



New World Preparatory Charter School

2012-13 School Evaluation Report

Visit Date: May 2, 2013

Report Issued: April 1, 2014

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 four components. The first section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. The second section provides background information on the conduct of the evaluation visit, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school's current charter cycle. The third section provides the school's 2012-13 Performance Review and Summaries, which gives an analysis of the attainment of the key academic goals in the school's Accountability Plan. Finally, a fourth section entitled School Evaluation Visit presents overall benchmark conclusions (in italics) and an analysis of evidence collected for each of the respective benchmarks. Following these sections, the report includes an appendix containing the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (a component of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks) used during the visit.

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

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

Because of the inherent complexity of a school organization, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school's prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and note areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. The Institute notes that due to a high volume of school visit responsibilities this report is delivered in a less than optimal time frame coming so many months after the visit. However, the Institute's responsibility to capture data on school performance remains important. The Institute has made attempts throughout the report to indicate what was observed on the ground at the time of the visit. It may be that the school has addressed some of the issues identified. The Institute will capture that information in a subsequent report.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 15, 2009
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	February 7, 2010
School Opening	September, 2010

Location and Enrollment

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
26 Sharpe Ave., Staten Island, NY 10302	NYC CSD 31	Private	282	6-8

Partner Organization

Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Victory Education Partners, Inc.	Education Management Organization	2010-11 to 2011-12

Mission Statement

New World Preparatory Charter School (NWP) will provide an exceptional education for students in grades 6-8 by employing research-proven strategies to raise middle school academic achievement including: academic rigor and relevance, personalization, focused professional development, and meaningful engagement of families and the larger community.

Key Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic rigor and relevance;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalization;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong professional development; and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging families and the larger school community as critical partners.

School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	125	127	6	6	182
2011-12	249	194	6-7	6-7	182
2012-13	374	282	6-8	6-8	182

Student Demographics¹

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13 ²
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 31 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 31 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity					
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	1	0	1
Black or African American	57	15	61	14	55
Hispanic	33	24	35	25	40
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	4	8	2	8	2
White	3	53	2	52	1
Multiracial	2	0	0	0	1
Students with Disabilities³					
Students with Disabilities ³	25	--	27	22	28
English Language Learners					
English Language Learners	5	6	13	6	13
Eligible for Free Lunch					
Eligible for Free Lunch	72	45	67	45	--
Eligible for Reduced –Price Lunch					
Eligible for Reduced –Price Lunch	7	8	4	9	--
Economically Disadvantaged					
Economically Disadvantaged	--	--	--	--	83

Board of Trustees⁴

Name	Position
John P. Tobin	Chair
Rev. Terry Troia	Secretary
Denis P. Kelleher	Treasurer
Angelo Aponte	Trustee
Araceli Arizmendi	Trustee
Carin Guarasci	Trustee
Jack Minogue	Trustee
Emma Vidals	Trustee
Peter Weinman	Trustee
Arnold Obey	Trustee
Linda Mulligan	PTO President
Beverly Peterson	Ex-officio
Father Mark Hallinan	Ex-officio

¹ Source: 2010-11 and 2011-12 School Report Cards, SED.

² The Institute derived the 2012-13 statistics from the school's October 2012 student enrollment report to SED (2012-13 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available.

³ 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 as the State's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets.

⁴ Source: Institute board records.

School Leader(s)

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

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	First Year	Institute	April 14, 2011
2011-12	Evaluation	Institute	April 4-5, 2012
2012-13	Informal	Institute	February 5, 2013
2012-13	Evaluation	Institute	May 2, 2013

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
May 2, 2013	Natasha Howard, PhD	Director of School Evaluation
	Adam Aberman	External Consultant

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 rd Year of the First Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁵	3 rd Year of the Current Four Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

⁵ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a charter term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of that charter term. For schools in initial charter terms, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the charter term. For schools in subsequent charter terms, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.

2012-13 School Performance Review

At the beginning of the charter term, the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of English Language Arts (“ELA”) and math. The Accountability Plan also includes science and No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) goals. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal.

Note: This year the Institute is not taking into account the two absolute ELA and math measures when evaluating schools’ goal attainment. Because of the high standards in the new state testing program only a handful of schools statewide met the absolute proficiency target and the state has not yet recalibrated the absolute Annual Measurable Objective.

Performance Evaluation

In 2012-13, the second year that both comparative measures in ELA and math were applicable to New World Preparatory Charter School (“New World Prep”) and the third year of its four-year Accountability Period, the school met neither its ELA nor its math goal. Given the school’s failure to meet its key academic Accountability Plan goals, New World Prep’s prospects for renewal are in jeopardy.

The school is meeting its No Child Left Behind (“NCLB”) goal. The school is not meeting its science goal.

ELA

Through the first three years of the Accountability Period, New World Prep met only one of the ELA measures that constitute the goal; the mean growth percentile, in both 2011-12 and 2012-13. It has underperformed the Staten Island School District in each of the last two years. In comparison to demographically similar schools, New World Prep has performed worse than expected each year.

Math

Through the first two years of the Accountability Period, New World Prep did not meet any of the math measures that constitute the goal. In 2012-13, it met only one measure; the mean growth percentile. It has underperformed the Staten Island School District in each of the last two years. In comparison to demographically similar schools, New World Prep performed worse than expected in the first two years, and as expected in 2012-13, though still below the target. The school does cite regents pass rates as an indicator of progress though the Institute was unable to find a record of the information in the NYSED database. The Institute will continue to monitor this progress as data becomes available.

NCLB

New World Prep has met its NCLB goal in the first two years of its charter.

Science

In 2012-13, the first year that the school administered the 8th grade science exam, it did not meet the goal, falling below the target of a 75 percent proficiency rate and under-performing the local school district.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts
New World Prep Charter School



	2010-11			MET	2011-12			MET	2012-13			MET			
	Grades Served: 6				Grades Served: 6-7				Grades Served: 6-8						
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
ABSOLUTE MEASURES 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)				
	4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)				
	5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)				
	6	29.4 (109)	(0)		6	43.7 (87)	(0)		6	12.6 (95)	(0)				
	7	(0)	(0)		7	25.3 (99)	26.9 (93)		7	11.5 (96)	13.0 (77)				
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	14.8 (88)	15.1 (86)				
	All	29.4 (109)	(0)		All	33.9 (186)	26.9 (93)	NO	All	12.9 (279)	14.1 (163)	NO			
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO				
	6	113	122	NO	6-7	121	135	NO	6-8	71					
COMPARATIVE MEASURES 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31						
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
	NA			NA	7	26.9	52.6	NO	7-8	14.1	32.5	NO			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	
	71.5	29.4	39.2	-0.62	NO	66.8	33.9	39.9	-0.36	NO	82.4	12.9	17.6	-0.41	NO
GROWTH MEASURE 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State				
	4				4				4	0.0					
	5				5				5	0.0					
	6				6				6	44.9					
	7				7				7	56.8					
	8				8				8	52.9					
	All	42.0	50.0	NO	All	50.6	50.0	YES	All	51.8	50.0	YES			

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

New World Prep Charter School



	2010-11			MET	2011-12			MET	2012-13			MET			
	Grades Served: 6				Grades Served: 6-7				Grades Served: 6-8						
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
ABSOLUTE MEASURES															
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)				
	4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)				
	5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)				
	6	35.8 (109)	(0)		6	37.9 (87)	(0)		6	18.9 (95)	(0)				
	7	(0)	(0)		7	33.3 (99)	31.2 (93)		7	13.5 (96)	14.3 (77)				
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	18.2 (88)	18.6 (86)				
	All	35.8 (109)	(0)		All	35.5 (186)	31.2 (93)	NO	All	16.8 (279)	16.6 (163)	NO			
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO				
	6	122	137	NO	6-7	124	148	NO	6-8	76					
COMPARATIVE MEASURES															
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31						
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
	NA			NA	7	31.2	65.2	NO	7-8	16.6	29.0	NO			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	
	71.5	35.8	48.4	-0.60	NO	66.8	35.5	52.5	-0.80	NO	82.4	16.8	16.7	0.00	NO
GROWTH MEASURE															
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State				
	4				4				4	0.0					
	5				5				5	0.0					
	6				6				6	58.8					
	7				7				7	58.8					
	8				8				8	69.9					
	All	30.0	50.0	NO	All	35.0	50.0	NO	All	62.3	50.0				YES

Summary of Brief Informal Visit

New World Prep's quantitative data is consistent with the Institute's qualitative evaluations of the school's program. During its 2011-12 evaluation visit, the Institute found inadequate instructional leadership insufficient to support the development of the teaching staff so that they in turn can support students in achieving academic success. At the time of this visit, the Institute found an uneven quality of instruction across classrooms as well as deficiencies in the capacity of the organization to support teachers in gaining and sustaining strong instructional practices. Specifically, the Institute notes in its 2011-12 School Evaluation Report the lack of a comprehensive system to use assessment data to make decisions about student learning interventions, insufficient coordination of instruction, a lack of clearly defined criteria for identifying at-risk students, the absence of a clear school-wide grading policy, limited supervisory support for a largely inexperienced staff, little teacher accountability for student performance and a focus on teaching processes rather than student learning outcomes.

An informal Institute visit to New World Prep on February 5, 2013, revealed that the school had addressed some of its basic procedures and structures since the 2011-12 school year, but that these changes had yet to fundamentally affect the delivery of the instructional program. The school introduced standard grading rubrics, but teachers continued to be responsible for creating their own class assessments. Instructional coaches, now employed by the school rather its management company, continued to be on-site only part-time thereby limiting supports for teachers. This was of particular concern given the large number of novice teachers. The school indicated teachers receive professional development during the summer, attending conferences and professional development seminars and receive regular support from the Principal, Academic Directors, coaches. Such efforts are only important to the degree that they change the strength of classroom instruction and the academic outcomes for students. Limited teacher accountability for student achievement remained an issue. In addition, the chairperson of the school's board of trustees did not communicate any sense of urgency to improve student outcomes despite members' awareness of the renewal timeline and of New World Prep's lack of attainment of its Accountability Plan goals.

Based on the above concerns regarding the academic program in place during its informal visit in February, the Institute conducted a formal visit to New World Prep on May 2, 2013, and presents the findings from that visit below. While the Institute generally reports on findings for a broader set of benchmarks, this visit focused specifically on instructional leadership, pedagogy and board oversight.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Instructional Leadership

New World Prep has yet to develop instructional leadership and coaching structures sufficient to support the development of its teaching staff.

- In previous years, the principal served as the only full-time instructional leader and relied heavily on two part-time consultants employed by the school's education management organization, Victory Education Partners ("Victory") as well as a number of other external consultants who provided coaching for teachers. At the time of the visit, the two primary consultants worked directly for the school rather than Victory and held the titles of academic director and assistant academic director. They continued to be part-time employees, holding primary responsibility for content area coaching in literacy and math, respectively. Given the high level of beginner teachers' need, the school's instructional leadership was not, at the time of the visit, adequate to support teachers in developing effective instructional practices.
- New World Prep created a number of teacher-leader positions including a teacher coordinator, a literacy coach and content area leaders. The staff members designated for these roles were at the time of the visit fairly inexperienced and maintained instructional responsibilities, which limited their availability to provide in-class support for other teachers. The school indicates investing significant professional development in these leaders, however no additional academic results are available to determine the effectiveness of this support. The Institute will continue to monitor this as the school approaches renewal.
- A review of the school's professional development calendar indicates the school missed opportunities to align instructional leaders' stated school-wide priorities and professional development topics. For example, the calendar showed relatively little focus on instructional strategies such as cold-calling and use of higher-order questioning techniques despite effective checks for understanding being an identified priority area. School leaders reported using instructional memos, book study and other strategies to create alignment.
- With a significant emphasis on classroom management during professional development activities and coaching sessions, New World Prep had not, at the time of the visit, sufficiently developed the instructional competencies and skills of the school's largely inexperienced teaching team. Fifteen of 29 New World Prep classroom teachers and interventionists had no previous teaching experience, and only three entered the school year with three or more years of classroom experience. According to the school principal, six of 18 teachers did not return to the school for the 2012-13 school year, and six additional teachers left during the year.
- Instructional leaders have redesigned the school's coaching practices. However, at the time of the visit coaching lacked a systematic focus on school-wide instructional priorities. To address previously identified deficiencies in its coaching system, New World Prep created its "Feedback in Action" program to foster greater continuity and consistency in feedback from various instructional leaders. While this effort has merit, the change had not yet enabled teachers to translate knowledge gained in professional development activities into effective classroom practices.

- In addition to frequent informal observations and periodic formal video observations, instructional leaders conducted a formal mid-year review and an end-of-year evaluation with clear criteria, which teachers received in advance. While the school leader reports using performance data to hold teachers accountable for student achievement, the focus of data reviews tended to be on individual students rather than overall class performance. Given the absence of clear expectations for overall improvement in student performance, the leader did not effectively hold teachers accountable for student achievement.

Pedagogy

Instruction at New World Prep lacks rigor and does not prepare students to demonstrate proficiency on state exams.

- Teachers generally delivered purposeful lessons that aligned to the school’s curriculum; planned activities support stated learning objectives. Nevertheless, most teachers did not pace lessons well and did not maximize learning time. In some classrooms, teachers prioritize completing a lesson over ensuring students understand the material and meet stated learning objectives. In one math class for example, the teacher cut paired practice on completing equations short – despite students’ focused and on-task behavior – and did not check any answers, explaining, “We’re running late so let’s just skip ahead.”
- With few exceptions, instruction at New World Prep lacked rigor and offers students limited opportunity to develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking skills. Teachers rarely challenge students to defend or elaborate on their answers, or to analyze information. Students did not have opportunities to use new knowledge and skills to investigate open-ended problems. In one notable exception to the school-wide trend toward engaging in low-level tasks, an ELA teacher challenged students to draw parallels between key themes of the civil rights movement and passages found in Dr. Seuss texts.
- Instruction observed during the visit was largely teacher-driven with the majority of interactions between teachers and students. Students had few opportunities to interact with peers while engaging in learning activities. Additionally, teachers did not challenge students to defend or elaborate on their answers nor did they correct mistakes in student responses.
- Teachers checked for student understanding primarily by conferencing with students during independent practice and group work. Teachers used cold-calling on a limited basis. The utility of these checks was unclear, however, as teachers did not consistently adjust instruction based on checks for understanding. For example, one teacher continued with a lesson as planned despite receiving no response from several students after asking the class to indicate understanding with thumbs up/thumbs down signals.
- New World Prep uses a co-teaching model but did not leverage it effectively to differentiate instruction in order to meet individual students’ needs. In most observed classrooms, one teacher served as the instructor for a lesson while the other teacher functioned primarily as a monitor.
- With nearly half of the instructional team new to teaching, difficulties with classroom management detracted from a consistent focus on academic achievement. Teachers inconsistently redirected low-level misbehavior such as talking during independent practice and often allow students’ off-task behavior to continue unchallenged.

Board Oversight

Despite members spending significant time on-site managing day-to-day operations and developing programs, the New World Prep board has not put sufficient focus on student achievement and has not worked effectively to meet the school's Accountability Plan goals.

- As noted in the Institute's 2011-12 School Evaluation Report, New World Prep board members previously expressed their belief in the need for two data points on state assessments in order to assess the school's programs and hold the school leader accountable for student achievement. Following the release of the school's second year of State assessment data reflecting some growth but still a generally poor performance in both ELA and math, the board continued to express absolute confidence in the school leader and the academic program. Subsequent to the visit the board reports it frequently makes informal visits to classrooms making informal observations and sharing them with the school leaders. Also subsequent to the visit the school indicated it does include expectations for student performance in the school leader's contract. The Institute remains concerned that the board has yet to put in place a strong method of gauging the school's academic performance. As such, the Institute will continue to monitor this in future years.
- Board members took an active role in the school's day-to-day programming, with multiple board members reporting they spend considerable time at the school generally and in classrooms specifically. In contrast to the visit team's analysis of instruction indicating teachers needed additional supports, the board reported being pleased with teachers' use of a number of instructional practices such as differentiation, flexible groupings, collaborative teaching and implementation of the school's new Literacy Leaders program.
- According to the board, classroom grades and interim assessment data received by the board in its monthly dashboard suggest that individual students are making "great progress;" however, members also expressed doubt that the school will meet its academic Accountability Plan goals.
- The New World Prep board articulated several specific actions they took to improve the school's educational program (e.g., adding a member who served as principal of a school designated as Title I, placing a greater emphasis on data analysis), but board members did not clearly communicate to Institute visitors an urgent focus on posting the achievement gains required to put the school on a trajectory toward renewal.

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 2012

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

- Revised May 2012 -

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

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

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

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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	<p>expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members; • the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter; • the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner; • the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion; • the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and • the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law;

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

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

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<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; • the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy; • the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and • the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C Financial Reporting	<p>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.</p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; • annual budgets and cash flow statements; • un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment; • bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and • grant expenditure reports.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D Financial Condition	<p>The school maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;

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

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

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