



Charter Schools Institute  
*The State University of New York*

# **Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys**

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## **School Evaluation Report 2010-11**

Visit Date: March 17, 2011

Report Issued: October 12, 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (“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 SUNY 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 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, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **Document Performance.** The Institute collects information to build a database of a given 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.

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, if applicable, 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 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 notes areas in need of improvement 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.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to the Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys (“Brighter Choice Boys”) on March 17, 2011. The school is in its first year of operation. Based on an analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit, Brighter Choice Boys is on a trajectory toward meeting its Qualitative Educational Benchmarks (a component of the Renewal Benchmarks) by establishing the systems and procedures for an effective instructional program. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators discussed more fully later in the report. Some of the more salient indicators include the following:

### *Academic Success*

#### Areas of Strength

- Brighter Choice Boys has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data in ELA and math and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.
- Brighter Choice Boys’ teachers plan and implement purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to state standards and the school’s curriculum.
- Brighter Choice Boys’ school leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance.

#### Areas for Growth

- Brighter Choice Boys’ curriculum documents are scope and sequences based on the school’s identified “power-standards”. The school does not yet have a process for developing or revising its curriculum.

### *Organizational Capacity*

#### Areas of Strength

- Brighter Choice Boys’ organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

#### Areas for Growth

- Brighter Choice Boys is under enrolled.

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 15, 2009
Date Initial Charter Approved by: Board of Regents	January 12, 2010
School Opening Date	September 2010

### Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-2011	116 North Lake Avenue, Albany, NY	5	Albany

### Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	Brighter Choice Foundation	Nonprofit Foundation	2010 -Present

### Current Mission Statement

The mission of the Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys (BCMS-B) is to prepare boys for high school and college success while attending to the unique developmental needs of middle school students.

### Current Key Design Elements

- Differentiating instruction to meet the wide ranging learning needs of its entire scholar body and offering flexible learning spaces that compliment and encourage varied instructional methods.
- Emphasizing scholar choices with BCMSB's unique *iChoose: Citizenship, Integrity, Perseverance, & Scholarship* character campaign.
- Utilizing data from all aspects of its operation to inform decision making and improve scholar performance.
- Committing to technology use and integration into the school's academic program and culture.
- Providing each scholar an adult advisor and small-group seminar to support the positive social and emotional development of boys.
- Offering individualized counseling and guidance throughout the high school placement process.

**School Characteristics**

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	54	50	46	5	5	190

**Current Board of Trustees<sup>2</sup>**

Board Member Name	Term Expires	Position/Committees
Thomas W. Carroll	2011	Treasurer
Chris Bender	2011	Chair
Wendy Berry	2011	Member
Martha Snyder	2011	Member
Vanessa Threatte	2011	Member

**School Leader(s)**

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2010-Present	Darryl Williams, Principal

**School Visit History**

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Institute	March 17, 2011

<sup>1</sup> 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.)

<sup>2</sup> Source: School renewal application and Institute board information.

## **SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

### **Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence**

#### **Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)**

*Brighter Choice Boys has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data in ELA and math and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.*

Brighter Choice Boys' staff regularly administers assessments aligned to their curriculum and state standards in English language arts (ELA) and math. This data is collected, analyzed and used to improve instruction. Teachers also create end-of-unit assessments and daily "exit-tickets" in ELA, Math and other core subjects. The school's staff analyzes ELA and Math results on a school-wide level, whereas teachers independently analyze social studies and science end-of-unit assessments. Teachers collaborate within and between grade levels on the norming of classroom assessment items. Teachers use classroom assessment results to identify content for re-teaching and to develop differentiated instruction strategies.

#### **Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)**

*Brighter Choice Boys' curriculum documents are scope and sequences based on the school's identified "power-standards". The school does not yet have a process for developing or revising its curriculum.*

Brighter Choice Boys' teachers rely on commercial materials to guide their lesson planning. The school's leaders coach the teaching staff on instructional techniques and verify alignment of the curriculum materials to state standards. School leadership monitors curriculum pacing through the school-wide assessment program in ELA and math and makes recommendations to teachers on modifying curriculum topics. At the time of the Institute's visit, teacher's curriculum pacing guides and procedures to ensure vertical curriculum alignment differed across content areas. The school leadership reports they are developing procedures to ensure content alignment between grade levels.

#### **Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)**

*Brighter Choice Boys' teachers plan and implement purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to state standards and the school's curriculum.*

Brighter Choice Boys' students are cognitively engaged within classrooms. Instruction is grade-appropriate and teachers implement purposeful lessons. However, they do not introduce activities that promote higher-order thinking. As a result, teachers implement lessons with clear objectives but do not differentiate their instruction or ask students challenging questions.

#### **Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)**

*Brighter Choice Boys' school leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance.*

Brighter Choice Boys' instructional leadership team provides teachers with extensive informal feedback on their classroom instruction. The school's leadership team systematically follows-up

with teachers regarding feedback. They provide targeted support to teachers and assist teachers with improving their instruction. Teachers are aware of the evaluation criteria and they report they have been held accountable for quality instruction.

### **At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)**

*Brighter Choice Boys uses clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities and provides sufficient resources and support to meet their needs.*

Brighter Choice Boys' special education teacher adequately monitors the progress of students with disabilities. The school has a response to intervention process to support academically struggling students. The school has an academic intervention service program in ELA and students are placed in the program based on prior state assessment results and with school leadership input. The school has afterschool tutorial programs in mathematics which were created by a teacher at the school. Additionally, the special education teacher has academic strategies and materials for classroom teachers to use while working with special education and academically struggling students.

### **Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)**

*Brighter Choice Boys promotes a culture of learning and scholarship..*

Teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines which promote an atmosphere of learning. The school has a comprehensive behavior management system which adjusts to students' age and ability to adhere to the system. Brighter Choice Boys give students an increasing level of autonomy as they get older in order to increase each students' ability to choose appropriate consequences. While the school has a clear discipline policy, its implementation is not always consistent between classrooms.

### **Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)**

*Brighter Choice Boys has a comprehensive professional development program.*

Brighter Choice Boys' professional development program is implemented school-wide and focuses on teacher's needs. The school's leadership team structures the professional development sessions and modifies the content of sessions based on teacher needs. The school leadership team reports that they observe and listen to teachers and to ensure professional development sessions compliment support their needs. The school's leadership team, after observing teachers and providing feedback, ensures that strategies covered in professional development sessions are implemented in classrooms.

### **Mission (Benchmark 2. A)**

*Brighter Choice Boys is faithful to its mission.*

Brighter Choice Boys is committed to educating adolescent boys with a longer school day and a college bound education focus. The school establishes a culture of scholarship and college readiness. For example, course descriptions mimic college syllabi including a seminar curriculum. The school

places an emphasis on the use of technology, with teachers reporting that school leaders constantly emphasize the integration of technology into learning experiences.

### **Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)**

*Brighter Choice Boys' organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.*

Brighter Choice Boys is competently managed and the school's leadership team is in the process of developing procedures to improve effective day-to-day management. Brighter Choice Boys is currently under enrolled and school leaders understand that this issue may impact the school's ability to effectively deliver educational services. As a result, they are taking steps to increase enrollment. At the time of the visit, the school's attendance rate, for enrolled students, is above 90%.

### **Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)**

*The Brighter Choice Boys' school board has worked effectively to oversee the total educational program.*

The Brighter Choice Boys' school board receives detailed school data and educational program information from the school's leader. Board members report that this information improves their decision making capabilities and allows them to effectively plan for the future. The school board has acknowledged areas of expertise that are underrepresented and are planning to recruit new board members with these areas of expertise. The school board has developed a clear plan and structure for evaluating the school leader and holding him accountable for student achievement.

### **Conduct of the Visit**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys on March 17, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

**Team Leader: Joe Nicolella** has worked as a consultant for over seven years with the State University of New York (SUNY) Charter Schools Institute and the SUNY Research Foundation. Primary responsibilities have included the review and critique of curriculum documents for over thirty schools submitted to the Institute as a part of the initial charter school application process and the critique of all curricula submitted at the time of charter renewal or changes in academic program. He has also served as a member of over thirty five CSI school review teams responsible for initial applications, grant applications, annual school review and renewal of charter. Mr. Nicolella earned a Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Education. He also holds a Master of Science in Advanced Classroom Teaching and a Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Nicolella has also completed all coursework and examinations for the doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. All of his professional training was completed at the University at Albany.

**Institute Team Member: Sean Fitzsimons** is a Program Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He supports SUNY's new charter school application process by addressing questions from applicants, reviewing and analyzing new applications, coordinating the

review of applications to establish new charter schools by Institute staff and external educational experts, and drafting application summaries and other related documents. Mr. Fitzsimons most recently served as Chair of the Social Studies Department at Manassas Park Middle School in Manassas Park, Virginia where he guided curriculum sequencing and pacing to align the school's courses with state standards, trained and mentored faculty, and designed and implemented courses in Civics and Economics, American Studies, American History, and World Geography. He also taught remedial reading curriculum to special education students and English language learners. Prior to his service at Manassas Park Middle School, Mr. Fitzsimons was an Administrative and Research Assistant at the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. In addition, Mr. Fitzsimons was a visiting instructor at Shanghai Teachers University in Shanghai, China, where he designed and taught curriculum for English language learners. Mr. Fitzsimons received his Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction and Secondary Education Social Studies from George Mason University and his Bachelor of Arts degrees in International Relations and Political Science from the State University of New York, College at Geneseo.

**Institute Team Member: Maya Lagana** is an Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. She is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans and the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Ms. Lagana joined the Institute as an Analyst for School Evaluation. In this position she scheduled ongoing school evaluation visits, communicated with school team members and administrative staff regarding site visit logistics and requirements, developed and disseminated RFP documents, and coordinated the recruitment and work of consultants. Prior to joining the Institute, Ms. Lagana served as a research intern at New Visions for Public Schools in New York City, where she performed data analysis on school performance and conducted research on a variety of educational issues. In 2008, Ms. Lagana was a Project Manager at Boston Collegiate Charter School in Boston, Massachusetts, where she was responsible for creating and implementing a data organization system as well as analyzing data. During that same year, Ms. Lagana also helped to craft grant proposals and formulate a strategic fundraising plan for Achievement First in Brooklyn, New York. Previously, Ms. Lagana was an Assessment Specialist at the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence in Washington D.C., where she helped to develop teacher certification exams and analyzed item level statistics and demographics information. In addition to her extensive background as an analyst, Ms. Lagana also has experience as a third grade classroom teacher in New York City. Ms. Lagana received her Master of Public Administration degree in Policy Analysis from New York University's Wagner School for Public Service, her Masters of Education degree from Mercy College and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carleton College.

**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.

<b>Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</b>	
<b><u>Evidence Category</u></b>	<b><u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u></b>
<b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1B</b>	<p><b>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and state performance standards;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy;</li> <li>• the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school’s Accountability Plan goals are being achieved;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school regularly communicates each student’s progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Assessment Data</b>	
<b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1C</b>	<p><b>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pedagogy</b></p>	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum;</li> <li>• the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and</li> <li>• the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.</li> </ul> <p><b>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time;</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instructional Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>The school has strong instructional leadership.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement;</li> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement);</li> <li>• the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual</li> </ul>

<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</b></p> <p><b>At-Risk Students</b></p>	<p>teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students’ needs;</li> <li>all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program;</li> <li>the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students’ Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals;</li> <li>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</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</b></p> <p><b>Student Order &amp; Discipline</b></p>	<p><b>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied;</li> <li>classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident;</li> <li>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</li> <li>throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</b></p> <p><b>Professional Development</b></p>	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program;</li> <li>the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s</li> </ul>

	<p>mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests;</li> <li>• professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals;</li> <li>• teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities;</li> <li>• the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities;</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.</li> </ul>
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<b>Renewal Question 2</b> <b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>	
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<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
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<b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</b>  <b>Mission &amp; Key Design Elements</b>	<p><b>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stakeholders are aware of the mission;</li> <li>• the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and</li> <li>• the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.</li> </ul>
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<b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</b>  <b>Parents &amp; Students</b>	<p><b>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school;</li> <li>• the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it;</li> <li>• few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school;</li> <li>• a large number of parents seek entrance to the school;</li> <li>• parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and</li> <li>• the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.</li> </ul>
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<b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</b>  <b>Organizational Capacity</b>	<p><b>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations;</li> <li>• staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission;</li> <li>• the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving</li> </ul>
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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"> <li>• the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals;</li> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined;</li> <li>• the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability;</li> <li>• the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted;</li> <li>• the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and</li> <li>• the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</b></p> <p><b>Board Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</b></p> <p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> </ul>

- 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 updated as needed.