Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

King Center Charter School

School Evaluation Report
2009-2010

Visit Date: March 4, 2010

Report Issued: April 4, 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 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 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 charter schools authorized by them. By providing this oversight and feedback, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **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.

- **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.

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 first section, titled 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. 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. The third section, entitled School Evaluation Visit, presents the analysis of evidence collected during the current evaluation visit. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided as background and context for the current evaluation.

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit to the King Center Charter School ("King Center"), the school appears to be making adequate progress toward achieving its mission and meeting the SUNY Charter Renewal Benchmarks considered during this evaluation. Although this conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in this report, some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Academic Success

Areas of Strength:

- King Center has in place a comprehensive system in which curriculum development, assessment, instructional leadership, and professional development are interconnected.

- As the school year progresses, the curriculum is continually updated to meet the needs of students, based on school-wide assessments. The resultant student data is used to continually update pacing templates, which list when and in what order skills should be taught and assessed.

- Students in observed lessons were on-task and largely thoughtful participants in classroom activities.

- Teacher evaluations included comments of varying depth, focusing on teaching and learning.

- Students are identified as in need of intervention based on the data coordinator and classroom teachers' review of test results at Data Meetings. Classroom teachers monitor the interventions by charting student achievement data to show each child's response to recently implemented interventions.

Areas for Growth:

- Evaluators perceived the expectations for writing to be low and the scoring of assignments to be unreliable.

- In general teachers were well aware of a variety of techniques for differentiating instruction within groups. They cited examples of their own practice and were just beginning to differentiate in a sustained manner within groups.

- While the school's teacher evaluations addressed broad themes of teaching and learning, teachers reported being unclear from the formal evaluations their specific strengths and areas needing improvement.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength:

- School leaders monitor the school's programs and make changes if necessary. They continually evaluate the delivery of curriculum and instruction through the assessment system and structured classroom observation

- The school board is cognizant of student-level issues and the impact of the program on students enrolled in the school. They are strong advocates for the mission of the school and at the same time are well aware of the school's academic performance relative to its accountability plan goals.

Areas for Growth:

- As the school grows, demand on the school's leadership structure will increase, especially with the greater importance of establishing strong school culture and discipline for a pre-adolescent student population.

- The academic coordinator serves as the school's instructional leader but currently in a part-time position. Adding additional grades and classes will increase the demands on this position and the existing data coordinator position.

- The bulk of the current assessment system is managed with hand-written reports and paper documentation. Adding additional grades and classes will increase the demands on this system and presumably the need for easy access to data across grades and over time.

- The school has recently experienced high teacher turnover. While teachers appear to be leaving because of extenuating circumstances, rather than school-related issues, evaluators did not find evidence of a systematic approach to meeting long-term staffing needs.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	January 25, 2000
Date Initial Charter Approved by: Operation of Law	April 4, 2000
School Opening Date	August, 2000

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades At This Location	District
2000-present	938 Genesee St., Buffalo, NY 14211	K-4	Buffalo City School District

Renewal

Type of Renewal	Date Approved by the SUNY Trustees
Initial Short-Term Renewal (2 years)	May 17, 2005
Subsequent One-Year Renewal With Conditions	March 20, 2007
Subsequent Full-Term Renewal	January 15, 2008

Current Mission Statement

The King Center Charter School partners with parents and the community to ensure a caring student-centered environment of high expectations and academic excellence supported by evidence-based curriculum taught by a deeply-committed and highly-qualified staff.

Current Key Design Elements

- An early admissions program for three- and four-year olds with an optional home-based school readiness program;
- Strong parental involvement through participation in three conferences a year, homework support and volunteering in classrooms;
- Rigorous New York state standards focused curriculum;
- Ongoing professional development activities for teachers;
- Use of assessment data to provide differentiated instruction and dynamic pacing guides;
- Support social and emotional development daily through the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum; and
- A commitment to technology, making it possible for all teachers to integrate technology into their teaching on a daily basis and to share multimedia reading portfolios with parents.

Current Board of Trustees[1]

Name	Term Expires	Position/Committees
Lois Johnson	6/30/2012	Co-President – Education & Curriculum, Personnel & Nominating
Catherine Wettlaufer	6/30/2012	Co-President – Finance & Facilities, Policies & Procedures
Michelle Martin	6/30/2010	Vice President – Education & Curriculum, Personnel & Nominating
Keith Frome	6/30/2010	Secretary – Education & Curriculum
Robert Kresse	6/30/2012	Treasurer – Finance & Facilities
Lillian Bell	6/30/2010	Parent Rep.
Susan Koch	6/30/2011	Parent Rep. – Policies & Procedures
Brooke A. Tompkins	6/30/2012	Trustee – Finance & Facilities
Timothy Kupinski	6/30/2012	Trustee – Finance & Facilities
Sherryl Weems	6/30/2011	Trustee – Education & Curriculum, Personnel & Nominating
Wendell Whitaker	6/30/2011	Trustee – Finance & Facilities, Policies & Procedures

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2000-01 – 2009-10	Dr. Claity Massey, Director

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment[2]	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2000-01	80	80	80	K-3	K-3	185
2001-02	80	100	101	K-3	K-4	185
2002-03	80	100	100	K-3	K-4	185
2003-04	80	100	100	K-3	K-4	185
2004-05	80	100	105	K-3	K-4	185
2005-06	105	105	105	K-4	K-4	185
2006-07	105	105	104	K-4	K-4	185
2007-08	105	105	101	K-4	K-4	185
2008-09	105	105	105	K-4	K-4	185
2009-10	105	132	131	K-4	K-4	185

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[1] Source: Institute Board records.
[2] 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 Demographics

	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Percent of School Enrollment[3]	**Percent of Buffalo CSD Enrollment**	**Percent of School Enrollment[4]**	**Percent of Buffalo CSD Enrollment**	**Percent of School Enrollment[5]**	**Percent of Buffalo CSD Enrollment[6]**
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	2	0	2	0	1
Black or African American	95	57	97	57	97	57
Hispanic	2	14	1	15	0	15
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	1	0	2	0	3
White	0	25	2	25	2	24
Multiracial	3	0	0	0	1	0
Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities[7]	18	N/A	20	N/A	17	N/A
Limited English Proficient	0	7	0	7	0	8
Free/Reduced Lunch						
Free Lunch Eligible	87	70	83	72	78	74
Reduced-Lunch Eligible	7	8	13	8	8	8

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator	Date
2000-01	First-Year Visit	Institute	May 24, 2001
2001-02	Second-Year Visit	Institute	April 29, 2002
2002-03	Third-Year Visit	External	February 24-25, 2004
2003-04	NA	NA	NA
2004-05	Initial Renewal Visit	Institute	October 8, 2004
2005-06	NA	NA	NA
2006-07	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	September 20, 2006
2007-08	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	September 26, 2007
2008-09	NA	NA	NA
2009-10	School Evaluation Visit	Institute	March 4, 2010

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[3] Source: 2006-07 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

[4] Source: 2007-08 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

[5] Source: 2008-09 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

[6] Aggregated District data not yet available for 2008-09 school year.

[7] New York State Education Department does not report special education data. Statistics given were provided by the school.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE

Background

Regardless of the type of visit, Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized around 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 section of the School Evaluation Report begins with a summary of the observations made and the conclusions drawn during previous visits to the school. This information is used by evaluation teams in preparation for the visit and assists the observers in understanding the accomplishments and challenges the school has faced. Similarly, this information provides the reader with insight into the Institute's inspection of the school's academic program and conclusions from prior visits, including those conducted by external experts on behalf of the Institute. Following this summary is a detailed analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. 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 Evaluation Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a renewal visit to King Center Charter School on September 25-26, 2007. As part of the Institute's visit protocol, the evaluation team: observed classrooms; interviewed administrators, board members and teachers; and reviewed student work and other documents. A Renewal Report was provided to the school's board of trustees outlining the major conclusions from the visit; these conclusions are briefly summarized below.

- King Center established a system to gather assessment and evaluation data for improving instructional effectiveness and student learning in core academic subjects.

- The priorities set by the school's leadership were responsive to, and consistent with, achieving the school's academic Accountability Plan goals and addressing academic deficiencies.

- At the time of the renewal inspection visit, classroom instruction was uneven with some classrooms establishing clear expectations and effective structure while others were characterized by a more mechanical and less engaging classroom environment.

- Professional development was aligned with the school's current educational priorities.

- King Center has fulfilled its mission to provide academic support by enlisting the collaboration and involvement of family and community.

- The school's improved student achievement results over the last year are in part attributable to the school board of trustees' active and productive engagement in the school's operation.

Evaluation Visit Benchmark Analysis and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

King Center has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve student learning. The school regularly administers, collects, and analyzes reading and mathematics assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and to state standards. Teachers and school leaders use the assessment results to adjust instruction among classroom groups, though differentiation of instruction within groups is limited. The school follows clear policies and procedures for using student performance data.

King Center's staff uses the assessments to create grade level matrices that guide the creation of curriculum/pacing guides, designed to keep teachers and students moving through the standards. The school administered the state assessments from the previous year in October as well as Acuity, a standardized test aligned to the state standards, in November/December. Small classroom groups are reconfigured approximately every six weeks in order to reteach skills that students have not mastered. In addition to the standardized assessments in English language arts, the school administers Scott Foresman unit benchmark assessments every five weeks and the program's selected comprehension assessments weekly, as well as Fox in the Box literacy assessments at least twice a year. In mathematics teachers select items weekly from published Scott Foresman mathematics tests. These practices have generally been followed since at least the Institute's renewal inspection visit in 2007.

King Center has produced a comprehensive system in which curriculum development, assessment, instructional leadership, and professional development are interconnected. The instructional coordinator indicated that in her role she continually refines procedures for reviewing and analyzing assessments in order to get teachers to use data deliberately in making their instructional decisions.

Under the direction of the instructional coordinator, the data coordinator analyzes assessment data by individual student, individual teacher, and teachers collectively to develop the school's professional development agenda and revise the English language arts and mathematics pacing guides as needed. The weakest skills are ranked and identified to set the pacing guide for the following six weeks of whole-class instruction. After analyzing the benchmark and Acuity assessment results, the data coordinator meets with teachers. These meetings are documented on a "Data Meeting Form" which covers the type of assessment reviewed, deficits and strengths among the tested state performance indicators (target skills) and an action plan—for both whole group and small group.

Data spreadsheets are used to tally student performance on individual items and aggregate results to the classroom level. Commonly missed items are color coded and students who perform below standards are identified. Most members of the visit team noted that the sample spreadsheets were generally completed by hand which may not allow the school to easily evaluate data over time. Similarly, the data coordinator compiled benchmark and school-wide assessment data by hand on

graph paper. Without electronic record keeping, the wealth of student data cannot be easily analyzed to determine grade-level, subject-specific and school-wide trends beyond the classroom at one point in time.

The Acuity test, administered three times a year to 3rd and 4th graders, is regarded as the most important in establishing the scope and sequence. While the Scott Foresman tests contribute to the pacing, Acuity helps the school predict how students are likely to perform on state assessments. As the school leaders determined that the Acuity scores appear to be inflated, they have raised their expectations on Acuity to match up with success on the state assessments. They have also determined that at the end of 2nd grade there is alignment with Fox in the Box and Acuity. These comparisons attest to the school's attention to ensuring that the indicators of student performance are valid and reliable.

Aside from the standardized assessments, the evaluation of student work is less structured with teachers' grading writing assignments using the commercial curriculum's rubrics and conducting their own item analyses of each weekly assessment. The data coordinator periodically checks the grading; however, despite these reviews the quality of graded student writing that was reviewed by evaluators was relatively low with "4"s often given to assignments that were below grade level.

Interviewed teachers reported instances of reteaching based on the assessment results, including adding center activities to focus on skills not yet mastered, and adjusting the pacing guide to spend more time on particular skills. Students are grouped homogenously for both math and reading; with groups changing every Acuity exam cycle. Given this kind of grouping, the lesson activity tended to be the same for all members of the respective groups. In interviews, teachers reported some within-group differentiation such as using leveled texts and shortening assignments. Also, students are identified for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) based on current benchmark assessment results. Some teachers reported that students move between groups as needed based on assessment results and that there was a weekly process for changing groups, although it seemed this process was largely informal and was more of a discussion between lead- and co-teacher

On the day of the visit, an entire grade was reviewing multiplication skills, because a recent assessment demonstrated that approximately "one-third of the students were having difficulties" mastering multiplication numeracy. Additionally, based on the same assessment results, multiplication is now also a focus of the grade's AIS instruction.

King Center follows clear policies and procedures for the use of student performance data. Teachers are clear about school expectations for how to use data, about their responsibilities for Data Meetings and maintaining Data Meeting Forms. The school has consistent procedures for determining report card grades and promotion, which are regularly communicated to families through weekly progress reports. Report card grades are based on selection tests, spelling tests, writing rubrics, benchmark assessments, and center work using rubrics from Scott Foresman. They are distributed three times per year. Parents must return and sign the progress reports, which contain the same elements as report cards.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

King Center has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework based on a commercial curriculum program. Teachers clearly know what to teach in English language arts and mathematics and when to teach it. The school has adequate instructional materials that are aligned to the ELA and

math curriculum framework. The school has an effective process for reviewing and revising its pacing guide and reviews its curriculum framework to the extent that it monitors student performance through its assessment program. Revision of the curriculum is generally limited by the resources that it draws from its package of Scott Foresman materials.

King Center staff conducted a review process a number of years ago to select curricular material. The staff selected Scott Foreman's resources, which they determined to be aligned to New York State standards. The school's curriculum framework is based on a review of the standards and of state assessments from the prior three years. School leaders were able to discuss how they ensured all standards were covered, both through an initial gap analysis and then looking back after each Acuity assessment. Teachers also are responsible for highlighting standards as they are taught to ensure full coverage.

King Center's year begins with curriculum/pacing guides that are based on student assessment results from the end of the previous year. During the summer, the data coordinator develops the first few weeks of pacing guides for teachers, drawn from skills which students had not mastered. After teachers have completed these units, they develop the pacing guide on their own and submit them to the instructional leadership team for review. Teachers reported that in their review, school leaders might ask them to add more time for particular objectives or to rearrange the order of standards taught.

As the school year progresses, the curriculum is continually updated to meet the needs of students, based on the school-wide assessments. The resultant student data is used to continually update pacing templates, which list when and in what order skills should be taught and assessed. The pacing guide template requires the inclusion of state standards, performance indicators, objective, dates, assessments and approved resources. The instructional coordinator reported that the pacing guides were updated, including prioritizing and changing order of skill instruction, in November and would be again right after the inspection visit. The updates represent a fluid process for a "responsive curriculum."

The school's curricula and pacing guides are uniformly structured and significantly detailed, including identifying skill areas needing attention, indicating grade level on state performance indicators, related Scott Foresman resources, summaries of class performance on various unit tests, Acuity Results, Data Meeting Forms, and hand-written action plans. The inspection team found them to be a valuable, comprehensive resource in which teachers actively engaged, as attested by the extent and depth of annotations in them.

Using the pacing guide to identify learning targets, teachers plan and submit lesson plans for review every Friday. One teacher reported that unless they hear back that there is a problem, they go ahead and teach the lessons as planned.   At the beginning of the year, the instructional coordinator provided teachers with a model/template for the lesson plans, reviewed expectations and provided more extensive comments to teachers on their lessons than she did as the year progressed.

King Center has adequate instructional materials in English language arts and mathematics that are aligned to its curriculum framework. The school relies heavily on Scott Foresman for these materials. Teachers draw on supplementary materials from Scott Foresman online to provide content for their classrooms' student center activities, for guided reading questions and as a source for math problems. Some teachers augmented the writing program with additional materials they developed themselves.

Teachers generally indicated that there was limited material available for teaching science and social studies; many of the materials in these subjects were teacher created.

A formal process for reviewing and revising the curriculum is generally limited to the pacing guides. After every benchmark assessment, teachers and school leaders revisit the pacing guides to identify skills in which students are still weak and to determine if more time is needed to achieve skill mastery, including time during allotted reteaching weeks. However, more broadly, when asked about curriculum development for the 5th grade, which will be offered for the first time next year, teachers were unaware of any efforts to develop the new curriculum, or if they would be consulted on vertical alignment issues.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

High quality basic skill instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school. Teachers implement purposeful lessons with general objectives aligned to state standards and the school's curriculum. Students in observed lessons were on-task and largely thoughtful participants in the activities at hand, though these activities tended to promote basic skills rather than higher order thinking or problem solving. There was little evidence of differentiation of classroom instruction, including in center activities.

In classes, teachers explicitly referred to the learning target for lessons and posted lists of "must dos" and "may dos" so that students knew what they were expected to complete before leaving learning center stations. Whole class instruction tended to focus on mastering target skills with teachers purposefully and regularly referencing the stated lesson objective. Some questioning was rigorous: teachers asked questions that required students to analyze and apply, though typically not to the extent of requiring students to synthesize and evaluate.

In all observed classes students worked in centers, whose activity focused on the day's stated objective. Students generally appeared to be successful in meeting the objective both during independent center work time and when doing guided practice with the teacher in small groups. For example, in one grade the English language arts and math centers were highly structured and purposefully planned, with detailed procedures for tasks students were to perform in each center and for transitioning between centers. In this instance, the classroom ELA centers consisted of lead-teacher guided reading, test preparation and skill-building, independent vocabulary building, an activity devoted to the current target skill, a listening center, and a computer center for skill-building practice.

Students in observed lessons were on-task and largely thoughtful participants in class activities, though these activities tended to promote basic skills rather than higher order thinking or problem solving. During observed lessons students needed little reminding from teachers to remain on task and generally participated in the discussion with relevant responses. When working independently in centers, students worked diligently and if finished early, found and began work on acceptable tasks. When working with the teacher in small groups, all students participated, either voluntarily or by teacher insistence.

While the inspection team observed productive teaching and learning, the activity concentrated on basic skills. The center activities observed in both math and reading did not require much higher order thinking. Math groups engaged in activities that were largely computation-based, though grade appropriate. In reading, comprehension questions ranged in level, but were largely factual in nature

rather than those requiring analysis. In these groups, teachers tended to focus on vocabulary and recall of the story, with limited deeper analysis.

Based on review of graded documents, the evaluation team found that expectations for writing were low and the scoring of assignments did not align with the scoring rubric.   In one observed upper grade class, based on a writing assignment from a benchmark assessment using rubrics from the Scott Foresman curriculum, the writing was largely simplistic and included many errors yet many such pieces were given 3s and 4s, despite not meeting all of the criteria laid out in the rubric nor being grade level appropriate. There was little commentary beyond the rubric grade so it was not possible to determine the reason for the high grades. In another upper-grade class, the assignment had called for students to write a memoir about the best memory they had of King Center. Student "memoirs" were one paragraph in length. There was no evidence of graphic organizers to elicit more thoughtful essays. Many of the final drafts had multiple grammatical errors. Regardless, teachers had assigned mostly 3's and 4's to the final drafts.

While classrooms were organized by homogenous groups into centers, their activities did not vary based on student level during observations. Teachers reported that instruction was differentiated across small groups during center time, though the inspection team members did not report observing such varied activity. All students appeared to work on the same material regardless of previous skill or reading level. The only differentiation observed in center activities (including the guided reading group) was a shortened assignment for some groups and a routine for individual students to work alone. In math centers, if students finished early, they could turn to an individualized folder of worksheets; some students were allowed to work with enrichment flash cards when they finished center assignments. The special education coordinator reported that she worked with classroom teachers to differentiate activity in centers when needed.

Teachers reported that differentiated materials were used in centers and provided examples of methods of differentiation used in their lessons. For example, when students were working at a vocabulary center the teacher reported that some students worked from a text which had the definitions of each word highlighted while other students worked from a text that did not have the definition indicated and had to identify it themselves. In another activity the teacher reported that she created three different worksheets for different level students: at the low level students were to draw pictures of the concept, in the middle students were to draw pictures and write sentences and at the high level students were to just write sentences.

In general teachers were well aware of a variety of techniques for differentiating instruction within groups. They cited examples of their own practice that were not observed during the evaluation.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

King Center's instructional leadership is strong, though limited in its capacity because of time constraints. The leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement. They provide teachers with sustained and systematic support, focusing on implementing the school's curriculum and assessment system. The leaders conduct regular evaluations. Teachers are held accountable for quality instruction and student achievement; however, not all teachers were aware of any perceived instructional deficiencies.

In interviews, teachers explained what the school leaders expected of them and their students.   They reported that there were high expectations of them, insofar as they were held to strict standards in

using the curriculum, following the pacing guide, and reinforcing the school structure. Teachers indicated that the school's instructional priority was that, "all children should have an opportunity to be successful here" and that, "what the kids need drives all instruction." Teachers appeared to understand that they were accountable to leaders for student achievement and indicated that the leaders modeled these expectations.

The instructional coordinator, who is on site two-to-three days a week, focuses on instructional delivery. Teachers reported that she gives a variety of suggestions about how to do things more efficiently in order for students to be successful. One teacher estimated that each week she received at least one extended observation with written feedback and four or five brief observations. The two coordinators conduct these short visits using a protocol to monitor teachers' implementation of current content and procedures, including determining that teachers are following the pacing guide, implementing the lesson plan, and whether they literally checked off the standards they had covered for the week. Teachers indicated that debriefing typically takes place verbally in the hallway or at a quick sit-down meeting. They reported that the feedback was useful and was in line with their own evaluation of their performance and that the leaders often directed teachers to talk with, or observe, their colleagues who were particularly good at a skill they had not yet mastered themselves.

While school leaders were able to point to many ways in which they worked with teachers to implement the school's comprehensive curriculum-assessment model, some teachers reported that they received little coaching to address their own specific areas needing improvement. They were largely unable to describe specific identified weaknesses and how the leaders were working with them to improve in their own pedagogical skills. Further, they could not articulate any specific next steps they had been advised to follow in their own professional development.

Teachers indicated that the instructional coordinator is their direct supervisor for instruction and that she leads all-staff professional development meetings, when available, especially those pertaining to implementing the pacing guide. They reported that the instructional coordinator is "very accessible" and confirmed that they seek support from the data coordinator when the instructional coordinator is not present at the school.

Instructional leaders conduct regular evaluations. Teachers understood the evaluation process and were well-aware of the criteria. The reviewed evaluations were largely positive and tended to focus on elements outside of instruction.

Teachers are evaluated in the four main areas in Danielson's protocol—assessment, curriculum, professional development and instruction, with several indicators under each area and an overall component score. A number of indicators address non-classroom issues, such as planning, professionalism and attendance at school functions. In general, it was unclear how the sub-criteria for evaluation were developed and/or refined, given that some of these items were inputs and some required yes/no entries. Additionally, some items appeared to be misclassified: "modify and adjust instruction in accordance with analysis of student performance" was listed in the curriculum section along with "offer students opportunities to independently demonstrate appropriate instructional responses during lesson/center work."

Evaluations included comments of varying depth, focusing on teaching and learning. For example: "[The teacher] continues to embrace the model of using data to guide all practices. She readily accepts the challenges of creating a responsive curriculum for her students as well as establishing a learning environment that is guided, supportive and maximizes instructional time." While

concentrating on teaching, the comments did not contain specific strategies for improving instruction. A number of teachers expressed the sentiment that they would like to receive more specific suggestions on improving their practice.   They were unable to point to areas where they needed to improve based on their formal evaluations and indicated that they did not have specific goals for growth.

Teachers know that student achievement data informs the teacher evaluation process and were aware of the school's Accountability Plan goals.   They are aware of the data and school performance from their participation in Data Meetings and the action plans contained in Data Meeting Forms.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

King Center is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically. The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students, provides sufficient resources and supports to meet their needs, and adequately monitors their progress. Teachers are provided with sufficient support to help them meet the needs of at-risk students.

Students are identified as in need of intervention based on the data coordinator and classroom teachers' review of test results at Data Meetings. Students may receive in-class support in centers or daily AIS activities. The classroom teachers monitor the interventions by charting student achievement data to show each child's response to recently implemented interventions. If there appears to be a greater need to be addressed through special education services, the staff follows a Response to Intervention (RTI) process, in which the classroom teachers and the special education coordinator develop a follow-up intervention strategy.

The school's Academic Intervention Services (AIS) play a central role in reinforcing individual intervention efforts and monitoring student progress before considering special education referral. The school uses assessment data to identify students in need of AIS services, reevaluates them at each benchmark assessment (every five-to-six weeks), and regroups them accordingly. The school uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) model if these interventions are unsuccessful and there is a consensus among the staff that special education services are needed. This approach dovetails with that of the Buffalo schools which have a referral form, where six interventions taken prior to referral must be listed to substantiate the need for a referral. The school benefits from a productive working relationship with the Buffalo Committee on Special Education and works with it throughout the referral process.

The school provides a variety of in-class and school-wide interventions to meet the needs of at-risk students. AIS provides remedial support as part of a structured school-wide program. There is a scheduled time each day for one or two groups from each class to receive targeted support, using Scott Foresman remedial materials. The special education teacher provides push-in and pull-out services. A staff AIS teacher devotes part of her time to working with the special education students. The Waterford Early Reading computer program is used at the end of the day for some students as an additional intervention. The school offers an optional summer program, which, while not mandatory, is highly recommended and most students attend.

The special education coordinator reported that she had sufficient resources to carry out her responsibilities. She generally uses classroom curricular materials as well as supplementary materials from the Scott Foresman website. While generally covering the same target skills as those being taught in the classrooms, she also addresses other skill areas based on assessment data and in

consultation with the school leaders. During an observed resource room session, students were practicing listening comprehension and note-taking, based on their weak performance in these areas on the most recent assessment. The activity was well-scaffolded and aligned with concurrent classroom activity.

The school's special education coordinator monitors the progress of all special education students, through both regular progress-monitoring of IEP goals and data analysis from interim assessments. Prior to each report card the coordinator, the respective classroom teachers and supplemental service providers, generate these reports, which evaluate progress toward achieving the IEP goals. The data coordinator produces reports on the academic performance of special education students after each benchmark assessment. The special education coordinator has on-line access to all student grades, enabling her to quickly make program adjustments and to evaluate the special education program as a whole.

The special education coordinator works closely with classroom teachers to ensure that they have the supports to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. She regularly leads professional development sessions on interventions, best practices and policies. A full day of summer training was devoted to special education topics and gave teachers an opportunity to review IEPs. Because the special education coordinator has access to teacher lesson plans, the content of instruction is well coordinated.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

King Center promotes a culture of learning in a safe and orderly environment. Teachers have effective classroom management skills and students have internalized routines that promote learning. The school has a clear discipline system that is consistently applied.

The school environment is calm, hallway transitions are orderly, and transitions within classrooms are quiet and efficient. Teachers have clear procedures in place for students to engage in independent work and transitions between centers are quick, quiet and efficient. Students work well independently. Classrooms are neat, organized and print rich. Despite the absence of sound barriers between classes, the school is quiet and students are able to focus on the teacher. Teachers have clear expectations for proper behavior and admonishments are quick and effective with few interruptions because of behavior issues.

All teachers use some type of positive behavior modification system, as well as routines throughout the day that allow for learning time to be maximized. The inspection team observed all teachers using some type of reward system to manage both group and individual behavior. Systems varied from table points, to team points, to monitoring individual progress during each subject with a corresponding reward. Teachers used positive praise to reinforce student behavior and used a positive calm tone to explain behavioral expectations to students and the reasons behind those expectations.

Center transitions were extremely well-managed in most classes. Teachers would give students a two-minute clean-up warning and then point to a group's next center. The group members would move quickly to that center when instructed to do so. They were able to follow this routine seamlessly and get to work quickly in the next center.

Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are developed for students who are not responsive to the classroom technique of teachers' recognizing and rewarding appropriate behavior. Following the RTI model, teachers formulate a BIP plan in collaboration with the special education coordinator and with input form the student as well. Plans list the problem areas to be addressed and the strategies to be used, including: daily report cards, incentive systems and tailored instruction. Teachers generate weekly progress reports, monitored by the coordinator. The results are graphed and the plans are revisited regularly and adapted if needed.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

King Center's professional development program assists teachers in meeting school goals by addressing identified school-wide deficiencies. The school has a comprehensive professional development program insofar as it supports a set of school-wide priorities. The program is largely based on addressing these identified concerns, rather than providing differentiated opportunities to meet individual teacher needs.

As part of their formal evaluation, classroom teachers are expected to participate fully in the professional development process. They participate in weekly professional development/coaching sessions focusing on a set of pre-determined core competencies. School leaders have established the expectation that teachers will implement the techniques and strategies acquired during the professional development sessions.

The instructional coordinator provides individual coaching based on student assessment information along with classroom observations, indicating not only which skills students have not learned, but also that the teacher has not taught the particular skill effectively. This process centers on debriefing with teachers during Data Meetings as opportunities for self-reflection and coaching. Also tied to the system is the routine of leaders' conducting classroom walk-throughs.

The school's year-long plan was organized around a set of topics, based on school priorities (assessments, curriculum, professional responsibilities, and instruction), and included specification of the responsibilities of the administration, teachers, students, parents, and community. Except for the Data Meetings, all scheduled activities took place as whole staff sessions. While teachers generally completed exit slips at the end of sessions in order to assess learning as well as teacher interest in future sessions, it was unclear how these exit slips were actually used for follow-up. Staff meeting agendas typically contained housekeeping, procedural topics and one more substantial component, usually from Danielson's effective-teaching material, often as a video and debrief or similar modeling exercise.

Teachers reported that they attended additional professional development activities outside of school at their own initiative. They indicated that they were unaware of being able to request additional professional development opportunities outside of the school. The special education coordinator reported being sent to outside training and then turn-keying the material for co-workers.

A number of veteran teachers reported that the summer professional development sessions focused on routines and school culture, which they found to be repetitive. On the other hand, they appreciated that the workshops were responsive to teachers' needs in the classroom and liked teachers' brainstorming together on suggestions for successful practices. One teacher indicated that the sessions in which "concrete instructional ideas are shared among teachers are the most effective and appreciated."

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

King Center has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The structure contains distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school is competently managed with the administration adequately monitoring and evaluating the school's programs and making changes if necessary.

Interviewed teachers were clearly able to describe the school's organizational structure and felt that the structure provided sufficient support to them as teachers. Teachers were able to clearly articulate the roles of each member of the school's leadership team and reported being well-supported by the team. It is clear to teachers from which school leader they should seek and expect support. The instructional coordinator provides the school's instructional leadership. The data coordinator provides some instructional support regarding assessment and its connection to curriculum and instruction. The special education coordinator oversees and supports teachers' instruction of special education students. The school director administers the overall program, including operations and community relations and also has responsibility for student discipline.

Teachers reported that they had sufficient resources to maximize their effectiveness and that the facility (especially with this year's expansion to a second building) met their needs. They indicated that the administration was responsive to their requests for additional support.

School leaders monitor the school's programs and make changes if necessary. They are mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and prepared to make changes to teaching assignments during the course of the school year. They continually evaluate the delivery of curriculum and instruction through the assessment system and structured classroom observation.

The school has recently struggled with teacher retention. While teachers appear to be leaving because of extenuating circumstances rather than school-related issues, teacher turnover puts a strain on developing a strong vibrant organization. Based on the roster of teachers submitted at the time of the visit, the teaching staff in general has some experience, presumably in the Buffalo City Schools, but little experience at the King Center itself. Only one classroom teacher had three years of experience at the school; almost half were new to the school.

The effectiveness of the school's leadership team appeared to center on the leadership of the instructional coordinator. With the role filled as a part-time position, the school benefits from the dedication and commitment of the current incumbent. Further the arrangement functions sufficiently well because of the clear division of labor between director, instructional coordinator, and data coordinator. In addition, the limited availability of the instructional leader is less critical because of the small size of the school: with only six classes the scope of supervision is not as extensive as in most schools.

However, as the school grows, it faces challenges in both increasing size and complexity. Adding additional grades and classes will increase the demands on the coordinators. More importantly, with the introduction of the new position of upper school administrator as well as additional coordinator positions, the respective leadership roles will be recalibrated, especially with the greater importance of establishing strong school culture and discipline for a pre-adolescent student population.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

King Center's school board has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program. The board has adequate skill sets, structures and procedures to govern the school and is focused on student achievement and the school's academic Accountability Plan goals. The board receives sufficient information from school leaders to provide effective oversight. The board has capably evaluated the school leaders.

The board has benefited from continuity in its membership. Its members have adequate skills including education, community involvement and financial expertise. The school board has had adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school. It holds monthly full-board meetings with sub-committees meeting three or four times a year in a retreat in which it focuses on addressing strategic issues and making structural decisions. The personnel committee handles board appointments and school staff hiring; the education committee is tasked with oversight of program delivery and school accountability.

The instructional coordinator reports test results to the education committee, which meets once a month. Members are familiar with the tests and the school's performance. Committee members also reported reviewing with the instructional coordinator the implementation of the curriculum, as well as monitoring the identification of, and plans for, at-risk students. Members reported that the school director and instructional coordinator regularly provide them with student data, recently including preliminary reports on Acuity and Fox in the Box data along with plans for remediation. The Committee indicated that it was instrumental in hiring the instructional coordinator.

The board was cognizant of student-level issues and the impact of the program on students enrolled in the school. Board members are strong advocates for the mission of the school and at the same time are well aware of the school's academic performance. When asked about the dip in performance in 2007-08, the board reported that they had discussed the issue at length and in response instituted a more robust summer school remediation program. They provide effective oversight, making changes to the academic program when necessary, including, in addition to the summer and Saturday program, planning on the expansion of the school to serve students K-8.

The board was familiar with the pattern of teacher attrition in the school and had investigated the matter, finding that morale and attitude were not factors in teachers' leaving. Members reported that they saw the turnover as a positive aspect as the new "refreshing" administration had higher expectation for accountability. It was not clear whether the board had reviewed the school's hiring practices.

The board evaluates the director, whose three-year contract is based on the school meeting its Accountability Plan goals. The director in turn evaluates the instructional coordinator. Despite this formal reporting structure, the instructional coordinator continues to report to the board three times a year—an artifact of her having originally been a consultant to the board. While this cross-cutting arrangement appears to be functional to the extent that the director and instructional coordinator have clearly demarcating lines of responsibility, its viability in the face of additional leadership positions as the school grows is unclear.

The board indicated that it has been very satisfied with the school's performance under the leadership of the director and the instructional coordinator.   Board members indicated that having attained the achievement level required in the school's Accountability Plan they would have "the luxury to dive deeper" into the affective and non-cognitive portion of the program.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at King Center Charter School on March 4, 2010. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Ron Miller, Ph. D. (team leader) is Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He has worked for the Institute since September 2002. Dr. Miller began his career teaching for seven years in New York City public schools and then 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 all city schools and coordinated staff development on the use of the reports for district administrators in the high school and community school districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their capacity 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 the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds an A.B. degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University.

Kevin Flynn is a former Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans, as well as the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Prior to joining the Institute in November 2008, Mr. Flynn served as the Chair of the Science Department at KIPP 3D Academy Charter School in Houston, TX, where he authored curriculum, instructed 7th and 8th grade students, coached peers, and managed the Saturday School program. Prior to his service at KIPP 3D Academy, Mr. Flynn served as a science teacher via Teach For America at the John Marshall Middle School, also in Houston. A recipient of the school's Excellence in Teaching Award, his responsibilities included curriculum development and instruction for at-risk students as well as English Language Learners. Mr. Flynn received his Master's degree in Education, with a concentration in Policy, Organization and Leadership Studies, from Stanford University and his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Cornell University.

Maya Lagana is an Analyst for School Evaluation for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. She is responsible for scheduling ongoing school evaluation visits, communicating with school team members and administrative staff regarding site visit logistics and requirements, developing and disseminating RFP documents, and coordinating the recruitment and work of consultants. Ms. Lagana worked for New Visions for Public Schools, Achievement First and Boston Collegiate Charter School while in graduate school. 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 at P.S. 195 through the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. 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.

External Consultants

Adam Aberman is the Principal and Founder of The Learning Collective, a consulting organization that helps clients leverage digital mediums for learning. Previously, Adam was the Director of Global Digital Strategy for Ashoka's Youth Ventures, which helps teams of youth in 20 countries launch socially responsible businesses and organizations. Prior to Ashoka, Adam was the Executive Director and Founder (and currently Board Member) of icouldbe.org, the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 5,000 teens nationwide and in Tanzania.   Before establishing icouldbe.org, Adam was a Regional Coordinator for the New York City Department of Education. Adam began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. Adam received a B.A. from Vassar College and a Master's in Public Policy, with an emphasis on Education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Andrew Kile is currently a Learning and Teaching Coordinator for grades 3-5 at Harlem Day Charter School. He began his career in education through Teach For America in 2006, where he began his work teaching second grade. In his fourth year at HDCS, he moved into teaching fourth grade part time and coordinating learning and teaching. In December 2009, he moved into a full time coordinating position. He received his BA from The Ohio State University and his MS. Ed from Pace University. Andrew is also a member of the 2009 Cohort of the Emerging Leaders Fellowship program with the New York City Charter Center. Outside of school, Andrew has volunteered with various groups in New York City, including CISV New York and the Brooklyn Arts Council.

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?**
Evidence Category	**State University Renewal Benchmarks**
State University Renewal Benchmark 1B **Use of Assessment Data**	**The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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**	**The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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; • 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 *as implemented* 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1D **Pedagogy**	**High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1E **Instructional Leadership**	**The school has strong instructional leadership.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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 development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual

	teachers;
	• 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1F **At-Risk Students**	**The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1G **Student Order & Discipline**	**The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1H **Professional Development**	**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.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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

	mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;
	• 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.

	Renewal Question 2 **Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?**
Evidence Category	**State University Renewal Benchmarks**
State University Renewal Benchmark 2A **Mission & Key Design Elements**	**The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2B **Parents & Students**	**Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2C **Organizational Capacity**	**The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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

	its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;
	• 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2D **Board Oversight**	**The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2E **Governance**	**The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.** Elements that are generally present include: • 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 updated as needed.