



Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE
AS TO THE APPLICATION FOR CHARTER
RENEWAL OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT
CENTER OF THE HAMPTONS CHARTER
SCHOOL**

FEBRUARY 8, 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	Page 1
Reader’s Guide.....	Page 5
School Description	Page 8
Executive Summary and Recommendation.....	Page 10
Findings and Discussion	Page 11
Renewal Benchmarks	Page 18

INTRODUCTION

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”) authorizes the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “Board of Trustees”) to grant charters for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools. Charter schools provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- improve student learning and achievement;
- increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; and
- provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹

In order to assist the Board of Trustees in their responsibilities under the Act, the Board of Trustees authorized the establishment of the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York (the “Institute”). Among its duties, the Institute is charged with evaluating charter schools’ applications for renewal and providing its resulting findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

This report is the primary vehicle by which the Institute transmits to the Board of Trustees its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s renewal application, and more broadly, the merits of a school’s case for renewal. It has been created and issued pursuant to the “Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewals of Charters for State University Authorized Charter Schools” (the “State University Renewal Practices”).² More information regarding this report is contained in the “Reader’s Guide” that follows.

¹ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

²The State University Renewal Practices, Policies and Procedures (revised January 25, 2005) are available at www.newyorkcharters.org.

Statutory and Regulatory Considerations

Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years. The Act prescribes the following requirements for a charter school renewal application:

- a report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- a detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements; and
- indications of parent and student satisfaction.³

The Institute's processes and procedures mirror these requirements and meet the objectives of the Act.⁴

As a charter authorizing entity, the Board of Trustees can renew a charter so long as the Trustees can make each of the following findings:

- the charter school described in the application meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; and
- granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁵

Where the Board of Trustees approve a renewal application, they are required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review.⁶ The Regents may approve or return the proposed charter to the Board of Trustees with the Regents' comments and recommendation. In the former case, the charter will then issue and become operational on the day the initial charter expires. In the latter case (return to the Board of Trustees), the Board of Trustees must review the returned proposed charter in light of the Regents' comments and respond by resubmitting the charter (with or without modification) to the Regents, or by abandoning the proposed charter. Should the Board of Trustees resubmit the charter, the Regents have thirty days to act to approve it. If they do not approve the proposed charter, it will be deemed approved and will issue by operation of law.⁷

³ § 2851(4) of the Act.

⁴ Further explication of these policies and procedures is available on the Charter Schools Institute's website. See <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/howto/renewal.html>.

⁵ See § 2852(2) of the Act.

⁶ See § 2852(5) of the Act.

⁷ See §§ 2852(5-a) and (5-b) of the Act.

Process for Renewal

While that renewal process formally commences with submission of a renewal application, a school must work to make the case for renewal from the time it is chartered. From its inception, the school must build its case for renewal by setting educational goals and thereafter implementing a program that will allow them to meet those goals.

Under the State University's accountability cycle, a school that is chartered enters into a plan (the "Accountability Plan")⁸ setting forth the goals for the school's educational program (and other measures if the school desires) usually in the first year of the charter. Progress toward each goal is determined by specific measures. Both goals and measures, while tailored in part to each school's program, must be consistent with the Institute's written guidelines. When the Accountability Plan is in final form, it receives approval from the Institute.

Thereafter, the charter school is required to provide an annual update on its progress in meeting its Accountability Plan goals and measures (the "Accountability Plan Progress Report").⁹ This permits the school not only the ability to provide all stakeholders with a clear sense of the school's progress, but forces the school to focus on specific academic outcomes. In the same vein, both the Institute and the State Education Department conduct visits to the school on a periodic basis. The main purpose of the Institute's visits is to determine the progress the school is making in implementing successfully a rigorous academic program that will permit the school to meet its Accountability Plan goals and measures. Reports and de-briefings for the school's Board or leadership team are designed to indicate the school's progress, its strengths and its weaknesses. Where possible, and where it is consistent with its oversight role, the Institute provides general advice as to potential avenues for improvement. To further assist the school in this regard, the Institute may contract with third-party, school inspection experts to conduct a comprehensive third-year visit to the school and to look specifically at the strength of the school's case for renewal at that point.

By the start of the fifth year of a school's charter (as set forth above), it must submit an application for charter renewal, setting forth the evidence required by law and the State University. Applicant charter schools are asked to formulate and report evidence of success in answer to four renewal questions:

- Is the school an academic success?
- Is the school a viable and effective organization?
- Is the school fiscally sound?
- If the school's charter is renewed, what are its future plans?

⁸ See <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/resource/reports.html> for detailed information on Accountability Plan guidelines.

⁹ See <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/resource/Model%20Progress%20Report1.pdf> for a model Accountability Plan Progress Report.

The application is reviewed by Institute staff. The staff also conducts a desk audit to both gather additional evidence as well as verify the evidence the school has submitted. This audit includes examination of the school's charter, including amendments, Accountability Plan, Accountability Plan Progress Reports, Annual Reports and internal documents (such as school handbooks, policies, memos, newsletters, and Board meeting minutes). Institute staff also examines audit reports, budget materials, and reports generated over the term of the school's charter both by the Institute and the State Education Department.

Thereafter, the Institute conducts a multi-day site visit to the school. Based on a review of each school's application for charter renewal, a lead member of the Institute's renewal visit team works with the school's leadership to design a visit schedule and request any additional documentation the team may require to ensure that analysis of the school's progress is complete (professional development plans, special education plans, school newsletters, *etc.*). Renewal visit team members visit classes, observe lessons, examine student work, sit in on school meetings, interview staff members and speak informally with students. In addition, the team conducts extensive interviews with the school's board of trustees and administrators.

The evidence that the Institute gathers is structured by a set of benchmarks that are grouped under the four renewal application questions listed above. These benchmarks are linked to the accountability plan structure and the charter renewal requirements in the Act; many are also based on the correlates of effective schools.¹⁰

Following the visit, the Institute's renewal team finalizes the analysis of all evidence generated regarding the school's performance. The Institute's renewal benchmarks are discussed and the lead writer uses the team's evidence and analysis to generate comments under each renewal benchmark. The completed benchmarks present a focus for discussion and a summary of the findings. The benchmarks are not used as a scorecard, do not have equal weight, and support but do not individually or in limited combination provide the aggregate analysis required for the final renewal recommendation.

The Institute then prepares a draft report and provides a copy to the school for its review and comment. The draft contains the findings, discussion and the evidence base for those findings, but does not contain a recommendation. Upon receiving a school's comments, the Institute reviews its draft, makes any changes it determines are necessary and appropriate and determines its findings in their final form. The report is then finalized, recommendations are included, and copies are provided to the members of the Committee on Charter Schools, the other members of the Board of Trustees and the schools themselves. This report is the product of that process.

¹⁰ See <http://www.effectiveschools.com>.

READER'S GUIDE

This renewal report contains the following sections: Introduction, Reader's Guide, School Description, Recommendations and Executive Summary, Findings and Discussion and completed Renewal Benchmarks. As this guide, the Introduction, and School Description speak for themselves, no guidance is provided for these sections. Guidance as to the remaining sections is set forth below.

1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Institute's Recommendations are the end result of its review process. In this section, the Institute provides not only its recommendation as to whether the charter should be renewed, but the recommended terms of any renewal, *i.e.*, short or long-term, grades and number of students it is recommended the school be authorized to serve, conditions under which the charter is renewed, *etc.* Following the recommendations themselves is a short executive summary that lays out in abbreviated form reasons for the recommendation as well as the findings that support the recommendation.

Pursuant to the State University Renewal Practices, the recommendations made by the Institute can take the following forms.

- *Early renewal*: available to schools in the fourth year of the charter that can at that point make a compelling and unambiguous case for renewal. Schools that gain early renewal will then have five full years of instruction before facing renewal again, thus allowing them to concentrate on instruction and providing them with more ready access to capital markets.
- *Short-term planning year renewal*: available to schools that have taken one or more planning years. These schools will be able with limited review to obtain renewal in order to allow them to gather at least four full years of data before facing a full-blown renewal review.
- *Renewal*: available to schools in their fifth year. Schools that have a compelling and unambiguous case for renewal will be eligible for renewal term of five years.
- *Renewal with conditions*: available to schools that 1) have a compelling and unambiguous educational record of success but that have material legal, fiscal or organizational deficiencies that practically cannot be completely corrected by the time of renewal — so long as such deficiencies are not fatal to a determination that the school is fiscally, legally and organizationally sound, or 2) have demonstrated sufficient academic performance for renewal, but require conditions to improve the academic program. Such conditions may include but are not limited to restrictions on the number of students and grades served.

- *Short-term renewal*: available to schools in their fifth year that present an ambiguous or mixed record of educational achievement, but that have effectively implemented measures to correct those deficiencies and such measures are likely to lead to educational success and students' academic improvement with additional time. Typically, but not always, short-term renewal will be for two years. A short-term renewal may also be coupled with conditions relating to organizational, fiscal or legal deficiencies.
- *Restructuring renewal*: available to schools that have not presented a case for renewal of any kind, but that are voluntarily willing to enter into a restructuring plan whereby the current school would cease instruction at the end of the school's final year of instruction under the current charter and its Board of Trustees would wind up operations of the school. Thereafter, the school's Board would legally commit itself to implementing a wholesale restructuring of the education corporation, including a new Board of Trustees, administrative team, academic program, enrollment and organizational structure, and potentially a new location, which school then could meet and exceed state standards and all the requirements of the Act. Once restructured the education corporation would have authority to recommence instruction.
- *Non-renewal*: where a school does not present a case for renewal (short term, conditional, or otherwise), the charter will not be renewed and the charter will be terminated upon its expiration.

In addition to discussing the recommendations themselves (and any conditions made part of those recommendations), the executive summary also contains the findings required by subdivision 2852(2) of the Education Law, including whether the school, if renewed, is likely to improve student learning and achievement.

2. **Finding and Discussion**

The findings are grouped and separated into four sections corresponding to the four questions that a charter school seeking renewal must answer and must provide evidence supporting its answer. They are:

- Is the school an academic success?
- Is the school a viable and effective organization?
- Is the school fiscally sound?
- If the school's charter is renewed, what are its future plans?

Below each group of findings is a summary of the evidence supporting the finding. This evidence is a synthesis of information gathered over the life of the school's charter and is analyzed through the lens of the Institute's Renewal Benchmarks (available on the Institute's website).

The ordering of the findings—with those regarding a school's academic performance and outcomes placed first—reflect the fact that renewal of a State University authorized charter is primarily based on a school's progress towards performance-based goals that the charter school and the Institute agreed to in the school's Accountability Plan. However, while success in meeting these goals is the primary determining factor, the school's ability to demonstrate that its educational program as implemented is effective and that the organization is viable, fiscally stable and in compliance with applicable law are also important factors. So, too, the school must be able to show that its plans for the charter renewal term are feasible, reasonable and most of all achievable.

3. Renewal Benchmarks

The Renewal Benchmark section contains each renewal benchmark together with a review of the pertinent evidence gathered during the renewal cycle. As noted earlier, the benchmarks, similar to the findings, are grouped under the four renewal questions.

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School (CDCH) was approved by the State University Board of Trustees in July of 2000 and by the Board of Regents in August of the same year. The school opened in January 2001 in Wainscott, New York (Long Island). The school was originally located in leased space where the Kindergarten through second grade classrooms, the kitchen, and the school offices were located on the upper level, while the third through fifth grade classrooms, the health office, student art gallery, physical therapy room and support staff offices were located on the lower level. At the time of the renewal visit, CDCH had just moved into its new building, also located in Wainscott, where all classrooms, most offices, therapy and multi-purpose rooms are found on the ground level. The lower level provides space for two offices, workspace for teachers and additional space yet being completed for future use. The building is completely accessible by all students and staff, regardless of physical limitations. In addition, the site includes ten acres of land, of which the school has developed five into an enclosed play area for students.

Student enrollment at the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has grown from an original 24 students in Kindergarten through fourth grades to 93 students in Kindergarten through seventh grades. Historically, 50-57 percent of the student population has been comprised of students with disabilities. At the time of the renewal visit, 54 percent of the school's students were students with disabilities. The school continues to provide an inclusionary, community-based program where students with special education needs are instructed along with their regular education peers. A Student-Centered Plan (SCP) is developed for each student to ensure that the student's educational needs are met and that student performance goals are established and measured. If a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the IEP goals are incorporated into the student's SCP.

CDCH's educational program is based on New York State standards, and implemented under the direction of the school's Principal and Educational Supervisor. Each classroom is staffed with two certified teachers and other support personnel, as needed. The educational program includes a focus on character education through a monthly theme. During the spring and summer of 2004, significant time was devoted to creating curriculum maps and scope and sequence documents to guide instruction. The school uses Everyday Math and Scholastic Reading for instruction in reading and mathematics.

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School's mission statement is as follows:

The mission of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons [Charter School] is to expand school choice and enhance educational opportunities for children and families. The school will create an environment that promotes educational excellence and personal growth in all children. It will build upon each student's unique strengths and address their individual needs by

bringing together all facets of the school community in a collaborative effort to help each student learn and develop.

The school has a stable Board of Trustees comprised of nine members. Five Trustees have served since the founding of the school, and eight have served at least three years. The Board meets regularly and primarily functions as a whole body, but does have two standing committees and uses workgroups to fulfill specific needs when necessary. The Board remains dedicated and committed to providing the resources and infrastructure to support a school that is strong academically, organizationally and fiscally.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation: The Charter Schools Institute recommends that the charter of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School be renewed for a full term of five years with a final enrollment of 135 students in Kindergarten through eighth grades and consistent with the other terms of operation set forth in its application for renewal.

Summary Discussion

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has reasonable future plans and the Institute recommends a full five-year renewal of the school's charter. CDCH will serve students in Kindergarten through eighth grades throughout the five-year period with a minimum enrollment of 110 students and a maximum of 135 students.

The school has met most of the goals in the outcome measures set for its academic subjects. According to limited data, the school has outperformed its comparison, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES in ELA and mathematics. For the limited report card data available, CDCH scores are substantially higher than those of the BOCES on the fourth grade state examinations.

Because of the small size of the school and the number of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) excused from testing, these state test results are based on only a handful of students. In its absolute level of performance on the fourth grade state examinations, based on the four to eight students who have taken the exam each year, CDCH has met the criterion of success set in its outcome measures. In mathematics and science, the school has come close to meeting, if not met, its goal in each of the three years of testing. In English Language Arts (ELA), virtually no students were proficient in the first two years, but 80 percent of the students were proficient in the third year. With CDCH setting its accountability measures to focus on students who were enrolled for at least three years, 2003-04 was the first year in which students could have attended the necessary amount of time. CDCH came close to meeting this absolute level of performance in ELA, math, and science.

The State Education Department has deemed CDCH to be a *Charter School in Good Standing*, which indicates that the school has not failed to make adequate yearly progress for two successive years under the NCLB requirements.

At the time of the renewal visit in September 2004, the school generally had effective systems and programs in place that provide a basis for concluding (together with the outcome data noted above) that the school would, if approved for renewal, likely continue to improve student learning and achievement. In addition, the school has benefited from consistent leadership at the Executive Director and Board levels. The school's Executive Director developed and submitted the original application to establish the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School. Five of the nine trustees have served since the founding of the school, while eight of the nine have served three years at least. The Board has guided the school in the successful efforts to fund and build a new facility, which the school moved into just prior to the opening of school this fall. The school has maintained overall financial health, and is a viable and effective organization.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

- Finding 1: The Child Development Center of the Hamptons has met most of its goals in the outcome measures set for its academic subjects. The requisite percent of students achieved proficiency on state examinations and the school outperformed its comparison, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES, on these measures. The state test results are based on only a handful of students. Based on a larger number of students, the school had mixed results in enabling students to achieve sufficient value-added, year-to-year gains in reading and math on the TerraNova test.*
- Finding 2: The Child Development Center of the Hamptons has adopted new curriculum materials for core content areas to create continuity of instruction across grades. The curriculum has yet to be implemented, and therefore its effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated.*
- Findings 3: A Student-Centered Plan (SCP), created for each student by the grade level team, reflects the academic, behavioral and social/emotional goals established for each student. The plan is the basis of the school's inclusionary culture.*
- Finding 4: Teachers informally assess students by keeping anecdotal records on classroom observations, and by reviewing student written materials collected in "portfolios." This information is used to evaluate the achievement of the goals contained in the Student-Centered Plans. The evidence used, however, is not reliable and does not enable teachers to predict how well students will perform in attaining grade level competencies.*
- Finding 5: The school has two certified teachers staffing each classroom. In the lower grades, one of the co-teachers is certified in special education. Upper grade teachers do not have access to the same level of special education support. Throughout the school, teachers who are new to the profession and/or new to the school require greater support to ensure that students achieve individual goals and state standards.*
- Finding 6: Although the school's administrators, as teacher supervisors, are available to classroom teachers for advice, there was no evidence that they provide direct support to teachers in their day-to-day instruction.*
- Finding 7: In the past, professional development focused on specific instructional and behavioral issues. More recently the school has used staff development*

days and weekly "team" times to establish a collaborative curriculum development effort which address grade level requirements.

Finding 8: The majority of students who attend the charter school (54 percent) are students with disabilities that have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). As the result of significant time and effort devoted to the issue, the school has established strong, viable relationships with the variety of student districts of residence and their Committees on Special Education (CSE). This has resulted in increased efficiency in the provision of the required programs and services.

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has met most of the goals in the outcome measures set for its academic subjects. According to limited data, the school has outperformed its comparison, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES in ELA and mathematics. For the limited report card data available, CDCH scores are substantially higher than those of the BOCES on the fourth grade state examinations. The school has had mixed results in enabling students to achieve sufficient value-added, year-to-year gains in reading and mathematics, according to student performance on the nationally-normed TerraNova test.

In its absolute level of performance on the fourth grade state examinations, based on the four to eight students who have taken the exam each year, CDCH has met the criterion of success set in its outcome measures. In mathematics and science, the school has come close to meeting, if not met, its goal in each of the three years of testing. In English Language Arts (ELA), virtually no students were proficient in the first two years, but 80 percent of the students were proficient in the third year. With CDCH setting its accountability measures to focus on students who were enrolled for at least three years, 2003-04 was the first year in which students could have attended the necessary amount of time. CDCH came close to meeting this absolute level of performance in ELA, math, and science.

In addition, CDCH is deemed a *charter school in good standing* by the State Education Department. This rating indicates that the school has not failed to make adequate yearly progress for two successive years under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School's curriculum is based on the New York State core curriculum, and implemented by classrooms staffed with two certified teachers. The school recently adopted new curricular materials for reading and mathematics to address issues regarding continuity of instruction across and between grades. Teachers develop a Student Centered Plan (SCP) for each student that incorporates academic, social/emotional and behavioral goals with assessment results. If a student has an Individualized Education Program

(IEP), his or her IEP goals are also incorporated into the SCP. The SCP is the basis for the school's inclusionary approach to education where students with disabilities are educated alongside their non-disabled peers. The teaching staff includes three teachers who are certified in special education, speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, and a social worker. Other related service professionals are engaged as necessary to meet IEP requirements.

Teacher anecdotal notes regarding observations play a key role in assessing student progress. Other forms of assessment include state assessments, the review of student "portfolios" of written work, teacher developed tests, publisher-produced unit tests and the school's value-added assessment, the TerraNova. Outside of the TerraNova and the state assessments, the school is working to develop methods of assessment that are more verifiable and reliable in predicting student achievement of grade level competencies.

The school continues to "tweak" its professional development opportunities to more directly link the improvement of pedagogy with student achievement and attainment of state performance standards. In its current year, the school has extended the teachers' day by an hour to provide time for instructional planning and meetings, including faculty meetings, committee and grade-level meetings *and* professional development. On Wednesdays during this school year, the added hour is specifically earmarked for professional development.

Teachers informally assess students by reviewing student written materials collected in "portfolios." This information is used to evaluate the achievement of the goals contained in the Student-Centered Plans. The evidence used, however, is not reliable and does not enable teachers to predict how well students will perform in attaining grade level competencies.

Throughout the school, teachers who are new to the profession and/or new to the school require greater support to ensure that students achieve individual goals and state standards.

Finally, in order for the school's teaching staff to access the type of support needed to improve instruction, classroom teachers require detailed, classroom-based instructional guidance. The Board created and filled an "Educational Supervisor" position to work along with the school's Principal to address this need. However, it was not evident, at the time of the renewal visit, that the administrative staff possessed the capacity to provide in-depth support to teachers in their daily instruction, or their review of student written materials collected in "portfolios." In

addition, it was not clear that new teachers were given guidance in setting grade-level expectations for student performance.

2. Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?

Finding 1: The Board is structured in a way that allows the Trustees to function effectively. The Board's actions reflect a deep sense of commitment to the school and its goals, as evidenced by the completion of the new facility. As the school matures and its needs change, the Board will face new challenges in ensuring that elementary and middle level students meet individual and state standards in preparation for high school.

Finding 2: With minor exceptions, the school is in substantial compliance with applicable regulations and law. The school presented a mixed record of complying with submissions to the Institute.

The Board of Trustees of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons takes its governance responsibilities seriously. The nine member Board is deeply committed to providing the infrastructure necessary to support a school that is academically, organizationally and fiscally sound. Evidence of the Trustees' commitment and dedication is reflected in their regular meetings, adoption of operational policies and procedures, the annual development and adoption of a school budget, longevity of trustee membership on the Board, and by the completion of the school's new building in Wainscott. The school had just moved into the new facility prior to the opening of school in September 2004.

Trustees speak with a unified voice about the mission and goals of CDCH, and the Board is structured in a manner that emphasizes its focus on educational achievement. The Board primarily functions as a whole body, but does have two standing committees: Education Program and Personnel. When or if needed, the Board can easily activate its Nominating, Building, and/or Community Advisory committees.

The Board utilizes multiple methods of obtaining feedback and input from parents. The Board membership includes a parent representative as a voting member. In addition, the Board conducts annual surveys of parent satisfaction with the school and its academic program, issues regular newsletters, and offers other forums for parent involvement and communication. Based on their most recent survey, parents indicated that they are indeed satisfied with the school's instructional program, communication practices, level and quality of parent involvement, and level of interest of field trips.

The school's Principal and Executive Director typically attend Board meetings, and report on their individual areas of responsibility. The

Principal regularly reports on student performance and instruction, and the Board has used that information to make changes in the instructional program and staff.

3. Is the School Fiscally Sound?

Finding 1: The Board has provided adequate financial oversight during the term of its first charter.

Finding 2: Throughout the life of its charter, the school has consistently and in a timely fashion met its financial reporting requirements and maintained appropriate internal controls. Additional controls and process improvements continue to be developed.

Finding 3: The school's financial condition has been generally weak but stable. While the school has not always operated on a balanced budget, it has never experienced an operating cash shortfall.

Over the life of the CDCH charter, the Board has provided adequate financial oversight and has posted evidence of making decisions that further the school's mission, program and goals. The school operates pursuant to a long-range fiscal plan and has produced realistic budgets over the term of the charter.

The school has generally complied with financial reporting requirements and submitted annual financial statement audit reports with unqualified opinions indicating that the school's financial statements fairly represent its financial position. Reports have been complete and the school has followed generally accepted accounting principles.

The school completed the most recent school year in weak but stable financial condition. The school is solvent and has maintained adequate cash flow. The support of the CDCH Foundation for Special Children adds to the fiscal stability of the school.

4. What Are the School's Plans for the Renewal Period and Are They Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?

Finding 1: If the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School's charter is renewed, the school intends to expand by adding an eighth grade and reaching an enrollment of 135 students. The growth would fulfill its goal of being an elementary and middle school option for students and their families on the eastern end of Long Island. The plans are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Finding 2: CDCH's Board of Trustees anticipates that the Board will continue using its current structure, but realizes that under its by-laws may grow as large as fifteen members, if deemed necessary. The Board of Trustees is also aware that governing a middle school brings different demands than an elementary school, and is prepared to address the inherent challenges. The plans in this area are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Finding 3: The school has provided a reasonable and appropriate five-year fiscal plan for the term of a future charter.

If the charter for CDCH is renewed, the school intends to further enhance its curriculum based on the New York State core curriculum and performance standards, and to expand to include an eighth grade. The addition of an eighth grade would complete the goal of creating an elementary and middle school program. The elementary school would include Kindergarten through sixth grades, while the middle school would include seventh and eighth grades. The school's middle school program would also be guided by the State Education Department's "Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs."

The school would continue to provide an inclusionary program where students with disabilities are educated alongside their non-disabled peers, and Student-Centered Plans are created for all students. If a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the IEP will be incorporated in the SCP. Assessment of student progress will be measured using state assessments in grades three through eight, the TerraNova in Kindergarten through fourth grades (until the state assessments include third grade), and the New York State Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities.¹¹ CDCH will continue to implement its newly formalized "Child Study Process" to address student behavior that interferes with student learning.

At the time of the renewal visit, CDCH's Board of Trustees was keenly aware that if the school's charter is renewed and the school grows to include a middle school, it will face new challenges in ensuring that the school has the necessary leadership, curriculum, fiscal and other resources necessary for students to attain the school's and state's goals. To address the challenges, the Board of Trustees indicated that they have already begun to institute specific practices, such as closely monitoring student performance, including classroom visits; and designing and instituting the use of a protocol to evaluate the school's Principal and Executive Director.

¹¹ The Accountability Plan as submitted in the renewal application is generally reasonable and feasible; however certain additional measures may be required in order to take account of changes in the New York State's testing regimen or revisions to the Institute's Accountability Plan Guidelines. In such cases, these additional measures will be added either prior to the execution of a new proposed renewal charter or thereafter.

At the end of this charter period, the school is in a weak but stable financial position. The school's stability is enhanced by the support of the CDCH Foundation and its securing of a permanent facility. The Institute finds that the school's financial position during the term of a future charter should stabilize and strengthen assuming the continued demand for enrollment in the school.

RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

Evidence Category	Benchmarks	
<p>Renewal Question 1</p> <p>Is the School an Academic Success?</p>		
<p>Benchmark 1A</p> <p>Academic Attainment & Improvement</p>	<p>1A.1.1</p>	<p>Absolute Measures (New York State Assessments): The school meets or has made meaningful and consistent progress towards meeting the outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of the school’s charter.</p>
	<p>1A.1.2</p>	<p>Comparative Measures: The school meets or has made meaningful and consistent progress towards meeting the outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of the school’s charter.</p>
	<p>1A.1.3</p>	<p>Value Added Measures: The school meets or has made meaningful and consistent progress towards meeting the outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of the school’s charter.</p>
	<p>1A.1.4</p>	<p>NCLB Measure: The school has made adequate yearly progress as required by NCLB.</p>
	<p>1A.1.5</p>	<p>Unique Academic Measures: The school meets or has made meaningful and consistent progress towards meeting the outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan.</p>

Academic Attainment & Improvement

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons (CDCH) has met most of the goals in the outcome measures set for its academic subjects. In 2003-04, CDCH basically met its proficiency goal on state examinations. According to limited data, the school has outperformed its comparison, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES. Because of the small size of the school and the number of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) excused from testing, these state test results are based on only a handful of students. Drawing on the larger number of students who took the nationally-normed TerraNova test, the school has had mixed results in enabling students to achieve sufficient value-added, year-to-year gains in reading and mathematics.

In its absolute level of performance on the fourth grade state examinations, based on the four to eight students who have taken the exam each year, CDCH has met the criterion of success set in its outcome measures. In mathematics and science, the school has come close to meeting, if not met, its goal in each of the three years of testing. In English Language Arts (ELA), virtually no students were proficient in the first two years, but 80 percent of the students were proficient in the third year. With CDCH setting its accountability measures to focus on students who were enrolled for at least three years, 2003-04 was the first year in which students could have attended the necessary amount of time. CDCH came close to meeting this absolute level of performance in ELA, math, and science.

In its comparative level of performance in ELA and mathematics, CDCH has outperformed the Eastern Suffolk BOCES, which had been chosen as the best comparison, given its sizeable special education population. For the limited report card data available, CDCH scores are substantially higher than those of the BOCES on the fourth grade state examinations.

Results have been mixed on the value-added to student learning, according to spring-to-spring cohort gains on the TerraNova Test. In the three years for which spring-to-spring results for the same students are available, there were substantial gains in both reading and math in the first year, notable declines in the second year, and modest gains in the third year. CDCH only met its outcome measures in reading and math in the first year. At the end of the 2003-04 school year, the third year, on average the grade cohorts were scoring slightly below grade level. These conclusions are tempered with the understanding that the data are based on a small number of students (N=40), many of whom have IEPs. In addition, the value-added to the achievement of cohorts over a longer period of time is difficult to gauge because of student turnover.

The State Education Department has deemed CDCH to be a *Charter School in Good Standing*, which indicates that the school has not failed to make adequate yearly progress for two successive years under the NCLB requirements. CDCH has included a unique outcome measure in its Accountability Plan (see below).

Accountability Plan Outcome Measures

In its Accountability Plan, the Child Development Center of the Hamptons set outcome measures to demonstrate its academic success in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics, as well as science and social studies. The outcome measures include the following three required types: 1) the absolute level of student performance on state examinations; 2) the comparative level of student performance on state examinations; and 3) the value-added to student learning according to year-to-year comparisons of student cohort performance on a school-selected standardized test. The following tables indicate the specific outcomes CDCH set for itself accompanied by its annual results.¹²

In addition to being held to these accountability measures, CDCH is expected, under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), to make adequate yearly progress toward enabling all students to score at the proficient level on the state ELA and mathematics examinations. In holding charter schools to the same standards as other public schools, the state issues a

¹² Please note: since CDCH began operation in January 2001, it administered the state examinations for the first time in 2001-02. As state examination results for the Eastern Suffolk BOCES are only available in ELA and mathematics for 2000-01 and 2001-02, they are not reported below in a separate table. According to CDCH's renewal application, in 2001-02, 10 percent of the BOCES fourth graders were proficient in ELA and 11 percent were proficient in mathematics. As 2000-01 was CDCH's first year of operation, there are no value-added cohort results for that year.

school accountability report. CDCH's accountability status in the most recent report is indicated below.

Besides the three required outcome measures, and the NCLB outcome measure, the school also included additional self-selected academic outcome measures as part of its Accountability Plan. These various outcome measures constitute the renewal benchmarks for academic attainment and improvement.

Absolute Level of Performance on State Examinations

Accountability Plan		Results				
Subject	Outcome Measure	Grade	School Year			
			2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
ELA	Seventy-five percent of all children taking the 4 th grade NYS English Language Arts assessment who have attended the school for three or more years will perform at Level 3 or 4.	4	Not applicable	25 % ¹	0.0% ²	66.7%
Math	Seventy-five percent of all children taking the 4 th grade NYS Mathematics assessment who have attended the school for three or more years will perform at Level 3 or 4.	4	Not applicable	62.5% ¹	60.0% ¹	66.7%
Science	Seventy-five percent of all children taking the 4 th grade NYS Science assessment that have been attending the school for the past three years will perform at Level 3 or 4. ³	4	Not applicable	62.5% ¹	80% ¹	66.7%
Social Studies	Seventy-five percent of all children taking the 5 th grade NYS Social Studies assessment that have been attending the school for the past three years will perform at Level 3 or 4.	5	Not applicable	No students in grade	69.2% ¹	0.0% ⁴

¹ Results are for all tested students irrespective of time enrolled.

² Based on results for four students.

³ Results on the science exam in 2000-01 to 2002-03 represent the proportion of students answering a pre-determined number of questions correctly (*i.e.*, the state designated level).

⁴ Based on results for one student.

Value-Added to Student Learning According to Spring-to-Spring Cohort Gains

Accountability Plan		Results				
Subject	Outcome Measure	Grades	School Year			
			2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Reading	The average reading scores of cohort students for grades K-5 will increase 3 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCEs) per year as measured by the Terra Nova.	All	N/A	16.1	(-5.2)	1.2
Math	The average mathematics scores of cohort students for grades K-5 will increase 3 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCEs) per year as measured by the Terra Nova.	All	N/A	23.8	(-8.7)	2.0

Adequate Yearly Progress as Required by NCLB

The State Education Department's School Accountability Report states CDCH's 2003-04 School Accountability Status: *Charter School in Good Standing*, which indicates that the school has not failed to make adequate yearly progress for two successive years.

Student Achievement According to Unique Academic Measures.

Accountability Plan		Results				
Subject	Outcome Measure	Grades	School Year			
			2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Reading	Students will achieve 75 percent mastery of their initial annual goals as written on their Student-Centered Plan (SCP) or Individualized Education Plan.	All	82.5%	80.2%		N/A
Math	Students will achieve 75 percent mastery of their initial annual goals as written on their Student-Centered Plan (SCP) or Individualized Education Plan.	All	84%	70%	75%	N/A
Science	Students will achieve 75 percent mastery of their initial annual goals as written on their Student-Centered Plan (SCP) or Individualized Education Plan.	All	83%	92.8%	(all subjects)	N/A
Social Studies	Students will achieve 75 percent mastery of their initial annual goals as written on their Student-Centered Plan (SCP) or Individualized Education Plan.	All	81%	91.3%		N/A

Please note: because the renewal application does not discuss procedures for determining mastery of initial annual goals, the reliability of this measure could not be ascertained.

<p>Benchmark 1B</p> <p>Use of Assessment Data</p>	<p>1B</p> <p>The school effectively and systematically uses assessment and evaluation data to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>A school that fully meets this benchmark will have put in place during the life of the charter a system for the effective use of assessment data. Such a system would include at least the following elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the collection and analysis of student performance data, including data gathered from an analysis of student work pursuant to a set of well-defined and well-aligned standards; ● the use of assessment instruments and data to determine accurately whether State performance standards and other academic goals are being achieved; ● the use of assessment data to make changes and improvements, where the data indicates a need, to curriculum and instruction; ● the regular communication between teachers and administrators of assessment results and a common understanding between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of those results; and ● the regular communication to parents of assessment data to assist them in their efforts to improve student learning and achievement. <p>More generally, a school should be able to demonstrate a system where performance standards, instruction, required student work and assessments are integrated and have led to increased student knowledge and skills.</p>
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Since its inception, the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has faced the challenge of using assessment tools to foster an inclusive learning environment and to demonstrate academic progress toward achieving state standards. The school uses teacher observation as a key component in the assessment of student progress. Other forms of classroom assessment, as reported by administrators and teachers, include teacher-made tests (such as math or spelling), anecdotal notes, publisher-produced unit assessments and student “portfolios” (collections of student papers). In addition, the school uses the TerraNova as its value-added assessment of student performance.

The Student-Centered Plan (SCP) has been a focal point for individualizing instruction and establishing student goals throughout the initial charter period. A SCP is comprised of four parts: a narrative progress report, student goals and objectives, a report card and the Terra Nova item analysis. Originally, student goals were developed and included in the SCP each fall. The SCP would then not be reviewed again until the end of the school year. The school found the infrequent review of the SCP did not serve teachers or students well, and in the school’s fifth year, modified the process to require quarterly reviews of the SCPs to revise the goals as needed. Since the school had just initiated the quarterly SCP review process, no evidence was available at the time of the renewal visit regarding the effects of the change. Teachers devote significant amounts of time

developing the SCPs, but did not report consistently consulting the SCPs during the school year. The emphasis appeared to be placed more on the creation of the goals than on rigorously and reliably evaluating student performance in terms of attainment of grade level competencies or state performance standards.

Although the school has developed writing rubrics in the past, at the time of the renewal visit, no evidence of the school-wide use of rubrics in the evaluation of student performance in the area of writing or other disciplines was obtainable. However, rubrics were available for teachers to use “as a resource.” The effectiveness of these rubrics had not been established.

Teachers were unfamiliar with the criteria for student academic success as outlined in the school’s Accountability Plan. They did not report either using student performance data as the basis for discussions with colleagues or administrators, or to change instruction in the classroom. Teachers indicated that administrators did not review assessment strategies, and that their focus tended to be on the evaluation of student behavior. Evidence indicated that the school does not have a systemic or systematic way of monitoring student progress and modifying instruction

<p>Benchmark 1C</p> <p>Curriculum</p>	<p>1C</p> <p>The school has a clearly defined quality curriculum that prepares students to meet State performance standards.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark has defined with precision the essential knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve (and that are aligned with the relevant State standards) and makes them a priority within the curriculum. Course offerings and outlines reflect those priorities. The curriculum as implemented is organized, cohesive, and seamless from grade to grade.</p>
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CDCH follows the New York State core curriculum and uses Everyday Math and Scholastic Reading for instruction in reading and mathematics, and McGraw Hill texts will be used for science. The school was awaiting the arrival of new books at the time of the renewal visit. During the spring and summer of 2004, a group of four teachers worked with administrators to create the first scope and sequence document to guide instruction across the school. The effectiveness of this document has yet to be determined. The school's academic program is complemented by monthly character education themes, such as friendship, trustworthiness, responsibility and fairness.

In its initial four years, teachers used a variety of textbooks to provide instruction in the core subject areas which resulted in discontinuity within and across grades. Everyday Math was selected for use this year to create uniformity and continuity, at least in the area of mathematics. Professional development was provided by a consultant of the mathematics publishing house, prior to the opening of school in September. Since Everyday Math is based on a spiraling approach to instruction, with each year building on concepts of previous years, it is critical that teachers do not lose sight of grade level expectations and fall back on assessing student improvement and not basing student performance on absolute grade standards. At the time of the renewal visit, teachers were unaware of any plans to align the curriculum across grades or any intentions to meet to review concepts or coordinate instruction.

Teachers developed a template curriculum map for use in the 2004-05 school year to link monthly instruction to curriculum, skill mastery and standards. The template, however, contained no method for evaluating the extent of student learning or the effectiveness of instruction. At the time of the renewal visit, the school shared its intention that the grade level teams produce curriculum maps a month in advance; it was too early in the school year to determine whether the intention had indeed become a reality.

<p>Benchmark 1D Pedagogy</p>	<p>1D.1</p> <p>Strong instructional leadership girds the school’s work in improving student learning and achievement.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark has instructional leadership that has demonstrated the capacity to lead the comprehensive implementation of the school’s curriculum and has facilitated the alignment of classroom instruction, learning activities, instructional resources, support, and assessments. Instructional leaders at the school ensure that teacher planning time, lesson development, and internal assessment systems lead to the successful attainment of the school’s mission and academic goals.</p>
	<p>1D.2</p> <p>Quality instruction is evident throughout the school fostering an academic learning environment and actively supporting the academic achievement of children.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark is one in which classroom practice reflects competent teaching and instructional strategies that engage students. The academic learning environment at the school is one in which effective teaching and learning are valued and supported; there is a clear and strong focus on achievement goals, and student and staff accomplishments are recognized.</p>
	<p>1D.3</p> <p>The school has strategies in place to identify and meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure, students not making reasonable progress towards achieving school goals, and students who are English Language Learners.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark has implemented special programs and provides the necessary resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. The programs are demonstrably effective in helping students meet goals.</p>

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School’s administrative staff includes a Principal and Educational Supervisor, and is supplemented by outside consultants who have provided, and continue to provide, specific services, such as development of the school’s original application, accountability plan and annual reports, and student performance recommendations. The school’s current Principal previously served as the Director of Educational Programs and Professional Development, but made the transition to Principal during the spring of 2004. This is the school’s third Principal.

The Principal and Educational Supervisor work very closely together to provide structure and instructional leadership to the school’s teaching staff. In interviews, teachers quickly responded that the Principal “listened” to their needs when first assuming the role of Principal, and ensured that certain curricular needs were addressed, *i.e.* the adoption of Everyday Math. The Principal was also credited with working to change the schedule so that time was available to plan and meet with colleagues to discuss instructional and school-wide issues, *i.e.* the added hour each day from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. The Principal’s

primary focus has been on curriculum development and development of the school-wide monthly themes. The Educational Supervisor, who is certified as a social worker but in the process of acquiring her certification as an educational administrator, is responsible for ensuring that structures are in place to ensure the seamless operation of the school's academic program. For example, the Educational Supervisor deals with the myriad of issues regarding related services staff, the various school districts involved and the scheduling of related services for students. The Educational Supervisor also provides support for classroom teachers, such as making curricular materials like the curriculum scope and sequence document more readily accessible to staff, and is considered by teachers as the "go to" person. Both the Principal and Educational Supervisor observe classroom teachers and work together in the development of teacher evaluations. Evidence indicates, however, that teachers did not receive the depth of instructional feedback from either the Principal or Educational Supervisor necessary to modify the delivery of instruction.

Each classroom of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School is staffed by two certified teachers. At the primary levels (Kindergarten through second grades), one of the two teachers is certified in special education. Since, historically, 50-57 percent of the student population has been comprised of students with disabilities, and the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular education program is a key design element of the school, it is critical that all teachers have the necessary instructional support to meet the academic needs of all students in the classroom. Teachers in the upper grades do not have access to such support.

"Co-teaching" is a key design element of the school. Teachers stated that they had not received professional development regarding the best practices in "co-teaching," and that they did not typically plan together to maximize the use of each co-teacher's strengths in the classroom. Therefore, "co-teaching" has been implemented differently in each classroom. In very few rooms were the skills and abilities of each teacher utilized fully during an individual lesson. While in some classrooms, teachers appeared to share instruction more equally during a lesson or worked with students individually; in many cases, the teacher not providing instruction either functioned as an assistant or prepared materials for another lesson. All teachers' schedules include a 40-minute daily planning period and on one day each week each teacher had two planning periods of 45 minutes each.

The mission of CDCH is to provide educational choice and expanded options to students and their families, especially those who reside on the eastern end of Long Island. Over the course of the school's initial charter, CDCH worked hard to establish strong and viable relationships with the multiple school districts from which its students come. The number of districts varies each year. At the time of the renewal visit, the school's population of students with disabilities came from eight different school districts. Early in the school's initial charter period, each district sent its staff, in the form of one-to-one aides and therapists, to the charter school to provide the IEP-required services. However, even though the related services met the requirements of students' IEPs, it created difficulties for the school in terms of orienting those individuals to the school's program and philosophy. As of the 2004-05 school year, all except one district allow the charter school to hire the necessary staff to provide the required services and the districts provide the funding. It was evident from documents reviewed, observations and administrative interviews, that the school benefits from the continuity in scheduling, training and overall programmatic participation of the related services staff under this new arrangement.

CDCH uses a "push-in" model to provide special education services, to the greatest extent possible. The school does not have a formal resource room, but makes arrangements to provide small group or individual services where necessary. The school provides certain services or supports to all students, such as speech and social skills

development. The school's special services staff, in addition to three special education teachers, includes speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, and a social worker. The school also has utilized the services of behavioral specialists. One provided professional development in the area of behavior modification during the 2003-04 school, while the other continues to work part-time at the Kindergarten and first grade levels to institute Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) as an approach to deal with student behaviors that may interfere with instruction.

Although the school's student population included no students who were English language learners or students who qualified as at-risk of academic failure, the school has processes in place to identify students in need of such services/programs. The school's staff includes individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and Italian. The school has issued many notices and communiqués in both English and Spanish.

<p>Benchmark 1E Teaching Staff</p>	<p>1E</p> <p>The school's instructional staff is qualified to implement the school as envisioned in the charter. Teachers are competent in their assigned content area and generally use instructional practices that lead to student academic success.</p> <p>A school that meets this benchmark will be able to demonstrate that teachers are competent in their assigned content area and generally use instructional practices that lead to student academic success. (While handled under the benchmark for legal and charter compliance, it is important to note that a school must also be able to demonstrate that teachers are certified or otherwise qualified under both federal and state law with few exceptions. In instances where the school has not been in compliance with this requirement of law, the school should be able to show that it has taken swift and appropriate remedial measures.)</p>
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Based upon the Institute's review of teacher certification documents, CDCH's teachers hold New York State teaching certificates and are therefore certified in accordance with the Charter Schools Act of 1998. In Kindergarten through second grades, one of the two teachers at each grade level is certified in special education. Overall, the school's teaching staff is young in terms of professional experience with most teachers having five or fewer years of teaching experience. The school has, however, provided professional development to augment and hone their instructional knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Benchmark 1F
Student Order & Discipline

1F

The school has implemented discipline policies and procedures that promote learning for all students.

The school that meets this benchmark has documented discipline policies and procedures (for regular and special education students) and has consistently enforced those policies. As implemented and enforced, the discipline policy will have promoted calm, safe classrooms where students are required to (and not distracted from) participating fully in all learning activities. Students at a school meeting this benchmark will also generally report a reasonable sense of security. A school will also be able to provide appropriate records regarding expulsions and suspensions.

Students at the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School appeared on task and demonstrated minimal disruption. There was no evidence of a culture of defiance or testing limits. Teachers were observed using various classroom management techniques, such as point systems, which appeared effective. Teachers indicated that the committee of teachers who worked on the school's "Code of Conduct" developed the "Child Study Process" which has been implemented for the 2004-05 school year. Teachers confirmed that the Child Study Process formalized the approaches that teachers had taken informally to address any student behavioral issues in their classrooms.

Although a formal document was not available during the renewal visit, a copy of the school's Code of Conduct was printed for review by the renewal team. The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School's Code of Conduct is applicable to all students. The Code of Conduct outlines policies and practices regarding student behavior and consequences for misbehavior. The Code of Conduct specifically addresses the discipline of students with disabilities, including suspension, removal or other disciplinary actions. The school's Board of Trustees recognized that students with disabilities enjoyed certain procedural protections and expressed its commitment to ensuring that all school policies and procedures were consistent with procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. This was critical since the School enrolls a unique student population in which, historically, 50-57 percent are students with disabilities with IEPs. Therefore, in the event that behavioral issues effect instruction, consideration must be given to the possible relationship between the behavior and a student's disability, as well as to the involvement of the student's district of residence. Should a student be suspended or otherwise removed from the school as a disciplinary measure, although the school districts of residence currently voluntarily provide alternative instruction, the school is ultimately responsible for ensuring that such instruction is provided to the student.

The Child Study Process addresses any student behavior issues. The process had not yet been used at the time of the renewal visit, but teachers were aware of its existence. At the most fundamental level, the classroom, the process begins by reminding teachers to first attempt to resolve any behavior issue by using classroom techniques and talking with the student's parent(s). Depending on the success of classroom level interventions, the process moves through a series of stages that could result in the involvement of the full school community. The Child Study Process materials include forms to report the incident(s) that require attention from both the adult and student perspectives, and forms to record information from the classroom, general and child study team meetings. The child study team includes the classroom teachers and staff, school administrators and related services staff, as necessary.

<p>Benchmark 1G</p> <p>Professional Development</p>	<p>1G.1</p> <p>The school’s professional development program aligns with the school’s mission, assists teachers in meeting students’ academic needs and school goals, and addresses any identified shortcomings in student learning and/or teacher content knowledge.</p> <p>Professional development offerings at a school that meets this benchmark are aligned with the school’s educational philosophy and are effective in helping teachers improve instruction. Most importantly, professional development practices at the school are a priority of the school leadership and buttress the instructional program, meet student learning needs and result in increased student achievement. The school’s calendar reflects that professional development and instructional planning are a high priority. A school should also be able to demonstrate that necessary support for inexperienced teachers is available. Teachers and school leaders report professional development activities have resulted in gains in teacher pedagogic content, knowledge, and skills and this expertise has led to increased student academic achievement.</p>
	<p>1G.2</p> <p>The school has a system in place for ongoing teacher evaluation and improvement that supports the school’s ability to reach the goals contained in its Accountability Plan.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark has leaders who spend extended time in classrooms. Teachers receive relevant and helpful written and verbal feedback, counsel, support, and opportunities to increase the instructional skills and content knowledge required for the school to meet its academic goals.</p>

Although the school has provided professional development and has allowed teachers to participate in professional development through other venues, the school has not developed a comprehensive professional development plan. Prior to the opening of school each year, the school conducts a multi-day (typically three days) orientation for teachers and staff. This year that session included an extensive session conducted by the McGraw Hill publisher on the use of Everyday Math. Some teachers also attended a workshop on the use of Phonographix during the summer of 2004.

When asked about professional development provided during the previous school year, teachers reported that the administration informed teachers of professional development opportunities provided by outside entities. Teachers reported participating in professional development activities related to behavior modification and Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). In addition, some teachers provided inservice for staff regarding their areas of interest or specialty, *i.e.* the speech teacher provided training regarding how to complement the work she does with students or several teachers collaboratively presented a workshop on balanced literacy. Also, in 2003-04, teachers had to volunteer to work on either the school’s curriculum or Code of Conduct committees as part of the school’s staff development days.

Teachers attend professional development activities on a voluntary basis. Guidance is not provided to assist teachers in determining whether participation in a specific professional

development activity is the best fit between the teacher's pedagogical needs and the school's academic program. The school engaged a consultant from Scholastic Reading in its early years to provide professional development on the school's reading program, and would like to repeat the session. However, the school has been unable to negotiate the necessary arrangements with the publisher.

During the 2003-04 school year, teachers had weekly meetings to discuss classroom issues, including instruction. This year, an hour has been added to teachers' schedules at the end of the instructional day. The additional hour is used for instructional planning and meetings, including faculty meetings, committee and grade-level meetings and professional development. On Wednesdays, the added hour is earmarked for professional development.

Teachers receive two formal evaluations per year, and frequent informal visits by school administrators; however, at the time of the visit at the beginning of the school year, there was little evidence that these informal visits served as opportunities to provide feedback to teachers on the quality of their daily instruction. Of 16 classroom teachers, four had four or more years of teaching experience. Primary teachers (Kindergarten through second grade) receive support for providing instruction to students with disabilities from the grade level team members who are certified in special education. Upper grade teachers do not have immediate access to the same level of support for providing instruction to students with disabilities.

Renewal Question 2

Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?

Benchmark 2A
School Specific Non-Academic Goals

2A

The school meets or has made meaningful and consistent progress towards meeting the Unique Measures of non-academic student outcomes that are contained in its Accountability Plan over the life of the charter.

The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has one unique measure of student performance in its Accountability Plan, and has been successful in achieving that goal almost consistently over the course of its initial charter period. That measure follows:

Students will achieve 75 percent mastery of their initial annual goals as written on their Student-Centered Plan (SCP) or Individualized Education [Program] (IEP).

The following chart reflects the percentage of students at CDCH who met the 75 percent target over the course of the school's initial charter, for regular education students (reg) and those with IEPs (spec):

	ELA		Math		Science		Social Studies	
	Reg & Spec	Spec	Reg & Spec	Spec	Reg & Spec	Spec	Reg & Spec	Spec
2000/01	82.5	81.0	84.0	80.5	83.0	84.0	81.0	81.0
2001/02	80.2	63.1	70.0	66.0	92.8	74.5	91.3	76.7
2002/03	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2003/04**	84.0	79.0	84.0	74.0	84.0	79.0	93.0	88.0

*For the 2002-03 school year, the school calculated an aggregate score reflecting student mastery of ELA, mathematics, science and social studies. Ninety-three percent of students were found to have attained, at least, 75 percent of their individualized annual goals.

**For the 2003-04 school year, the school also reported the percentage of general education students who attained the 75 percent target. The scores for solely the general education population follow: ELA-93 percent; Mathematics-96 percent; Science-93 percent; and Social Studies-100 percent.

<p>Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Mission & Design Elements</p>	<p>2B</p> <p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>The school that meets this benchmark has school Board members, parents, teachers, school leader(s) and community partners that consistently present evidence of the school’s success with reference to the school’s mission and the key design elements included in its charter application. Key elements of the school’s design are well implemented and the school’s academic results, governance, and instructional practices reflect the mission of the school.</p>
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The school’s mission includes a variety of expectations for the school, but none address the area of student achievement. Given that the mission is generally written, most teachers grasp the essence of it but could not articulate specific provisions. Over the life of its charter, the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has implemented many of the key design elements in its charter. Specifically, the school created and implemented the use of Student-Centered Plans for each student; worked through numerous issues with the sending school districts to obtain competent and consistent related service providers; provided needed support services to regular and special education students; instituted multiple ways to involve parents and other community members in the decisions regarding their children’s education; and garnered the support of community members in ensuring the growth and stability of the school.

The school has not fully implemented other aspects of its design, such as using a theme-based instructional approach. The school did establish monthly themes as part of its character education program in its fifth year. The school has also not been able to establish relationships or venues for students to access local resources by which to further develop their skills and knowledge. In addition, although teachers and staff have access to professional development activities, there is currently not a plan to ensure the professional development enhances teachers’ instructional skill and expertise. Finally, the school has been unable to provide new technologies for student use in learning. The school intends to address this issue in the new building since it was designed to support state-of-the-art technology as part of the educational program.

The school’s Board clearly articulated the school’s mission as evidenced by reports generated over the term of the charter and in observations and interviews at the renewal visit.

<p>Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Governance (Board of Trustees & School Leadership)</p>	<p>2C.1</p> <p>The Board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes and has abided by them.</p> <p>A school that meets this benchmark has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and a code of ethics) and has consistently abided by them through the term of the school’s charter. Where possible, the Board has avoided creating conflicts-of-interest. The school Board has also maintained and abided by the corporation’s by-laws. In addition, a Board meeting this benchmark will have actively sought information from the staff, parents, community and student populations. The system for hearing such views and concerns will have been consistently implemented so that all views and concerns were appropriately heard and acted upon. The Board will have published, reviewed and communicated policies annually and currently maintains an up-to-date policy manual.</p>
	<p>2C.2</p> <p>The Board and school leadership clearly articulate the school’s mission and design and work to implement it effectively.</p> <p>To fully meet this benchmark, school leaders and Board members should be able to evidence a strong understanding of the school design and demonstrate that they have referred to it regularly in managing and governing the school. Moreover, the Board and the school’s administration should have deployed resources effectively to further the academic and organizational success of the school. At the Board level, the Board should have a process for selecting both Board members and the school leader or school leadership team that is timely and effective and such process should result in a stable and effective Board and leadership team. The Board should also have evaluated school leadership on an annual basis. Such evaluation should be based on clearly defined goals and measurements. The school Board and school leadership should be able to demonstrate that they are facile with the process.</p>

The Board of Trustees of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons takes the responsibilities of governing a charter school seriously, as demonstrated by the commitment of time and effort of its nine members. Five of the nine Trustees have served since the founding of the school, while eight of the nine have served, at least, three years. The Board meets regularly, and speaks with a unified voice regarding the mission and needs of the school. The school’s Executive Director and Principal attend most meetings, and the Principal regularly reports on student performance. The Board functions through its standing committees, *i.e.* Personnel and Education Program, and when needed the Nominating, Building, and Community Advisory committees. The Board does not have a standing or ad hoc Finance or Audit committee, and justifies such by addressing financial issues as a body of the whole.

The Board’s commitment and dedication, as well as its ability to garner the support of the school’s community, are clearly reflected in the completion of the school’s new facility. The Board, and the school’s Executive Director, directed their energies to fundraising and construction of the building to accommodate the growing school population and their

educational needs. In fact, individual Trustees donated time and labor to complete various projects within their areas of expertise in the new school. The actual activities related to fundraising were the domain of the CDCH Foundation, the school's 501(c)(3) affiliate organization.

The CDCH Board of Trustees has, over the course of the school's initial charter, obtained feedback from the school community, *i.e.* parents, teachers and students, regarding the school and its educational program. The Board has used a variety of methods to obtain the feedback, such as annual surveys, monthly newsletters, parent representation on the Board, and other methods of communication. The Board has also disseminated school policies and procedures through staff and parent manuals, although at the time of the renewal visit the Board's code of ethics policy was not available to staff in the form of a current manual. The Board had reaffirmed the code of ethics in July, and it was available in the prior year's staff manual. In addition, Board minutes indicated that the Board of Trustees not only adopted a conflict of interest policy, but abided by its provisions. The minutes included examples of Trustees recusing themselves when appropriate from discussions and votes on specific issues.

CDCH's Board of Trustees has engaged the services of a consultant to support the work of the Board and the school since its inception. The consultant helped craft the original application to obtain a charter, played a primary role in developing the school's Accountability Plan and subsequent accountability plan progress reports, and keeps the Board apprised of due dates for critical reports and works in their development. Based on an interview with the Board during the renewal visit, although the Board of Trustees believes it is capable of operating without a consultant, the members believe they work better with a consultant and, at this point, plan to continue utilizing the same or another consultant's services.

The Board of Trustees recently completed the design and development of its assessment protocol for the evaluation of the school's Principal and its Executive Director. The assessments will be instituted during the 2004-05 school year.

<p>Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>2D</p> <p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school as evidenced by survey results as well as the volume of parents who choose the school to provide education for their children and the degree to which parents persist with that choice over the child’s academic career.</p> <p>The school that satisfies this benchmark will be able to show through generally accepted surveying standards and practices that a large majority of all parents with students enrolled at the school are satisfied with the school. As only a well-informed parent can be meaningfully satisfied, the school must be able to show that it has provided to parents detailed and accurate information about their child’s performance as well as the performance of the school as a whole. The school should also be able to provide data on application lottery, enrollment and persistence rates to demonstrate that large numbers of parents seek entrance to the school, and far more importantly, keep their children enrolled year-to-year. Ideal survey data will also provide an explanation for the persistence rate experienced by the school.</p>
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The Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School has strong support from the parents/guardians of its students. Based on parent interviews, parents are comfortable at the school and very familiar with school operation and staff. Communication occurs both formally and informally through a variety of avenues, such as daily or weekly notes from the classroom teacher (frequency depends on the student’s grade level, extent of disability, and/or specific issues to be addressed), classroom weekly review letters to parents, monthly school newsletters, classroom team meetings and Parent Nights. Parents receive quarterly progress reports that include both narrative summaries of progress in achieving the goals of the Student-Centered Plan (SCP)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) and grades. In addition, the school has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Board of Trustees includes a parent representative.

CDCH includes several measures of parent satisfaction in its accountability plan: (1) enrollment levels will be within 85 percent of the yearly proposed school enrollment; (2) attendance rates reported in average percentage of enrolled students present will be made available to the public for each academic year, and student attendance rates will be at 90 percent or higher; and (3) the number of returning students will be within 85 percent of the previous year’s final register – excluding those that have moved or those who have developed medical conditions which preclude their attendance and/or those whose CSEs have recommended a more restrictive setting.

The school’s enrollment for the 2004-05 school year surpasses the goal of 85 percent of proposed enrollment for the year. In fact, the enrollment level for 2004-05 is 117 percent of the proposed enrollment for the current school year. CDCH has achieved this goal in each year of its initial charter. The school also has met its Accountability Plan goal for attendance in each year of the charter by reaching the 90 percent or higher mark. In the most recently completed school year, 2003-04, the attendance rate was 92 percent. The school has also consistently met its goal of having at least 85 percent of its students return each year. As of September 2004, 97 percent of the previous year’s students returned to CDCH. Each of these measurements reflects a high level of parent satisfaction with the school.

Finally, the school conducts an annual survey of parent satisfaction. Although, typically, one-third of the school's parents return the survey, the results indicate that parents consider the school's instructional program, communication practices, level and quality of parent involvement, and level of interest of field trips highly satisfactory, almost excellent, using a three-point scale (actual responses ranged from 2.4 to 2.6).

When interviewed, parents expressed their appreciation of the school and its staff, as well as their sentiments regarding the need for students to achieve the state standards. Most parents liked the fact that CDCH was compared with other schools, and that that information was readily available to them. Most parents also thought it important that their child(ren) learned how to take tests so they could be more successfully. However, a small fraction of parents did not think it important for their child(ren) to take or pass state assessments, since they did not think the assessment benefited their child(ren). This sentiment was held by a very limited number of parents of students with disabilities.

<p>Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>2E</p> <p>The school has substantially complied with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p>A school that meets this benchmark will have compiled a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable laws and regulations. In addition, at the time of renewal, the school will be in substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable laws and regulations. Such school will have maintained and have had in place effective systems and controls for ensuring that legal and charter requirements were and are met. A school should also be able to demonstrate that the school has an active and ongoing relationship with independent legal counsel that reviews relevant policies, documents, and incidents and makes recommendations as needed.</p>
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The Institute reviewed steps the school took in response to the New York State Education Department's Third Year Monitor Report. The school was either in compliance or was in the process of coming into compliance for almost all areas examined by the State Education Department including teacher certification, obtaining IEPs for all students and having an adequate Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (SAVE) emergency plan. The provision of alternative instruction for suspended students appears to be the one exception. We also note that the State Education Department has indicated that as of January 28, 2005, the school was only in partial compliance with SAVE in that the school safety plan submitted pursuant to Education Law section 2801-a was not complete.

The school has processes and procedures in place to ensure it provides services for students with disabilities as required under the law. The school has worked to improve its relationships with districts from which it draws special education students and has greatly reduced problems with Committees on Special Education in students' home districts.

The school has an active and ongoing relationship with independent counsel to assist the Board in legal matters.

The school has presented a mixed record of submitting information to the Institute in a timely manner as provided for in the school's charter. While the school's record in this regard has improved over time, certain items are still unacceptably late.

The good compliance record of the school contained a few notable exceptions as follows. In the second year of its charter, the school did not fulfill an additional assurance to enroll a minimum of 50 students. In one instance, the school Board did not hold Board member elections on the date specified in the by-laws, but did otherwise properly re-elect its members. The school's adherence to all provisions of the Open Meetings Law and the Freedom of Information Law could be improved in certain respects.

Overall, the school's policies and procedures, other internal controls, Board minutes and other documentation, as well as responses to interview questions by Board members and school personnel demonstrate the school's general and substantial compliance with the Charter Schools Act, applicable provisions of the New York Education Law and other New York law, applicable federal law (e.g., I.D.E.A., F.E.R.P.A.), its bylaws and the provisions of its charter.

Renewal Question 3

Is the School Fiscally Sound?

Benchmark 3A
Board Oversight

3A **The Board has provided effective financial oversight, including having made financial decisions that furthered the school’s mission, program and goals.**

The Board has provided adequate oversight and has made decisions that have furthered the school’s program and goals. The Board has been actively involved in establishing and approving a staff salary scale and devoted significant time and energy to the school’s new facility. The new facility was built and is owned by the CDCH Foundation for Special Children, a related organization. It was through the efforts of the Board, the foundation and key administrators that the school was successful in securing the necessary land and financing and ultimately completing the construction of the facility. While some work remains to be done, the school was ready and opened on time for the 2004-2005 school year.

A review of Board minutes indicates numerous in-depth discussions of facility issues and less frequent discussions of budget and fiscal issues. There are no regular reports prepared for presentation to the Board, although there is an annual fiscal report, typically done in June. There is an annual presentation of the audited financial statements to the Board; although there is no evidence that the Board meets with the independent auditor to discuss the annual audit report.

The Board does not have an audit or finance committee and as a result acts as a full Board on those issues. Given the self-described small size of the Board, such additional committees are not deemed necessary or desirable by the Board’s treasurer. Such committees are not required by statute and a case can be made that a Board can be operated more efficiently without a standing committee structure. However, all members of the Board should be equally aware of the problems and opportunities facing the school.

The school’s budget is reviewed and approved by the Board each year. The Board also reviews and approves any major expenditure as well as salary increases. The business manager and/or financial manager attend the Board meetings, which are typically held monthly.

While the structure in place has been effective for the initial charter period, the establishment of an audit committee would strengthen the Board’s oversight. The Charities Bureau of the New York State Attorney General’s Office describes the establishment of an audit committee as crucial to the governance of a not-for-profit organization. The role of such committee should be clearly defined when established. In organizations with small Boards, the entire Board may serve the function of the audit committee. For larger organizations, it is more appropriate to create a separate audit committee that can devote its attention to this area.

<p>Benchmark 3B</p> <p>Budgeting and Long Range Planning</p>	<p>3B</p> <p>The school has operated pursuant to a long-range financial plan. The school has created realistic budgets that are monitored and adjusted when appropriate. Actual expenses have been equal to or less than actual revenue with no material exceptions.</p>
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The school has operated pursuant to long-range plans beginning with the five-year plan included as part of its charter application. Budgets have provided a realistic framework for the school’s spending activities and monitoring procedures were generally in place. Each month, the financial statements are reviewed by the Business Manager and the Financial Manager in order to assess cash flow and adequacy to meet expenses. Billings are submitted to the districts on a timely basis. Accounts receivable are continually monitored to ensure positive cash flow.

Typically, the school draws students from eight different school districts with a wide range of per-pupil aid. As a result, during the budget development process the school must pay particular attention to the residence of each anticipated student. The level of services required for each student is also a complicating factor due to the large number of special education students at the school and the difficulty in estimating the requirements for new students that will attend.

There is some evidence that the school has conservatively developed its budgets. For example, the estimated revenues for the year ended June 30, 2004 budget were \$1,672,325, while actual revenue totaled \$1,701,743. However, the total of actual expenses has exceeded actual revenues in two of four years resulting in an accumulated unrestricted net asset deficiency of \$42,901. This represents about two percent of the school’s 2004-05 budget.

A factor contributing to the net asset deficiency may be that the school does not have a formal process for adjusting the budget when it is needed. As a result, the budget is not being used as a tool to constrain spending when actual results are projected to differ from the adopted budget. For example, when comparing the FY 2002-03 budget to actual results by line-item, there were numerous unfavorable variances at year end. A process by which material budget adjustments could be made, as needed, would improve the effectiveness of the Board’s monitoring. At the Board’s discretion, authority for budgetary transfers that have a neutral impact on the budget could be delegated to the school leader with a report to the Board. However, when a material revenue shortfall or significant overspending of funds is anticipated, the Board’s approval of a revised budget is a prudent approach to meet its fiduciary responsibility.

<p>Benchmark 3C</p> <p>Internal Controls</p>	<p>3C</p> <p>The school has maintained appropriate internal controls and procedures. Transactions have been accurately recorded and appropriately documented in accordance with management’s direction and laws, regulations, grants and contracts. Assets have been and are safeguarded. Any deficiencies or audit findings have been corrected in a timely manner.</p>
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Based on interviews with staff and review of documentation, the school has established processes and controls related to payroll, procurement and safeguarding of assets. The school has established written fiscal policies and procedures. These policies continue to be reviewed and are subject to modification. Current policies and procedures cover cash receipts, cash disbursements, bank reconciliations, payroll, purchasing, accounts payable, and accounts receivable. Additional systems and controls will need to be further developed as the school matures. For example, given the small size of the school and small number of administrative staff, optimal segregation of duties may not be achieved in some instances and therefore the school needs to establish and maintain compensating controls. Also, although the school has a system to record fixed assets, it has not yet established procedures for performing periodic physical inventories. Lastly a formal budget policy adopted by the Board would enhance overall accountability. Typical items included in such a policy are the identification of who is responsible for its preparation, discussion of any long-range planning that would be included, adoption of a budget calendar, formally establishing a general format for presentation of the budget, clarification of budget adoption, revision and transfer procedures.

The school has not acquired fidelity bonding for any of its employees nor has it purchased insurance coverage for employee theft or dishonesty. Either of these approaches would be a prudent way to reduce risk to the school and are considered best practices.

The school’s independent certified public accountant (CPA) has not issued written management letters in conjunction with the annual financial statement audit of the school. Since the school has not had material deficiencies and/or reportable conditions, recommendations from its CPA have been verbally communicated. All recommendations have been implemented.

Benchmark 3D	3D	The school has complied with financial reporting requirements. The school has provided the State University Board of Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports on time, and such reports have been complete and have followed generally accepted accounting principles.
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Except as noted below, the school has met its financial reporting requirements. The annual financial statements, budget, and quarterly financial reports were generally filed early or on time. For the first three years of its charter the school filed its annual audit by August 1st, nearly three months before the due date. Such a record is exemplary and should be the envy of charter schools everywhere.

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Type of Auditor Opinion	Unqualified ¹³	Unqualified	Unqualified	Due and Rec. 11/1/04
Conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conducted in accordance with <i>Government Auditing Standards</i> ?	No	No	No	Yes
Expenses reported by function? (Program and Supporting)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Noncompliance	See note below			None reported
Reportable conditions ¹⁴				None reported
Material Weakness(es) ¹⁵				None reported

Please note: audits done in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* include separate reports on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance. The school's audits did not include these reports and as a result, there were no reports on noncompliance, reportable conditions or material weaknesses.

The school's failure to have its audits completed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* was the result of confusion over the requirements in the charter. Once notified, the school took the necessary steps to obtain a proper audit for the year ended June 30, 2004.

¹³ An unqualified auditor's opinion of the financial statements indicates that, in the auditor's opinion, the school's financial statements and notes fairly represent, in all material respects, the financial position, changes in net assets and its cash flows in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

¹⁴ Reportable conditions relate to significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal control over financial reporting.

¹⁵ A material weakness is a condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that material misstatements to the financial statements may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of their assigned functions.

<p>Benchmark 3E</p> <p>Financial Condition</p>	<p>3E</p> <p>The school has maintained adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations and has monitored and successfully managed cash flow. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</p>
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The school completed the year in weak but stable financial condition. The school is solvent and has maintained adequate cash flow. The school had a positive change in unrestricted net assets of \$25,859 and finished with a net asset deficiency of \$42,760. The school also has access to an unsecured line of credit from a charitable foundation in the amount of \$300,000, which enables it to cover periods of time when payments are delayed. The amount outstanding on the line of credit was \$141,599 as of June 30, 2004, a decrease of \$40,000 from the prior year.

The school and the CDCH Foundation for Special Children have combined to successfully raise a significant amount of funds for school operations. Private grants and donations to the school have been steady and averaged about \$115,000 per year in its first three years representing between 21 percent of total expenses in 2001 and declining to seven percent in 2003. During 2004, the school received unrestricted private grants and contributions totaling \$52,184 and an additional \$180,000 that was temporarily restricted. The remaining amount temporarily restricted is \$150,000.

Renewal Question 4

Should the School’s Charter Be Renewed, What Are Its Plans for the Term of a Future Charter?

<p>Benchmark 4A</p> <p>Curricular & Assessment Plans</p>	<p>4A</p> <p>The school’s curriculum and assessment plans for the term of a future charter are reasonable, feasible, and achievable and are likely to improve student learning and achievement.</p> <p>Schools that plan to retain or augment curricular and assessment designs presented in the original charter application have provided evidence that the implementation of that design has resulted in academic success during the term of the existing charter.</p> <p>Schools that propose a material redesign to the curriculum and assessment plans for the term of a new charter have clearly articulated the new design, provided research and evidence that the proposed new design will result in the increased academic performance of children, and a plan and timeline outlining the implementation of the new curricular design. These plans are likely to improve student learning and achievement and are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p> <p>Schools that seek to add grade levels not included in the approval of the original charter have presented an outline of the curriculum and specific assessment plans for the term of a future charter. These plans are likely to improve student learning and achievement and are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p>
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If the charter for the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School is renewed, the currently Kindergarten through seventh grade school of 93 students will grow to become a Kindergarten through eighth grade school of 135 students. The elementary division will consist of grades Kindergarten through six, while the middle school will include grades seven and eight. The school will continue to build on its inclusionary model of regular and special education students with two certified teachers in each classroom. The curriculum will be further enhanced based on the state’s core curriculum and the “Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs.” When initially chartered, CDCH submitted a curriculum for Kindergarten through eighth grades which was approved by both the University Trustees and the Board of Regents. The school will continue to use that as its frame for curriculum development.

If its charter is renewed, CDCH will continue to use the Student-Centered Plan (SCP) as a guide to individualize instruction and gauge student progress. However, the SCP will be refined to more clearly reflect a performance-based system of evaluation linked to goals and objectives derived from state performance standards. The school will develop a comprehensive professional development plan to ensure that instructional staff is knowledgeable in the most effective pedagogical methods to engage students and improve student learning. As part of the professional development, the school will also ensure that teachers receive the detailed instructional guidance necessary to hone their skills.

The school will use the CTBS-Terra Nova for its value-added assessment in Kindergarten through fourth grades, along with the state’s Alternative Assessment for students with

disabilities. The school will participate in all state assessments, which will cover grades three through eight beginning in 2006. In addition, the school intends to continue to build its portfolio system for collecting and reviewing student work.

<p>Benchmark 4B Accountability Plan</p>	<p>4B</p> <p>The school has provided a draft Accountability Plan that defines the school’s measurable goals for the term of a future charter.</p> <p>The school’s proposed Accountability Plan follows the guidelines set forth by the Institute and presents an accountability system that is reasonable, feasible, and achievable.</p>
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The school has submitted a draft Accountability Plan that is largely in line with the demands of the Institute’s Accountability Plan guidelines. The Institute will, based upon the final renewal recommendation and vote of the State University Trustees, work with the Child Development Center of the Hamptons Charter School to finalize the school’s Accountability Plan goals and measures and will codify it in any final renewal charter document.

Although the Accountability Plan as submitted in the renewal application is generally reasonable and feasible, certain additional measures may be required in order to take account of changes in the New York State’s testing regimen or revisions to the Institute’s Accountability Plan Guidelines. In such cases, these additional measures will be added either prior to the execution of a new proposed renewal charter or thereafter.

<p>Benchmark 4C School Calendar & Enrollment</p>	<p>4C</p> <p>The school has provided a sample school calendar that includes the number of days and proposed daily hours of instruction. Additionally, the school has provided an enrollment plan outlining the grades and growth patterns it anticipates during the term of a future charter.</p> <p>The plans are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p>
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The school has submitted future enrollment plans for term of a future five-year charter. The school plans to grow to a maximum enrollment of 135 students in grades Kindergarten through eight in the 2006-07 school year and to maintain that grade structure and enrollment levels through the remaining years of a five-year charter (2009-10).

Subject to the Institute’s final recommendation and the State University of Trustee’s vote as to grade levels to be served and length of the renewal charter, the school’s plans are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

<p>Benchmark 4D Fiscal & Facility Plans</p>	<p>4D</p> <p>The school has provided a reasonable and appropriate five-year fiscal plan for the term of a future charter.</p> <p>The school has provided a fiscal plan that includes a discussion of how future enrollment and facility plans are supported and/or impacted by the school’s fiscal plan for the term of its next charter. In addition, fiscal plans provided for a future charter term reflect sound use of financial resources that support academic program needs.</p>
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Long-range fiscal projections are more susceptible to error than those for a single year. Such projections are subject to revision due to changes in local conditions, objectives, and laws. The school will be required to develop and adopt annual budgets based on known per pupil amounts. As such, the school Board has budgeted conservatively and assumed zero percent increases in its per-pupil funding. The school’s fiscal plan projects an increasingly strong financial position over the proposed renewal charter period.

The school’s current enrollment is 93 which is within the enrollment collar provided in its charter (approved enrollment is 85 students). By enrolling more students than approved, the school has a cushion against student attrition. The school projects that paid enrollment will equal its proposed enrollment in its fiscal plan. If the school continues its policy of overenrolled students at the start of the year to allow for attrition, this approach is reasonable. However, by the third year of the fiscal plan, the school is projecting nine classes of 15 students each, which does not allow cushion for additional students.

Facility lease costs to be absorbed by the school are projected to be approximately \$125,000 per year and are expected to increase annually. The expected increase will hinge on additional costs needed to complete the facilities. The lease expenses represent a \$1,136 per student or six percent of operating expenses in 2005-06.