



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

The Academy Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2010-11

Visit Date: April 27-28, 2011

Report Issued: September 7, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”), jointly with the New York State Board of Regents, are required by law to provide oversight sufficient to ensure that each charter school that the State University Trustees have authorized is in compliance with applicable law and the terms of its charter. The SUNY Trustees, however, consistent with the goals of the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998, view their oversight responsibility more broadly and positively than purely monitoring compliance. Accordingly, they have adopted policies that require the Charter Schools Institute (“the Institute”) to provide ongoing evaluation of SUNY authorized charter schools. By providing this oversight and feedback, the State University Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **Document Performance.** The Institute collects information to build a database of a school’s performance over time. By evaluating the school periodically, the Institute can more clearly ascertain trends, determine areas of strength and weakness, and assess the school’s likelihood for continued success or failure. Having information based on past patterns, the Institute is in a better position to make recommendations regarding the renewal of each school’s charter, and the State University Trustees are better informed in making a decision on whether a school’s charter should be renewed. In addition, a school will have a far better sense of where they stand in the eyes of its authorizer.
- **Facilitate Improvement.** By providing substantive information about the school’s academic, fiscal and organizational strengths and weaknesses to the school’s board of trustees, administration, faculty and other staff, the Institute can play a role in helping the school identify areas for improvement.
- **Disseminate Information.** The Institute disseminates information about the school’s performance not only to its board of trustees, administration and faculty, but to all stakeholders, including parents and the larger community in which the school is located.

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

This annual School Evaluation Report includes three primary components. The Executive Summary of School Evaluation Visit provides an overview of the primary conclusions of the evaluation team regarding the current visit to the school, summarizing areas of strength and areas for growth. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided, as background and context for the current evaluation. The second section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as summary historical information regarding the life of the school. Finally, in a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit, this report presents the analysis of evidence collected during an evaluation visit conducted in the current school year, with an italicized paragraph that introduces each specific benchmark and provides a summarizing conclusion.

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and

note areas in need of improvement with respect to the school's performance as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

Background

Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized by a set of benchmarks that address the academic success of the school, including teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school as an organization, including such items as governance and management. Entitled the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, these established criteria are used on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

While the primary focus of the visit is an evaluation of the school's academic program and organizational capacity, issues regarding compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations may be noted (and subsequently addressed); where the Institute finds serious deficiencies in particular relating to student health and safety, it may take additional and immediate action. However, monitoring for compliance is not the principal purpose of the visit.

This is an analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Some benchmarks are covered in greater detail than others in an effort to highlight areas of concern at the school and provide additional feedback in these areas. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school renewal visit to The Academy Charter School (“The Academy”) on April 15th, 2010. The evaluation team observed classrooms; interviewed administrators, board members and teachers; and reviewed student work and other documents. Following the 2010 renewal evaluation visit, a report was provided to the school’s board of trustees outlining the major conclusions from the visit. The conclusions provided at that time are briefly summarized below.

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Overall, the Academy had a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and administered a variety of assessments, with these systems being strongest in English language arts. The Academy was beginning to use this data for instructional decisions, though at the time of the visit it was largely limited to grouping students.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

The Academy had an organized curriculum based largely on the commercial programs they selected to use in the core academic subjects. This framework guided teachers’ instruction at both the unit and daily planning levels.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Adequate instruction was evident throughout the school. Instruction was generally well-planned to meet objectives aligned with state standards and the school’s curriculum.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

At the time of the visit, the school had generally competent instructional leadership. The instructional leadership team consisted of the principal and staff developer; their roles were generally discrete, though there was some overlap in their roles during the school’s first year.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

The Academy’s day-to-day operations were sufficient to carry out its academic program. However, at the time of the visit there was not a clear distinction between the board’s oversight and the school administration’s day-to-day management.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CURRENT SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to The Academy Charter School on April 27th and 28th, 2011. The Academy is in its second year of operation. Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit, The Academy is on a trajectory toward meeting its Qualitative Educational Benchmarks (a component of the Renewal Benchmarks) by establishing systems and procedures for an effective instructional program. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators discussed more fully later in this report. Some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

The Academy regularly administers multiple assessments and has systems to collect data. However, the school does not have a school-wide process for teachers to use data to improve classroom instruction. Teachers use assessment results independently to re-teach content.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

The Academy's curriculum, based on commercially purchased materials, purportedly aligns with state standards. The school's curriculum review includes an evaluation of the rigor of its commercial curriculum products to ensure that students master state standards.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Teachers provide adequate instruction throughout the school. Teachers systematically develop lesson plans, keep students on-task and maximize learning time. Classrooms are conducive to learning; they are safe and orderly especially given the size limitations of the school's classrooms.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

The school's leadership regularly evaluates teachers, though operational duties currently prevent the principal from holding teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement prompting him to consider making personnel changes to the instructional leadership team.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

The Academy has functioning operational management with staff, systems and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 18, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	February 23, 2009
School Opening Date	September, 2009

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades At This Location	District
2009-10 through present	94 Fulton Avenue Hempstead, New York	All	Hempstead Union Free School District

Current Mission Statement

The Academy Charter School will offer an exceptional interdisciplinary curriculum in a technology-rich environment that challenges students to explore connections across subjects and use experiential learning to bridge the gaps between theory and practice. In addition to core subjects, our students will benefit from high expectations in physical education, health, and the arts. Our focus on character development and community service will cultivate a student body poised to be active, engaged and responsible members of the community. We will employ a committed staff whose teaching and high academic and behavioral expectations will promote the excellence we know our community's children can achieve.

Current Key Design Elements

- Two hours of daily literacy instruction;
- Ninety minutes of daily math instruction with an extensive use of manipulative;
- Strong family involvement; and
- Character education, leadership development, and community awareness through service learning projects.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2009-10	168	N/A	167	K-2	K-2	180
2010-11	240	N/A	258	K-3	K-3	180

¹ Source: SUNY Charter School Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

Student Demographics²

	2009-10	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Hempstead UFSD Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Black or African American	93	40
Hispanic	5	58
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	0
White	0	0
Multiracial	2	1
Special Populations		
Students with Disabilities ³	2	17
Limited English Proficient	2	28
Free/Reduced Lunch		
Eligible for Free Lunch	58	69
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	12	7

Current Board of Trustees⁴

Board Member Name	Term Expires	Position/Committees
Barrington Goldson	2014	Board Chair,
Robert Stewart	2014	Technology and Infrastructure
Hazelin Williams	2014	Secretary, Fundraising, Community Relations
Dawn West-Blaise	2014	Finance and Asset Acquisition
Hope M. Chin	2014	Fundraising, Community Relations
Washburn Anthony Martin	2014	Finance and Asset Acquisition
Shelia Dancy-Wilkins	2014	Judicial, Grievance, and Compliance
Roderick Roberts	2014	Fundraising, Community Relations
Janet Ann Sanderson-Brown	2014	Academic and Personnel
Sharon McKoy	2014	PTO President (Non-Voting)

² Source: School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

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

⁴ Source: Board Information provided by the school.

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10	Nykeisha Jenkins-Rycraw, Principal
2010-11	Dr. Nicholas Stapleton, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	First-Year Visit	Institute	April 15, 2010
2010-11	Second-Year Visit	Institute	April 27-28, 2011

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

The Academy regularly administers multiple assessments and has systems to collect data. However, the school does not have a school-wide process for teachers to use data to improve classroom instruction. Teachers use assessment results independently to re-teach content.

Teachers administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and the Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) reading fluency assessments three times per academic year to measure and track student literacy development. In English language arts, teachers report administering state practice exams modeled after the state exam and purportedly aligned with state standards. The Academy also administers Interim math assessments (IAs), developed by the school's education management organization (EMO)*, three times prior to January providing teachers sufficient time to analyze student and classroom math results before the May state exam administration.

In addition to these assessments, teachers administer a nationally norm referenced assessment entitled the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) at the end of the academic year. School leaders report analyzing ITBS data to compare school results with nationally norm-referenced student populations. While the school has systems to administer and review assessment data, teachers report analyzing data on an individual basis and creating strategies to improve classroom instruction. They also report using assessment results to create small instructional groups and re-teach content. As a result of teachers' independent use of assessment data, re-teaching strategies lack coordination and consistency across grades.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

The Academy's curriculum, based on commercially purchased materials, purportedly aligns with state standards. The school's curriculum review includes an evaluation of the rigor of its commercial curriculum products to ensure that students master state standards.

Teachers rely upon commercial curriculum materials whose publishers claim aligns with state standards and which provide teacher's a curricular scope and sequence for each content area. The observation team found evidence of previous curriculum material "cross-walks" aligning with state standards. Teachers report following commercial curriculum standard citations as well as scope and sequences and pacing guides in English language arts and mathematics for planning lessons.

The school principal reports the school has a process to review and revise the curriculum program. It has a curriculum review committee comprised of teachers and school leaders who review curriculum materials and discuss how teachers should implement lessons. Teachers report that they decide, as a group, when to change the curriculum program and

* The Academy's EMO is Victory Education Partners.

materials. For example, during the last academic year teachers presented curriculum material alignment concerns to school leadership, this resulted in the school adopting new curriculum materials.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Teachers provide adequate instruction throughout the school. Teachers systematically develop lesson plans, keep students on-task and maximize learning time. Classrooms are conducive to learning; they are safe and orderly especially given the size limitations of the school's classrooms.

Teachers implement lessons using engaging instructional methods including: one-to-one direct instruction, small group instruction and whole-class instruction. They also effectively monitor classroom activity transitions and teach with a sense of urgency. Teachers plan purposeful lessons containing lesson objectives, state standard citations and interesting and engaging activities. Teachers enthusiastically deliver lessons, lead classroom discussions and offer constant praise and encouragement to students. Despite limited, small classroom spaces, teachers make classrooms print and media rich with ample reading materials. While in these small classrooms, students transition between activities in an orderly manner, and teachers effectively re-direct misbehavior.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

The school's leadership regularly evaluates teachers, though operational duties currently prevent the principal from holding teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement prompting him to consider making personnel changes to the instructional leadership team.

At the time of the Institute's visit, the school's curriculum director, responsible for instructional leadership, had recently resigned. Because the remaining members of the school leadership team do not focus on instructional leadership, they understand the need to quickly fill the vacant position. The current school leadership team focuses on operations and enrollment. The school leadership team consists of a school principal and an executive director. The executive director currently focuses on transitioning the school from its current location to a nearby, newly renovated building. He exclusively supports long-range operational planning and enrollment management. The school principal manages the day-to-day operations of the school and ensures teachers have resource materials to carry out the school's academic program.

The school principal regularly observes teachers and consistently records their classroom teaching performance within a standardized teacher performance evaluation form. Though teachers receive regular observations, the evaluation form used provides minimal evidence of critical feedback. In addition, the school supplies contracted instructional consultants for their teachers, yet the observation team found no evidence of sustained or systematic coaching. Teachers also report that they submit weekly lesson plans. The principal provides lesson feedback and teachers report finding the lesson feedback helpful.

The school currently uses informal structures to support teachers' pedagogical needs. Teachers report the existence of grade level instructional leaders, yet they could not define

the roles and responsibilities of this position. A grade-level leader reports that she disseminates information from school leaders to her colleagues, acting in an informational role rather than a teacher-mentor role.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

The Academy helps academically struggling students by providing social, emotional and behavioral supports. Teachers report that students make progress, but the program does not have enough evidence to determine its effectiveness.

The school has comprehensive systems to support the behavioral, social and academic needs of all students. School leadership reports the school has a disproportionate percentage of challenging students whose social and emotional needs make them at-risk for academic failure. In order to support the social and emotional needs of all students, the school employs a full-time social worker who assists children with behavioral counseling. The school also employs a psychologist who helps to identify, monitor and provide a range of social and psychological services for students with social and emotional needs.

In addition to employing qualified social and psychological service providers, the school has a systematic, school-wide process to identify and deliver service to academically struggling students. However, the school lacks a process to monitor students during academic intervention phases. Teachers report the school has a three-tier academic intervention process for academically struggling students, known as Response to Intervention (RTI). Results from regularly administered reading fluency assessments and math IAs identify students for academic intervention services. However, the school does not have a standard achievement level within each assessment which qualifies a student for academic intervention services. The school's pupil personnel committee (PPC) comprised of classroom teachers, special education teachers and school leadership selects students for academic intervention services. The PPC meets weekly to discuss students who may need academic interventions and the school's special education teacher and academic interventionist coordinate intervention services.

The school examines incoming student records to identify students who may require special education services as well as examining records for students with a primary home language other than English. The school employs a special education coordinator who manages the caseload of identified special education students and provides direct educational services to these students. To meet the needs of English language learners, the school recently hired an English as-a-second-language teacher.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

The Academy has a safe and orderly learning environment.

Classrooms and public spaces are safe and orderly, and students treat teachers and peers with respect. The school has a strong *core-character* program which promotes the values of respect, responsibility, self control, cooperation, friendship, trustworthiness and service. Teachers provide direct instruction on core-character definitions. They also provide core-character examples and relevance for their students.

Teachers throughout the school consistently use the school's behavior management system. The behavior management system promotes positive behavior choices and has consequence and corrective action procedures for inappropriate behavior. The school has posted the color-coded behavior management system clearly within each classroom. Teachers promote an atmosphere of learning by insisting students follow classroom procedures for hand-raising, appropriately responding to questions and respectfully addressing adults. Consequently, teachers create quiet, disciplined classrooms which are conducive to learning. Students perform classroom transitions with efficiency allowing teachers to maximize instructional time.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

Teachers attend bi-weekly professional development which offers foundational training for novice teachers; although training session effectiveness is inconsistent.

Teachers have bi-monthly, school-wide professional development sessions with several topics selected by school leadership, and they are able to attend sessions most relevant to them and later attempt to introduce newly learned skills into their classrooms. Teachers report that the school principal listens to their concerns and will introduce topics that they request. Teachers report that the professional development sessions effectiveness depends on the topic. Professional development topics range from learning specific skills like using classroom technology to implementing the school's core-character program within classrooms. The range of topics with the school's bi-weekly professional development provides the staff with concrete skills needed to deliver instruction and the content knowledge needed to introduce new programs.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

The Academy has functioning operational management with staff, systems and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

The principal manages day-to-day operations. At the time of the visit, the school faced overcrowding challenges, but the principal still accommodated the needs of all school staff members, especially the school's special education teacher, social worker and psychologist. Despite limited classroom space, the school boasts a clear organizational system with teachers efficiently transitioning students throughout the building. To ameliorate the school's classroom space needs the Academy's executive director assists the school with all of its finance, operations and community outreach needs related to the school's relocation into a new facility.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

The Academy's board oversees the school's operations and educational program.

The board implements and maintains appropriate policies, systems and processes to support the school. Members provide insightful guidance to improve the school's growth and expansion. The board demonstrates knowledge of the school's academic accountability requirements and works to develop systems and procedures to improve classroom instruction.

Board members have systems in place to evaluate the school's leadership and complete regular and formative evaluations of the school's leadership. In addition to evaluating the school's principal, the board is in the process of reviewing its purchased service agreements with external vendors, including services purchased from the EMO.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at The Academy on April 27th and 28th, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Team Leader: Dr. Paul Wright was recently appointed Director of School Evaluation at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Dr. Wright will be responsible for the Institute's extensive school evaluation program, overseeing and in many cases leading school evaluation visits by Institute staff as well as coordinating the independent evaluations done on the Institute's behalf. Dr. Wright will lead ongoing efforts to refine the Institute's nationally regarded evaluation protocols and reporting tools; including oversight of the production of the Institute's school evaluation reports which provide valuable information to schools and the public about school progress. He will also coordinate internal staff training on school evaluation. Prior to joining the Institute, Dr. Wright directed Quality Education Partnership, Inc., a national consulting network that conducted evaluations of traditional and charter schools and created strategic management plans for school improvement. The former Development Director for School Design and Strategic Planning of Mesa Public Schools in Arizona, Dr. Wright developed unique schools of choice serving a wide spectrum of learners in coordination with Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright also served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group, an Educational Management Organization providing educational services to students throughout Arizona. Dr. Wright received his Ed.D. and his M. Ed. from Arizona State University and his B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany

Institute Team Member: Dr. Ron Miller is the Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute. After teaching for seven years in New York City public schools, Dr. Miller joined the central offices of the New York City Department of Education, where he conducted evaluative research and organizational studies. As Director of the Office of School Planning and Accountability, he served as the educational accountability officer for the Department. In that capacity, he developed school accountability reports for the city schools and coordinated staff development on their use for district administrators in all the high school and community school districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their competence to use data for school improvement. In this role he developed PASS, a school performance review system which was adopted in 600 city schools. Dr. Miller has regularly presented papers at annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds a BA degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University

External Team Member: Ms. Wilma Cordero is a consultant for the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Ms. Cordero was an American History/Social Studies teacher and department leader for over 20 years in the New York City public school system. In this

capacity she developed rigorous and creative curriculum units for heterogeneous classes, team-taught, supervised student teachers and mentored new teachers. During the last 15 years she has worked as a consultant doing research and evaluations for the New York City Department of Education (DOE). She is currently involved in conducting an evaluation of the Bilingual/ESL Teacher Leadership Academy program at Bank Street College. Ms. Cordero has also provided consultant services for John Schoener and Associates, Inc. evaluating education programs such as *New Beginnings*, an alternative program for high school students and *Reading First*, an early childhood literacy program. She holds a Masters degree in Political Science from the New School for Social Research. She is also the co-author of *Breaking Away from the Textbook: A Creative Approach to Teaching American History* (2006, 3rd ed.). The book provides teachers with strategies and activities to fill the gaps left by traditional textbooks and curricula and is widely used by teachers across the US and in other countries.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.

Visit the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.

Benchmarks 1B – 1H, and Benchmarks 2A – 2E were using in conducting this evaluation visit.

Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
State University Renewal Benchmark 1B Use of Assessment Data	<p>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and state performance standards; • the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board; • the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy; • the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school’s Accountability Plan goals are being achieved; • the school’s leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school’s academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services; • the school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students; • a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade; • the school regularly communicates each student’s progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and • the school regularly communicates to the school community overall academic performance as well as the school’s progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1C Curriculum	<p>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a well-defined curriculum framework for each grade and core academic subject, which includes the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve as specified by New York State standards and performance indicators;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program; the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans; teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum; the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson; lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school’s student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments; all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; the school’s instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms; the school’s leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas; the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional
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	<p>development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school’s leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and the school’s leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school’s academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<p>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students’ needs; all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program; the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students; the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures; all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students’ Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals; the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</p> <p>Student Order & Discipline</p>	<p>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied; classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.
<p><u>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</u></p> <p>Professional Development</p>	<p>The school’s professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers’ pedagogical skills and content knowledge.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s

	<p>mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests; • professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals; • teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities; • the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities; • the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and • the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.
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Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
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<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</p> <p>Mission & Key Design Elements</p>	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving
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	<p>its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; • the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; • where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;

- the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;
- the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter;
- the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner;
- the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints;
- the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies;
- the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and
- the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and professional development as needed.