



Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx

School Evaluation Report 2011-2012

Visit Date: February 9-10, 2012

Report Re-Issued: August 21, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Note on the Issuance of this Final Report

The Institute conducted this school evaluation visit in the third year of Girls Prep Bronx’s four-year initial Accountability Period, when the school administered state assessments for the first time. The State Education Department released the results of the state assessments subsequent to the final draft of the following report. The criteria for initial charter renewal include the school’s performance on the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks referenced above and discussed in the report below as well as the school’s performance in meeting its student achievement academic Accountability Plan goals. A preliminary review of the school’s performance on the spring 2012 state assessments in English language arts and mathematics indicates that Girls Prep Bronx will not meet its English language arts Accountability Plan goal.

According to the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of The State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”), the requirements for an initial Full-Term Renewal generally include a consistent record of meeting or coming close to meeting all of the school’s key academic Accountability Plan goals. On the other hand, given the minimal amount of assessment data available at the end of the Accountability Period, the SUNY Renewal Policies include the criterion for a Short-Term Renewal of compiling a mixed or limited record of educational achievement in meeting the key goals.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 9, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	February 23, 2009
School Opening Date	August 31, 2009

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2009-10 to Present	681 Kelly Street, Bronx NY	K-3	Bronx CSD 8

Current Mission Statement

<p>The mission of Girls Prep is to prepare New York City’s girls to graduate from college and succeed in life. Girls Prep girls will embody the core values of scholarship, merit, responsibility, and sisterhood and use these values to guide their choices. Girls Prep will graduate scholars who meet or exceed New York State Performance Standards and are active citizens who learn and serve in their community.</p>
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Current Key Design Elements

<i>Rigorous Academics:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-aligned, challenging curricula or each subject; • Use of assessment and classroom data to tailor instruction and ensure the success of all students; • Extended school day and year; and • Low student/teacher ratios.
<i>Vibrant School Culture:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Values-Scholarship, Merit, Citizenship, and Responsibility; • Bi-weekly Unity Meetings to celebrate the students, school, and accomplishments; and • Classrooms named after female role models.
<i>Well-Rounded Development:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily fitness and art classes; and • Emphasis on leading a balanced, healthy life, with a healthy food policy for students.
<i>Growing Leaders from Within:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows program apprentices new teachers; • Leadership pipeline provides a clear path from Fellow to Principal; and • Two teachers in each K-2 classroom;
<i>Families as Partners:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visits from teachers at the beginning of each school year; • Requiring parents to sign-off daily on all homework assignments; and • Engaging families in the life of the school through daily communication, events, and open doors.

School Characteristics¹

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2009-10	144	130	132	K-1	K-1	184
2010-11	210	207	204	K-2	K-2	184
2011-12	273	280	296	K-3	K-3	184

Demographics²

	2009-10		2010-11	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 8 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 8 Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0
Black or African American	39	27	39	26
Hispanic	46	63	49	63
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	4	0	5
White	0	6	0	6
Multiracial	14	0	12	0
Special Populations				
Students with Disabilities ³	6	N/A	14	N/A
English Language Learners	7	12	8	12
Free/Reduced Lunch				
Eligible for Free Lunch	78	77	78	77
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	11	8	10	7

Current Board of Trustees⁴

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
R. Boykin Curry IV	Chairman
Lauren Frank	Vice Chair
Maria Zimmerman	Academic Committee
Sarah Bennison Machiels	Academic Committee
Laura Weil	Finance Committee
Tiffany Williams	Parent Representative

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

² Source: New York State Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

³ New York State Education Department does not report special education data; statistics given are provided by the school.

⁴ Source: Institute board information.

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10 to Present	Josie Carbone, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	First Year Visit	Institute	April 20,2010
2011-12	Third Year Visit	Institute	February 9-10, 2012

CONDUCT OF VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
February 9-10, 2012	Danielle Keen	Analyst for School Evaluation
	Lori Clement	Senior Analyst
	Jenn David-Lang	External Consultant

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle ⁵	
Charter Period	Third Year of 1 st Charter Term
Accountability Period	Third Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Impending Renewal Visit	Fall 2013

⁵ Because the Institute makes a renewal decision in the last year of a Charter Period, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of the Charter Period. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the Charter Period. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous Charter Period through the next to last year of the current Charter Period.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

1.B Use of Assessment

Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx (“Girls Prep Bronx”) has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve student learning.

Girls Prep Bronx administers a variety of formative and summative assessments. The school administers the TerraNova test in reading and mathematics on an annual basis, in addition to regularly administering the Complete Writing Assessment from Litlife, DIBELS, Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmark, and curriculum-aligned unit assessments. This year, the school has also begun to administer regular Interim Assessments (IAs) from Achievement Network (ANet) to students in the 3rd grade.

While the vast majority of these assessments align to both the state standards and the school’s curriculum, ANet assessments do not align directly with the Girls Prep Bronx curriculum. Administered quarterly, the ANet IAs test a sequence of skills usually appearing on the New York State English language arts and mathematics exams. ANet determines the sequence of skills tested on the exams in advance for the entire cohort of New York City schools with whom they work and does not take into account the sequence in which the individual schools choose to teach each skill. While ANet IAs do not align directly with the Girls Prep Bronx curriculum, they allow the school to compare their own results to the results of similar schools in the New York City cohort. Leaders are currently addressing the lack of alignment between their curriculum and these assessments.

School leaders, in conjunction with ANet staff developers, regularly compile assessment results into spreadsheets and reports. Teachers analyze these reports both individually and by grade team. ANet staff developers provide teachers with training on using this data to create action plans for adjusting instruction. The process is not yet systematic across the school. All teachers report regrouping students and re-teaching concepts in smaller groups or in centers based on assessment results; however, each teacher uses his or her own judgment or advice from grade team members interpreting the data and making changes to instructional plans.

The school does not have a reliable method for ensuring that the scoring of writing assessments and student work is reliable and consistent across each grade. Teachers do not consistently examine student work as a team, nor have they normed the grading of writing samples.

The school regularly communicates student progress to families through report cards. Parent communication is enhanced by the day-to-day presence of parents in the building and the teachers’ strong rapport with them.

1. C Curriculum

Girls Prep Bronx is in the process of revising its curriculum to incorporate the Common Core standards and its newly adopted mathematics program.

Girls Prep Bronx has a clear scope and sequence, aligned to the New York State standards, for reading and writing which is based on the Litlife commercial curriculum. Teachers supplement this scope and sequence with unit plans that include big ideas, essential questions, unit goals and the four stages of lesson development: immersion, identification, guided practice and commitment. The school is in the process of revising the scope and sequence and unit plans in order to incorporate the Common Core standards.

While the revision process for the reading and writing curricula is a gradual one, the mathematics curriculum is undergoing a much more substantial and immediate transformation. In previous years the school has used envisionMATH; however, this year, based on the principal's observations, the school has transitioned to using TERC's Investigations curriculum. Currently, the school only has a comprehensive curriculum map for 3rd grade. The mathematics coach is in the process of writing maps for grades K-2. In addition, the principal and coaches are working with Public Prep, the school's charter management organization to plan curriculum for the school's upcoming 4th grade class.

Teachers have daily periods for lesson planning and are expected to upload lesson plans to the school's server and to maintain copies in their classrooms. Most teachers report that they do not receive feedback or guidance on lesson plans unless they request it from coaches. Teachers have sufficient resources including commercial materials to support the Litlife and Investigations curricula. In addition, teachers have access to Everyday Calendar Math to provide additional mathematics instruction during morning meetings and a wide variety of leveled books for independent and small-group reading instruction.

1. D Pedagogy

Instruction at Girls Prep Bronx ranges from quality to high quality.

Girls Prep Bronx uses the parallel teaching model effectively in all classes, maximizing the resource of having two instructors in the room. A lead teacher leads a class either with a 'teaching fellow' or in partnership with a special education teacher in a collaborative team teaching (CTT) class. Homeroom classes are split during core content instruction to allow for intensive small group instruction.

Lessons generally include a short mini-lesson, followed by small group work. During small group instruction, teachers effectively differentiate instructional materials and texts, as well as instructional approaches, in order to challenge students at the appropriate level and address their individual learning styles. For example, in one English language arts class, where two teachers worked with small groups, one group focused on reading a higher level text and writing responses about characters' feelings, while another group read a lower level text and identified character traits in accompanying pictures.

Daily small group instruction allows teachers to effectively gauge each student's level of understanding. Teachers take notes during lessons, collecting and tracking qualitative data on

each student's strengths and weaknesses. Lessons focus on clear, rigorous objectives that challenge the girls to think critically and make inferences. Most girls are able to articulate clearly the purpose of the lesson and the objective that they strive to master.

There is a strong instructional focus on vocabulary development and writing in all English language arts classes. The majority of teachers, in all grades including kindergarten, push students to justify answers with evidence and to go beyond basic comprehension and factual recall towards demonstrating inferential learning. Teachers engage nearly all students in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time, with a few students drifting off-task for a short period before an adult redirects them. Teachers maximize learning time through the use of efficient transition procedures. Given the daily instructional routines, students clearly understand their role in lessons and transition from activity to activity with ease.

1. E Instructional Leadership

Girls Prep Bronx has strong instructional leadership.

The school's instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff. The leadership team, led by the school's principal, includes two instructional coaches, a director of student and family affairs and a learning specialist coordinator. The leadership team meets monthly to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall program; the instructional coaches also meet with the principal one-on-one each month. In response to the leadership team's evaluation of the academic program last year, the principal has made significant changes to the program including the hiring of an instructional coach for mathematics and a director of operations to allow the principal more time to focus on instruction.

The principal sets high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement during summer professional development sessions. Instructional leaders expect teachers to set annual professional goals for themselves and individualize the teachers' professional development accordingly. The leadership team has developed a comprehensive support and evaluation system to assist teachers in meeting these goals.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers also develop goals for student achievement. These goals drive regular instructional coaching cycles. Instructional coaches provide five coaching cycles each year, working with four classrooms per cycle and with all teachers participating in at least two coaching cycles. During a given cycle, coaches conduct pre-observation meetings, observe and debrief with teachers each week. The principal also performs regular classroom walkthroughs; however, teachers report receiving little feedback from these informal observations. While teachers report finding the coaching cycles useful, the cycles have a narrow focus. Coaches concentrate mostly on helping teachers meet goals that they have set for themselves and their students, rather than providing them with coaching to build on the areas in which leaders determine that a teacher lacks strong pedagogical skills.

The principal conducts formal teacher evaluations twice yearly. Evaluations are based on observations, lesson planning and preparation, classroom environment and professional responsibilities. During mid-year evaluations teachers complete a self-evaluation and discuss their findings in comparison to the principal's evaluation of their performance. This discussion culminates in an action plan to address identified areas for growth. At the time of the visit, the

principal reported that she had not yet conducted the mid-year evaluations. While teachers report being aware of the criteria used for evaluations, many teachers confuse coaching observations and feedback sessions conducted throughout the year with the mid-year evaluations.

The school's leadership provides structured opportunities and resources for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program. Teachers meet weekly as a grade team and are occasionally joined by the principal and coaches to plan units and discuss content.

1. F At-Risk Students

Girls Prep Bronx has a robust program for serving special education students and those at risk of academic failure. The school also has a demonstrably effective program that meets needs of English Language Learners (ELLs).

The school provides all students with differentiated, small group instruction using a variety of instructional approaches and leveled materials and has created more intensive support systems for those students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through extra guided reading sessions, CTT classes, push-in support, SETTS, the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS) intervention and the Do the Math mathematics intervention program.

The school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions. Students that score more than three months behind in reading on the Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmark automatically receive 90 extra minutes of small group reading instruction per week. Those that are more than six months behind receive LiPS intervention services four days per week. Classroom teachers or push-in teachers provide Do the Math intervention services to students who they observe struggling with basic number sense or who perform poorly on informal assessments.

Teachers may also refer students to a structured, twice weekly Child Study Team (CST), which reviews one child's performance holistically and brainstorms interventions to serve that child. The team reviews the same child's progress every six weeks. If after multiple CST check-ins, the student fails to improve, the school may refer her for a special education evaluation.

The school provides sufficient training, resources and support to all teachers and specialists for meeting the needs of at-risk students and has sufficient staff to serve them. All special education teachers, whether they teach a CTT class or provide push-in services, have scheduled planning time with the general education teachers of the students they serve. The school closely monitors the progress of both students at risk of academic failure and those with IEPs; however, the school has not yet taken steps toward evaluating the effectiveness of special education and at-risk services as a whole.

The school has a program for serving its 24 ELLs, who make up eight percent of the total student population, and employs one full-time English-as-a-second-language coordinator to serve these students. Students in kindergarten and 1st grade, with less developed English language skills receive pull-out ELL instruction. The kindergarten group uses a curriculum that focuses on building and clarifying vocabulary. In first grade, the focus of pull-out sessions is on literacy and building sight recognition of English words. In the upper grades, the ESL coordinator pushes into classes with ELLs and either co-teaches or parallel teaches ELL students in order to support the students in

accessing the general education curriculum. The program has proven effective: last year, 82 percent of the school's ELLs improved at least one level on the NYSESLAT exam.

1. G Student Order and Discipline

Girls Prep Bronx promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.

Girls Prep Bronx has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied. The school makes the policy available to families in the student handbook, which clearly explains expectations for student behavior. All teachers track low and mid-level misbehavior using a color-coded ladder of consequences that identifies whether students are learning, not learning or hurting the learning of others. At the end of each day, teachers record student behavior in a tracker submitted to the director of student and family affairs, who identifies trends and works with students and teachers to reverse negative trends and reward positive ones, in addition to handling all extreme behavioral disruptions. Students with negative behavioral trends often receive behavioral plans, crafted in close coordination with their classroom teachers and parents. When requested, the school also provides coaching to parents on correcting behavior at home and has created reverse behavioral plans for students who behave well at school, but poorly at home to assist parents with setting boundaries and establishing rules.

The school designs classroom management techniques and daily routines to promote safety and organization. Prior to the start of the year, teachers receive training on school-wide routines and techniques including voice meters, as well as hand signals for bathroom breaks and pencil sharpening. In addition to school-wide routines, each teacher develops classroom procedures and submits them to the director of student and family affairs who monitors their consistent implementation and effectiveness.

The school has a strong incentive system in place that supports its scholarly culture. The school recognizes students with 30-150 day records of good behavior with a variety of rewards at school-wide "unity meetings."

1. H Professional Development

Girls Prep Bronx's leadership centers its professional development program on teacher interest and provides overall training in program implementation.

Girls Prep Bronx continues to reflect on, and develop, its professional development program. Leaders evaluate the program throughout the year, based on principal and coach observations and teacher feedback. They make changes as necessary, such as altering the length of coaching cycles to meet teacher needs. The leadership team has already identified ways to improve the program for next year, including providing further opportunities for individual teachers to turnkey insights gained from external professional development to the rest of the staff.

In addition to coaching provided by the school's instructional coaches, new teachers receive two weeks of professional development in the summer, while returning staff receive one week. During summer sessions, teachers gain an introduction to the school's curricular programs, resources and assessments, culture and core values, as well as school-wide routines and procedures. The school also holds professional development sessions each Friday, led by the instructional leadership

team. Once a month these sessions focus on school-wide professional development topics, such as the development of SMART goals or the Danielson rubric for evaluation. Every three weeks this session is devoted to collaborative study groups. Teachers choose study group topics and report using these groups to share and discuss ideas.

The new mathematics coach hosts a monthly session to increase teacher content knowledge in mathematics. Teachers spend these sessions working through challenging mathematics problems and report finding the sessions extremely helpful for improving their teaching. Some teachers express a desire to have a similar offering in English language arts.

The school provides each staff member with a \$1500 stipend for external professional development which teachers report using to attend conferences and workshops or for educational expenses related to certification or graduate school programs. Public Prep provides additional professional development opportunities through day-long workshops on topics such as assessment development, technology and curriculum. The school employs an external literacy coach who visits monthly to conduct observations and provide coaching and curriculum guidance. The instructional leadership team also receives external coaching from ANet to build the schools capacity to analyze data and effectively use ANet IA tools.

2. C Organizational Capacity

The organization of Girls Prep Bronx effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.

Girls Prep Bronx demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations. The school defines clear lines of accountability, staff roles and responsibilities. The principal, with support from the newly hired director of operations, manages all operational and fiscal matters.

The principal regularly evaluates and monitors the school's programs and makes changes as necessary. For example, noticing gaps in the students' mathematics abilities and teachers' pedagogical skills in mathematics instruction she recently hired a mathematics coach, changed the overall mathematics curriculum and implemented a new mathematics intervention program.

Public Prep supports the principal in making major changes in the program based on CMO network-wide data. Based on trends at Girls Prep Bronx, and its sister school, Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York, the network began using ANet IAs this year in order to have a more reliable indicator of student achievement relative to the upcoming New York State exams.

The school has established clear priorities and allocated sufficient resources toward achieving its mission and Accountability Plan goals. This year, the school's focus is on improving the school's Response to Intervention (RTI) process, assisting teachers in setting measurable goals for student achievement and preparing for the addition of 4th grade next year.

Girls Prep has a robust hiring process that begins at the CMO level. Public Prep recruitment staff initially screens candidates before moving them on to an interview and demo lesson with the school's principal and an interview with the school's peer interview team. Some teaching staff join the school through the Public Prep teacher pipeline program, which as a first step hires licensed teachers with less experience as "fellows" and "associate fellows." The school pairs fellows with a

lead teacher in grades K-2 or a grade team in grades 3-4. These individuals participate in small group instruction and planning and are able to apply for lead teacher roles after having spent two to three years learning in the classroom under the tutelage of a lead teacher. Once hired, the school successfully retains its high quality staff. All teaching staff receive twice yearly evaluations; non-teaching staff receive one formal evaluation each year. Public Prep is currently in the process of developing an evaluation standard rubric for the evaluation of non-teaching roles.

The school maintains full enrollment and currently has a waitlist.

2. D Board Oversight

The Girls Prep Bronx board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the school.

The Girls Prep Bronx board has adequate skills and expertise in education reform, finance, marketing and communications, as well as adequate meeting time, to provide rigorous oversight of the school. The board meets regularly with the board of the school’s sister school, Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York, in order to compare performance and statistics. In addition, members of both boards join together to form network-wide committees, which focus on topics such as academics and finance.

The school board understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight and regularly receives a dashboard that details the results of reading and mathematics IAs, as well as information on teacher turnover, parent survey results and student discipline. The school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals, including opening a middle school and securing a larger facility, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders.

Public Prep leads a 360-degree evaluation of the school’s principal twice yearly with the input of the school board and school staff, the results of which the board critically reviews. The board also works in conjunction with the school’s principal to ensure that Public Prep provides the services detailed in its contract. It does not, however, currently conduct on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness. Recently, the board asked board members who are Public Prep employees or who sit on its board to resign from the Girls Prep Bronx board in order to eliminate any possible conflict of interest.⁶

⁶ Based on the conflict of interest provisions of the General Municipal Law, directors, officers, and/or employees of a not-for-profit charter management organization may legally sit on the board of a charter school which they manage. SUNY’s charter agreement limits this participation to no more than one (1) interested party if the school’s board has six (6) or fewer total trustees, or two (2) interested parties if the school’s board has seven (7) or more trustees. In any event, no trustee affiliated with a not-for-profit charter management organization may serve as the school board’s office of chairperson or treasurer.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.

Visit the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.

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

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">State University Renewal Benchmark 1B</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Use of Assessment Data</p>	<p>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and state performance standards; • the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board; • the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy; • the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school’s Accountability Plan goals are being achieved; • the school’s leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school’s academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services; • the school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students; • a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade; • the school regularly communicates each student’s progress and growth to

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

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

State University Renewal Benchmark 1H	The school’s professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers’ pedagogical skills and content knowledge.
Professional Development	<p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; • the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s mission, curriculum, and instructional programs; • annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests; • professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals; • teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities; • the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities; • the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and • the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.

Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
State University Renewal Benchmark 2A	The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.
Mission & Key Design Elements	<p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.

<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision; • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight;

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

Legal Requirements

Elements that are generally present include:

- during its charter period, the school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL, and Open Meetings Law;
- at the time of renewal, the school is in substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- over the charter period, the school has abided by the terms of its monitoring plan;
- the school has designed and put in place effective systems and controls to ensure that legal and charter requirements were and are met; and
- the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel that reviews relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and makes recommendations and handles other legal matters as needed.