



**Charter Schools Institute**  
The State University of New York

## **2014-15 School Evaluation Report**

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### **Beginning with Children Charter School II**

**VISIT DATE:** MAY 21, 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on May 21, 2015. While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. This subset, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. They provide a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), as well as leadership, organizational capacity and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

The appendix to the report contains a School Overview with descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. It also provides background information on the conduct of the visit, including information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school’s current charter cycle. Finally, the appendix displays the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

**The report below provides benchmark evidence to support these conclusions in order to highlight areas of concern. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report. As such, limited detail and evidence about positive elements of the educational program are not an indication that the Institute does not fully recognize evidence of program effectiveness. This report does not contain an overall rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal; however, it does summarize the various strengths of the school and notes areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks.**

## SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	June 2011
Date of School Opening	September 4, 2012

### Location and 2014-15 Enrollment

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
215 Heyward Street, Brooklyn	NYC CSD 14	Co-located	205	K-3

### Partner Organization

Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Beginning with Children Foundation	Not-for-profit charter management organization	2012-13 to Present

## **Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence**

**Instructional Leadership.** Beginning with Children Charter School II (“BWC II”) has adequate instructional leadership with numerous structures and systems in place to support the development of the teaching staff.

- The instructional leadership, consisting of a principal and two academic deans for grades K-1 and 2-3, is adequate to develop the pedagogical competencies of teachers. In addition to the Beginning with Children Foundation (the “network”) superintendent’s weekly check-ins and monthly in-person meetings with BWC II’s principal, a coach from the network meets monthly with deans to observe and provide feedback on their support of teachers.
- BWC II’s leaders provide sustained and systemic coaching and supervision of staff. The school holds teachers accountable for quality instruction through developing and overseeing improvement procedures for teachers that they base on teacher competencies. Depending on instructional need, deans observe teachers weekly or biweekly and meet with teachers one-on-one after observations to discuss lesson strengths and weaknesses and to plan next steps for the following week. The deans document and share the conversations and next steps through an online portal.
- Instructional leaders implement a professional development program that develops the pedagogical competencies of teachers. Rather than workshops consisting of new material internal staff or external consultants deliver, focus of the monthly, full-day professional development sessions centers around teacher sharing and communications about particular questions such as “What content do you think your students will struggle with?” and “What content do you think your students will perform well on and can be de-emphasized?” As part of the program, grade teams alternate in sharing instructional best practices, which teachers report is beneficial and informs daily lesson implementation. Additionally, during professional development days teachers and instructional staff monitor the progress of particular at-risk students and discuss strategies to meet students’ academic needs most effectively.
- Instructional leaders regularly conduct mid and end-of-year teacher evaluations using the Danielson Framework. Teachers are aware of evaluation criteria and complete self-evaluations then compare them with evaluations received from school leaders. Leaders and teachers come to agreement on the results of the evaluations and discuss teacher next steps. This year, school leaders have refined the mid-year evaluations to more finely address the elements of classroom instruction prioritized by school leadership.

**Use of Assessment Data.** The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. Teachers leverage BWC II’s online portal and grade team meetings to use data to inform instructional planning.

- To evaluate student mastery and growth, BWC II administers the STEP Literacy Assessment three times a year, *RALLY!* Assessments twice a year, the Terra Nova once a year, ELA benchmark assessments from the Journeys curriculum every five weeks and math benchmark assessments from the Math in Focus curriculum every six chapters. Teachers also administer weekly assessments in classrooms to monitor student progress in meeting academic goals.
- BWC II operates a robust online data management portal that aggregates data by grade, class, student and at-risk group. Teachers score assessments and input results into the portal, which teachers, school leaders and network staff regularly review. A member of the network’s technology team generates data reports quarterly to distribute to network officials and the school’s board of trustees.
- Teachers use grade team meetings to norm and score benchmark and other assessments. After collecting data, teachers use the information to differentiate instruction, inform student groupings and determine which students may need extra academic interventions. The weekly grade team meetings provide teachers and leaders the opportunity to look at grade level trends. In addition, one-on-one meetings with deans allow for a closer look at class data and monthly child study team (“CST”) meetings allow for at-risk and general education staff to examine students receiving or in need of extra supports.
- BWC II leaders use data as a factor in evaluating the school’s academic program. School leaders report that Terra Nova and STEP data inform the school’s continued use of Math in Focus and Journeys curricular materials. Student data and information also inform the professional development program. For example, the school continues to place an emphasis on increasing professional development regarding writing instruction due to observed gaps in student work products.
- BWC II regularly communicates to families about student performance through parent teacher conferences and report cards four times a year.

**Curriculum.** BWC II’s curriculum is adequate to support teachers in their instructional planning.

- The school has a curriculum framework, including scope and sequence documents and pacing guides for each grade and subject that provide a fixed and underlying structure for instruction.
- The school currently uses several commercial curricular materials to support its program. BWC II utilizes Math in Focus as its math curriculum, Journeys for ELA, Lucy Calkins and Journeys materials for writing and Engage New York Core Knowledge curricula for both science and social studies. Each curriculum program includes scope and sequence documents and pacing guides. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade dean adjusts the Math in Focus pacing guides for those grades to better align with Common Core State Standards. From these materials, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it.

- BWC II leaders' process for selecting and developing curricula includes researching the academic performance of schools that use the curricula under consideration and regularly reviewing and adjusting materials to ensure alignment to state standards.
- Grade team teachers collaborate in weekly meetings to make adjustments to pacing guides and discuss weekly lesson overviews they submit to leaders for review. Although they submit weekly overviews to leaders, teachers do not formally submit daily lesson plans; teachers review lesson plans with academic deans in one-on-one coaching meetings.

**Pedagogy.** With a school-wide culture of scholarship and learning, BWC II utilizes its teaching pairs effectively to make ad hoc adjustments to instruction in order to meet students' learning needs. Though purposeful, instruction does not include opportunities for students to build higher-order thinking or problem-solving skills.

- Co-teachers, both with clear roles in supporting students, deliver purposeful lessons that align with the school's curriculum and provide multiple opportunities for differentiated activities (19 of 19 classrooms observed). Lesson activities support students in meeting clear objectives and teachers use age-appropriate academic language when providing directions. For example, a teacher asked kindergarten students practicing an original song for an upcoming ceremony to identify idioms in the song lyrics. In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class students worked with teachers in small groups to identify specific strategies to solve various math problems.
- Teachers generally use effective checks for understanding (12 of 19 classrooms observed). For instance, co-teachers showed students how to calculate elapsed time before having students work independently. Seeing from students' written work that the class struggled to understand clock motion and subtraction, the teachers called on a pair of students to demonstrate for their peers. Other methods teachers use to assess student progress during lessons include conferencing, hand signals and cold calling. Checks for understanding are most consistent in small group instruction.
- Few lessons challenge students to develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking skills (2 of 19 classrooms observed). Despite occasions to interact with peers in small groups and pairs, students do not have opportunities to apply presented concepts to real-life situations. Teachers do not ask open-ended questions to challenge students. Teacher questions and class activities tend to require students to recall presented information rather than examine, interpret and summarize lesson concepts.
- Most teachers pace lessons appropriately for students' ability levels and communicate a clear sense of urgency for learning (16 of 19 classrooms observed) in print-rich classrooms that maintain consistent focus on academic achievement (15 of 19 classrooms observed). Students also demonstrate great enthusiasm for learning. For example, in one Kindergarten classroom students given a prompt for a persuasive writing assignment

eagerly ran to their desks and immediately began writing letters that included proposed solutions to an identified problem.

**At-Risk Students.** BWC II addresses the educational needs of at-risk students.

- BWC II provides students struggling academically, students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) and English language learners (“ELLs”) with adequate services to meet their academic needs.
- The school has clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. BWC II uses a tiered response to intervention program, which the special education coordinator manages, to identify students struggling academically who may be in need of additional supports. In the past BWC II used the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (“NYSESLAT”) and currently administers the Home Language Identification Survey and New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”) to identify ELLs.
- BWC II has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of struggling students and the 23 students with IEPs, 14 of whom receive academic services. The school utilizes an integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) model in some classrooms that allows for small, differentiated groups to support students with extra interventions. The school also provides special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) to seven students.
- At-risk students also receive pullout services and/or additional push-in services. To determine need, the school uses CST meetings to review Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (“STEP”) assessment data and classroom assessment data and reviews teacher anecdotal records. The special education coordinator along with SETSS teachers, the ESL teacher, classroom teachers and the academic dean for the respective grade meet monthly to review student progress based on student assessments from the past four to six weeks. From this data, the CST determines which students may need additional interventions, which student interventions require adjustment and which students require referral to the committee on special education.
- An English-as-a-Second Language (“ESL”) teacher serves the school’s 44 ELLs. She provides both push-in and pullout supports, providing more push-in supports to the 24 ELLs in Kindergarten classes. Through weekly grade team meetings, she receives and adjusts lesson plans and determines necessary supplements she will provide. Although students receive these supports, ELLs are under-performing other students in both ELA and math.
- The school provides at-risk program staff with effective professional development opportunities to support students. In addition to in-house professional development in which they share and receive best practices monthly, at-risk program staff members regularly attend professional development activities at the New York City Charter School Center. At-risk program staff members work with general education teachers in weekly grade team meetings to enable appropriate student support during lessons.

**Organizational Capacity.** The school organization supports the delivery of the educational program. BWC II has low staff turnover and regularly monitors and evaluates its programs.

- In contrast to Year 1, BWC II has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The network and the school’s director of operations carry out many of BWC II’s operational needs so that the principal and academic deans can focus on instruction.
- The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Staff members know who to go to for specific needs and questions.
- The school has high retention of staff. Since the 2013-14 school year, only one teacher has left the school. BWC II also retains its founding principal and the K-1 dean has been in place for two years.
- The school allocates sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals. Classrooms are well stocked with teacher and student supplies.
- BWC II maintains adequate student enrollment, currently serving 205 students and reports a waitlist of 372 students. The school backfills students as necessary.
- Though BWC II has been successful in recruiting ELLs, leaders identify the need to recruit more students with special education needs to reflect the reported local school district demographics more closely.
- BWC II monitors and evaluates its programs and makes changes as necessary. For example, the school, in concert with the network and other network schools, made the decision to adopt a more robust data management system this year. Also, in response to the identified need for students to spend more time writing, the school hired a group of teachers during the summer of 2014 to modify the ELA curriculum to include more writing activities during lessons.

**Board Oversight.** The education corporation board works effectively to monitor BWC II’s progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals. The board has struggled to submit new board member information to the Institute as required in its charter agreement. The Institute will work with the school to ensure a successful remedy to this issue in the future.

- BWC II merged into the Community Partnership Charter School (“Community Partnership”) education corporation in 2014. The education corporation now has an eight member board of trustees that governs both schools, including contracting with the Beginning with Children Foundation to serve as the schools’ not-for-profit charter management organization.

- Board members possess adequate skills, including education, financial and legal expertise, to govern BWC II. Multiple subcommittees provide sufficient structures by which the board governs and oversees the total educational program; those committees include: academic, legal, school and nominating.
- The board requests and receives information to provide sufficient oversight of the school's program and finances. On a quarterly basis, the board delves deeply into school-wide assessment data, reviewing results by student, classroom and grade level. Additionally, the board compares BWC II academic data to that of its sister school. The education corporation board also monitors both schools' finances carefully. Lower than expected enrollment at Community Partnership has created a lower than expected surplus; as of the third quarter financial reporting, the surplus was approximately \$550,000. Community Partnership continues to maintain a healthy balance sheet with net assets of \$4 million. BWC II's financials reflect stable chartered enrollment levels and a surplus as of the third quarter financial reporting with net assets of approximately \$600,000.
- The board establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals and allocates resources accordingly. For example, following the school committee's identification of increasing the number of applications for Kindergarten seats as a priority, the board hired a part-time outreach coordinator.
- The BWC II board regularly evaluates the performance of the school principal and management company. The Memorandum of Understanding between the network and school clearly details roles and responsibilities of the board, school leadership and staff at both the school level and network level with established and ongoing performance data reviews. The academic committee conducts twice-yearly evaluations of the principal using a defined protocol.
- Board members express satisfaction with results of the October 2014 addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding that resulted from the merger of the two SUNY authorized schools, which created the ability to utilize shared services and restructure compensation. Network employees specifically dedicated to serving the two schools will have their salaries and expenses reimbursed and a final reconciliation of the service fee is conducted at year end.
- The board currently has no formal procedures to evaluate its own performance and should institute that review on a continual basis. The Institute noted that the board is diligent in its board oversight.
- Board members maintain communication with school stakeholders and consider input. Parents regularly attend board meetings and sometimes deliver reports. The board is currently considering a proposal made by a group of parents to include foreign language instruction during the school day.



## APPENDIX

### SCHOOL OVERVIEW

#### Mission Statement

Beginning with Children Charter School II is a nurturing community that fosters a love of learning and the development of character for students in grades K-5. Our students achieve academic excellence and are prepared to succeed in top performing high schools and colleges. Beginning with Children Charter School II students develop and use G.R.I.T. (Good Judgment, Resilience, Integrity and Teamwork) for personal and community improvement.

#### Student Demographics<sup>1</sup>

	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15 <sup>2</sup>
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 14 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 14 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0	1	0	1
Black or African American	40	26	39	25	35
Hispanic	50	60	56	59	59
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	3	4	2	4	2
White	2	10	1	10	2
Multiracial	4	0	1	0	1
<b>Special Populations</b>					
Students with Disabilities	12	18	13	21	12
English Language Learners	11	12	16	12	18
<b>Free/ Reduced Lunch</b>					
Eligible for Free Lunch	80	82	82	71	--
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	4	5	9	4	--
Economically Disadvantaged	90	92	92	75	91

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2012-13 and 2013-14 New York State School Report Cards.

<sup>2</sup> The Institute derived the 2014-15 Students with Disabilities, ELL and Economically Disadvantaged statistics from the school's October 2014 student enrollment report to the New York State Education Department (2014-15 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available. Because NYSED releases data up to a full year after the conclusion of any one school year, the data presented in this table may differ from current information reported by the school and included in this report.

### School Characteristics

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>3</sup>	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2012-2013	100	103	K-1	K-1
2013-2014	150	150	K-2	K-2
2014-2015	200	205	K-3	K-3

### Board of Trustees<sup>4</sup>

Board Member Name	Position
Martin Ragde	Chair
Katie Cunningham	Vice-Chair
Amy Kolz	Co-Secretary
Kiisha Morrow	Co-Secretary
David Stutt	Treasurer
Rubens Amedee	Trustee
Clare Cusack	Trustee
Sonia Gulardo	Trustee
Oma Holloway	Trustee
Keisha Rattray	Ex-officio Non Voting Trustee
Esosa Ogbahon	Ex-officio Non Voting Trustee
Adjowah Scott	Ex-officio Non Voting Trustee

### School Leader(s)

School Year(s)	School Leader(s) Name and Title(s)
2012-13 to Present	Esosa Ogbahon, Principal

### School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2012-13	First Year Visit	Institute	April 4, 2013
2014-15	Evaluation Visit	Institute	May 21, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Source: The Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State School Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

<sup>4</sup> Source: Institute records at the time of the visit.

## CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

### Visit Team Members

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Member	Title
May 21, 2015	Natasha Howard, PhD	Managing Director of Program
	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst
	Adam Aberman	External Consultant

### Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of Five-Year Charter Term
Accountability Period <sup>5</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2016

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<sup>5</sup> Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a charter term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of the charter term. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the charter term. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.

## State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 2012

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### Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks<sup>1</sup> (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

- They provide a framework for the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) to gather and evaluate evidence to determine whether a school has made an adequate case for renewal. In turn, this evidence assists the Institute in deciding if it can make the required legal and other findings in order to reach a positive recommendation for renewal. For example, the various benchmarks that the Institute uses to determine whether the school has had fiscally responsible practices in place during the last charter period allow the Institute to determine with greater precision whether the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter period, a finding that the New York Charter Schools Act requires the SUNY Trustees to make.
- At the same time that the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks provide a framework for the Institute to collect and review evidence, they also provide the school with a guide to understanding the Institute’s evaluative criteria. As the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (or some sub-set of them) as the framework for conducting its ongoing school evaluation visits, school leaders should be fully aware of the content of the Benchmarks at the time of renewal.

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect the interwoven nature of schools from an academic, organizational, fiscal and/or legal perspective. For example, the Institute could reasonably place many of the academic benchmarks under the heading of organizational effectiveness. More generally, some redundancy exists because the Institute looks at the same issue from different perspectives.

Precisely how the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, during both the renewal process and throughout the charter period, is explained in greater detail in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”), available on the Institute’s website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm). Responses to frequently asked questions about the Institute’s use of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks appear below:

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<sup>1</sup> Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share. These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the *Correlates of Effective Schools*. The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

- Revised May 2012 -

- The Institute does not have a point system for recommending renewal. A school cannot simply tally up the number of positive benchmark statements in order to determine the Institute’s recommendation.
  - Some benchmarks are weighed more heavily than others. In particular, the Institute gives the greatest weight to how well the school has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
  - Despite the fact that the Accountability Plan comprises only a single benchmark, a school’s performance on that benchmark is critical. In fact, it is so important that while the Institute may recommend non-renewal for fiscal and organizational failures (if sufficiently serious), excellence in these areas will not excuse poor academic performance.
- The Institute does not use every benchmark during every kind of renewal review, and how the benchmarks are used differs depending on a school’s circumstances. For example, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (Benchmarks 1B-1F, 2C and 2D) are given far less weight in making a renewal decision on schools that the Institute has previously renewed. Similarly, less weight is accorded to these benchmarks during an initial renewal review where a school has consistently met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
  - The Institute also may not consider every indicator subsumed under a benchmark when determining if a school has met that benchmark, given the school’s stage of development or its previous track record.
- Aside from Benchmark 1A on academic Accountability Plan goals (which is singular in its importance), no school should fear that a failure to meet every element of every benchmark means that it is not in a position to make a case for renewal. To the contrary, the Institute has yet to see a school that performs perfectly in every respect. The Institute appreciates that the benchmarks set a very high standard collectively. While the Institute certainly hopes and expects that schools aim high, it is understood that a school’s reach will necessarily exceed its grasp in at least some aspects.

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated. Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

It is important that the entire school community understand the renewal process. All members of a school’s leadership team and board should carefully review both the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks and the SUNY Renewal Practices. Note that a renewal overview document for parents, teachers and community members is also available on the Institute’s website at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm). Please do not hesitate to contact the Institute with any questions.

## State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

<b>Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</b>	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Academic Accountability Plan Goals</b></p>	<p><b>Over the Accountability Period, the school has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.</b></p> <p>The Institute determines the extent to which the school has met the Accountability Plan goals in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English language arts;</li> <li>• mathematics;</li> <li>• science;</li> <li>• social studies (high school only);</li> <li>• NCLB;</li> <li>• high school graduation and college preparation (if applicable); and</li> <li>• optional academic goals included by the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use of Assessment Data</b></p>	<p><b>The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state performance standards;</li> <li>• the school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments;</li> <li>• the school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders and board members;</li> <li>• teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention;</li> <li>• school leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and</li> <li>• the school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students’ progress and growth.</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum</b></p>	<p><b>The school’s curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades;</li> <li>• in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans;</li> <li>• teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents;</li> <li>• the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and</li> <li>• teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pedagogy</b></p>	<p><b>High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum;</li> <li>• teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding;</li> <li>• teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills;</li> <li>• teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and</li> <li>• teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY 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>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F</b></p> <p><b>At-Risk Students</b></p>	<p>pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff;</li> <li>• instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers’ instructional effectiveness;</li> <li>• instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels;</li> <li>• instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers;</li> <li>• professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice;</li> <li>• instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses; and</li> <li>• instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically;</li> <li>• the school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students;</li> <li>• general education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program;</li> <li>• the school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students;</li> <li>• teachers are aware of their students’ progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students;</li> </ul>



	<b>Renewal Question 1</b> <b>Is the School an Academic Success?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and</li> <li>• the school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including the school nurse, if applicable.</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 2</b> <b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A</b></p> <p><b>Mission &amp; Key Design Elements</b></p> <p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B</b></p> <p><b>Parents &amp; Students</b></p> <p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C</b></p> <p><b>Organizational Capacity</b></p>	<p><b>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school faithfully follows its mission; and</li> <li>• the school has implemented its key design elements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families;</li> <li>• families are satisfied with the school; and</li> <li>• parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program;</li> <li>• the organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>• the school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied;</li> <li>• the school retains quality staff;</li> <li>• the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals;</li> <li>• the school maintains adequate student enrollment;</li> <li>• the school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and</li> <li>• the school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary.</li> </ul>

<b>Renewal Question 2</b> <b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D</b></p> <p><b>Board Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>The school board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school’s future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization;</li> <li>• the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances;</li> <li>• it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision;</li> <li>• the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively;</li> <li>• the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and</li> <li>• the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E</b></p> <p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems and processes.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships;</li> <li>• the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members;</li> <li>• the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;</li> <li>• the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter;</li> <li>• the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner;</li> <li>• the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion;</li> <li>• the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and</li> <li>• the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</b></p> <p><b>Legal Requirements</b></p>	<p><b>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law;</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 2</b> <b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations;</li> <li>• the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan;</li> <li>• the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements;</li> <li>• the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and</li> <li>• the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A</b></p> <p><b>Budgeting and Long Range Planning</b></p>	<p><b>The school operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures;</li> <li>• board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate;</li> <li>• the school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions;</li> <li>• the school routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and</li> <li>• actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B</b></p> <p><b>Internal Controls</b></p>	<p><b>The school maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures;</li> <li>• the school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management’s direction, laws, regulations, grants and contracts;</li> <li>• the school safeguards its assets;</li> <li>• the school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions;</li> <li>• the school has controls in place to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy;</li> <li>• the school’s trustees and employees adhere to a code of ethics;</li> <li>• the school ensures duties are appropriately segregated, or institutes compensating controls;</li> <li>• the school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained;</li> <li>• the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements;</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial Reporting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions;</li> <li>• the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy;</li> <li>• the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and</li> <li>• the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.</b></p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable;</li> <li>• annual budgets and cash flow statements;</li> <li>• un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment;</li> <li>• bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and</li> <li>• grant expenditure reports.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial Condition</b></p>	<p><b>The school maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;</li> </ul>

	<b>Renewal Question 3</b> <b>Is the School Fiscally Sound?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months);</li> <li>• the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections;</li> <li>• If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;</li> <li>• If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and</li> <li>• the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.</li> </ul>



<b>Renewal Question 4</b> <b>If the School’s Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?</b>	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A</b></p> <p><b>Plans for the School’s Structure</b></p>	<p><b>Key structural elements of the school, as defined in the exhibits of the Application for Charter Renewal, are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period;</li> <li>• the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program;</li> <li>• the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget;</li> <li>• key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school’s budget and staffing;</li> <li>• a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state’s performance standards; and</li> <li>• plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school’s structure is likely to support the educational program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B</b></p> <p><b>Plans for the Educational Program</b></p>	<p><b>The school’s plans for implementing the educational program allow it to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school’s educational program;</li> <li>• for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and</li> <li>• where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation standards set by the Board of Regents.</li> </ul>

<b>Renewal Question 4</b> <b>If the School’s Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?</b>	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C</b></p> <p><b>Plans for Board Oversight and Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable plan for board oversight and governance.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school;</li> <li>• plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board’s ability to carry out its responsibilities;</li> <li>• if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and</li> <li>• if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D</b></p> <p><b>Fiscal &amp; Facility Plans</b></p>	<p><b>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.</b></p> <p>Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections;</li> <li>• fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs;</li> <li>• fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions;</li> <li>• information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and</li> <li>• facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.</li> </ul>