



Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York

ROCHESTER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
THIRD YEAR INSPECTION REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

The third year inspection is part of a comprehensive accountability system for New York State charter schools sponsored by the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute. The visit during the school's third year of operation provides an independent assessment of the school's progress toward its academic and organizational goals as defined in its accountability plan.

The third year inspection complements the yearly reviews conducted by CSI staff and corroborates the school's annual reports of progress toward the targets it defined in its accountability plan. The visit provides an independent assessment of the school's progress and provides recommendations to the school as it prepares to apply for charter renewal in its fifth year of operation. The recommendations represent the experienced opinions of the inspection team and are intended to offer the school guidance for enhancing the evidence base for its renewal application.

II. CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

The third year inspection to Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School was conducted on March 5-6, 2003 by an independent team of experienced educators from SchoolWorks, Beverly, MA.

- Dr. Karen Laba, Project Manager, SchoolWorks: former middle and high school science teacher, preservice science teacher educator and supervisor, and consultant in accountability system design and implementation for SchoolWorks.
- William Wibel, Consultant, SchoolWorks: retired principal in K-12 settings currently a Visiting Practitioner at the Principals' Center, Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Harrington Gibson, Consultant, SchoolWorks: former fourth grade classroom teacher in Chicago; currently a doctoral student at Harvard Graduate School of Education in Learning and Teaching; consultant with Boston Public Schools.
- Dr. Mary Flamer, Consultant; SchoolWorks: program coordinator of Title I for the New Jersey Department of Education; consultant with New Jersey public schools.

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

academic and organizational goals. The team offered a brief oral summary of its findings and recommendations to school leaders and invited them to ask for clarification as needed.

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

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

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

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

III. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School is in its third year of operation, opening on September 5, 2000 with 325 kindergarten through eighth grade students in its temporary location at 82 St. Paul Street in Rochester, NY. The school is currently serving 450 students. RLACS plans to increase its student population to 580 students at the start of the 2003-2004 school year. The school occupies a renovated office building located in downtown Rochester. Its unique setting offers challenges such as parking; however, at the time of the inspection the school was celebrating the announcement of the almost-completed negotiations for a new site.

The school is governed by an active board who seek to prepare future leaders for the Rochester community. To manage the academic program and monitor student achievement, the school entered into an agreement with its educational provider, National Heritage Academies. National Heritage Academies is based in Michigan and implements an educational program which seeks to help children obtain the essential knowledge, skills and concepts to be academically successful.

Eighteen classroom teachers, two special education teachers, a social worker, behavioral specialist, lead secretary, receptionist, nurse and speech pathologist serve the 450 students at RLACS. Additional staff members include a principal, assistant principal, 11 paraprofessionals,

a physical education, music, art and library teacher. Ten out of the 18 teachers are completing their first year at RLACS.

The academic program includes the core subject areas of reading/ELA, mathematics, science and social studies. Students also receive instruction in special subjects including art, music, physical education and library. The school's literacy program is *Collection of Young Scholars* distributed by Open Court Publishing Company. *Saxon Math* serves as the core resource for mathematics. The science and social studies curriculum are based on New York State Learning Standards and Core Curriculum and follow the Hirsh *Core Knowledge* Sequence. The school is currently working with NHA to ensure that the content of the curriculum is consistent with the sequence used in the Rochester City School District.

PART I: SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

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

- 1. Students at Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School rank below the national norm on the spring Metropolitan Achievement Test 8 (MAT8) in both reading and mathematics.**

TABLE 1: MAT8 Total Language (NCE*)
Continuing students only (cohort)

Grade in 2000	N	Spring 2001	Spring 2002
1	37	39.7	42.1
2	32	30.9	49.4
3	28	42.8	47.3
4	27	44.9	39.9
5	16	40.5	40.2
6	19	41.9	45.0
7	15	43.1	39.1

In language, RLA students generally rank just below the 50th NCE national mean. The group of students entering at grade six when the school opened showed the greatest difference between their performance and the national average on the most recent test.

TABLE 2: MAT 8 Total Math (NCE)
Continuing students only (cohort)

Grade in 2000	N	Spring 2001	Spring 2002
1	37	34.8	39.5
2	32	28.3	39.4
3	28	30.6	42.9
4	27	39.3	41.0
5	16	41.9	43.8
6	19	40.0	38.9
7	15	38.5	34.0

Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School students are farther below the national norm in mathematics as measured by MAT 8. Over both administrations of the test, students rank between 7 and 21 NCEs below the mean. Judging from these results, the

* Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is a standard score (a score that is expressed as a deviation from a population mean) with the lowest score being 1, the highest being 99 and the mean (arithmetical average) of 50. NCE's may be added, subtracted and averaged and may be used to represent how a student or group of students performed in comparison to the mean. For example, a drop in scores over time means the students are being passed by their peers nationwide and an increase in scores over time means that students are passing their peers nationwide.

students at RLACS require some remediation to compare with the national averages, with the greatest weaknesses in mathematics.

2. **Performance among RLA students on the state assessments demonstrates less than adequate achievement of the state standards. RLACS eighth graders in 2002 reveal dramatically low achievement on the NYS Language Arts measure.**

**TABLE 3: RLACS NYS English Language Arts Assessment
(Percent of students at each performance level)**

	Grade 4 (N=15)	Grade 8 (N = 9)
Level 4	0%	0%
Level 3	27.3%	4.2%
Level 2	52.3%	79.2%
Level 1	20.5%	16.7%

On the New York State English Language Arts assessment, only 27.3% of the RLA fourth graders reached proficiency. For eighth graders, only 4.2% achieved proficiency (Level 3 or 4) for the '02 test.

In comparison with the performance of students in the Rochester City School District, Rochester Leadership Academy students lag far behind both city and state proficiency percentages.

TABLE 4: Grade 4 NYS English Language Arts (2001)

2001	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
RLACS	24%	56%	20%	0%
Rochester City	15%	43%	35%	7%
State	10%	30%	43%	17%

TABLE 5: Grade 4 NYS Mathematics (2001)

2001	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
RLACS	25%	48%	25%	2%
Rochester City	15%	37%	39%	9%
State	9%	22%	43%	27%

Across the Rochester City Schools, approximately double the number of fourth graders reached proficiency on the 2001 state ELA test (the most recent administration available for comparison) than did RLACS fourth graders. The same comparison holds true for the mathematics test. A conclusion from these results is that students at RLACS are well below expected targets in both English Language Arts and mathematics and performing well below their district and state peers.

Comparison of the results of RLACS eighth graders with the city schools would be invalid because of the small number of RLACS students tested in 2001 (9). Comparison in future years will be more informative.

- 3. On the RLACS standardized assessments in science and social studies (MAT 8), students rank closer to the national mean than in language and mathematics.**

TABLE 5: MAT 8 Science, 2001 and 2002, NCE rank

Grade	Science			
	N	Spring 01	N	Spring 02
1	46	NA	45	43.6
2	44	37.1	47	38.1
3	41	44.9	42	40.1
4	44	43.3	40	45.7
5	22	40.2	37	40.5
6	23	37.6	22	39.5
7	20	44.1	23	40.2
8	9	49.1	24	39.4

On the MAT 8 Science assessment, no student group is more than 12 NCEs below the national mean at Rochester Leadership Academy.

TABLE 6: MAT 8 Social Studies, 2001 and 2002, NCE rank

Grade	Social Studies			
	N	Spring 01	N	Spring 02
1	46	NA	45	37.6
2	44	42.3	47	40.4
3	41	42.5	42	42.4
4	44	44.8	40	47.9
5	22	43.8	37	41.8
6	23	45.3	22	38.1
7	20	40.9	23	43.2
8	9	46.0	24	41.8

Social studies achievement among RLACS students is similar to their science rank, with no student group falling farther than 13 NCEs below the national mean on the latest assessment. Most student groups are within 10 NCEs of the mean.

- 4. Seventy-three percent of students at RLACS received an ‘acceptable’ score of 2 or 3 on the internal writing assessment administered by the school in 2002.**

The school administers its own internal writing assessment to students in grades 3, 5 and 7. Writing products are scored using a locally developed rubric, with a score of 2 indicating ‘acceptable.’ Writing scores for RLACS students who completed the assessment in spring 2002 for grades 3, 5, and 7 are shown in the table.

TABLE 7: RLACS Writing Assessment, Grades 3, 5, 7 Combined

Year	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1	Score 0
2000-2001	1 (1%)	26 (44%)	28 (48%)	3 (5%)
2001-2002	28 (30%)	40 (43%)	25 (26%)	0

Rochester Leadership Academy scores its internal writing assessment using a clearly constructed rubric detailing core skill areas. Seventy-three percent of RLACS students received a score of 2 or 3, whereas 26% of students received a score of 1. Overall, a majority of students at RLACS are demonstrating proficient writing skills as indicated by this internal measure.

QUESTION 2: What progress have students made over time in attaining expected skills and knowledge?

1. On the Metropolitan Achievement Test, continuing students at RLA in the earlier grades tend to show improvement in rank on both English Language Arts and mathematics tests, while students in the upper grades show declines.

TABLE 8: MAT 8 English Language Arts, True Cohort (Continuing Students) NCE

Grade in 2000	N	Spring 2001	Spring 2002	Across Year Change
1	37	39.7	42.1	+2.4
2	32	30.9	49.4	+18.5
3	28	42.8	47.3	+4.5
4	27	44.9	39.9	-5.0
5	16	40.5	40.2	-0.3
6	19	41.9	45.0	-3.1
7	15	43.1	39.1	-4.0

TABLE 9: MAT 8 Mathematics, True Cohort (Continuing Students) NCE

Grade in 2000	N	Spring 2001	Spring 2002	Across Year Change
1	37	34.8	39.5	+5.0
2	32	28.3	39.4	+11.1
3	28	30.6	42.9	+12.3
4	27	39.3	41.0	+1.7
5	16	41.9	43.8	+1.9
6	19	40.0	38.9	-1.1
7	15	38.5	34.0	-4.5

The charts reporting MAT8 results in question 1 represent the changes across one year for students continuing at RLACS. Four out of seven classes of students have declined from 2001-2002 in the reading/language arts ranking and two out of seven classes of students showed declines on the mathematics battery of tests. Subgroups of students, particularly in the lower elementary grades (1-3) show improvement on this measure, while declines appear strongest in the upper grades (4-8). Strong generalizations cannot be made due to the limitation of one year of data.

- 2. Successive groups of fourth grade students at Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School show modest improvements in both the English Language Arts and the math New York State assessments. In contrast, the most recent eighth grade group fell far below their predecessor's achievement on this standardized measure.**

Table 10: Rochester Leadership Academy NYS Scores –English Language Arts

	2001	2002	2001	2002
	Grade 4 (n=15)	Grade 4 (n = 40)	Grade 8 (n = 9)	Grade 8 (n = 24)
Level 4	0%	0%	0%	0%
Level 3	20%	27.3%	13%	4.2%
Level 2	56%	52.3%	63%	79.2%
Level 1	24%	20.5%	25%	16.7%

Table 11: Rochester Leadership Academy NYS Scores –Mathematics

	2001	2002	2001	2002
	Grade 4 (n=15)	Grade 4 (n = 40)	Grade 8 (n = 9)	Grade 8 (n = 24)
Level 4	2%	2.5%	0%	0%
Level 3	25%	32.5%	33%	4.5%
Level 2	48%	50.0%	22%	31.8%
Level 1	25%	15.0%	44%	63.6%

The fourth grade students in the most recent tested group at Rochester Leadership Academy show stronger performance in English/Language Arts and Mathematics on the New York state assessments than the group tested in 2001. In English/Language Arts, fewer students scored at levels 1 and 2, while a greater percentage reached 'proficiency' or level 3. No students in either group reached level 4. In mathematics, a smaller percentage of the fourth grade students at RLACS in 2002 were performing at level 1 and a higher percentage scored at levels 2 and 3.

The 2002 group of eighth grade students showed weaker performance in both English/Language Arts and mathematics on the New York State assessments. In English/Language Arts, the eighth grade group showed a reduction in the percentage of students performing at the lowest level than in the preceding class of eighth graders – a positive change – but the group also showed a significantly lower percentage reaching level 3, the lowest level considered 'proficient.' In mathematics, the 2002 eighth grade group of RLACS students show a 50% increase in the percentage of students at the lowest performance category and a dramatic decrease in the percentage reaching proficiency. In 2000-2001 33% of the eighth grade group performed at level 3, compared to 4.5% in 2001-2002. Although caution is urged when making generalizations with one year's data and with such small samples, the current trend shows that students in the current fifth grade (grade 4 in 2002) are moving toward higher rates of proficiency, while students entering eighth grade are less proficient in each successive year.

3. Students at Rochester Leadership Academy show progress in their ability to demonstrate proficiency in writing skills on the school's internal assessment.

During its first year, Rochester Leadership Academy reported that on the 2000-2001 internal writing assessment, 47% of students in grades 3, 5 and 7 performed at level 2 or 3 and 57% received a score of 1 or 0. During the 2001-2002 administration of the internal writing assessment, 73% of students received a score of 2 or 3 indicating a 26% increase for students demonstrating proficiency on this internal measure between the first and second administration.

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

1. National Heritage Academy provides training and support to the faculty in implementing a comprehensive curriculum while monitoring student performance to provide academic support in an effort to increase student achievement.

The inspection team found that the curriculum as designed provides opportunities for differentiating instruction by incorporating ongoing assessments to group students based on their skill level. The RLACS school board reports a strong commitment from National Heritage to provide a curriculum that is flexible in meeting the needs of diverse students. The programs used by NHA include *Saxon Math*, *Daily Oral Language and Collections for Young Scholars*, distributed by Open Court Publishing Company. In addition, the board has access to data generated by NHA which allows the board and the principal to make instructional decisions to adapt grouping to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, the board stated that the principal put in place an enrichment program to further advance student achievement in the area of mathematics. An additional full-time teacher has been hired to monitor and implement the enrichment program offered in mathematics.

Teachers report participating in an in-service conducted by NHA to provide assistance in implementing the curriculum and monitoring student performance. As part of their training, teachers are required to follow a detailed month-by-month pacing chart, as well as incorporating review units to enhance student understanding. Teachers also report receiving ongoing support throughout the year from on-site visits and electronic communication with NHA's academic liaisons.

A variety of internal assessments are also used to track student performance. Teachers explained that they use tests from the curriculum, prior knowledge assessments, teacher-made tests, rubrics, and oral assessments to monitor student performance and to differentiate instruction. RLACS teachers used *Open Court*, a phonics-based reading curriculum, across all grades to group students based on their specific proficiencies.

2. Teachers at RLACS have clearly defined job responsibilities that are designed to meet the needs of diverse students and processes are in place to differentiate instruction. However, the team did not observe a wide range of instructional strategies that would indicate that the instructional methods as implemented would meet the needs of diverse students.

As defined in the original charter application, the job responsibilities created for teachers at RLACS include: 1) provide direct and indirect instruction; 2) engage in long- and short-term planning to address the individual needs of students; 3) evaluate student's progress; and 4) teach using a multi-model approach. In addition, the support services provided by National Heritage Academy allows for a partnership that provides assistance in monitoring student performance and providing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development that would help them differentiate instruction.

Teachers and parents report after-school tutoring as a strategy to meet the needs of struggling students. Parents report time being allocated at the end of the day for re-teaching and individualized instruction. Although parents and teachers confirm that tutoring is available to students, there is no formal system in place to measure the effectiveness of this support system.

Whole group instruction was provided for both remediation and enrichment classes as the inspectors observed in both corrective reading and math enrichment programs. Both programs required a pull-out process where students are selected for enrichment math and corrective reading based on prior assessments. The reading specialist describes the program as "a team effort" in which no student advances above the group. She commented, "If one person (in the class) cannot understand a concept, the group waits and cheers them on." The reading specialist accommodates special needs students by modifying written assignments. However, in the classes visited during the inspection, all students were expected to participate in the same oral work at the same pace.

The team observed more examples of differentiated instruction in the lower grades than in the upper grades. Teachers in grades 1-3 report receiving support in differentiating instruction from their paraprofessionals. Teachers explained that the paraprofessionals assist with discipline issues, help with transitional classroom tasks (cleaning tables, setting up work stations) and work with specific individuals or subgroups of students on assigned tasks. Teachers in the lower elementary grades spoke highly of the instructional support provided by paraprofessionals who help monitor student progress and assist in the flexible grouping of students. One teacher, while reflecting on the support she receives from her paraprofessional, stated, "I take pride in knowing where every student is and what they need to work on." The team observed examples of teachers and paraprofessionals in the early elementary grades working closely with small groups of students, monitoring student responses and questioning students to encourage them to elaborate on answers. The paraprofessionals assisted teachers when students were off task, which allowed the teacher to continue with the lesson, maximizing instructional time.

In contrast, in the upper elementary and middle grades, classes were all teacher-led whole group instruction on the day of the visit, with few examples of differentiation of lesson pacing or structure within the regular classroom. The pull-out sessions for

enrichment or remediation served as the primary strategy for addressing differing student learning needs.

3. Rochester Leadership Academy employs a variety of support services for its students, including a reading specialist, behavior specialist, speech pathologist, special education teacher, social worker and math enrichment instructor and academic liaisons from National Heritage Academy in an effort to meet the needs of diverse students.

The principal reported receiving feedback from teachers stating concern over the high percentage of students with comprehension and phonemic awareness issues in the upper elementary grades. As a result of this concern, Rochester Leadership Academy employs a reading specialist who is in charge of implementing the Corrective Reading Program. Teachers speak highly of the Corrective Reading Program that serves students in grades 4-8. The goal of the program is to provide small group instruction on reading skills for students identified using the *Open Court* phonics assessments. There are 20 sessions throughout the day serving small groups of 5-8 students. The reading specialist coordinates the sessions to ensure that students who are not making progress based upon the results of the *Open Court* assessments receive additional support. Teachers and the special education coordinator describe the program as successful despite initial concerns expressed by teachers over the pull-out process.

The principal and board report having to deal with discipline as a pressing issue faced by RLACS. To alleviate this problem, the principal hired a full-time behavioral specialist during the second year of the school's operation (2001-2002). The behavioral specialist describes her purpose as helping to foster a culture where students can learn and expand their potential. In order to achieve this goal, the behavioral specialist works with teachers on behavior management strategies, conducts student focus groups to address behavior issues that are hindering academic achievement, communicates the expectations for student behavior to parents and students, and conferences with the principal and teachers on concerns over specific students throughout the year. Teachers report receiving support and guidance from the behavior specialist as they enforce rules for behavior in their classrooms.

The special education teacher monitors the students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of students with identified learning gaps. The principal reports improvement in receiving IEPs from the Rochester School District allowing her to hire the necessary staff to work with students who require special education services. The school has a part-time special education resource room where students who require speech and occupational therapy receive services.

Teachers report receiving support from National Heritage Academy's various academic liaisons to aid in the successful implementation of the curriculum. NHA offers opportunities to staff to fly to Michigan for professional development and college level courses. Teachers new to the school receive training focused on an overview of the curriculum. Educational providers from *Open Court*, Collins writing and *Core Knowledge* offer professional development to orient teachers to the curriculum and assist in its implementation. The inspection team received indications of significant variations

in the levels of support teachers report. Veteran teachers indicated they have had numerous opportunities for NHA experience, but recently hired teachers reported fewer in-depth opportunities. As noted earlier in this report, there was a full-time staff member hired to provide some enrichment in the area of mathematics.

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

1. National Heritage Academy serves as the educational provider for Rochester Leadership Academy and assists in the implementation of legitimate recognized programs designed to provide children at all graded levels with “a strong, balanced core curriculum with an emphasis on the basic skills.” A moral focus is also integrated in the curriculum.

RLACS uses a comprehensive reading program distributed by the Open Court Publishing Company, *Collection of Young Scholars*. The program is designed to equip students with the skills that will allow them to: “1) read and respond to a variety of texts; 2) acquire strategies for accessing information and exploring concepts; 3) learn how to communicate effectively using both oral and written language; 4) learn how to work both independently and collaboratively; 5) learn how to give sustained effort to thinking and problem solving.” In English, students review grammar, punctuation and spelling, using *Daily Oral Language* exercises.

Saxon Math is used at RLACS where a focus of repetition over time is the philosophy behind the incremental development of topics students encounter throughout the year. The features of the *Saxon Math* program include: 1) Objectives, which are introduced through group activities; 2) The use of manipulatives and collaboration to engage students in discussions pertaining to math concepts; 3) The mastery of concepts through the use of hands-on experience and symbolic representation. The NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) reports that Saxon students meet their requirements for math skills in which students must demonstrate proficiency.

The science and social studies curriculum are based on New York Learning Standards and Core Curriculum and follow the *Core Knowledge* sequence. In addition to the core curriculum, RLACS offers music, art, library and gym throughout the week.

Resource binders are available to staff to enhance and plan for the core academic program. Some teachers report using the web-based “academy link” set up by NHA to view lesson plans and get ideas for lessons, and to use the academy’s resources. Teachers were generally satisfied with the resources provided to them to design effective lesson.

2. The team observed a range of quality of instructional practices in classrooms and varied levels of student engagement.

The inspection team visited nine classrooms at RLACS in which a variety of instructional practices were observed. Approximately half of the classes visited were described by team members as being engaging and challenging. For example, team members saw

teachers closely monitoring the responses of students, asking probing questions and making appropriate use of paraprofessionals to maximize the level of instruction provided to students. Lessons observed were both student- and teacher-directed. Panel members observed respectful teacher-student interactions with an emphasis on encouraging students to their full potential.

The other classes visited by the inspection team were less engaging and offered little variation in instructional style, resulting in low student engagement. Team members observed teachers who had a difficult time maintaining classroom order. There were examples of teachers pleading with students as evidenced by the statement, "Please do not get out of your seat." While some teachers were more adept at making the scripted curriculum engaging to students, there were instances where teachers would follow their scripted lesson with little attention to student behavior or attentiveness. It appeared to the observer that teachers placed more attention to getting through the lesson rather than on the students' ability to comprehend the concept.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

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

1. Students in the focus group were generally not satisfied with their experience at Rochester Leadership Academy although students in the early elementary grades expressed some level of satisfaction.

Among the participants in the focus group during the inspection, students in the early elementary grades expressed enthusiasm with selected school activities such as the manipulatives used in math and science experiments. Students in the upper grades were more vocal about their dissatisfaction with the school in comments such as, "I am not fond of this place" and "I don't like the work." The sentiments expressed by this subgroup indicated that they were dissatisfied primarily with the disorder present in classrooms. As some students reflected on the curriculum and instruction, they expressed little enthusiasm about learning and several commented they did not feel challenged by the content of the lessons.

2. The three parents in the focus group expressed satisfaction with the school. Although the school administers a parent survey, the inspection team was unable to conduct an independent review of the survey results.

The parents attending the focus group were enthusiastic in their support of the school. Parents felt that the school kept them well informed of the progress of their children. A strong appreciation was expressed for the e-mails, phone calls and reinforcement of morals. One parent appreciated the "Academy Link" which allows parents with web access from home to monitor student progress and e-mail their child's teachers. The focus group comments corroborate the school's Accountability Progress Report which indicates

strong satisfaction among the survey respondents for the quality of communication with the school.

Parents described the staff as caring and committed and felt teachers regarded their children highly. Parents expressed an appreciation for the extra time teachers put in to provide individual instruction to their children. Parents believed that teachers are effective at re-teaching important topics and charting student progress. Two areas of weakness expressed by one parent were the limited gym space and infrequently updated website.

Parents were generally satisfied with school safety. The location and security were cited as examples of why they feel the school is safe. Parents believe that the school handles discipline problems appropriately. The moral focus was described by the focus group parents as helping to build integrity and reinforcing what is already taught at home.

At the time of the inspection, the team was offered an opportunity to review the survey results, but did not have time to create an independent summary of the full set of responses. In the *2003 Accountability Progress Report*, Rochester Leadership Academy reports a summary of parent responses to survey questions about safety concerns, but summaries of broader issues are not required or reported in the document. The inspector's findings are based solely on the sample of parents at the focus group.

QUESTION 2: Are systems in place to promote the efficient operation of school functions?

1. Management and governance systems are in place to promote the efficient management of day-to-day operations at Rochester Leadership Academy.

The Rochester Leadership Academy Board of Trustees and the educational provider, National Heritage Academies, appear to have developed a productive relationship for establishing leadership and monitoring the day-to-day operations at the school. NHA is responsible for selecting and hiring the principal and assisting in the analysis of school data. Teachers are also provided with support from NHA on-site and electronically through the academic liaisons.

The Board describes their role as working on the operational program and ensuring that their vision comes to fruition. Key responsibilities of the Board include overseeing the financial audits and hiring staff, setting up fundraisers, monitoring the principal's performance, and advocating for students. The RLA Board consists of members who have extensive connections to the community and a range of expertise in education, finance, school governance, and facilities. At the time of the inspection, the Board was celebrating its recently announced acquisition of a new site for the school to allow its expansion to the full grade range and enrollment envisioned in its original charter. The Board delegates to NHA the responsibility for tracking student performance and responsibility for the successful implementation of the core curriculum.

The additions of an assistant principal and a behavior specialist have served the school well. Discipline is the domain of the behavior specialist, as described earlier in this report. The assistant principal serves as the school's instructional leader, visiting classes

and overseeing the implementation of the academic program by the staff. The principal maintains responsibility for overall management and supervision of school operations, as well as liaison with National Heritage Academies.

2. The school has adequate procedures to maintain a qualified teaching staff. Rochester Leadership Academy currently has ten founding teachers and has been effective at retaining teachers over time.

The assistant principal is instrumental in providing instructional support to teachers. Teachers described receiving ongoing formal and informal feedback on instruction from the assistant principal which is helpful to their instruction. The principal hired the assistant principal to aid in the implementation of the curriculum. The parents and teachers interviewed by the inspection team held the principal in high regard.

Currently, the principal reports maintaining ten founding teachers out of 18, as reported on the RLACS 2002-2003 staff roster. As noted earlier in this report, teachers are able to participate in professional development conducted by the educational providers on site and off site. However the inspection team did not conduct a comprehensive survey of staff members to determine the degree of participation in the various professional growth opportunities.

Teachers also cited access to “Academy Link,” a web-based resource that allows teachers to view lessons and look for ideas as they plan their instruction, as an available resource provided to them. Teachers reported wide variations in their degree of use of the system, with some teachers indicating they use Academy Link often to access lesson plans and search for lesson ideas; others reported they rarely use the system.

QUESTION 3: Are systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program and modify it as needed?

1. The principal and NHA have compiled various forms of data; however, the inspection team did not find evidence that this information resulted in the modifications needed to ensure the effectiveness of the academic program.

As noted earlier, NHA provides assistance to the school in tracking student performance on external assessments. The data is reported to the principal in a variety of ways by the national headquarters, but there is not a system in place to engage the principal or the teachers directly in the analysis of the factors that might be contributing to the poor results that the school has demonstrated over the first two years. In the *2002 Accountability Progress Report*, the principal indicated her conclusions that the reasons for poor performance were most closely linked with weak teaching. She does not indicate whether the school considered other possible reasons, such as the correlation between the content and skills provided by the school’s curriculum and those assessed by the state. National Heritage has asserted that there is broad alignment between the state standards and the local curriculum, but this alignment does not yet take into consideration the actual assessment items included on state tests.

Teachers report using internal assessments to place students in the corrective reading program. However, the process for aligning the corrective reading program and other support systems with the expected skills and content of the NYS learning standards remains undefined. Teachers indicated that they use the pacing and scope and sequence charts that are included with their curriculum binders to determine what to teach, and do not make use of assessment results for daily planning. Given the serious weaknesses of RLA students in both reading language arts and mathematics, the inspection team found the school's data analysis system insufficient in providing guidance for teachers and school leaders to develop effective remediation.

Ongoing communication between RLACS staff and NHA academic liaisons and an analysis of the correlation between the academic program and the requirements of New York State assessment system have resulted in some progress in modifying the curriculum. Alignment between the NHA curriculum and New York State standards is currently underway in the educational management office in Michigan. There is a training process in development designed to use test data to inform classroom instruction. A targeted date for the implementation of this process for teachers is set for May, 2003.

Since the alignment process is only now underway, the school has not yet had the opportunity to use standardized test data to make program decisions on instruction and curriculum. In the RLACS accountability plan, low student performance is attributed to factors such as 1) student behavior; 2) teacher incompetence; and 3) teacher's comfort level with subject areas. While these reasons may contribute to the school's poor performance results, the inspectors did not have sufficient information about instructional quality or curriculum alignment to draw valid inferences to corroborate the principal's claims. As the school moves forward and is able to link student assessment results with systematic curriculum and instruction information, reasons for poor performance can be more clearly identified. The steps that the school is taking along with NHA are first steps to using data to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program over time.

III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

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

- 1. All stakeholder groups mentioned the moral focus and back to basics as central elements of the Rochester Leadership Academy mission. Providing parents with a choice and developing leaders were also key phrases used by stakeholders.**

The focus on a back-to-basics education and attention to moral values were the most frequently used phrases to describe the unique aspects and mission of the school. Parents in the focus group expressed their understanding of the mission of RLACS as providing them with a choice and helping to reinforce morals instilled at home. One parent stated, "I expect my son to put 100% in his academic work. This school helps to reinforce the expectations I set at home." Board members describe their vision of preparing leaders that would help to uplift the Rochester community. Teachers and school leaders describe

using the back-to-basics approach to create higher academic standards for students. As noted earlier in this report, the inspection team noticed a productive and collaborative relationship between the board, NHA and school leaders as they carry out the mission of the school.

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

- 1. Rochester Leadership Academy is making strong progress toward providing the special programs described in its charter.** (*Goals 1 and 2 were taken from the school's accountability plan.*)

Goal 1 – Rochester Leadership Academy will provide instruction in Moral Focus as an integral part of the curriculum.

The moral focus is included in the daily schedule and incorporated into the curriculum. Teachers described various lessons that are part of the focus. Members of the inspection team saw examples of students participating in an assembly with a moral focus on encouragement. The kindergarten classes performed a skit that focused on ways to encourage others. Parents expressed selecting the school due to the integration of morals into the curriculum and students are aware of the focus. The school's ability to focus on morals is clearly communicated among all stakeholders.

Goal 2 – Rochester Leadership Academy will emphasize the development of leadership in its students.

The Board reports a focus on leadership; however the team did not observe any school programs or practices that would allow us to form a judgment on this particular goal. While the school proposes the development of leadership in its students as a distinctive feature of its educational program, the inspectors found few examples of programs designed to achieve this goal. As reported in the *RLACS 2002 Accountability Progress Report*, the school is in the early stages of creating programs that engage all students in leadership activities.

PART II: SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN: ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS

Goal 1: “To develop students who are proficient in Reading and Language Arts.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Students will demonstrate improvement in the Total Reading Achievement as determined by the Metropolitan Achievement Test 8.

measure 2: Seventy -five percent of who have been enrolled at RLACS for three or more years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State English Language Arts Assessment (ELA) administered to fourth and eighth grade students each year.

measure 3: At the end of each school year, students in grades 3, 5 and 7 will write an essay that will be scored, using a rubric developed by the classroom teachers and administration of RLA, to evaluate proficiency in writing. The essays will be evaluated by educators other than the students’ own classroom teachers, specifically the school principal and assistant principal, director of curriculum.

Goal 2: “To develop students who are proficient in Math.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Students will demonstrate improvement in the Total Math Achievement as determined by the Metropolitan Achievement Test 8.

measure 2: Seventy-five percent of who have been enrolled at RLACS for three or more years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Math Assessment administered to fourth and eighth grade students each year.

Goal 3: “To develop students who are proficient in Science and Social Studies.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Students will demonstrate improvement in Science and Social Studies as determined by the Metropolitan Achievement Test 8.

measure 2: Seventy-five percent of students who have been enrolled at RLACS for three or more years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science and Social Studies Assessments administered to fourth and eighth grade students each year.

Goal 4: Special Education students will make strong progress in the academic area.

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: All Special Education students will receive full services as indicated in each IEP with the intent to allow students to gain the ability to perform independently with success in the regular classroom.

measure 2: Special Education students will show academic growth in Reading and Math as measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test Grade Equivalent scores.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

The school might consider the following recommendations to enhance the quality of evidence to be used to assess its progress toward its own goals.

For both Goals 1 (ELA) and 2 (Mathematics):

1. Include the entry or baseline scores when presenting tables in the same manner they are presented in the tables for social studies and science. Ensuring that data is consistently formatted will help to ensure clarity.
2. When presenting claims for the reasons for low student performance, provide additional supporting evidence to corroborate the claims. For example, present data on the number of new entrants and their scores when making comments such as “Many factors have influenced the continued low returns at Levels 3 & 4 such as limited length of time at RLACS and the introduction of new students each year.” Comparing the scores of new students with continuing students to show differences in attainment will support your assertion.
3. Use caution when selecting judgment words when discussing data that indicates low student performance. An outsider may interpret those judgments as a lack of ability to address key reasons for low student performance.
4. Proofread for minor typos throughout the plan.
5. In the section titled *Strategies for Improvement* update strategies mentioned in earlier reports or explain why the strategy was not continued.
6. Report all measures that are listed on the approved accountability plan or provide an explanation for the omission of measures. Sometimes it is reasonable to omit data, but the reader would like to know whether the omission is intentional or accidental.

For Goal 3 (science) and Goal 4 (social studies):

7. The tables reporting student performance on the MAT 8 Science and Studies assessments are clear in their presentation. Continue reporting information in this manner, including baseline scores and showing the results of all grades tested.
8. Report the scores for the cohort group as well as whole class results as was done for English Language Arts and Math on Mat 8 assessments. This allows an evaluator to see any differences between new students and continuing students.
9. On NYS assessments, report cohort as well as whole class results.

Goal 4: Special Education students will achieve proficiency

10. If external reviews have been conducted by the State Education Department to affirm your compliance with legal requirements, mention it in your progress report including excerpts from the report (if possible) to show your progress in ensuring that you meet the needs of all students at RLACS.
11. Include the number of students when presenting tables showing score results. Indicate what percentage of the population are students with IEPs at each grade level for the whole school
12. Include a discussion of the range of disabilities included in the aggregate score shown in your progress report. Provide a rationale for collapsing all disabilities into a single measure.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS

Goal 1: “Rochester Leadership Academy will make careful use of financial resources.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Rochester Leadership Academy will provide an annual budget, by August 15, of the coming school year that supports the educational program. It will also submit an audited financial statement by October 1 of the following school year.

measure 2: Rochester Leadership Academy will provide a proper balance sheet that shows that funds have been properly distributed and indicates financial stability.

Goal 2: “Rochester Leadership Academy will demonstrate a demand for this Charter School.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Enrollment will be at or above eighty-five percent of capacity over the course of the school year as measured monthly.

measure 2: A waiting list will be maintained and will reflect at least ten percent of the total average enrollment.

measure 3: Less than three percent of the student population will leave the school because of failure on the part of Rochester Leadership Academy Charter to provide a program in alignment with the school’s mission.

Goal 3: “Rochester Leadership Academy will provide proper governance and management of the school.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Rochester Leadership Academy will be managed by a Board of Directors which will meet monthly, maintain proper minutes of such meetings and, as was granted by SUNY, organize and operate this charter school in agreement with the State University of New York.

measure 2: To summarize each school year, an annual report will be published to parents, the community and to the chartering authority.

Goal 4: “Rochester Leadership Academy will provide properly certified teachers and staff.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: Every teacher will be New York State certified or be actively pursuing certification or hold a degree in his or her area of expertise.

measure 2: Background checks will be performed on all employees at Rochester Leadership Academy and show that they have a responsible record in working with children.

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

The school might consider the following recommendations to enhance the quality of evidence to be used to assess its progress toward its own goals.

For Goal 1 (Careful use of financial resources)

1. Define “careful” to ensure that an outsider does not create his or her own definition of “careful use.” For example, you might consider describing the target percentage allocation for major categories of expenditures (e.g., 50% instructional costs, 10% facilities etc).
2. Since readers of the school’s accountability plan are not always financial professionals consider defining “proper” if your intention is beyond meeting all legal requirements as determined by your external auditor.

For Goal 2 (Demonstrate demand for this charter school)

3. Include in your table the total enrollment each school year and the date in which enrollment data is being reported.
4. When reporting information for students on the waiting list, cite the date in which the information is being reported.
5. When making claims for the reasons for certain data results, include information that would serve as evidence to corroborate claims.
6. When reporting survey results indicating the reasons for withdrawal, consider including samples in the appendix to allow the reader confirm that the responses being collected are accurately reflected in the report.

For Goal 3(Proper governance and management)

7. The school might consider reporting the total number of board meetings held throughout the year and the percentage of board members in attendance.

For Goal 4 (Provide certified teachers and staff)

8. Include a table that reports the total number of teachers and the certification subcategories reporting the percentage of teachers certified, their endorsement or degree area (e.g., 85% provisionally certified; 90% endorsed in elementary education; 5% early childhood and 5% special education.)

III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS

Goal 1: “Rochester Leadership Academy will provide a safe and orderly environment.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: On a parent survey, at least ninety percent of parents feel their children are safe in the school environment.

measure 2: On a student survey, at least ninety percent of students feel safe in their school environment by the end of the 2002-2003 school year.

measure 3: Incidences of fighting and disruptive behavior such as disrespect, destruction of property, bullying, inappropriate language, that warrant the attention of the principal will average less than five per month by the conclusion of the 2002-2003 school year.

Goal 2: “Rochester Leadership Academy will involve parents in the educational growth of their children.”

Measures proposed by the school:

measure 1: RLA will encourage parent involvement through opportunities to volunteer; at least 25% of parents will participate at least 3 hours as evidenced by school sign-in sheets.

measure 2: A Parent Leadership Team will be formed . . . to support the efforts of Rochester Leadership Academy by raising money for special events, spreading the good news of RLA, bringing Moral Focus programs to the students, maintaining the facility and enhancing the library.

Goal 3: “Rochester Leadership Academy will provide instruction in Moral Focus as an integral part of the curriculum.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: The Rochester Leadership Academy teachers will schedule the equivalent of one period per day for the instruction in Moral Focus. This curriculum is provided by National Heritage Academies and focuses on one specific virtue each month.

measure 2: An all school assembly will be held the first Monday of each month at which the month’s moral focus will be highlighted by students and faculty.

Goal 4: “Rochester Leadership Academy will emphasize the development of leadership in its students.”

Measures proposed by the school

measure 1: School ‘safeties’ will be appointed from the seventh and eighth grades. These students will be responsible for helping to monitor proper behavior and safety in the halls during arrival and dismissal each day.

measure 2: Upper class students will partner with lower class students to work on mutual projects and to form a mentoring relationship under the direction of classroom teachers.

measure 3: A student Council consisting of 9 upper classmen (4 seventh graders and 5 eighth graders) will be formed to provide students with leadership opportunities.

measure 4: Rochester Leadership Academy will participate in at least 3 community outreach programs per year.

UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

The school might consider the following recommendations to enhance the quality of evidence to be used to assess its progress toward its own goals.

For Goal 1: (Safe and orderly environment)

1. When reporting the results from the parent survey, indicate the percentage of the parent population represented by the returned surveys.
2. When reporting student survey data, provide corroborating evidence beyond the number of students who replied ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to the survey questions to add to the survey’s reliability.

For Goal 2 (Involve parents in educational program)

1. When reporting information describing the opportunities for volunteering at RLACS compile data from a volunteer sign in sheet for each year. In addition you may want to consider including a description of strategies to improve the number of parents who volunteer in the school.
2. Continue including a discussion focusing on the challenges you face in forming a parent group. You may consider including quotes from feedback forms rather than speculating the reasons for not meeting this goal.

For Goal 3: (Effective home/school link)

1. You may wish to include samples of the monthly newsletters as addenda to your accountability report.
2. To monitor the percentage of parents who use the Academy Link system, you may want to identify the possible rates of access to the system. This information would serve as evidence in verifying the usage of the Academy Link system.
3. After revising the parent survey, have a sample group of parents review the survey to assure that items are readable and clear. Review their written responses to form a judgment as to whether the questions are eliciting the appropriate feedback. Consider reviewing the raw data results for each relevant test item.

For Goal 4: (Moral focus as an integral part of the curriculum)

1. Include a description of selected activities or a sample of the scope and sequence for representative grades detailing the pacing and objectives of the Moral Focus curriculum.

For Goal 5: (Emphasize the development of leadership among students)

1. Even if the “safeties” program is not in effect, report the challenges you face in implementing this program. Include plans for modification and report on the progress of those plans.

APPENDIX A: FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL PROGRESS

Category	Criteria	Evidence Sources
Academic Program	To what extent have students attained expected skills and knowledge?	School's Accountability Plan and Progress Report(s)
	What progress have students made over time in attaining expected skills and knowledge?	School's Accountability Plan and Progress Report(s)
	Does the school's instructional program meet needs of diverse students?	Class visits, interviews, data review, Accountability Plan Progress Report
	Do the school's standards reflect implementation of high academic expectations?	Review of curriculum documents; confirmation of implementation by class visits
Organizational Viability	Are students and parents satisfied with the work of the school?	Interviews, survey review
	Are systems in place to promote the efficient operation of school functions?	Interviews, observations Staffing history
	Are systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program and to modify it as needed?	Personnel evaluation policies, minutes and agendas of board, staff meetings
Unique Aspects	Are the school's mission and vision clear to all stakeholders?	Interviews, document reviews
	Are the school's special programs meeting expected targets?	Accountability Plan, Progress Reports, other docs unique to each school
Financial Accountability	Is enrollment stable and sufficient to provide the financial foundation of the school?	
	Does the school's financial management serve the needs of students?	
Legal Compliance	Is the school in essential compliance with legal and regulatory requirements?	

**** Sections assessing Financial Accountability and Legal Compliance will be provided by the Charter Schools Institute and amended to this report as available.**

**APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR
ROCHESTER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

I. Academic Program Goals

Goal 1: To develop students who are proficient in Reading and Language Arts.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- improvement in Total Reading Achievement on MAT 8	-- include entry or baseline scores as in science/ss charts -- provide additional supporting evidence/cross reference for conclusions about reasons for student performance -- caution against selection of judgment words in discussion of data summaries
-- 75% of students at RLA for 3 or more years will perform at or above level 3 on NYS ELA assessment at 4 th and 8 th grade	-- good to include chart showing performance to date, even though students do not meet the measure criteria of 3 years; shows progress toward ultimate goal
-- essay scored own rubric; show 'proficiency' (level 2)	-- break out results by grade level -- show a connection between ELA scores and this writing assessment -- add title on charts showing grade, percent or "n" -- very helpful to show rubrics -- consider aligning rubric to NYS scoring rubric
-- comparisons with RCS	-- report all measures identified in the approved Accountability Plan
Goal 2: To develop students who are proficient in Math.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- demonstrate improvement total math achievement is determined by MAT 8	(similar chart/table recommendations as for ELA) -- provide supporting evidence for conclusions about reasons for student performance -- correct typos
-- at RLA >3 years at or above level 3 on NYS math	-- correct typos -- update/eliminate 'strategies for improvement' if not including in final progress report
-- at or above students in RCS	-- report all measures on approved Accountability Plan
Goal 3: To develop students who are proficient in Science.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- average increase of 3 NCE on MAT 8 science assessment	-- clear, comprehensive charts showing all grades, all scores, including baseline; continue as data is gathered for subsequent years -- in proposing reasons for student results, corroborate explanation with supporting evidence
-- students at RLA >3 years above proficiency level defined by NYS on NYS science assessment	-- show cohort as well as whole class results, as done for ELA and math
-- students in gr . 4 and 8 above level of RCS students	-- report all measures on approved Accountability Plan
Goal 4: To develop students who are proficient in Social Studies..	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- average increase of 3 NCE on MAT 8 social studies assessment	(same as science recommendations)

-- students at RLA >3 years above proficiency level defined by NYS on NYS social studies assessment	-- show cohort results as well as whole class results
-- students in gr . 5 and 8 above level of RCS students	-- report all measures as defined in approved accountability plan (or explain why data omitted)
Goal 5: Special Education students will make strong progress in the academic area.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- students will receive full services	-- if external reviews have been conducted (by SED, e.g.) to affirm your compliance with legal requirements, mention in progress report and perhaps cite excerpts from the report or exec. summary
-- academic growth in reading and math on MAT grade equivalent	-- add number of students to chart of score results -- indicate what percentage of the total population are students with IEPs at each grade/ for whole school -- discuss the range of disabilities included in the aggregate score; provide rationale for collapsing all disabilities into a single measure

II. Organizational Viability Goals

Goal 1: Rochester Leadership Academy will make careful use of financial resources.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- annual budget, audited financial statement -- proper balance sheet	-- define “careful” for yourself by stating, for example, your target percentage allocation for major categories of expenditures (e.g., 50% instructional costs, 10% facilities) -- consider defining ‘proper’ if your intention is to imply other than meeting all legal requirements as determined by your external auditor.
Goal 2: Rochester Leadership Academy will demonstrate a demand for this Charter School.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- enrollment at or above 85%/ measured monthly	-- nicely done chart -- include total enrollment each year with chart -- cite the date at which enrollment data are being reported
-- waiting list 10% of total average enrollment	-- cite the date on which the waiting list is being reported
-- less than 3% withdraw due to failure to provide alignment	-- if making claims for a the reasons for certain results/data, then show corroboration with additional evidence -- if the withdrawal survey is concise, perhaps include a sample in an appendix to confirm that the responses being collected are accurate
Goal 3: Rochester Leadership Academy will provide proper governance and management of the school.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- monthly board meetings	-- if suitable, report total meetings per year, number or percent of board member attendance
-- annual report published	(CSI will review legal compliance topics)
Goal 4: Rochester Leadership Academy will provide properly certified teachers and staff.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- every teacher NYS certified and hold degree in his/her area of expertise	-- show in table form number of teachers, number certified, number/ % not certified; endorsement or degree area also (e.g., 85% provisionally certified, 15% permanent certified; 90% El. Ed endorsed; 5% early childhood; 5% special ed)
-- employees have responsible record in working with children	(CSI will review legal compliance topics)

III. Unique Programmatic Areas Goals

Goal 1: Rochester Leadership Academy will provide a safe and orderly environment	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- 90% will say children safe on parent survey	-- indicate percentage of parent population represented by returned surveys
-- 90% of students will say they feel safe on yearly survey	-- provide corroboration to confirm survey responses (e.g., beyond number of 'yesses' and 'nos, is there other information that makes you confident these results are accurate?)
-- incidences of fighting and disruptive behavior will average less than 5 per month	-- table 3 is a clear, complete presentation of data
Goal 2: RLA will involve parents in the educational growth of their children.	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- RLA provide opportunities to volunteer, 25% of parents participate at least 3 hours	-- include data from volunteer sign in sheet for each year then discuss strategies to improve/ increase
-- Parent group formed, raise money for special events, promote good news of RLA, bring Moral Focus programs, maintain facility, enhance library	-- continue frank discussion of challenges of meeting this goal, efforts to entice/encourage participation -- use quotes from feedback forms rather than speculation to identify possible causes for the problem
Goal 3: effective home school link	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- monthly newsletters	-- provide examples as addenda
-- Academy Link in use	-- identify possible user rates/access counts to verify usage of Academy Link by parents
-- parent survey 90% parents say school makes satisfactory efforts to communicate with parents	-- include raw results from survey for each relevant item -- review the survey items and responses with representative parents to assure items are readable and clear, and that response aren't misleading
Goal 4: Moral focus as integral part of curriculum	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- one period per day for Moral Focus instruction	-- describe selected activities or sample scope and sequence for representative grade from curriculum guide
Goal 5: emphasize development of leadership among students	
<i>Proposed Measures</i>	<i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i>
-- safeties	-- even for programs not implemented, report challenges faced, plans to modify/implement in future (then report on progress of those plans)
-- older students partner with younger ones	(see recommendation above)
-- gr. 7 & 8 student council	(as above)
-- participate in 3 community outreach programs per year	-- report on all goals listed in plan