



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

2013-14 School Evaluation Report

East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School

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INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on December 11, 2013. While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) conducts a comprehensive review of all evidence related to all the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. These Qualitative Education Benchmarks address the academic success of the school as well as the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. They provide a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), as well as leadership, organizational capacity and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal. The appendix to this report contains a School Overview with descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. It also provides background information on the conduct of the visit, including information about the evaluation team and puts the visit into context of the school’s current charter cycle. Finally, the appendix provides the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

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 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	November 24, 2010
School Opening Date	August 29, 2011

Location and 2013-2014 Enrollment

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
1573 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10029	NYC CSD 4	Co-located	218	K-3

Partner Organization

School Year(s)	Partner Name	Partner Type
2011-12 to Present	East Harlem Tutorial Program	Institutional Partnership

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Instructional Leadership. East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School 1 (“Scholars Academy”) had consistently strong leadership that emphasized continual improvement of instructional practices through a systematized coaching system and a comprehensive evaluation process in place at the time of the evaluation visit.

- The school’s leadership maintained an environment of high expectations for teacher performance by setting and communicating clear goals for student achievement with staff through formal and informal meetings.
- The instructional leadership team, which, at the time of the visit, consisted of the school’s founding principal, the director of curriculum and instruction and the director of school culture, provided targeted and individualized support for the development of teaching staff.
- Instructional leaders provided sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision to grade-level or subject area teachers to improve their instructional effectiveness. Teachers received weekly planning support and actionable written feedback based on frequent classroom observations. School leaders designed professional development activities based on observed teacher needs.
- Instructional leaders included weekly meeting times for grade level teams and common prep periods for teachers in the school schedule, which helped to ensure ample opportunities to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels.
- Instructional leaders implemented a comprehensive and responsive professional development program that developed the competencies and skills of all staff based on teacher-identified needs, classroom observations and student assessment data on a weekly basis throughout the school year.
- At the time of the visit, the instructional leadership team designed targeted professional development activities to improve pedagogy and the implementation of curriculum in the classroom, with systematic follow up by instructional leaders to measure their effectiveness.
- Instructional leaders conducted comprehensive teacher evaluations twice each year that included teachers’ self-assessments of individual strengths, weaknesses and focus areas of growth. The principal evaluated teachers on their progress towards achieving both personal and school wide student performance goals.
- Instructional leaders held teachers accountable for high quality instruction and student achievement. The instructional leadership team selected high performing teachers for grade level lead and/or mentor roles, and did not offer subsequent contracts to teachers who failed to meet expectations after they received specialized supports over the course of the school year.

Curriculum & Assessment. At the time of the visit, Scholars Academy had in place an assessment system that improved instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school’s curriculum supported teachers in their planning of purposeful and focused lessons.

- Scholars Academy regularly administered benchmark assessments for reading, interim assessments for math created by the director of curriculum and instruction, and other classroom assessments that included exit tickets and writing prompts. The director of curriculum and instruction reported aligning these assessments to the school’s curriculum and state standards.
- Scholars Academy had a process for scoring and analyzing assessments. All teachers received training to administer assessments and analyze data during pre-service professional development. Regular grade level “alignment audit” meetings helped to ensure that assignments and grading between classes were consistent.
- School leaders analyzed assessment data at the grade, classroom and student level. Teachers and staff accessed data through an up-to-date school shared drive. School leaders regularly shared interim and other assessment data at board meetings.
- Teachers used assessment results to inform classroom student groupings, to determine concepts for re-teaching and to identify students that may need to be referred to the school’s student support team (“SST”) for additional academic support.
- Assessment results helped to determine professional development activities. Leaders monitored the school’s academic strengths and weaknesses regularly and also solicited teacher feedback when developing the professional development schedule. Leaders also used student assessment data to inform teacher performance evaluations.
- Parents received official communication on student progress and growth through four progress reports and four report cards per year. Teachers communicated regularly with parents on students’ academic and behavioral performance.
- The school used several curriculum frameworks to promote the school’s instructional plan that included Engage New York, Reading Street and Writer’s Workshop. These programs provided a fixed, underlying structure and were aligned to state standards and school performance goals.
- Scholars Academy’s curriculum program included scope and sequence and/or unit plans, which served as a bridge between the curriculum framework and teacher created lesson plans. With these materials, teachers knew what to teach and when to teach it.
- The school’s director of curriculum and instruction and principal used student performance data and teacher feedback to determine which programs have been effective and which may need to be adjusted for different grade levels for the next year. The school analyzed two years of student data before completely changing programs, but leaders noted during the visit that they were open to suggestions from grade level teams on resources that may better serve their students.

Pedagogy. Elements of strong instruction were evident in most classrooms across Scholars Academy, with a notable focus on literacy at the time of the evaluation visit. However, lessons lacked a sense of urgency and teachers’ focus on managing behavior often came at the expense of concentrating on student learning. As shown in the chart below, during the visit, Institute team members conducted 11 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school evaluation visits.

Classroom Observation Methodology: Number of Observations

	Grade			
	K	1	2	3
Content Area			2	2
ELA			2	2
Math			2	
Writing	2	1		1
Specials				1
Total	2	1	4	4

- Teachers delivered purposeful lessons with clear student learning objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum (11 out of 11 classrooms observed). With multiple adults in each classroom, Scholars Academy delivered instruction primarily through small groups and learning centers; teachers had clear roles in helping students reach lesson objectives. Although lesson activities aligned to stated objectives, the degree to which students completed assigned activities and therefore reached learning objectives varied greatly; in some classrooms, few students completed assigned tasks when not working directly with a teacher.
- Teachers regularly used a variety of techniques to check for student understanding (10 out of 11 classrooms observed). In general, when teachers attempted these checks during whole group instruction, they fell short of effectively gauging understanding because teachers frequently allowed students to opt out. For example, when only eight of 27 students in a class responded to a thumbs up/thumbs down prompt, the teacher called on a student volunteer then quickly moved on with the lesson without evidence of the other 19 students’ readiness to move forward. Conversely, teachers used conferencing and monitoring of students’ written work to positive effect and they often adjusted individual students’ instructions based on assessments of understanding.
- Teachers included opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that developed depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills (10 out of 11 classrooms observed). The *potential* to develop higher order thinking skills in planned lessons notwithstanding, teachers rarely challenged students to

defend and elaborate on their answers. Scholars regularly interacted with peers during pair shares and while reviewing each others' work and often provided detailed feedback and asked thought-provoking questions. In one ELA class, a student prompted her table partners to "take their time and think really, really hard" before responding to a question regarding their shared text.

- While most teachers maintained classroom environments generally focused on completing planned lessons (9 out of 11 classrooms observed), few teachers communicated a sense of urgency for learning and teachers' focus on managing behavior often came at the expense of concentrating on student learning. Protracted transitions between classroom centers resulted in lost learning time and, in conjunction with lesson design, contributed to many of the behavioral issues teachers attempted to manage. Instructional leaders were addressing classroom management issues in a number of ways, which included assigning behavior specialists to work with students and having particularly strong teachers model effective strategies during demonstration lessons. In one observed demonstration lesson, a mentor teacher used skillful pacing and upbeat tone to maintain students' attention on lesson activities despite minor outbursts from a student whose behavior often disrupted instruction.

At-Risk Students. Scholars Academy invested significant and sufficient resources and personnel to effectively address the educational needs of at-risk students.

General Education Students Receiving Targeted Interventions

Program	Students received academic interventions through push-in and pull-out services during the school day. Students in need of behavioral interventions received at-risk counseling provided by the social worker.
Staff	The staff consisted of the special education coordinator, the director of curriculum and instruction, a reading specialist, an academic interventionist, a social worker and a social work intern.
Identification Process	Classroom teachers identified students in need of academic interventions based on the results of standardized and school-created assessments. Teachers submitted documentation forms with observation and anecdotal notes to the Student Support Team ("SST"), to supplement academic performance data.
Coordination	The SST met once a week to review student progress. The special education coordinator met with grade level teams monthly to monitor the effectiveness of classroom interventions.
Progress Monitoring	Classroom teachers monitored student progress by reviewing results of in-class assessments. The special education coordinator tracked the interventions students received and how students responded.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	Approximately 70% of internal professional development activities focused on instructional practices and data analysis to guide and inform classroom instruction that included the identification and

	support of at-risk students.
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Students with Disabilities

Program	East Harlem Scholars used the Integrated Co-Teaching Model (“ICT”) to serve the 41 currently enrolled students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) mandating academic services. The school also provided related services in occupational, speech and physical therapy, as well as counseling services.
Staff	The staff consisted of the special education coordinator, SST and four additional special education teachers (one per ICT class per grade), a speech therapist, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a social worker and social work intern.
Identification Process	If a student did not make adequate academic progress with interventions in place, the SST made a referral for a special education evaluation to the district Committee on Special Education.
Coordination	The SST held weekly meetings to discuss all students with current IEPs. The special education coordinator met with grade level teams monthly to monitor the effectiveness of classroom interventions and suggest additional strategies as necessary.
Progress Monitoring	Special education teachers monitored each student’s progress towards meeting IEP goals. The special education coordinator disaggregated the performance data of students with disabilities in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs in place.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	None.

English Language Learners (“ELLs”)

Program	Identified ELLs received push-in and pull-out support in language acquisition in small groups.
Staff	The staff consisted of two certified ELL teachers, a reading specialist and an academic interventionist.
Identification Process	ELL teachers administered the LAB-R test in addition to school-created language assessment.
Progress Monitoring	ELL teachers tracked student performance on all internal formative assessments to assess students’ progress towards meeting set goals. General education teachers tracked ELL classroom performance similarly to that of students in the general education program. Every ELL student took the annual New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) until she/he has reached the level of proficient in English.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	ELL teachers created and implemented professional development activities to help teachers integrate classroom techniques to increase ELL proficiency and understanding.

Organizational Capacity. At the time of the visit, the Scholars Academy organization effectively supported the delivery of the educational program.

- Scholars Academy has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allowed the school to carry out its academic program. The founding director of operations coordinated all logistical functions that enabled the school's principal to focus exclusively on instruction.
- The school's organizational structure contained distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all school leaders and staff. School leaders were reflective and deliberate in developing and expanding the leadership structure to meet the growing needs of the organization in the near future.
- Scholars Academy had a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that was consistently applied across all classrooms, with individual behavior plans for specific students as necessary to address chronic behavioral concerns.
- While the school has experienced some teacher attrition over its charter term, the leadership team was purposefully creating additional systems to improve the retention of quality staff, such as the mentoring program and the introduction of grade level lead positions this year.
- Scholars Academy has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of its goals with significant investment in curricula and supplemental materials for all classrooms, such as leveled libraries for guided reading groups.
- Scholars Academy maintained adequate student enrollment in each grade level and had a waitlist of approximately 749 students.
- The school had procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Community outreach and recruitment efforts to increase enrollment had also been successful.
- The Scholars Academy leadership team regularly monitored and evaluated the school's programs, taking solicited feedback from teachers into account, and makes changes as necessary on an on-going basis. At the time of the visit the leadership team exemplified a systems-based approach to problem solving and was purposeful in the evaluation of how programs were producing the desired outcomes across the school.

APPENDIX **SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

Mission

The mission of East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School is to provide East Harlem families with a comprehensive Kindergarten through 8th grade learning community that combines a rigorous academic curriculum with innovative extended day and extended year enrichment.

Key Design Elements¹

- An intense focus on English language arts and mathematics. Daily English language arts instruction will be provided for 120 minutes and daily mathematics instruction will be provided for 90 minutes;
- A culture of “no excuses”;
- The hiring, training and retention of great teachers;
- The use of the extended day and year in order to provide a well-rounded curriculum.
- Daily Spanish classes for all students;
- Intensive academic support. For every 10 students in the school, there will be at least 1 adult;
- High quality space;
- Plans to grow to serve students in Kindergarten through grade 8;
- The extensive use of technology, including smart boards and computers in every classroom;
- A focus on professional development and a leadership structure that supports teachers in the classroom to expand and strengthen their instructional capacity;
- The use of State assessment and other data to inform teaching and to support differentiated instruction;
- A focus on the whole child through the identification of student needs and learning styles and appropriate adjustment of instructional strategies, as well as the use of a staff social worker; and
- The inclusion of parents and the community as part of the school’s culture. The school will work proactively to establish a culture that appreciates and respects the cultural, ethnic, language and other diversities reflected in the school community.

School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment²	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2011-2012	100	107	K-1	K-1
2012-2013	150	164	K-2	K-2
2013-2014	200	218	K-3	K-3

¹ As part of their initial application, schools identify the Key Design Elements that reflect their mission and distinguish the school.

² Source: SUNY Charter Schools Institute’s Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

Student Demographics

	2011-2012 ³		2012-2013 ⁴	2013-2014 ⁵
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 04 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	2	1
Black or African American	45	28	39	33
Hispanic	55	62	57	61
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	6	1	1
White	1	3	2	1
Multiracial	0	0	1	3
Special Populations				
Students with Disabilities	22	19 ⁶	23	27
English Language Learners	13	12	12	16
Free/Reduced Lunch				
Eligible for Free Lunch	70	79	75	76
Eligible for Reduced – Price Lunch	10	6	7	4
Economically Disadvantaged	90	-	70	73

Board of Trustees⁷

Board Member Name	Position
Joan Solotar	Chair
Iris Chen	Trustee
Brian Gavin	Trustee
James Kiggen	Trustee
Lili Lynton	Trustee
Carlos Morales	Trustee

³ Source: 2011-12 School Report Card, New York State Education Department.

⁴ The Institute derived the 2012-13 statistics from the school's October 2012 student enrollment report to SED (2012-13 BEDS Report).

⁵ The Institute derived the 2013-14 statistics from the school's October 2013 student enrollment report to SED (2013-14 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available.

⁶ Based on the State's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets.

⁷ Source: Institute Board records at the time of the visit.

School Leader(s)

School Year(s)	School Leader(s) Name and Title(s)
2011-12 to Present	Cheyenne Batista Sao Roque, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2011-12	First Year Visit	Institute	April 19, 2012
2013-14	Evaluation Visit	Institute	December 11, 2013

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
December 11, 2013	Natasha Howard, Ph.D.	Director of School Evaluation
	Heather Wendling	Senior Analyst
	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 rd Year of Five-Year Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁸	3 rd Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2015

⁸ 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.



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 2012

Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks¹ (the "SUNY Renewal Benchmarks") serve two primary functions at renewal:

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

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

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

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

- Revised May 2012 -

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

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

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

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

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

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

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

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

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

Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board works effectively to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school's program and finances; • 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; • the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively; • 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 • the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems and processes.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • 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

Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members; • the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • 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; • the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner; • 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; • the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and • 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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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;

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

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

	Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; • the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy; • the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and • 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.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C Financial Reporting	<p>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.</p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; • annual budgets and cash flow statements; • un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment; • 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 • grant expenditure reports.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D Financial Condition	<p>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).</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;

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

	<p align="center">Renewal Question 4 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?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A</p> <p>Plans for the School's Structure</p>	<p>Key structural elements of the school, as defined in the exhibits of the Application for Charter Renewal, are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period; • the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program; • 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; • key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing; • a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and • plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B</p> <p>Plans for the Educational Program</p>	<p>The school's plans for implementing the educational program allow it to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school's educational program; • 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 • 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.

	Renewal Question 4 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?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C</p> <p>Plans for Board Oversight and Governance</p>	<p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable plan for board oversight and governance.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • 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; • 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 • 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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D</p> <p>Fiscal & Facility Plans</p>	<p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.</p> <p>Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.