



# **Leadership Preparatory Ocean Hill Charter School**

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## **School Evaluation Report 2012-13**

**Visit Date: March 5th, 2013**

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

## INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report includes three components. The first section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. The second section provides background information on the conduct of the evaluation visit, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school's current charter cycle. Finally, a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit presents an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit. Following these sections, an appendix provides the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the "Renewal Benchmarks").

While the Institute conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all Renewal Benchmarks near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. These Qualitative Education Benchmarks address the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. They provide a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), as well as organizational capacity, board oversight and governance. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the "Institute") uses the established criteria on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

**The report below provides benchmark conclusions and evidence to support these conclusions in order to highlight areas of concern and provide additional feedback. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report, which deliberately emphasizes areas of concern. As such, limited detail and evidence about positive elements of the educational program are not an indication that the Institute does not fully recognize evidence of program effectiveness.**

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

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	May 13, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	October 28, 2008
School Opening Date	August 2010

### Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-11	1137 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11233	K-1	NYC CSD 23
2011-12 to Present	51 Christopher Ave, Brooklyn NY, 11212	K-3	NYC CSD 23

### Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Partner	Uncommon Schools	CMO	2010-Present

### Mission Statement

The mission of the school is to prepare students to excel in demanding college-prep high schools and colleges and to contribute to their communities as leaders.
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### Key Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding all stakeholders accountable for student achievement, including both staff and parents;</li> <li>• Building a program based on “best practices” of existing high-performing urban schools serving low-income students; and</li> <li>• Drawing on the considerable community resources available to the school.</li> </ul>
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### School Characteristics<sup>1</sup>

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2010-11	116	145	142	K-1	K-1
2011-12	171	232	232	K-2	K-2
2012-13	223	313	319 <sup>2</sup>	K-3	K-3

<sup>1</sup> 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.)

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

### Student Demographics<sup>3</sup>

	2010-11	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 23 Enrollment
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Black or African American	100	80
Hispanic	0	18
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	1
White	0	1
Multiracial	0	0
<b>Special Populations</b>		
Students with Disabilities <sup>4</sup>	8	N/A <sup>5</sup>
English Language Learners	8	4
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>		
Eligible for Free Lunch	53	79
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	6	5

### Board of Trustees<sup>6</sup>

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
Tokumbo Shobowale	Chair
Carrie Abrahamson	Trustee
Caroline Curry	Trustee
Ben Esner	Trustee
Michael Hall	Secretary
Matthew Klein	Trustee
Arvind Krishnamurthy	Trustee
Julie Jackson	Trustee
Dyrnest Sinckler	Trustee
Jeffrey Wetzler	Trustee

<sup>3</sup> Source: New York State Report Cards.

<sup>4</sup> 2010-11 BEDS Report.

<sup>5</sup> District-level Students with Disabilities enrollment data are not available for 2010-11. SED released these district data for the first time in spring 2012. Based on the state's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets, the CSD's 2011-12 Students with Disabilities enrollment is 17 percent compared to 15 percent for the school.

<sup>6</sup> Source: School renewal application and Institute board information.

**School Leader(s)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>School Leader(s) Name and Title</b>
2010-2011 to Present	Nikki Bridges, Principal Brendalyn King, Director of Operations

**School Visit History**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Visit Type</b>	<b>Evaluator (Institute/External)</b>	<b>Date</b>
2010-11	First Year	Institute	May 17, 2011
2012-13	Annual Visit	Institute	March 5, 2013

## CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

### Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
March 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	Danielle Keen	Senior Analyst
	Eileen Coppola, Ed.D	External Consultant

### Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Period	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of 1 <sup>st</sup> Five-Year Charter Period
Accountability Period <sup>7</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year of the Four-Year Accountability Period
Impending Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

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<sup>7</sup> 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 Data***

***Leadership Preparatory Ocean Hill Charter School (“LP Ocean Hill”) has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.***

- LP Ocean Hill regularly administers valid and reliable standardized assessments that align to the school’s curriculum. The school administers the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (“STEP”) assessment five times yearly to assess achievement and progress in literacy. It administers Interim Assessments (“IAs”) in math four times each year, as well as a writing assessment three times each year. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, teachers also administer IAs in ELA to predict students’ performance on the New York State test.
- The school has measures in place to ensure reliability in the scoring of STEP results, IAs and student writing. Teachers blind-score STEP assessments and group-score student writing in order to align results across the school.
- Teachers and instructional leaders at the school analyze the data from the STEP assessment and use it to group students and to identify students who are struggling academically. Teachers use the results of this in-depth analysis to develop six-week instructional plans in guided reading. The learning support coordinator also uses the analysis to tailor individual students’ interventions. Teachers monitor student progress using formative assessments and adjust instruction as necessary.
- School leaders use assessment data and information collected during classroom observations to develop professional development and coaching strategies. While the school uses assessment data to guide the school’s teacher professional development program, it does not figure directly in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- The school regularly communicates student progress to parents/guardians through progress reports, report cards, phone calls home and in-person meetings.

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

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

- The school has a curriculum framework, adapted from the Uncommon Schools (“Uncommon”) North Star Network that provides a fixed, underlying structure across all subjects and grades.
- In addition to the framework, Uncommon provides unit plans, lesson plans and formative assessments to the school.
- With the assistance of Uncommon network support staff, the school regularly reviews and makes adjustments to its curriculum. For example, using data from IA assessments and soliciting teacher input, the network recently made a switch to using the Investigations

Math curriculum, in order to encourage conceptual thinking skills outlined in the Common Core.

- Teachers adapt lessons from the North Star Network using IA and other data, infusing opportunities for students to practice skills on which they previously demonstrated poor performance.

### **1. D Pedagogy**

***High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.***

- Teachers deliver purposeful and focused lessons in all grades and subjects, clearly outlining the objective of each lesson for students. In most classrooms, two teachers instruct small groups, while one group of students works independently.
- Teachers frequently check for student understanding through small group instruction, call and response drills and circulating during independent practice.
- Teachers challenge students towards higher-level thinking in some subject areas more than others. In math lessons, teachers include opportunities for students to analyze data and to challenge one another's conclusions. In reading, teachers push students to make inferences about characters' feelings and motivations. Most writing assignments are argument-based short pieces, designed to teach students to cite text as supporting arguments.
- Teachers at LP Ocean Hill maximize learning time extremely effectively, utilizing smooth and organized transitions. Teachers maintain focused pacing, quickly redirecting students who are off-task. Classroom management techniques and routines create a strong focus on academic achievement.
- Students use "accountable talk" across the school, engaging in discussion by articulately defending their own answers and building off those of their peers.

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

***The school has strong instructional leadership, including an exceptionally robust system of feedback and support for teachers.***

- School leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement with clear, school-wide goals. The school's board and school staff collectively set high expectations for student achievement.
- Teachers set professional development goals with their instructional leaders and revisit their progress toward meeting these goals every four weeks, setting new goals as they achieve previous ones.
- LP Ocean Hill's principal and director of staff development observe each teacher one-to-three times per week. Teachers have weekly meetings with their assigned instructional leader, during which they discuss the most recently observed lesson. In addition, instructional leaders provide feedback for the teacher on every observation. This feedback, generally in the form of an email, includes strengths and "quick fixes," and also addresses

deeper issues and long-term goals. Instructional leaders implement this system consistently and thoughtfully.

- Instructional leaders set the school’s professional development agenda based on teacher needs that they observe during regular classroom observations. Both leaders and teachers report that instructional leaders follow-up on professional development topics, holding teachers accountable for implementation.
- One teacher per subject per grade adapts lesson plans for the entire grade from the North Star Network, using assessment data to adjust instruction to the needs of their students. Instructional leaders review and approve these plans, and grade team leaders discuss the plans at their weekly meetings to ensure consistency in implementation. In this way, instructional leaders ensure aligned and high quality lesson planning.
- Instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. Using informal observation notes and feedback, instructional leaders evaluate teachers against a standard rubric that measures both pedagogical strengths and professionalism.

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

#### ***LP Ocean Hill meets the needs of at-risk students.***

- The school has a clear process for identifying at-risk students. The learning support coordinator analyzes STEP data and observes students that teachers identify as struggling throughout the school to identify those most in need of pull-out interventions support. The school administers the home language survey to every family during orientation in order to identify potential English language learners (“ELLs”) and administers the LAB-R to students if necessary.
- The school employs two special education teachers who provide adequate intervention services for low-performers and the school’s 16 students with Individualized Education Program (“IEPs”), including SETSS for reading and math, and push-in for writing. The school uses the Wilson reading program to support students who perform lowest on the STEP assessment. Teachers and the learning support coordinator analyze STEP and IA data to monitor these students’ growth. The school’s seven ELLs receive support in the context of general literacy instruction during small group and guided reading periods, as well as SETSS if necessary.
- A Student Support Team (“SST”), led by the learning support coordinator and comprised of classroom teachers, a special education teacher and the school’s social worker, meets twice monthly to identify students for whom intervention services are unsuccessful and consider increasing the intensity of interventions. The group creates support plans for students, which teachers implement and the team revisits at the next SST meeting. If students do not show improvement, the learning support coordinator may work with parents to decide whether special education evaluation is necessary.
- The learning support coordinator analyzes the assessment data of academically struggling students and students with disabilities. The school disaggregates at-risk student data from

the general education population to measure the school's progress toward closing the performance gap between the two groups.

- Teachers and the learning support coordinator confer to monitor students' progress toward achieving IEP goals.

## **2. C Organizational Capacity**

### ***LP Ocean Hill's organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.***

- 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 school's director of operations and her team successfully carry out all operational tasks, leaving teachers and instructional leaders to focus on academics.
- The organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Teachers clearly know who to go to for each of their individual needs, and to whom they are accountable.
- The school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied. Given extremely high levels of engagement, no significant misbehavior was noted during the evaluation visit; however, the staff reports that the school's discipline system is effective and consistently implemented.
- The school retains quality staff. Ten of the school's founding teachers remain at LP Ocean Hill and only three staff members left the school last year.
- The school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals.
- The school maintains adequate student enrollment and has over 4,000 students on its waitlist.
- 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.
- The school regularly monitors and evaluates its programs and makes changes if necessary. For example, the school changed its math curriculum after remarking that it did not sufficiently address conceptual understandings of math, and it is currently in the process of revamping the writing program to systematize best practices and increase teacher alignment when grading assessments.



## State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 2012

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### Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks<sup>8</sup> (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

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

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect 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.

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<sup>8</sup> Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share. These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the *Correlates of Effective Schools*. The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

-Revised May 2012-

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

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

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated.

Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

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

# State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

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

<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C</b></p> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p>	<p><b>The school’s curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades;</li> <li>• in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans;</li> <li>• teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents;</li> <li>• the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and</li> <li>• teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D</b></p> <p><b>Pedagogy</b></p>	<p><b>High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum;</li> <li>• teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding;</li> <li>• teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills;</li> <li>• teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and</li> <li>• teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E</b></p> <p><b>Instructional Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>The school has strong instructional leadership.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;</li> <li>• the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff;</li> <li>• instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers’ instructional effectiveness;</li> </ul>

- 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.

**SUNY Renewal  
Benchmark 1F**

**At-Risk Students**

**The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.**

The following elements are generally present:

- 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;
- 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.

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

<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D</b></p> <p><b>Board Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>The school board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school’s future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization;</li> <li>• the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances;</li> <li>• it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision;</li> <li>• the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively;</li> <li>• the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and</li> <li>• the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E</b></p> <p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems and processes.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships;</li> <li>• the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</li> <li>• the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members;</li> <li>• the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to</li> </ul>

	<p>maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter;</li> <li>• the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner;</li> <li>• the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion;</li> <li>• the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and</li> <li>• the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</b></p> <p><b>Legal Requirements</b></p>	<p><b>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law;</li> <li>• the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations;</li> <li>• the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan;</li> <li>• the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements;</li> <li>• the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and</li> <li>• the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

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

<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C</b></p> <p><b>Financial Reporting</b></p>	<p>conditions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy;</li> <li>• the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and</li> <li>• the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.</b></p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable;</li> <li>• annual budgets and cash flow statements;</li> <li>• un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment;</li> <li>• bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and</li> <li>• grant expenditure reports.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D</b></p> <p><b>Financial Condition</b></p>	<p><b>The school maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</b></p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;</li> <li>• the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months);</li> <li>• the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections;</li> <li>• If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;</li> <li>• If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.</li> </ul>
	<b>Renewal Question 4</b> <b>If the School's Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?</b>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A</b>  <b>Plans for the School's Structure</b>	<p><b>Key structural elements of the school, as defined in the exhibits of the Application for Charter Renewal, are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period;</li> <li>the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program;</li> <li>the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget;</li> <li>key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing;</li> <li>a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and</li> <li>plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program.</li> </ul>
<b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B</b>  <b>Plans for the Educational Program</b>	<p><b>The school's plans for implementing the educational program allow it to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school's educational program;</li> <li>for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and</li> <li>where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation</li> </ul>

	standards set by the Board of Regents.
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C</b></p> <p><b>Plans for Board Oversight and Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable plan for board oversight and governance.</b></p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school;</li> <li>• plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board’s ability to carry out its responsibilities;</li> <li>• if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and</li> <li>• if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D</b></p> <p><b>Fiscal &amp; Facility Plans</b></p>	<p><b>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.</b></p> <p>Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections;</li> <li>• fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs;</li> <li>• fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions;</li> <li>• information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and</li> <li>• facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.</li> </ul>