



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Girls

School Evaluation Report 2010-11

Visit Date: April 6, 2011

Report Issued: September 12, 2011

Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207
518/433-8277, 518/427-6510 (fax)
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org>

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and notes areas in need of improvement as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

Background

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to the Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Girls (Brighter Choice Girls) on April 6, 2011. The school is in its first year of operation. Based on an analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit, Brighter Choice Girls is on a trajectory toward meeting its Qualitative Educational Benchmarks (a component of the Renewal Benchmarks) by establishing systems and procedures for an effective instructional program. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators discussed more fully later in the report. Some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Academic Success

Areas of Strength

- Brighter Choice Girls has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework with clearly defined skills that align to state standards.
- Teachers implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to state standards and the school's curriculum.
- Brighter Choice Girls has a comprehensive professional development program that adjusts throughout the year to better address school-wide priorities.

Areas for Growth

- Although teachers use assessment data to re-teach and identify students for remediation, no formal process exists for using data to improve instructional effectiveness.
- Brighter Choice Girls does not have an effective school-wide process for reviewing its curriculum and developing curriculum for new grades.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength

- Brighter Choice Girls is competently managed and staff have sufficient resources

Areas for Growth

- Some staff members report that leadership does not always effectively communicate school wide priorities.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

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

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-Present	250 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206	5	Albany

Partner Organizations

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

Current Mission Statement

The mission of the Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Girls (BCMS-G) is to prepare girls for high school and college success while attending to the unique developmental needs of middle school students.
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Current Key Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiating instruction to meet the wide ranging learning needs of its entire student body and offering flexible learning spaces that compliment and encourage varied instructional methods; • emphasizing student choice with BCMS's unique <i>iChoose: Citizenship, Integrity, Perseverance & Scholarship</i> character campaign • utilizing data from all aspects of its operation to inform decision making and improve student performance; • committing to technology use and integration into the school's academic program and culture; • providing each student with an adult advisor and small-group seminar to support the positive social and emotional development of girls; and • offering individualized counseling and guidance throughout the high school placement process.
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School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	54	43	43	5	5	210

Current Board of Trustees²

Board Member Name	Term Expires	Position/Committees
Thomas W. Carroll	2012	Chair
Chris Bender	2012	Member
Wendy Berry	2012	Member
Martha Snyder	2012	Member
Vanessa Threatte	2012	Member

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2010 - Present	Vanessa Threatte, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	1st year	Institute	April 6, 2011

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

² Source: School renewal application and Institute board information.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Brighter Choice Girls administers multiple assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and state standards. Teachers use assessment data to re-teach and identify students for remediation.

Brighter Choice Girls has a school-wide, bi-weekly assessment program to measure student achievement in English language arts and mathematics. The school also administers the Terra Nova, a nationally norm-referenced assessment, upon admission, as a baseline of student performance and in the spring to measure student growth in mathematics and English language arts. Teachers also administer the Fountas and Pinnell, a literacy benchmark assessment, to measure literacy development.

At the beginning of the year, teachers and administrators use Fountas and Pinnell assessment results to select topics for whole-class instruction, to identify students for academic remediation and to assign students to homogeneously grouped classes in English language arts. Teachers use their end-of-unit assessments in mathematics, science, and social studies to select topics for re-teaching. Additionally, teachers use the school's bi-weekly math assessment data to select topics for "investigation" classes where students re-examine content taught during math class.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

Brighter Choice Girls has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework that aligns with state standards.

Brighter Choice Girls has a curriculum framework aligned to state standards. The director of curriculum, instruction and assessment (DCIA) aligns the curriculum framework with the New York State core curriculum and the Common Core State Standards. Teachers, in consultation with the DCIA, use the curriculum framework to create instructional planning pacing guides which organizes lessons into two week instructional blocks. Teachers, in consultation with the DCIA, use the Understanding by Design model to create month-long instructional units and then use a detailed school lesson plan template to plan daily instruction. The school has a process for regular lesson plan review where teachers submit lessons electronically to the DCIA who provides feedback.

The school has adequate curriculum materials to meet the needs of all students. Prior to the school opening, the principal chose instructional materials that aligned with the school's scope and sequences, then teachers chose from among these preselected materials. Teachers report that the principal expects them to supplement these materials throughout the year with other sources such as personal texts and Internet material. The DCIA and the special education teacher oversee the selection of supplemental materials in an effort to meet the needs of all students. While the school has a system to review and revise unit and lesson plans, it does not yet have a school-wide process for developing curriculum for planned grades.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Teachers implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to state standards and the school's curriculum.

Teachers clearly post lesson objectives in all classrooms and each lesson plan includes multiple lesson components that cognitively engage students. Lessons are grade level appropriate with many opportunities to promote higher order thinking and encourage student engagement. Teachers use multiple instructional delivery methods including: direct instruction, group work, independent practice, and hands-on practice, as well as instructional techniques such as cold-calling and partner talk to promote student engagement. Students not only respond to questions but explain their problem solving strategies, find details to support opinions and explain alternative methods to solve problems. Teachers use multiple learning modalities to differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of all students and design lesson topics specifically to encourage higher order thinking.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

Brighter Choice Girls' school leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement.

School leaders communicate college preparatory expectations to their students. Teachers plan and implement effective, engaging, differentiated lessons with clear objectives. Teachers have regularly scheduled weekly meetings with the DCIA to discuss lesson plans, assessments and instructional strategies. The principal also holds monthly meetings to discuss the school's bi-weekly assessment results. In addition, the principal and DCIA conduct classroom observations and provide teachers with feedback via e-mail and during weekly meetings. Teachers report that the feedback is very helpful. The school is implementing a detailed observation system with a written observation protocol form which targets specific objectives. At the time of the visit, not all teachers received observations and those who did report that they have not seen the observation form. The principal has designed a teacher evaluation system based on the school's four core values of citizenship, integrity, persistence, and scholarship.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

Brighter Choice Girls has clear procedures for identifying at-risk students, although not all teachers can clearly articulate these procedures. The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students.

Brighter Choice Girls has a defined response to intervention (RTI) process which includes teacher observations and student assessment data. The student support team (SST) coordinates the RTI process. The RTI process outlines Tier 1 interventions as teachers supporting students in the classrooms through differentiated instruction. If this proves ineffective, the SST suggests increased academic interventions as Tier 2 of the RTI process. These may include push-in or pull-out Academic Intervention Services (AIS) by the special education teacher. If necessary, students then receive Tier 3 interventions that include more intensive pull-out support from the special education teacher. If these interventions do not work, the student may receive special education services.

The school provides sufficient resources and support to meet the needs of at-risk students including

a special education teacher and English as a second language teacher who provide consulting services in English language arts and mathematics to the school's identified special education and limited English proficiency students. Generally struggling students also receive support through push-in services and pull-out remediation opportunities, as well as informal after school tutoring.

The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students through teacher observation and school-wide and targeted assessments for at-risk students. The SST also meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of interventions and review student assessment data.

Teachers receive informal support to meet the needs of at-risk students through meetings with the DCIA and regular conversations with the special education teacher. However, the school lacks a formal system for meeting with the special education teacher, and teachers report receiving limited professional development on meeting the needs of at-risk students.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

Brighter Choice Girls has a school-wide behavior management system that teachers implement with fidelity.

Brighter Choice Girls has a clearly documented school-wide classroom management system that uses merits and demerits to create a safe and orderly environment. Staff closely monitors hallways and transitions between classes are quiet and efficient. Classrooms are well managed and misbehavior is not tolerated. The principal holds teachers to consistent application of the behavior referral process and teachers understand the out-of-classroom referral process. The school also has a clearly documented suspension policy in its handbook.

The student services coordinator, who is also a certified social worker, creates a culture of learning and scholarship through student seminars. The seminars address current events, life skills, relationships, self-esteem and other developmentally appropriate issues. As students matriculate, school leaders indicate that seminars will also prepare them for high school and college.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

Brighter Choice Girls has a comprehensive professional development program that leadership adjusts throughout the year to better address school-wide priorities.

Teachers receive extensive professional development during a three week summer "Brighter Choice University" (BCU) training that addresses specific school needs. Teachers also attend "Friday Focus" professional development sessions once a month which address the on-going needs of the school. These sessions, developed and presented by the principal, addresses teacher needs according to the principal's observations. Teachers report that school staff, other than the principal, have designed and led "Friday Focus" sessions. While professional development topics support the implementation of the school's curriculum and instruction methods, some teachers report that not all professional development meets their specific needs. As a result, school leaders monitor and continue to improve topic selection.

Mission (Benchmark 2. A)

Brighter Choice Girls is faithful to its mission and implements design elements included in its charter.

Brighter Choice Girls has single gender classes, a longer school day, and mandatory uniforms as specified in the school's charter. The school establishes a culture of scholarship and college readiness. For example, course descriptions mimic college syllabi including a seminar curriculum. The school places an emphasis on the use of technology, with teachers reporting that school leaders constantly emphasize the integration of technology into learning experiences.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

Brighter Choice Girls has established an organizational structure with staff, systems and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

Brighter Choice Girls has competent management and staff members have sufficient resources. School administrators monitor and evaluate the school's programs and make changes as necessary. For example, the administration decided to re-focus the school's investigations class to support math instruction based on a request from the mathematics department. Communication between school administration and staff is effective; however, some staff members note that leadership can do a better job communicating school-wide priorities. At the time of the visit, the school faced under-enrollment challenges with board members reporting that this had adversely affected the school's ability to meet purchasing and hiring goals. School leaders report that the school has recruitment initiatives underway to address this issue.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

Brighter Choice Girls' school board provides oversight to the total educational program.

Brighter Choice Girls currently has a four member board and plans to recruit members with areas of expertise that are currently underrepresented on the board, such as legal experience and experience with middle schools. Board members are knowledgeable about each school's student assessment data, instructional practices and school culture. Organizationally, the members understand enrollment trends, the impact of student recruitment on the school's finances and the varying level of financial reserves at each site. The school board has developed a clear plan and structure for evaluating the school leader and holding her accountable for student achievement; however, board members have yet to complete the evaluation.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Girls on April 6, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

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

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

External Team Member: Joe Nicolella has worked as a consultant for over seven years with the State University of New York (SUNY) Charter Schools Institute and the SUNY Research Foundation. Primary responsibilities have included the review and critique of curriculum documents for over 30 schools submitted to the Institute as a part of the initial charter school application process and the critique of all curricula submitted at the time of charter renewal or changes in academic program. He has also served as a member of over 35 CSI school review teams responsible for initial applications, grant applications, annual school review and renewal of charter. Mr. Nicolella earned Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Education. He also holds a Master of Science in Advanced Classroom Teaching and is a Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Nicolella has also completed all coursework and examinations for the doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. All of his professional training was completed at the University at Albany.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

*An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.
Visit the Institute's website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.*

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

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

	<p>materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; • teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans; • teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum; • the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and • the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; • instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson; • lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; • instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school’s student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments; • all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; • learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and • teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; • the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); • the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; • the school’s instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms; • the school’s leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas; • the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual

	<p>teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and the school's leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school's academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<p>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students' needs; all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program; the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students; the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures; all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students' Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals; the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</p> <p>Student Order & Discipline</p>	<p>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied; classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</p> <p>Professional Development</p>	<p>The school's professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school's

	<p>mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests; • professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school's Accountability Plan goals; • teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities; • the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers' varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities; • the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and • the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.
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Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
State University Renewal Benchmark 2A Mission & Key Design Elements	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2B Parents & Students	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2C Organizational Capacity	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school's mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving

	<p>its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; • the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; • where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. |
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