



HARLEM DAY CHARTER SCHOOL THIRD YEAR INSPECTION REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

II. CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

The inspection of Harlem Day Charter School was conducted on January 27 & Feb. 23, 2004 by an independent team of experienced educators from SchoolWorks, Beverly, MA.

Dr. Karen Laba, Director of Resource Development, SchoolWorks: Karen is a former middle and high school science teacher, preservice science teacher educator and supervisor, and consultant in accountability system design and implementation for SchoolWorks.

Aretha Miller, Project Manager, SchoolWorks: Aretha is an eight year veteran special education teacher in the Boston Public Schools and the former curriculum coordinator for an alternative education program that provides services for at-risk and out-of school youth throughout Massachusetts..

William Wibel, Project Manager, SchoolWorks: Bill was a public school administrator for over twenty-five years, has supervised practice teachers and administrators for both Lesley and Harvard Universities, and has authored a number of articles on educational topics.

Emilys Peña, School Quality Review Consultant, SchoolWorks: Emilys worked for Boston Public Schools for 10 years as a bilingual special needs teacher for grades K-6, a literacy specialist at the middle school level, and at the high school level as Assistant Headmaster in charge of Teaching and Learning. Mrs. Peña has been involved as a teacher and

principal of numerous summer programs targeting students who wish to gain entrance into Boston Exam Schools. She has worked as a consultant for SchoolWorks for over 2 years conducting charter school inspections in Massachusetts and New York, as well as reviews of underperforming and exemplary district 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 its annual *Accountability Progress Report*, its original charter application, and reports from previous informal site visits by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. At the school, the team interviewed school administrators, Board representatives, staff, parents and students, and visited classes to understand the efforts the school is making to achieve its academic and organizational goals.

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

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

III. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Harlem Day Charter School opened its doors in 2001 to fifty students in grades K-1 and is now in its third year of operation, serving 158 students in grades K-3. The school occupies comfortable space in a residential -commercial high rise in Harlem. The school draws students from the surrounding community but also from as far away as the Bronx and Queens.

Students at Harlem Day Charter School are served by eight classroom teachers, each of whom is joined by a teaching assistant who works alongside the lead teacher to meet the needs of the 19

to 21 students in each class. The school employs one teacher for Art and Music, and one for Physical Education, Spanish and Health.

The administration of the school includes the Head of School who serves as the instructional leader in the building and the Administrator manages the academic, personnel, and facilities operations at Harlem Day. A Director of Development solicits supplemental resources to support school programs including private donations and private and public grant sources. A Special Education Coordinator and a Social Worker service students and families with special challenges. The staff of the regular school day program often continues into the extended day program, complemented by specialists who provide enrichment activities for participating students.

Governance of the school is conducted by an 11 member Board of Trustees, each of whom brings special talents to the governing body. Members represent real estate/ building services, social programs, educational research organizations, and parents of students at the school. The Board maintains adherence to its original ideal to remain “a good, small school.” The Board described a long term goal to promote the replication of the Harlem Day model in other locations throughout the city to provide similar high quality education for children.

The academic program at Harlem Day focuses on core academic areas of literacy and mathematics as well as character and values. The Family Academy Model for Education (eFAME) serves as the literacy curriculum to complement the Waterford Early Reading model used in the primary grades. EFAME includes an array of instructional resources accessible to teachers via the internet. The school changed from the Everyday Mathematics curriculum used in its first year to the Saxon math program beginning in 2002-2003 to provide more structure and guidance for teachers. Harlem Day follows the Core Knowledge sequence for social studies and science. The Heartwood curriculum complements the literacy program by engaging students in reading and discussing ethical themes through a range of literature selections.

Over its three year history, Harlem Day Charter School has attracted the attention of education and government leaders in part because of its ability to create a welcoming learning environment that honors and respects the individual student and sets high expectations for every child. The school is just approaching its critical years when its students will be expected to demonstrate adequate achievement on the state assessments in fourth grade. Hopes are high that the structures in place for children will have the desired positive impact.

PART I: SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

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

1. Students at Harlem Day Charter School generally rank above the national norm on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

Harlem Day Charter School administers the ITBS in spring to assess the relative rank of their students. The first group tested, first graders in spring 2002, ranked just below the national average of 50 NCE. As second graders, the performance of the continuing students ranked at the 70th percentile in reading and 53rd percentile in mathematics. As second graders, HDCS students rank slightly above their peers in mathematics and well above in reading. In addition to the 16 continuously enrolled students, there were four additional students in second grade in 2003 whose national percentile rank is similarly impressive, ranging from 65th to 99th in reading, and from the 49th to the 93rd in mathematics. Because there are only scores across one year of operation, results of the 2004 and future administrations of the ITBS will need to be examined to determine trends and patterns of gains or declines.

Table 1: Iowa Test of Basic Skills, 2002 and 2003

ITBS Reading		
Continuing students	Spring 02 NCE*	Spring '03 NPR*
1 st grade in 02 (2nd grade in 03)	38.5	70.56
ITBS Math		
1st grade in 02 (2nd grade in 03)	40.38	53.93

*note: two different measures are provided by the school, NCE and NPR; these are not directly comparable but offer independent pictures of the relative rank of the students

Scores for the first graders in spring 2003 were not available for review during the inspection.

2. Students at Harlem Day Charter School are at or approaching proficiency in reading as measured by their performance on the ECLAS.

The chart below represents a tally of scores of individual students on the school's most recent administration of the ECLAS diagnostic reading assessment. Students at successive grades are moving toward proficiency, defined for first graders as Level 4 and for students at the end of second grade at Level 6.

Table 2: HDCS ECLAS Results, January 2004

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kindergarten	26	10	13	6	3	
Grade 1	3	22	67	58	46	43
Grade 2				10	20	43

3. Initial results of the New York City Benchmark Assessments in mathematics show a range of proficiency among Harlem Day third graders.

The newly designed New York City Benchmark mathematics assessment was administered for the first time in October 2003. The results of the assessment are reported by key ideas from the NYCIA learning standards and represent the average percentage score (maximum = 100) of HDCS students.

Table 3: NYCIA Interim Assessments/ Benchmark Fall 2003 – Mathematics

Key Idea	HDCS Average Score
1. Mathematical Reasoning	30%
2. Number and Numeration	79%
3. Operations	67%
4. Modeling/Multiple Representation	80%
5. Measurement	75%
7* Patterns and Functions	65%
Total	69%

*no Key Idea 6 listed in test report

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

- 1. Students at Harlem Day Charter School have made strong gains over the one year using the data available from the school for review. Results from the 2004 administration of the ITBS will yield important information whether these gains represent a pattern or trend.**

As shown in Table 1, Harlem Day students rank above their peers by a greater degree as second graders than as entering students in first grade. Unfortunately, since the 2003 scores are reported as national percentile ranks rather than normal curve equivalents, changes from year to year cannot be calculated directly. It would serve the needs of evaluators if scores on norm referenced tests were reported as NCEs to allow longitudinal comparisons.

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

- 1. The written curriculum at the core of the HDCS academic program is comprehensive and represents a program that, if effectively implemented, could provide a varied learning experience to meet the needs of diverse students.**

The educational program at Harlem Day Charter School is framed around the Waterford and eFAME programs in literacy, Saxon mathematics, and Core Knowledge for social studies and science. Waterford emphasizes fluency for grades K through 2, while the eFAME system focuses on comprehension for students in grade 3-5. EFAME uses a balanced literacy approach, grouping students homogeneously for instruction and regrouping frequently based on regular assessments of student progress every three months.

The design of eFAME includes pacing recommendations for teachers which are intended to guide teachers. At HDCS, teachers said that being within two weeks of the designated pace is acceptable, but lagging behind much further would invite scrutiny.

- 2. Varied instructional strategies were in evidence across the school. These strategies are likely to meet the needs of diverse students.**

The inspectors observed 14 lessons (some classes were visited for more than one lesson) during the visit and noted direct instruction, 'centers,' and grouping for reading instruction. Teachers varied in their skill at implementing more than one instructional method within a single class, with some quite skilled at orchestrating smooth transitions between lesson components. Others were less adept at responding to students to maintain engagement with the lesson.

Of the 14 lessons, 7 were described as engaging and interactive. In these seven lessons, including music, Heartwood, mathematics and literacy, teachers set a vibrant pace, asked probing questions, and provided lesson activities that intrigued students. Attention to the learning tasks was universal. In the remaining 7 lessons, students were less intellectually engaged. One group was completing a subtraction worksheet with all problems vertically arranged rather than variations of layout which would challenge student's skill a completing the operations when aligned differently. Another group was sharing a single reading book and taking turns reading aloud, while the remainder of the class was expected to sit and listen patiently until their turn. Book "report" forms required recall of the story elements without asking students to apply, interpret, or evaluate the story. Some teachers struggled with managing class behavior, losing significant learning time with corrections and re-direction.

The diversification of student reading instruction is a grouping strategy that serves the needs of students with strong and weak reading skills. Less diversification is built into the mathematics instruction, with all students in math class expected to complete the same tasks at the same pace. During the inspection, no science or social studies lessons were observed, so assessment of the instructional diversity in those subjects is unavailable.

3. Harlem Day Charter School offers a wide range of support services for students with special challenges, both academic and social.

The full time Special Education Coordinator serves the school's 15 students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) using both "push in" and "pullout" methods. The teacher joins some of the students within their regular class to offer academic support and brings other students together in a resource setting for remediation. The school contracts for speech services for students with language limitations.

All students scoring in the bottom quartile on the ECLAS diagnostic reading assessment are classified as "at risk" of academic failure and receive Title 1 tutoring. The Art and Spanish teachers spend at least one class period per day working with students in the grade level classes to provide additional reading support. High school tutors complement the remedial services offered by the professional staff.

In addition to the academic support for struggling students, the school employs a full time nurse and a part time counselor and social worker. Along with attending to typical school nurse duties dealing with minor ailments and administering medication, the nurse has offered a workshop for parents and caregivers on asthma treatment and management. The social worker/counselor works with families of students in seeking needed social and behavioral services with an aim of assuring children have as stable a foundation as possible.

Harlem Day Charter School is planning an ambitious all day summer program for all third grade students including a half day of academic maintenance and enrichment activities and a half day of recreational events. A half day program is planned for students in grades 1 and 2. The school aims to eliminate any summer learning loss for its first group of fourth graders who will be taking the critically important New York State Assessments in 2004-2005.

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

1. While the curriculum in place at Harlem Day Charter School is aligned with the topics included in the New York State Learning Standards, there are wide variations in the level of challenge and rigor expected of students depending on teachers' interpretations of the guiding documents.

As reported previously, teachers at HDCS rely on the tools available on the eFAME web site to guide their instructional decisions. There is a rich array of lesson plans, learning activities, and reading lists available for the uniquely designed literacy program. A pacing chart defines the average or typical flow of lessons to allow teachers and administrators to monitor the student's progress through the program. In the inspectors' judgment, the content of the eFAME literacy program is adequate to the NYS learning standards in its design.

EFAME provides scope and sequence information for the Saxon mathematics program. A listing of the learning objectives on the Saxon section of the eFAME web site reveals an overwhelming emphasis on mathematical operations and procedures. Inspectors examined the end of unit assessments in several grade level texts, and the emphasis on operations is clearly evident.

In contrast, another section of the eFAME web site offers a “Standards Browser.” When the New York State Learning Standards are selected from that browser, there is a listing of the types of learning activities that represent those expected for students in the elementary learning levels in mathematics. For instance, the “Mathematical reasoning” strand of the learning standards calls for students to “use models, facts, and relationships to draw conclusions about mathematics and explain their thinking.” In the Standards Browser, teachers are offered the example of having students represent their ages as an inequality as one example of the type of learning activity that would develop student’s understanding of mathematical relationships. The Saxon materials examined during the inspection offered few if any opportunities for students to explain their mathematical reasoning or to use creative approaches to solving problems. The lessons plans examined during the visit and conversations with teachers indicate that teachers are generally faithful to the Saxon objectives, scope and sequence. In the judgment of the team, however, the program does not offer guidance that will lead students to develop the depth of understanding of mathematics intended by the NYS learning standards.

2. Student work samples and learning expectations evident in classes reveal a variability in the rigor and challenge of the academic program at Harlem Day Charter School corresponding to the variability in teachers’ lesson designs.

During the inspection, the team examined more than 55 pieces of classroom work provided by the school for students randomly selected by the inspection team. The team observed 14 lessons, visiting some classrooms more than once to observe both a mathematics and a literacy lesson. An assessment of the work products and of the implemented lessons parallel the variability in the rigor and challenge evident in the written curriculum materials described above.

Instruction observed during the inspection ranged from intriguing and engaging to rote and ordinary. In almost all classes, students and teachers were respectful and focused on the learning tasks at hand. There were a number of examples of the use of centers, with students rotating through various activities including time on the computers using the Waterford program. In two classes, in contrast, all students were given the same set of worksheets and expected to complete them in the same amount of time, with no allowance for the variation in student ability so common among early elementary age children. In another example of a less successful lesson, the teacher offered only one example of an “odd” number with no explanation of the underlying concept before asking students to complete a worksheet by circling other examples of odd numbers.

Students were highly engaged in at least six of the lessons observed, participating in interactive discussion of a read-aloud story with the teacher challenging them with probing questions about their comments. Music students were enthusiastically involved in “repeating the beat” offered to them by the teacher. In at least three classes, students were clearly self-monitoring, following rules and routines comfortably to complete their tasks.

Most (90%) of the work samples provided by the school were judged to represent appropriate assignments for the grade level/ ability level of the students. Approximately 50 percent of the samples were judged to represent the quality of work expected of students in that grade/ age. Several of the samples dated recently differed little from the type of work expected on samples dated from the beginning of the school year. A large percentage of the samples were worksheets requiring recall or fill-in answers, with few examples asking students to offer creative or original thought or, in the case of mathematics, explanation of the reasoning behind their solution. Inspectors were mindful of the notations made on the cover pages of the work samples that approximately one third of the students randomly selected from whom samples were requested are students with special education needs. The overall judgment remains, however, that the work samples do not represent the depth of understanding expected of the NY State learning standards for either regular education or special education students.

Of the samples of work provided for the inspectors, few had feedback or grading information from which the team could infer the level of quality of work product expected of students by their teachers. Work presented in common areas of the school was clearly exemplary, but the everyday work offered for the team's examination was less reflective of rigorous and challenging demonstration of learning from the students. Samples are representative of a limited range of adherence to the depth of the learning expected by the NYS Learning Standards. For example, in English language arts the team saw no examples asking students to demonstrate their critical thinking or in-depth comprehension of a story element. As mentioned previously, no examples reflected opportunities to address the reasoning, analysis, and application skills defined in the mathematics standards.

While there was judged to be a number of examples of quality instruction and learning during the inspection team's visit, the lower quality of the student work samples suggest a need for more rigorous expectations in the products students provide to demonstrate their understanding.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

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

1. Students at Harlem Day Charter School express enthusiastic support for the school.

Inspectors met with four lively, articulate second graders in a focus group during the visit. When invited to describe the 'best' thing about Harlem Day, the first respondent mentioned the content of the curriculum (African American contributions to our culture). His comments were followed by others citing the "our great principal," "good teachers," and "hanging out with my friends" as the best elements of HDCS. One very articulate youngster explained that this school was good because it allows one to "explore the imagination." There was widespread enthusiasm for the creative hands-on work in Art class and the study of astronauts in science. Opinions on whether the school work was easy, hard or just right varied across the range of options, with one claiming "just right," another saying "easy" and another asserting that there is a "lot of work."

Students reported to the inspector that they feel very safe at the school because they have practiced fire drills, there are cameras and a security guard at the entrance and because their parents come into the school wing to pick them up.

2. Evidence of parent satisfaction in surveys and a focus group indicate strong approval of the school and its communication with families.

Four parents gathered to share their thoughts with the inspection team, and corroborated the findings of the school's parent survey circulated spring 2003. The primary selection criteria for parents was the promise of small class sizes, academic rigor, and a desire for an alternative to the public school system. The focus group parents asserted that the school has mostly lived up to its promise, with one parent questioning the rigor of mathematics instruction. Parents were particularly pleased with the monthly assemblies when students present plays or demonstrations of their academic work and the school gathers to celebrate successes and honor achievement. A school-wide winter festival invited wide participation by children, teachers and families and a similar spring festival is in the planning stages. The Parent Organization is still in its early stage of development, but intends to explore ways to engage more parents actively in the life of the school.

Only 32 percent of families returned the spring survey, so the responses may not be representative of the larger population. Between 86 percent and 89 percent of the respondents rated the effectiveness of the academic program as "good" or "excellent." Satisfaction with their child's progress received high ratings from between 90 percent and 94 percent of respondents. Communication with their child's teacher was ranked "good" or "excellent" by 89 percent of parents and communication with the Head of School received high ratings from 80 percent of those who returned the survey. While a smaller than desired response pool, the uniformity of the approval ratings suggests strong support for the work of the school.

In addition to survey and focus group comments, the rate of re-enrollment of students at Harlem Day is an indicator of satisfaction among parents and caregivers. According to school records, over 90 percent of students re-enrolled for the 2003-2004 academic year. A growing waiting list is further indication of community interest in the school.

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

1. Overall, most of the systems to monitor the academic program at Harlem Day Charter school are in place and operating effectively.

HDCS has systems in place to monitor classroom instruction and to assure teacher quality and the enhancement of teachers' skills. Oversight of the academic program includes informal visits by the chairman of the Board of Trustees, frequent 'drop ins' by the Head of School, and formal evaluations twice per year. Support for teaching and enhancement of teachers' skills comes in the form of weekly grade level meetings, weekly meetings with the Head of School, and weekly sessions with three consultants from the Urban Education Exchange, the developer of eFAME.

The Board chairman reported that he visits the school weekly, casually observing the climate and culture of the school, informally stopping in to classrooms and speaking with teachers, students and parents as a means of monitoring the performance of the school. He also reported he speaks with the Head of School many times per week, initiated by both parties, to discuss organizational topics across a range of issues. Teachers reported that the Head of School regularly drops in to classes generally once or twice per week for a significant period of time. Teachers receive a formal evaluation twice per year from the Head of School.

Efforts to improve instructional practice begin with weekly grade level meetings which are designed to allow teachers to collaborate on planning and review of classroom activities. One day per week the grade level team meets with the Head of School to discuss instructional matters. Each week, three consultants from the Urban Education Exchange work with teachers in small groups or individually to guide use of the eFAME resources. According to the third grade teacher, who is the only teacher of her grade, the Urban Education Exchange consultants are personal mentors for her as she works with the school's pioneer class.

HDCS has chosen to encourage development of highly qualified teachers by providing stipends for continuing education and opportunities for attendance at conferences and seminars for all classroom lead teachers. School leaders coordinate visits to other schools for HDCS teachers. Assistant teachers are likewise encouraged to enhance their skills by participating in all building professional development both before the start of school as well as during the year.

2. HDCS Board and school leaders rely on informal strategies to modify the academic program.

The Board and administrators at Harlem Day have not engaged in a full scale systematic review of the academic program designed to evaluate the impact of the individual curricula on student learning. In the second year of the school's operation, the decision to change from the *Everyday Mathematics* program to *Saxon Math* was initiated by teacher requests for a more structured program with more guidance for lesson plan designs. After extensive research by the Head of School and Board members, the change was approved. Several members of the Board of Trustees are recognized experts in education, and they provide advice to other Board members to complement the recommendations of the school leader. Board members commented that they recognize their need for guidance on making reliable interpretations of test results to better inform their governance decisions. At the time of the inspection, the Board was discussing plans to conduct a Board training session on data analysis.

III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

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

- 1. Common themes of 'partnership' and 'high expectations' were expressed by parents, teachers, and school leaders when describing the mission of Harlem Day Charter School.**

All members of the Harlem Day charter School community expressed common themes of ‘partnership’ and ‘high academic expectations’ as central elements of the HDCS mission. As explained by parents and teachers, the partnership means distributing responsibility for each child’s education between both families/ caregivers and school staff. Participants in the focus groups explained that each has a role to play in building a child’s skills and confidence to allow them to succeed.

School administrators and Board members added the elements of the broader neighborhood community in their descriptions of the school’s mission and vision. They described long term goals of helping children at HDCS become familiar with and proud of the contributions of their community to the larger culture by exposure to music and the arts. These partnerships with the Studio Museum and community dance groups, are presently evidence primarily in the after school program activities.

Board members emphasized their vision of small class sizes and a strong financial foundation, commenting that they were “not trying to be all things to all people.” They were comfortable and confident in the likelihood of the school’s success if it could maintain its focus on being a small community of learners. A major consideration for the school’s coming year will be assuring a smooth transition to an appropriate placement in sixth grade for HDCS graduates and expanding and enhancing the school’s working relationships with parents.

In many ways, the themes mentioned to the inspectors closely parallel the core elements of the school’s written mission:

“To use a partnership between educators, families, and community members to create a strong academic organization in which student learn skills in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and Spanish at levels that exceed the New York state standards.”

Harlem Day has successfully shared its purposes with the families and staff who have chosen to share in its goals.

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

1. The school has made adequate progress toward its two unique goals, developing high quality staff and moving students from the lowest proficiency levels toward higher achievement.

In addition to the goal of “partnership” with parents and community mentioned in its mission, Harlem Day Charter School identifies two additional unique goals it aims to achieve: (1) to provide an environment that provides highly qualified staff in all classrooms; and (2) to raise the achievement of students scoring in the lowest quartile in reading on the Tera 3. The school has put in place programs that are moving toward attainment of the school’s goals in these areas.

HDCS leaders have instituted programs to promote the professional growth of both teachers and assistant teachers on its staff. HDCS provides financial support for teachers to continue coursework toward certification as well as offering a broad range of professional growth opportunities in-house. Four teachers enrolled in additional coursework during 02-03, along with 2 assistant teachers. Three staff members qualified for certification exams. While below the school's target of 50 percent participation, the inclusion of assistant teachers is an admirable move toward providing well skilled staff at all levels for students at the school.

For its second 'unique' program, the school sets a target to raise the performance of students in the bottom quartile of the Tera 3 reading assessment above the lowest level. As results from the 02-03 assessments demonstrate, the interventions employed by HDCS staff were most effective with the kindergarten and grade 2 students and less effective for the first graders.

**Table 4 -- HDCS: Number of Students in the Bottom Quartile (1- 25th percentile)
Tera 3, 2002-2003**

	Total number of students	Pretest	Posttest
Kindergarten	60	30	8
Grade 1	40	13	12
Grade 2	20	10	2

As Table 4 shows, large numbers of students moved out of the lowest quartile in reading in kindergarten and grade 2. At the end of the 02-03 term, there remained a large percentage of low performing students in grade 1. Overall, the school's progress toward its target is adequate but uneven, suggesting further exploration of the factors limiting the improvement among the first grade group.

PART II: SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN: ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS

Goal 1: All students at Harlem Day charter School will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.

Measure 1: Each cohort of eligible students will improve their reading skills by an average of three NCE points per year in national rank, according to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Cohorts will include the scores of all eligible students in grades 2-5.

Measure 2: Seventy-five percent of eligible 2nd and 3rd grade students will score seven points on the 2nd and 3rd grade EPAL, respectively, administered in the spring every year.

Measure 3: Seventy-five percent of eligible 3rd grade students will score a three on New York City Department of Education English Language Arts (ELA) Test administered in the spring every year.

Measure 4: Seventy-five percent of eligible students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment, administered to 4th grade students every year.

Measure 5: A greater percentage of eligible Harlem Day Charter School students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA than District 4 students.

Goal 2: All students at Harlem Day charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.

Measure 1: Each cohort of eligible students will improve their math skills by an average of three NCE points per year in national rank, according to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Cohorts will include the scores of all eligible students in grades 2-5.

Measure 2: Seventy-five percent of eligible 3rd grade students will score a three on New York City Department of Education Math Test administered in the spring each year.

Measure 3: Seventy-five percent of eligible students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Math Assessment, administered to 4th grade students every year.

Measure 4: A greater percentage of eligible Harlem Day Charter School students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Math Assessment than District 4 students.

Goal 3: All students at Harlem Day charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

Measure 1: Seventy-five percent of eligible students will have a passing score on the New York State Science Assessment, administered to 4th grade student every year as soon as the test in its final format is made ready.

Measure 2: A greater percentage of eligible Harlem Day Charter School students will have a passing score on the New York State Science Assessment than District 4 students.

Goal 4: All students at Harlem Day charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social, geographical, civic, and world studies.

Measure 1: Seventy-five percent of eligible students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies Assessment, administered to 5th grade students every year.

Measure 2: A greater percentage of eligible students will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies Assessment than District 4 students.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. As a preface for all the academic program goals, the inspectors recommend presenting a calendar of formal and informal assessments to be administered for each grade level. i.e.,

Sample Assessment Calendar: Formal Assessments

	ITBS	Tera-3 (?)	ECLAS (?)	EPAL	NYS ELA	NYS Math	NYS Science	NYS Soc St	NYC ELA	NYC Math
Gr K	2001+									
Gr 1	2001+									
Gr 2	2001+			2001+						
Gr 3				2001+					2003+	2003+
Gr 4					2004+	2004+	2004+			
Gr 5								2004+		

A similar table can be used to show the administration of informal and local assessments; e.g., CTB practice tests, diagnostic reading assessments, etc. These tables will help the reader understand the sequence of assessment results during the course of the school's years of operation.

For all assessments:

2. While the measure indicates that the school will track 'eligible' students (those enrolled at HDCS for two or more years), the overarching goal statement refers to 'all' students. The school's presentation would be more complete if it reported the performance of *both* the

eligible cohort as well as all students in the grade level. For example, a table could be presented in this way:

SAMPLE Assessment Report Format ITBS Mathematics, Spring 2004

Grade	Total # students	# Eligible Students	Ave. Scores Eligible Students	Ave Score All Students
K				
1				
2				
3				

Following the table of results, the school might present a narrative discussion of its interpretation of the meaning of the results.

- For measures tracking trends over time on norm referenced tests (ITBS for Harlem Day), clearly identify the grade level of the student cohort over time. For example, students entering HDCS in 2001 as first graders can be called the “class of 2006” since they will be in the ‘graduating’ class of fifth graders in 2006. A carefully constructed table can be used to present the growing collection of assessment data for students over the course of the school’s charter term.

SAMPLE Trend over Time Report Format

	ITBS Sp 2001	ITBS Sp 2002	ITBS Sp 2003	ITBS Sp 2004	ITBS Sp 2005	ITBS Sp 2006
Class of 2007 (n)			(gr 1)	(gr 2)	(gr 3)	(gr 4)
Class of 2006 (n)		(gr 1)	(gr 2)	(gr 3)	(gr 4)	(gr 5)
Class of 2005 (n)	(gr 1)	(gr 2)	(gr 3)	(gr 4)	(gr 5)	

- While internal/ informal assessments (CBT practice tests, teacher assigned grades) are generally considered less reliable measures than standardized tests, their usefulness will be increased if you can demonstrate a correlation between the internal measures and standardized results. For example, if students who are high performers on the NYS ELA Assessment are also earning high grades on classroom tests, the classroom grades are likely measuring similar knowledge and skills. The experienced educators on your Board may be able to assist in completing a correlation analysis of your internal assessments to make them more compelling evidence of your school’s performance.
- During the inspection, the team learned of a number of additional efforts undertaken by HDCS to assist poor performing students that were not clearly articulated in the Progress Report, including Title 1 tutoring and the Summer Program. These are important efforts the school has taken on to support students who are not meeting expected achievement targets and can enhance the school’s performance analysis.
- For each measure presented in the Progress Report, discuss the factors that you believe are contributing to unexpectedly high (or low) performance. Discuss how you will verify your hunch and what steps you intend to make to expand the positive practices you identify.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS

Goal 1: Harlem Day Charter School will maintain strong organizational viability by maintaining strong parent support and commitment to the school.

Measure 1: In a yearly parent survey distributed in the spring to all Harlem Day Charter School parents/ guardians, 80 percent of all parents will report that the effectiveness of the school's academic program, communication, and child's progress is good or excellent (on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, poor).

Measure 2: During the school year, Harlem Day Charter School will maintain an enrolments level equal to or exceeding 90 percent capacity and a waitlist equal to or exceeding 15 percent of the school's population.

Measure 3: Each year, the average daily attendance rate of all Harlem Day Charter School students will exceed 92 percent.

Goal 2: Harlem Day Charter School will maintain strong organizational viability by demonstrating sound financial practices and effective, responsible decision making.

Measure 1: Actual and proposed budgets for each school year will show effective allocation of resources to ensure effective school programs.

Measure 2: Yearly balance sheets will show that the school is fiscally sound and maintains adequate cash reserves.

Measure 3: yearly submission of audited financial statements will demonstrate that the school is responsible and prudent with public resources.

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parent surveys: Explore creative ways to increase the response rate from your disappointing 32 percent for the 2002 survey.
2. Parent surveys: Consider separating each component of the academic program and asking for evaluation of each independently. In the current survey form, you list multiple subject areas within the same question, making it difficult to disaggregate to identify concerns about science separate from social studies, for instance. Interested parents may have a range of opinions across the academic program areas and your decision making can be informed more accurately by separate questions.
3. Parent surveys: Since parents are unlikely to know the academic program in detail apart from the engagement of their children, consider re-phrasing items in Part 1 of the survey to ask, "How would you rate your child's performance in (reading, mathematics, science, social studies, writing, etc)?"

4. Enrollment target: The presentation of your progress toward your enrollment target is clear as written. It would enhance the presentation to include an ‘enrollment history’ chart as you prepared for the inspection to show the changes in your population over the course of your charter term.
5. Attendance: As suitable, offer a narrative discussion for the reader of the reasons/ factors contributing to the attendance patterns you present. For example, the inspectors wondered what might account for the gradual decline from October to December and the gradual increase again to other peaks in March and May.
6. Allocation of resources: Tables are clear as presented. Consider presenting a narrative discussion of the reasons for a surplus or deficit shown in your budget tables.
7. Consider elaborating on the sources of additional funding shown in your budget. Were they federal funds from competitive grants? If so, it speaks well of your industriousness and determination to seek and receive such grants. Are they private funds? This, too, speaks well of the commitment you’ve garnered from private donors if you are able to sustain their contributions. In either case, the reader would be interested to know how you’ve accomplished your fiscal soundness.

III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS

Goal 1: Harlem Day Charter School will provide a work environment that prepared “highly qualified teachers” for each grade level.

Measure 1: Each year, 50 percent of Harlem Day Charter School pedagogical staff will be accredited with two courses from a college or university either to obtain certification or advance their skills.

Measure 2: Each year, 100 percent of Harlem Day Charter School pedagogical staff will undergo 40 hours or more of professional development training in the areas of curriculum, classroom management, and technology.

Measure 3: As a result of teacher training in behavior and classroom management, the number of student behavior incidents reported to the principal will decrease by 50 percent or more from fall to spring of each school year.

Measure 4: Twenty-five percent of Harlem Day students in grades K-2 identified as scoring in the bottom quartile at the beginning of the school year will move up one quartile in the spring, according to the Tera-3 Test of Early Reading Ability.

UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Add a footnote to define “highly qualified” in your goal – do you use the federal definition or do you have your own criteria in mind?

2. To make your activities clear to the reader, explain the relationship between the professional development activities (both weekly grade level meetings and full day staff workshops) and the instructional needs of your students. If you can demonstrate a clear connection between the learning opportunities you offer teachers and the instructional practices likely to improve student achievement, the quality of your professional development evidence is enhanced.
3. It would help the reader understand your program if you provided more detail on the extra hours offered for new teachers, and added a description of ongoing support provided to novice teachers throughout the school year.
4. Behavior infractions: Offer the reader a discussion of the strategies you used to produce the dramatic decline in office referrals during the course of the year in addition to presenting the results. A bit of detail on the types of infractions counted in your tally would also enhance the reader's understanding of your progress toward your goals.
5. Supplemental support for bottom quartile: It was difficult to follow the results of the school's efforts to improve the performance of students in the bottom quartile both during the school year and during the summer term. Consider presenting absolute scores as well as improvements/ gains in a table so the reader can understand the range of student results within this specific population. If your results don't meet your target, explain what adjustments you intend to make to the program.

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 the needs of diverse students?	Class visits, interviews, data review, Accountability Plan Progress Report
	Do the school's standards reflect the implementation of high academic expectations?	Review of curriculum documents, student work samples ; confirmation of implementation by class visits
Organizational Viability	Are students and parents satisfied with the work of the school?	Interviews, survey review
	Are systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program and to modify it as needed?	Personnel evaluation policies, minutes and agendas of board, staff meetings
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

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HARLEM DAY CHARTER SCHOOL

I. Academic Program Goals

Goal 1: all students will become proficient readers and writers of the English language	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- each cohort increase 3 NCEs on ITBS reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an assessment calendar for the reader to show which assessments are taken when • Report the performance of both ‘eligible’ students as well as “all” students as indicated in your goal statement • Clearly identify cohorts by grade at time of test and current grade • Demonstrate correlation between internal tests and other standardized measures to enhance their reliability
-- 75% grade 2 and 3 score 7 on the EPAL:	
-- 75% eligible 3 rd graders score 3 on NY City ELA test	
-- 75% eligible students score Level 3 on grade 4 NYS ELA Assessment	
-- greater percentage HDCS score Level 3 or above than District 4	
Goal 2: All students demonstrate competency in understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- each cohort increase 3 NCEs on ITBS math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the performance of both ‘eligible’ students as well as “all” students as indicated in your goal statement • Clearly identify cohorts by grade at time of test and current grade
-- 75% eligible 3 rd graders score 3 on NY City math test	
-- 75% eligible students score Level 3 on grade 4 NYS Math Assessment	
-- greater percentage HDCS score Level 3 or above than District 4	
Goal 3: all students demonstrate competency in understanding and application of scientific reasoning	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- 75% eligible students receive passing score on NYS Science Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the performance of both ‘eligible’ students as well as “all” students as indicated in your goal statement • Clearly identify cohorts by grade at time of test and current grade
-- greater percentage HDCS earn passing score on NYS Science than District 4	
Goal 4: all students demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social, geographical, civic, and world studies	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- 75% eligible students score Level 3 on grade 5 NYS Social Studies Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the performance of both ‘eligible’ students as well as “all” students as indicated in your goal statement • Complement the progress report with information on all school efforts to improve student achievement
-- greater percentage HDCS score Level 3 or above than District 4	

II. Organizational Viability Goals

Goal 1:.. maintain strong parental support and commitment to the school	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- 80 percent on survey rate academic program, communication and child’s progress good or excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase return rate on surveys • Ask separate questions each academic area • Add detail on enrollment history to show progress toward target • Offer reader a discussion of your analysis of attendance patterns
-- enrollment 90 percent capacity and 15 per cent waitlist	
-- average daily attendance exceed 92 percent	

II. Organizational Viability Goals (cont'd.)

Goal 2: demonstrate sound financial practices and effective, responsible decision making	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- effective allocation of resources ensure effective school programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables clear as presented • Consider describing uses of additional funding resources for the reader
--balance sheets show fiscally sound, adequate cash reserves	
-- financial statements demonstrate responsible and prudent with public resources	

III. Unique Programmatic Area Goals

Goal 1: provide a work environment to prepare highly qualified teachers for each grade level	
Proposed Measures	Recommendations for the school to consider:
-- 50 percent pedagogical staff took 2 courses to advance skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer your own definition of 'highly qualified' for reader • Provide calendar and description of professional development activities (topic, duration, etc) • Describe for the reader the strategies used to reduce behavior incidents, types of incidents and change trends • Offer data on Tera-3 results in clear tables or charts; reserve narrative discussion for your analysis of the results • Consider offering the reader a description of intended changes to the remediation program
-- 100 percent participate in 40+ hours professional development training	
--behavior incidence decrease 50 percent from fall to spring	
-- 25 percent students in bottom quartile ¹ move up one quartile by spring using Tera-3	

¹ Quartile - divides the items of a frequency distribution into fourths with each containing one fourth of the total population



Charter Schools Institute

State University of New York

HARLEM DAY CHARTER SCHOOL THIRD YEAR REPORT FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Scope and Methodology

CSI staff performed a desk review of the school's quarterly financial reports, budgets, annual financial statement audit reports, and other correspondence. The review covered documents received during the period from the date the school was chartered, May 15, 2001, through December 31, 2003. The results of this analysis are provided below.

Financial Reporting

Except as noted below, the school has complied with its financial reporting requirements. The annual budgets, audit reports and quarterly financial reports were filed on time or within one week of the applicable due date, including extensions. The audit report opinions for the years ended June 30, 2002 and 2003 were unqualified, indicating the financial statements were fairly presented, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Audits were conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. However, the audits were not conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* as required. Section 5.3 of the charter specifies that the school must require its auditor to issue a report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants and on internal control over financial reporting. These reports are required by *Government Auditing Standards* and were not included as part of the school's audit report.

Financial Condition as of June 30, 2003

The school's financial condition was strong and had improved over the prior year. Unrestricted net assets totaled \$3,135,029 (\$26,125 per approved number of enrolled students) and the school's operating activities provided positive cash flow of \$1,018,195. Total net assets increased from the prior year by \$601,337.

The school has fixed assets (net of accumulated depreciation and amortization) totaling \$2,467,791 that consist primarily of leasehold improvements. The school has no long-term debt, but has commitments under a noncancelable operating lease to make payments totaling \$1,313,737 through fiscal year 2011 (\$146,424 per year).

The school received significant contributions to support its program. Contributions totaled \$1,334,931 or 76 percent of total expenses (compared to \$2,824,528 or 261 percent in the prior year).

Recommendation

Ensure that future audits are conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.