



## **Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School**

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# **School Evaluation Report 2012-13**

Visit Date: February 11, 2013

Final Report Issued: May 17, 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report includes four 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. The third section provides the school's 2011-12 Performance Review and Summaries, which gives an analysis of the attainment of the key academic goals in the school's Accountability Plan. Finally, a fourth section entitled School Evaluation Visit presents an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit. Following these sections, an appendix provides the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the "Renewal Benchmarks").

While the Institute conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all Renewal Benchmarks near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. These Qualitative Education Benchmarks address 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 organizational capacity, board oversight and governance. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (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 benchmark conclusions and evidence to support these conclusions in order to highlight areas of concern and provide additional feedback. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report, which deliberately emphasizes areas of concern. 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.**

**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 Education Benchmarks.**

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 16, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Board of Regents	July 19, 2010
School Opening Date	August 2010

### Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-11	1485 Pacific Street, Brooklyn, NY 11216	All	NYC CSD 23
2011-12 to Present	80 Underhill Ave, Brooklyn NY 11238	All	NYC CSD 13

### Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Partner	Uncommon Schools, Inc.	CMO	2010 to Present

### Mission Statement

The mission of Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School is to prepare each student to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college.
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### Key Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The belief that creativity flourishes within a structured academic environment;</li> <li>• uncommonly high academic and behavioral expectations combined with extensive individual supports; and</li> <li>• the belief that, without great teachers, nothing else matters.</li> </ul>
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### School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction <sup>2</sup>
2010-11	78	N/A	79	5	5	185
2011-12	148	N/A	141	5-6	5-6	185
2012-13	208	N/A	207 <sup>3</sup>	5-7	5-7	185

<sup>1</sup> Source: SUNY Charters Schools Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

<sup>2</sup> Annual School Visit Data Collection Form, February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

#### Student Demographics<sup>4</sup>

	2010-2011	
	Number of School Enrollment	Percent of District 23 Enrollment
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Black or African American	84	80
Hispanic	16	18
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	1
White	0	1
Multiracial	0	0
<b>Special Populations</b>		
Students with Disabilities	17 <sup>5</sup>	N/A <sup>6</sup>
English Language Learners	0	4
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>		
Eligible for Free Lunch	69	79
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	15	5

#### Board of Trustees<sup>7</sup>

Board Member Name	Term	Position/Committees
Linton Mann III	June 2015	Chair
John Greenstein	June 2013	Treasurer
Bob Howitt	June 2014	Trustee
Julie Kennedy	June 2015	Trustee
Stuart Linde	September 2015	Trustee
St. Claire Gerald	September 2015	Trustee
Eileen Shy	June 2015	Trustee

#### School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2010-11 to Present	Eric Green, Principal

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2010-11 School Report Cards, State Education Department ("SED").

<sup>5</sup> Source: The 2010-11 Students with Disabilities statistic is derived from the school's October 2010 student enrollment report to SED (2010-11 BEDS Report).

<sup>6</sup> Source: District-level Students with Disabilities enrollment data are not available for 2010-11. SED released these district data for the first time in spring 2012. Based on the state's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets, the CSD's 2011-12 Students with Disabilities enrollment is 19 percent compared to 18 percent for the school.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Institute board information.

**School Visit History**

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	First Year	Institute	April 26, 2011
2012-13	Routine	Institute	February 11, 2013

**CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

**Specifications**

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
February 11, 2013	Danielle Keen	Senior Analyst
	Eileen Coppola, Ed.D.	External Consultant

**Context of the Visit**

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of the First Charter Term
Accountability Period <sup>8</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of the Current 4-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

<sup>8</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.

## 2011-12 School Performance Review

### ***Performance Summary***

Based on results from 2011-12, the second year of Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School's ("Brooklyn East Collegiate's") four-year Accountability Period, and the first year that all five measures of its Accountability Plan were applicable, the school is meeting both its English language arts ("ELA") and math goals. The school is also meeting its NCLB goal. Brooklyn East Collegiate does not yet have results in science.

### ***ELA***

Based on results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, the school met its goal in ELA. The school met the absolute target, in the first year this measure was applicable, with 91 percent of students in at least their second year scoring proficient. The school met the Annual Measurable Objective ("AMO") set by the state and outperformed Brooklyn District 13 by over 36 percentage points. In comparison to demographically similar schools, the school met its target, performing better than expected and showing improvement from 2010-11. The school also met its year-to-year cohort growth target, with the school's 6<sup>th</sup> graders showing substantial gains.

### ***Math***

Based on results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, Brooklyn East Collegiate met its math goal, the first year that all five measures were applicable. Ninety-nine percent of students in at least their second year met the absolute target, exceeding the target of 75 percent proficiency. The school exceeded the state's AMO and outperformed Brooklyn District 13 by almost 50 percentage points. In comparison to demographically similar schools, the school met its target, performing better than expected to a large degree. The school also met its cohort growth target demonstrating overall year-to-year growth.

### ***No Child Left Behind***

Brooklyn East Collegiate has met its NCLB goal.

### ***Science***

Because the state science exam is only administered to 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the school does not yet have results in science.

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts**  
**Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School**



	2009-10			MET	2010-11			MET	2011-12			MET						
	Grades Served:				Grades Served: 5				Grades Served: 5-6									
	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)										
<b>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</b>																		
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.	Grades				Grades				Grades									
	3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)							
	4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)							
	5	(0)	(0)		5	79.8 (79)	(0)		5	78.5 (79)	75.0 (12)							
	6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)		6	94.9 (59)	94.4 (54)							
	7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)							
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)							
	All	(0)	(0)	--	All	79.8 (79)	(0)	NA	All	85.5 (138)	90.9 (66)	YES						
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	--	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PI	AMO	YES						
					5	143	122		5-6	150	135							
<b>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</b>	Comparison: Brooklyn District 23				Comparison: Brooklyn District 23				Comparison: Brooklyn District 13									
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Grades	School	District	--	Grades	School	District	NA	Grades	School	District	YES						
					NA		34.8	NA	6	74.1	37.7							
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at or above Level 3 on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	--	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES			
						68.8	50.6	44.4	0.37		63.6	53.6	46.7	0.45				
<b>GROWTH MEASURE</b>	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result		Gr	N	Base	Target	Result		Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	
5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.						--						NA						YES
	3						3						3					
	4						4						4					
	5						5						5	12	0.0	12.5	16.7	*
	6						6						6	56	62.5	64.6	71.4	*
	7						7						7					
	8						8						8					
	All						All						All	68	51.5	55.4	61.8	

**TACS**The Institute uses SED's "time adjusted cut scores", or "TACS", for evaluating the designated measures in the respective years. Although a lower standard than that used before 2009-10, TACS provide continuity with the standard used in previous years. Data Sources: SED data; school data workbooks; the Institute's student test database.

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

### Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School



	2009-10 Grades Served:			MET	2010-11 Grades Served: 5			MET	2011-12 Grades Served: 5-6			MET						
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)							
<b>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</b>																		
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.	3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)							
	4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)							
	5	(0)	(0)		5	94.9 (79)	(0)		5	93.7 (79)	91.7 (12)							
	6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)		6	100.0 (59)	100.0 (54)							
	7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)							
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)							
	All	(0)	(0)	--	All	94.9 (79)	(0)	NA	All	96.4 (138)	98.5 (66)	YES						
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	--	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PI	AMO	YES						
					5	173	137		5-6	186	148							
<b>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</b>																		
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Brooklyn District 23				Comparison: Brooklyn District 23				Comparison: Brooklyn District 13									
	Grades	School	District	--	Grades	School	District	NA	Grades	School	District	YES						
					NA		42.2		6	96.3	46.2							
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted level of students at or above Level 3 on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	--	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES			
	68.8	77.2	56.0	1.15		63.6	86.2	57.8	1.44		63.6	86.2	57.8	1.44				
<b>GROWTH MEASURE</b>																		
5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	--	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NA	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	YES
	3						3						3					
	4						4						4					
	5						5						5	12	33.3	40.3	66.7	*
	6						6						6	56	89.3	89.4	96.4	*
	7						7						7					
	8						8						8					
	All						All						All	68	79.4	79.5	91.2	

**TACS**The Institute uses SED's "time adjusted cut scores", or "TACS", for evaluating the designated measures in the respective years. Although a lower standard than that used before 2009-10, TACS provide continuity with the standard used in previous years. Data Sources: SED data; school data workbooks; the Institute's student test database.

## SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

### **Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence**

#### **1. B Use of Assessment Data**

***Brooklyn East Collegiate has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.***

- The school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments. Three times yearly, the school administers Interim Assessments (“IAs”), as well as one Final Assessment, created in collaboration with the school’s charter management organization, Uncommon Schools, Inc. (“Uncommon”). In each academic subject, one teacher per grade across Uncommon’s Collegiate Network (“Collegiate Network”) of middle schools, creates the IAs with oversight from both its principal and Uncommon instructional staff. In addition to IAs, Brooklyn East Collegiate also administers leveled reading assessments created by Uncommon four times yearly, as well as the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (“STEP”) assessment to low-performing and struggling students. Teachers also create and administer daily and weekly formative assessments with the oversight of designated instructional leaders (“ILs”).
- Uncommon systematically grades IA responses and provides teachers with an in-depth analysis of student performance. Brooklyn East Collegiate teachers meet together along with other Collegiate network teachers to grade writing pieces, using a standardized rubric that they norm to ensure reliability.
- The school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students. After each IA, teachers and ILs spend a full day analyzing data reports and using these reports to adjust curriculum, to regroup students for guided reading and to identify students for additional interventions.
- ILs use assessment results to target coaching to teachers whose students underperform, providing struggling teachers with more intensive feedback; however, IA results do not factor into formal performance evaluations. Nearly all staff members at the school teach guided reading, and ILs provide targeted professional development to those staff members whose guided reading groups make the least progress.
- The school sends bi-weekly progress reports home to parents/guardians, as well as quarterly report cards that teachers discuss during an in-person conference with families.

#### **1. C Curriculum**

***The school’s curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.***

- The school uses the Collegiate Network’s curriculum framework, which details student learning objectives based upon Common Core State standards, for all core academic subject areas.
- Based on this framework, “Collegiate Coordinators,” designated teachers across the network who lead curriculum planning in each subject by grade, create units of study and

pacing guides for each academic subject that they share across the network. Teachers generally know what to teach and when to teach it based upon these documents

- The school continually reviews and revises curriculum documents through an ongoing process in which ILs and Uncommon staff receive feedback from teachers after they implement lessons. Uncommon staff incorporates this feedback into the following year's curriculum.
- The Collegiate Network supports teachers in lesson planning. Collegiate Coordinators distribute model lesson plans, assessments and other instructional materials to teachers across the network. In consultation with the ILs, teachers adjust the lessons for their students. However, teachers receive these materials from one week to three days prior to the projected date of the lesson, which provides limited time to internalize and adjust the materials appropriately.

### **1. D Pedagogy**

***Quality instruction is evident throughout the school. Teachers implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to the curriculum.***

- Instruction at Brooklyn East Collegiate is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson.
- Teachers generally demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach, with one notable exception. All instructional staff members across the school instruct students during a 30-minute period of guided reading each day; in contrast to the subject and grade-level competency evident in other instruction, staff exhibit a wide range of pedagogical skill levels in teaching reading. The principal is working to develop non-literacy teachers' guided reading instruction by providing consistent feedback and guidance.
- Brooklyn East Collegiate's teachers deliver purposeful and focused lessons, with clear objectives. Most teachers annotate lesson materials with the script they will use to deliver their lessons.
- Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding. For example, teachers cold-call students, circulate to check answers during independent work, collect exit-tickets, have students call on each other and conduct drills in which students answer example questions one-by-one.
- Teachers occasionally 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. Learning objectives push students to master rigorous concepts; however, teachers push students only to the extent that they master content and provide a correct answer. Teachers rarely challenge students to explain how they came to their conclusions or to think about abstract or subjective concepts. For example, in one science class a student asked an abstract question about the behavior of waves, to which the teacher began to provide an answer but then quickly rushed students to the next planned element of the lesson in the interest of time.
- Teachers use a wide variety of systems and routines to maximize class time. Students have

internalized routines for transitions between activities and procedures during lessons for how to sit and when to speak. Teachers effectively use timers to assist with lesson pacing.

- Throughout the school, teachers exhibit effective classroom management techniques. Students are very clear on what is expected of them. When students fail to meet those expectations, they can clearly articulate what went wrong and how their class should have behaved.

### **1. E Instructional Leadership**

***Brooklyn East Collegiate has exceptionally strong instructional leadership.***

- The Collegiate Network has structured its teacher coaching system, so that each teacher is connected to one IL in his or her subject area, in addition to the principal. ILs observe teachers at least once per week, meeting with them to debrief and set priorities for improvement post-observation, including long- and short-term goals.
- ILs at Brooklyn East Collegiate establish an environment of high expectations for teacher performance. They maintain a frequent presence in classrooms and hold teachers accountable for implementing improvement strategies identified in the weekly post-observation feedback sessions. ILs store observation feedback and teacher goals in an electronic system that creates a record of support and growth accessible to both the teacher and leaders.
- ILs conduct mid-year teacher evaluations, with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers receive three weeks of professional development during the summer, in addition to two hours per week during the course of the school year. Sessions primarily focus on cementing the implementation of systems and routines, and providing teachers with time for coordination. ILs focus on building pedagogical skills during coaching cycles.
- ILs hold teachers accountable for quality instruction, though they do not explicitly use data to evaluate teachers.

### **1. F At-Risk Students**

***Brooklyn East Collegiate provides adequate support to students who are struggling academically.***

- The school has clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. The special education coordinator uses diagnostic reading and math exams to identify students immediately in need of academic intervention at the time of their enrollment. She revisits students' placements after each IA. In addition, teachers with concerns about an individual student's progress present their concerns at the bi-monthly student support team ("SST") meeting. During SST, grade-level teams discuss students with behavioral or performance issues and create targeted interventions for these students. The special education coordinator follows up on student progress every three to four weeks by email or during the next SST. If students fail to make progress, they may be referred for special education evaluation. The school administers the Home Language Survey and the Lab-R to identify English language learners ("ELLs").

- Brooklyn East Collegiate employs one special education coordinator and one special education teacher to provide push-in and pull-out services to students in need of academic intervention, its 19 students with academic disabilities and its three ELLs. External providers serve the four students that have IEPs for related services only. Special education staff generally pull students out of the second 30 minutes of their daily ELA period, providing extra structure and guidance during independent work time. In 2011-12, of the seven students with academic IEPs that sat for the state test, only three scored proficient in math; none scored proficient in ELA.
- The school's services for ELLs focus on building general literacy rather language acquisition. Teachers closely monitor student performance and differentiate instruction to students' observed needs during pull-out instruction. Given the limited number of ELLs enrolled during the history of the school, there is insufficient data to determine whether the school's ELL program is effective.
- General education teachers are aware of their low-performing students, and are responsible for putting in place in-class intervention services, as well as monitoring these students' progress. The special education coordinator tracks whether teachers' interventions have been successful and assists teachers with creating new intervention plans, if necessary.
- The network's director of special education provides support to all teachers and the special education coordinator with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students throughout the year. All general education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students' Individualized Education Program ("IEP") goals and can articulate instructional strategies for meeting those goals; the school's special education coordinator creates a "snapshot" for teachers detailing the relevant information on students' IEPs for each homeroom class that they teach.
- Brooklyn East Collegiate does not provide sufficient time and support for on-going collaboration between general education and special education teachers. This is particularly problematic, given that the school relies on special education staff to teach the second half of students' daily ELA and math courses.
- The school closely monitors the performance of all students and regularly disaggregates data from IAs to analyze the performance of at-risk students, ELLs and students with disabilities as a group. In most subjects, at-risk students perform within ten percentage points of the general education population, with the largest gaps occurring in reading.

## **2. C Organizational Capacity**

### ***The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.***

- Brooklyn East Collegiate has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The school's director of operations is responsible for all operational tasks, leaving the principal and teachers free to focus on instruction. In addition, Uncommon provides significant operational and academic support to the school.
- The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Brooklyn East Collegiate has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative

level that is consistently applied. The school does not, however, provide alternate instruction for suspended students as required by statute.

- The school retains quality staff; four of the seven founding teachers, as well as the founding principal and social worker remain at the school.
- The school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals.
- The school maintains adequate student enrollment and had a waitlist of 2,266 at the time of the visit.
- Uncommon has procedures in place to assist the school in monitoring its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusting its recruitment efforts accordingly.



## 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>9</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

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<sup>9</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 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 Policies”), 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:

- 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 Education 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 Policies. 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><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><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>

<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C</b></p> <p><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><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><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 pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;</li> <li>• the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff;</li> <li>• instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective</li> </ul>

	<p>coaching and supervision that improves teachers’ instructional effectiveness;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F</b></p> <p><b>At-Risk Students</b></p>	<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> <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 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>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>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B</b></p> <p><b>Parents &amp; Students</b></p>	<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>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C</b></p> <p><b>Organizational Capacity</b></p>	<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>

<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 expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</li> <li>• the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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> <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</li> </ul>

and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed;  
and

- the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.

	<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 3A</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><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>

<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C</b></p> <p><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><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D</b></p> <p><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> <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</li> </ul>

	<p>progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
<p><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></p>	
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<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</li> </ul>

	<p>educational program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
<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>

**SUNY Renewal  
Benchmark 4D**

**Fiscal & Facility Plans**

**The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.**

Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- the school's budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections;
- fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs;
- fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions;
- information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and
- facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.