



Brooklyn Dreams Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2011-2012

Visit Date: March 19-20, 2012

Report Issued: September 18, 2012

Charter Schools Institute
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INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report includes three components. The first section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. The second section provides background information on the conduct of the evaluation visit, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school's current charter cycle. Finally, a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit presents overall benchmark conclusions (in italics), the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks (a component of the Renewal Benchmarks) and an analysis of evidence collected for each of the respective benchmarks. Following these sections, the report includes an appendix containing the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks.

The Qualitative Educational Benchmarks address the academic success of the school, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization, including board oversight and organizational capacity. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

The report below provides more detailed conclusions, and evidence to support these conclusions, for some benchmarks in order to highlight areas of concern and provide additional feedback. In contrast to the format of reports issued in previous years and in an effort to issue reports in a timelier manner, the Institute now approaches the presentation as an exception report and deliberately emphasizes areas of concern. As such, limited detail and evidence about positive aspects of the program are not an indication that the Institute does not fully recognize evidence of program effectiveness.

Because of the inherent complexity of a school organization, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school's prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and note areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 15, 2009
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	March 4, 2010
School Opening Date	September, 2010

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-11 to Present	259 Parkville Avenue, Brooklyn, NY	K-3	NYC CSD 22

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	National Heritage Academies, Inc.	Education Management Organization	2010-Present

Current Mission Statement

To offer the families of Brooklyn a school with a culture that values integrity, academic excellence, and accountability, where all students are given the opportunity for success in high school, college and beyond by offering an academically rigorous and challenging K-8 educational program.

Current Key Design Elements

• Well-developed curriculum framework;
• Moral focus curriculum;
• Parental involvement;
• Preparing all students for college; and
• Strong support for teachers.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	196	192	K-3	K-3	180
2011-12	248	240	K-4	K-4	180

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

Demographics

	2010-11	
	Percent of School Enrollment ²	Percent of NYC CSD 22 Enrollment ³
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	0
Black or African American	81	42
Hispanic	0	14
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	8	17
White	5	27
Multiracial	0	0
Special Populations		
Students with Disabilities ⁴	15 ⁵	N/A
English Language Learners	4	10
Free/Reduced Lunch		
Eligible for Free Lunch	73	59
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	9	9

Current Board of Trustees⁶

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
Richard Conti	President
Sara Doar	Trustee
Michael Melendez	Trustee
Chris Nugent	Trustee
Joanne Oplustil	Trustee
Michael Pedone	Trustee
Katherine O'Neil	Trustee
Michelle Weeks	Trustee

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2010-Present	Yvette Wilds, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-2011	First Year Visit	Institute	March 22, 2011
2011-12	Second Year Visit	Institute	March 19-20, 2012

² Source: New York State Report Card 2010-11 Access Database.

³ 2010-11 New York State Report Cards.

⁴ New York State Education Department does not report special education data.

⁵ Self-reported by the school.

⁶ Source: Institute board information.

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
March 19-20, 2012	Danielle Keen	Analyst for School Evaluation
	Jenn David-Lang	External Consultant

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Period	2 nd Year of First Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁷	2 nd Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Impending Renewal Visit	Fall 2015

⁷ Because the Institute makes a renewal decision in the last year of a Charter Period, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of the Charter Period. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the Charter Period. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous Charter Period through the next to last year of the current Charter Period.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

1. B Use of Assessment

Brooklyn Dreams has a system to administer and gather assessment data but does not yet have a structured approach for analyzing and using that data to improve student learning.

Brooklyn Dreams administers a variety of assessments aligned to the school's curriculum. The school administers the nationally-normed Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in mathematics and English language arts three times per year. This year the school has also begun administering mock New York State tests in 3rd and 4th grade in order to assess student progress toward proficiency.

The school systematically collects data generated from these tests. The MAP test is scored online, with National Heritage Academies, Inc. (NHA), the school's education management organization, detailing the results to school leaders and teachers. Teachers score mock state exams together and manually produce item analyses.

Despite its systematic collection of assessment results, the school has not yet developed a structured format for analyzing the data from MAP or mock state exams or created a concrete approach for using it to improve teaching and learning. Teachers report that there is no formal time set aside for reviewing and analyzing the MAP results. Leaders simply expect teachers to use their planning periods to make data-based adjustments to their lessons when they can. When asked if there were school-wide expectations for what teachers should do with the data, one teacher said, "I'm not sure if there are expectations, it just made sense to me to re-teach based on the data and not just move on." Some teachers report that they use the MAP results to assign students to leveled groups during mathematics and English language arts workshops, while others did not report using these assessment results to adjust instruction.

In addition to these formal assessments, teachers regularly administer teacher- and commercially-created unit tests. Teachers score unit tests and store them in class assessment binders, which have sections dedicated to each student. While school leaders state that assessment binders are one of the many responses to the poor 3rd grade state test scores from last year, teachers do not use them strategically. At the time of the visit, there was no structured analysis of unit test results. Teachers report that they use data from assessments to group the students in their class and to identify students in need of academic intervention; nevertheless, each teacher does so at his or her own discretion.

The school's leaders report making several changes to the school's program this year based on last year's lower-than-expected test results. The school regularly communicates each student's progress by sending home report cards four times a year and through informal conversations between teachers and parents.

1. C Curriculum

Brooklyn Dreams has a thorough curriculum framework from NHA that provides general guidance to teachers in creating lessons and assessments; however, teachers have little specific guidance in developing daily lesson plans.

NHA provides Brooklyn Dreams with a thorough curriculum framework consisting of a comprehensive, year-long list of objectives for all grades and all subjects, including physical education and Moral Focus. The Imagine It! commercial curriculum forms the bases of the framework for English language arts instruction, as does Think Math! for mathematics instruction. The frameworks include a list of objectives that teachers should cover over the course of the year, grouped by quarter, so that they align with the MAP test administration dates; however, NHA does not provide the school with assistance on pacing or teaching these objectives, nor has the school taken a consistent systematic, school-wide approach to pacing objectives itself. For example, one of the deans of instruction has created pacing guides for mathematics in the upper grades while the other dean of instruction reports that she did not see the need for pacing guides and leaves this work to the teachers.

Furthermore, teachers use unit plans or other guiding documents inconsistently. Teachers created unit plans at the beginning of the year; however, school leaders allowed them to abandon the use of unit plans in the middle of the year, because according to the teachers, unit writing in addition to creating daily lesson plans rendered an unmanageable workload. Teachers are responsible for creating daily lesson plans, drawing from the quarterly objectives in the NHA framework, which teachers share across their grade level.

The NHA curriculum does not directly align to the New York State Standards. Due to this misalignment, the school has had to provide teachers with extra resources in order to fill the gaps in mathematics and English language arts. The deans of instruction report that NHA analyzes the curriculum for vertical alignment between grades; however, although teachers from different grade levels discuss the curriculum informally, there are no structured meetings to discuss whether the implemented curriculum does, in fact, align vertically.

1. D Pedagogy

Adequate instruction is evident in some classes throughout the school; however, the majority of lessons lack coherence and rigor and do not reinforce student learning through meaningful student practice and checks for understanding.

While lesson plans at Brooklyn Dreams are purposeful and based on lesson objectives, lesson implementation lacks focus in most classrooms. English language arts and mathematics instruction is broken into daily 90-minute lesson blocks consisting of a lesson and a workshop period during which teachers and push-in academic intervention specialists provide differentiated instruction to small groups. All teachers post objectives in the form of “I can” statements; however, in most classrooms, the level of specificity is not sufficient for students to have a clear understanding of the purpose of the learning activity. Some teachers tailor instruction and student practice closely to the “I can” statement; others do not give students opportunities to show they are capable of meeting the objective. For example, observers saw several teachers present a lesson based on the “I can”

statement to students and then move to the day's next activity without providing students with group or independent practice related to the lesson's objective; other teachers listed an "I can" statement on the board, though they only touched on subject matter related to the statement for a matter of minutes before moving on to a series of seemingly unrelated activities during the workshop period. In addition, most of the observed "I can" statements did not promote sufficient levels of rigor- stating that students could name, count, identify or understand- to prepare them for the New York State exams that now require students to use higher-order thinking skills and apply rather and demonstrate knowledge.

Transitions, while orderly, lack urgency and students move slowly from one task to another. A limited number of teachers challenge students when answering questions in class to justify their answers with evidence from the text, to build on the comments of their classmates and to explain their rationale when answering questions in class. While teachers engage most students in learning activities, they allow a small number to opt out of lessons.

As a whole, teachers do not effectively check the understanding of the entire class, but instead generally seek out answers from students who volunteer. Many teachers do not hold students accountable for learning. For example, in one classroom, a student could not articulate an answer to the teacher's question. As a result, the teacher told the student to prepare an answer and that she would call on him in a few moments. The teacher never circled back to check whether the student had prepared an answer.

1. E Instructional Leadership

Instructional leaders at Brooklyn Dreams provide regular coaching and feedback on instruction; the support is rigorous in the upper grades.

The two deans of instruction serve as the school's primary instructional leaders. Overall, the school's approach to instructional leadership is thoughtful and structured. Weekly observations and consistent teacher feedback, as well as the use of MAP test data to evaluate teachers, help the school set high expectations for teacher performance.

The deans meet with each grade team once per week for an instructional coaching and lesson planning session. They also observe teachers and meet with them for individual coaching sessions weekly. During weekly observations the deans use NHA's Teacher Observation Protocol Matrix, in order to pinpoint skills in which teachers are weak and create an instructional action plan before the following week's observation. This observation protocol matrix outlines a progression of skills that teachers should obtain as they become Proficient and move to the Advanced level. The deans hold them accountable for meeting expected competencies, depending on the length of time they have been teaching; at present, as the school employs mostly new teachers, most teachers are working on the required skills to demonstrate that they are Proficient.

Despite regular meetings with the principal, the school does not have a uniform approach for providing instructional leadership. While the two deans have ostensibly comparable leadership roles, they carry them out differently, with teachers reporting more comprehensive support from one dean than the other. For example, one dean reports observing teachers using the teacher observation matrix for 12 minutes each week, while the other dean observes for an entire period.

Teachers report that one dean analyzes the MAP test data with the grade level teams, while the other dean leaves the analysis up to the teachers.

The two deans of instruction evaluate teachers on four major areas: student learning results, the teacher observation protocol, parent engagement and professional accountability. At the time of the visit, teachers had just received their mid-year performance evaluation in these four areas. Teachers report that they find the evaluations fair and accurate and that they already had a clear sense of how their performance based on their weekly meetings with their instructional leader. At the time of the visit, instructional leaders only had major concerns about one member of the teaching staff; they are working with NHA to implement this teacher's improvement plan.

Teachers have structured time to plan together and with the assistance of their instructional leader. Teachers submit their lessons to the deans of instruction for feedback; however, they do not do so with enough lead time to make substantive improvements before implementing the lessons.

1. F At-Risk Students

The school has a system for serving and monitoring the progress of at-risk students.

The school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions to both at-risk students and those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The school employs two academic specialists, who serve students at-risk of academic failure. The school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions; the deans of instruction use RIT scores from the MAP test in order to place students into groups and create a schedule of students that the academic specialists will serve. Deans reconfigure groups and schedules after each administration of the MAP. Academic specialists either push-in to classes or pull-out groups of eight to 12 students at a time, using the intervention resources in the Imagine It! curriculum, a Kaplan tutoring program and the Descartes program, a resource that accompanies the MAP test, in order to reinforce basic skills. If students deemed at-risk do not improve with the help of push-in and pull-out support, teachers may refer them to the Intervention Assessment Team (IAT). The IAT meets weekly to discuss the progress of individual students and brainstorms specific interventions for them. The IAT monitors each student's progress every two to three weeks; the team may decide to recommend a child for a special education evaluation if teachers report no progress after several check-ins.

The school enrolls 36 students with IEPs and employs one special education teacher who provides SETTS service, by pushing into classes where students have an IEP that calls for Integrated Co-Teaching, as well as several other related service providers. All general education teachers are aware of students' IEP goals and demonstrate a working knowledge of instructional strategies for meeting those goals. Both academic intervention specialists and the special education teacher have regular time to meet with the homeroom teachers of the students they serve; they report using this time to plan lessons together, discuss data and map out interventions for specific students.

Brooklyn Dreams provides targeted language acquisition instruction to English Language Learners (ELLs). The school administers the Home Language Survey and subsequently the LAB-R for those students whose primary home language is not English. Those students who do not pass the LAB-R

receive services using the Achieve English curriculum for 45 minutes twice per week. The school's music teacher provides all English-as-a-Second-Language instruction at the school. Though she has been trained in implementing the Achieve English curriculum, she does not have specific training or knowledge on instructing ELLs. Teachers submit articulation forms to the music teacher to inform her of areas in which students struggle in class, so that she might target them during ELL pull-out periods. Brooklyn Dreams is participating in an NHA pilot of the Achieve English program. School leaders report that they believe the curriculum to be useful in developing English language skills; however, neither the school nor NHA have yet completed an analysis of its effectiveness. Last year, none of the school's 12 ELLs in the third grade tested proficient on the New York State English language arts exam.

1. G Student Order and Discipline

The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.

Brooklyn Dreams is safe and orderly. The school has a documented discipline policy, though at the time of the visit, misbehavior was so minimal that teachers did not need to apply it. Classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; the great majority of students are cognitively engaged and eager to participate in the learning process.

1. H Professional Development

The school provides a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers; however, these opportunities are not sufficiently sustained or strategic to develop the skills of teachers.

The deans of instructions' weekly coaching sessions continue to be the most effective form of professional development at the school and serve as the forum for teachers to set actionable goals and receive support at their varying levels of expertise. The school provides sufficient time for other professional development, including a one week summer in-service and weekly 90-minute professional development sessions. All new teachers also have the opportunity to travel to NHA headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan in order to participate in new teacher training that prepares them to implement NHA academic programs.

While school leaders report that they have shifted the focus of professional development away from procedural and organizational activities and toward instruction since last year, the school's professional development program continues to lack strategy. Weekly professional development sessions touch on a wide range of topics for a brief period. In addition to sessions devoted to rigor and small group differentiation, the school's stated professional development objectives, there are also sessions on a wide variety of other topics, including a great deal of time devoted to allowing teachers in each grade to share their best practices with the whole staff.

Teachers are generally only held accountable for implementing instructional practices discussed in their weekly coaching meetings and not those that are highlighted in regular professional development sessions. While the school leaders report evaluating the effectiveness of the program through informal conversations amongst themselves and by asking teachers for feedback, they do not systematically evaluate the program.

2. C Organizational Capacity

The school effectively manages its operational needs; however, the organizational structure results in inconsistent implementation of the academic program.

With the assistance of NHA, the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations. While the principal has the final word on operational decisions at the school, NHA facilitates most operational aspects of the organization including recruiting new staff, maintaining the budget and issuing staff paychecks

The school is located in a brand new facility leaving it with a significant amount of space to grow. Teachers report that, while they have all the curricular resources they need, they do not have the ability to make photocopies and do not have access to a variety of technology resources to use for instruction.

The school's principal acts as an administrator with the two deans of instruction reporting to her. This organizational structure leads to some inconsistency in the ways in which each dean approaches the role, leaving some teachers with greater levels of support than others. In addition, the school's primary decision-maker, the principal, spends very little time in classrooms, and thus, must depend on the deans for insights into the quality of instruction.

NHA supports the school in implementing its academic program through professional development and sporadic on-site consulting services. Despite these efforts, the management organization has done little to adapt its curriculum to New York State standards. Further, in the absence of direct school-specific direction from the management company, the school has not provided sufficient support to teachers to adjust the curriculum to the needs of the school's population.

NHA also assists the school in recruiting new staff members. NHA advertises open positions and creates a roster of candidates that meet the job requirements that the principal outlines for each position. The principal then holds interviews and ultimately decides which candidates to hire. At the time of the visit, the principal had not yet terminated any staff members, though she stated that she was considering not asking ineffective staff members back for the next school year.

Given last year's New York State test scores and recent IA scores, the school is not on a trajectory to meet its key Accountability Plan goals, when all required measures take effect this year. The school has yet to establish uniformly strong instructional leadership to develop the school's inexperienced teaching staff or use assessment and curriculum tools that directly support daily instruction specific to the needs of the students at Brooklyn Dreams.

2. D Board Oversight

The school board provides oversight to the school's operation, but it has not worked effectively to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals.

The school board has adequate skills and expertise, such as finance, legal, education and child psychology, in order to provide oversight to the various aspects of the school. The board recently

added members with specific experience in education, including a former principal, in order to develop its skill set. Despite its efforts to develop itself, the board does not articulate an understanding of the core business of the school-student achievement. When confronted with a full explanation of the school's scores on last year's state test, the board expressed great surprise at the school's performance in relation to meeting its accountability plan goals.

The full board, as well as its education, audit and compliance, and finance committees meets regularly. NHA, as well as the principal, provide the board with regular written reports on student performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity. The board articulates having general priorities including improving student achievement on the state test, providing after-school programs for at-risk students and increasing parental involvement; however, it has not established a concrete plan for bringing these priorities to fruition.

The board allows academic staff from NHA to conduct an evaluation of the school's principal and reports that it holds NHA accountable for the overall performance of the school. Where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school's performance, such as low state test scores in the first year, the board reports having pressed NHA to make substantive changes to improve student achievement, though teachers and school leaders were not aware of NHA implementing specific changes at the time of the inspection visit.

The school board conducts an annual self-assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight and regularly pursues opportunities for further governance training and development. Members of the board believe that with added members bringing significant experience in the education to the board, it is poised to provide rigorous accountability during the remainder of the charter period.

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

	<p>to his or her parents/guardians; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program; the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans; teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum; the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.
<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

	<p>assessments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 teachers; • the school’s leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and • the school’s leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school’s academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</p>	<p>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</p>

<p>At-Risk Students</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 mission, curriculum, and instructional programs; • annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven

	<p>needs-assessment and staff interests;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</p> <p>Mission & Key Design Elements</p>	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.

<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision; • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; • the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board,

	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities; • the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter; • the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner; • the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints; • the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies; • the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings;

	<p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2F</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>The school has substantially complied with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> during its charter period, the school has compiled 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; at the time of renewal, the school is in substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations; over the charter period, the school has abided by the terms of its monitoring plan; the school has designed and put in place effective systems and controls to ensure that legal and charter requirements were and are met; and the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel that reviews relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and makes recommendations and handles other legal matters as needed.