



First Year School Evaluation Report Success Academy Charter Schools

Success Academy Charter School – Bed Stuy 3
Success Academy Charter School – Bushwick
Success Academy Charter School Far – Rockaway
Success Academy Charter School – Flatbush
Success Academy Charter School South – Jamaica

Visit Dates: June 7-9, 2017
Report Date: September 12, 2017

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INTRODUCTION AND REPORT FORMAT

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the SUNY Charter Schools Institute’s (the “Institute’s”) observations and findings from its June 7-9, 2017, first year school evaluation visits to Success Academy Charter School – Bed Stuy 3 (“Success Bed Stuy 3”), Success Academy Charter School – Bushwick (“Success Bushwick”), Success Academy Charter School – Far Rockaway (“Success Far Rockaway”), Success Academy Charter School – Flatbush (“Success Flatbush”), and Success Academy Charter School – South Jamaica (“Success South Jamaica”).

REPORT FORMAT

As with all SUNY authorized charter schools, on a periodic basis throughout the term of the school’s charter the Institute conducts a number of formal site visits. The Institute reports in writing to the school on data gathered during these visits. Cumulatively, the information in reports such as this and those issued in later years, forms the foundation of qualitative data on the school’s effectiveness. At the conclusion of the school’s charter term, the Institute provides the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) an analysis of the school’s performance over the term of its charter that includes this qualitative information. The Institute makes a renewal recommendation for the school based on two components: the school’s attainment of its Accountability Plan goals and evidence of the quality of the school’s educational program collected during school evaluation visits.

At renewal, the Institute evaluates the academic, organizational, legal, and fiscal aspects of the school’s program using the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”; see attachment). For formal school evaluation visits conducted prior to renewal, the Institute focuses on specific qualitative benchmarks that provide a fixed standard for determining the quality of the academic program as the school progresses toward renewal.

The following report provides an overview of the programmatic elements implemented in all Success Academy schools for each of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks. The report further highlights specific strategies implemented at each first year school relative to each of the benchmarks.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

Success Bed Stuy 3, Success Bushwick, Success Far Rockaway, Success Flatbush, and Success South Jamaica are five of 38 SUNY authorized schools within the Success Academy Charter Schools, Inc., (“Success Academy”) education corporation. Twenty-nine of these authorized schools are currently open and operating, while the remaining nine schools are scheduled to open for the 2019-20 school year.

School	School Year	Grades	Initial Enrollment	Facility Information	Co-Location School(s)
Success Bed Stuy 3	2016-17	K-1	105	Co-located in a New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) building at 787 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY in Community School District (“CSD”) 16	P.S. 025 Eubie Blake School, a district elementary school serving Kindergarten – 5 th grade
Success Bushwick	2016-17	K-1	140	Located in a NYCDOE-rented facility at 139 Menahan Street, Brooklyn, NY in CSD 32	N/A
Success Flatbush	2016-17	K-1	157	Located in a NYCDOE-rented facility at 15 Snyder Avenue, Brooklyn, NY in CSD 17	Achievement First Voyager, a SUNY-authorized charter middle school in its first year of operation serving 5 th grade
Success Far Rockaway	2016-17	K-1	152	Co-located in a NYCDOE building at 10-45 Nameoke Street, Floor 3, Queens, NY in CSD 27	M.S. 053 Brian Piccolo, a district elementary school serving Kindergarten – 5 th grade and Village Academy, a district middle school serving 6 th – 8 th grade
Success South Jamaica	2016-17	K-1	155	Located in a NYCDOE-rented facility at 120-27 141 st Street, Jamaica, NY in CSD 27	N/A

The schools’ mission is to:

Build exceptional, world-class public schools that prove children from all backgrounds can succeed in college and life; and advocate across the country to change public policies that prevent so many children from having access to opportunity.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Institute staff inspected the schools at the above addresses on the following dates:

School	Date of Inspection
Success Bed Stuy 3	August 18, 2016
Success Bushwick	August 18, 2016
Success Flatbush	August 18, 2016
Success Far Rockaway	August 19, 2016
Success South Jamaica	August 19, 2016

Pursuant to these inspections (and documentation provided to or inspected by the Institute at that visit and prior/post thereto), the Institute determined that the schools (the “Education Corporation”) had completed substantially all of the prior actions required of them as defined in the Charter Agreement between the Education Corporation and the SUNY Trustees (the “Charter Agreement”) for the operation of the school. Therefore, per Section 3.1 of the Charter Agreement, the Institute permitted the Education Corporation to provide instruction at each school to students in accordance with the plan provided in the Charter Agreement.

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,¹ describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks describe the elements an effective school must have in place at the time of renewal.²

For first year visits, the Institute focuses on academic program benchmarks to establish a baseline measure of the quality of the school's systems and procedures which heavily affect the progress that a school is able to demonstrate in meeting its Accountability Plan goals during the charter term. The Institute expects a school to have moved from the beginning of implementation and the promise of future growth to full and effective implementation of a quality program by the time the school comes to renewal.

For high performing SUNY authorized charter schools that implement a common school design across multiple schools, the Institute provides an analysis and description of the schools' academic design, structured using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. This subset of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks focuses on instruction, assessment, curriculum, and leadership.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B:

Does the school have an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning?

Success Academy implements a rigorous and comprehensive assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.

Success Academy network schools administer a variety of diagnostic, formative, and benchmark assessments throughout the school year in order to determine students' level of mastery and identify intervention needs. To measure students' literacy skills, Success Academy administers the Fountas & Pinnell ("F&P") and Success for All ("SFA") assessments, both of which have demonstrated success across districts and geographic locations as academic interventions with urban and low-income students.³ Schools administer network-developed interim assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science as well as weekly tests in vocabulary, spelling, and No Hesitation Math facts.

School-based data coordinators work in conjunction with Success Academy network staff to provide thorough analyses of assessment data at the student, class, grade, and school levels using the network's robust Student Management System ("SMS"). This portal serves as a repository for student data and allows schools and the network to analyze results across classrooms, grades, and schools.

¹ An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf; and, gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf.

² Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, including greater specificity as to what the Institute looks for at each school that may demonstrate attainment of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, is available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf>.

³ SFA is a commercial curriculum that Success Academy implements, but it is not developed internally by Success Academy staff. The similarity in names is merely coincidental.

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

Additionally, leaders and the network's instructional management team use data to identify topics for professional development and to identify strategies needed for general coaching. Success Academy continually uses assessment data to evaluate teacher and program effectiveness.

- Success Academy Bed Stuy 3 administers weekly informal review quizzes and monthly mastery quizzes. Some teachers hold after-school tutoring sessions to provide additional support for students whose assessment results indicate they are at risk.
- Teachers at Success Bushwick provide before school tutoring to students whose assessment results indicate they are at risk. Additionally, teachers regularly call parents, in some cases daily, to provide them with updates on student performance.
- Before administering interim assessments, teachers at Success Flatbush hold meetings to predict students' scores based on their performance in class and on informal assessments. After each assessment, teachers analyze their predictions with the goal of coming within 5-10% of each student's actual performance. This practice enables teachers to understand student performance weaknesses and adjust instruction accordingly.
- Teachers at Success Far Rockaway administer teacher-created review assessments every one to two weeks to measure progress in between network assessments. Teachers use the assessments to adjust lessons to better meet students' needs. Additionally, teachers utilize a 'math carnival' where students rotate to various groups for mathematics remediation.
- Success South Jamaica consistently utilizes assessment data as an integral part of the academic program. Leaders meet once a week to discuss data from each classroom, and teachers meet with grade level teams on a weekly basis to review student work and determine action steps for student learning. The school communicates student progress to parents, often allowing students to call home to inform their parents of their high assessment performance.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C:

Does the school's curriculum support teachers in their instructional planning?

Success Academy's rigorous, research-based curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning within and across grades.

In addition to a curriculum framework that details what students will learn in each grade, the network provides teachers with a variety of supporting tools such as scope and sequence documents, unit plans, and individual lesson plans that provide a bridge between the framework and daily lessons. These materials detail what students should learn and be able to do throughout the school year; therefore, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Importantly, the framework creates a multitude of opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction with thematic units, which cover common themes in different content area lessons.

The academic program relies on a combination of network developed and commercial curricula. For ELA, Success Academy supplements its THINK Literacy framework with the SFA program, which uses a research-based approach to enhance students' literacy skills through methods such as cooperative learning and frequent assessment of student understanding. In mathematics, Success Academy uses

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

TERC Investigations, a program that centers on the teaching of fundamental ideas of numbers, operations, data, and measurement, and Cognitively Guided Instruction (“CGI”), an instructional approach that builds from students’ mathematical reasoning, in the elementary grades. Teachers access curricular materials via the Ed Institute, the network’s online platform, where they can retrieve ELA lesson plans, scope and sequence documents, and pacing guides. Teachers use these resources in their daily planning, adjusting materials slightly to meet the needs of their individual students.

- Teachers at Success Bed Stuy 3 frequently collaborate to create materials that supplement the curriculum provided by the network. This approach allows teachers to tailor the curriculum to their students’ unique needs.
- At Success Bushwick, one teacher on each grade level team is responsible for the materials for a different component of the curriculum. Teachers familiarize themselves with the curricular materials for a given week and share an overview with the other members of the team, which ensures consistency across classrooms.
- Success Academy Flatbush teachers use the curricular materials available via the Ed Institute to differentiate lesson plans for their students. Because the site allows teachers to view the materials for all grade levels, they can access materials to support struggling students or challenge high-achieving students.
- Success Far Rockaway teachers work closely with teachers from neighboring Success Academy schools to utilize curricular resources for teaching ELA and mathematics. For example, teachers communicate through video chat and an online messaging system to share resources, in addition to observing classrooms in established Success Academy schools. School leaders facilitate unit launches at the beginning of every unit to ensure teachers are equipped to provide high-quality instruction.
- Success South Jamaica, in response to low student achievement levels, supplemented the network’s curriculum by providing Leveled Literacy Intervention (“LLI”) to all students. Every student received intensive reading intervention as a supplement to the network’s provided curriculum.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D:

Is high quality instruction evident throughout the school?

High quality instruction that creates consistent focus on academic achievement and develops students’ higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills is evident across Success Academy schools. As shown in the chart below, during the first year visits, Institute team members conducted 40 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school visits.⁴

⁴ The timing of the visits was such that Institute staff observed primarily ELA classes, in addition to several math and science classes.

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

Content Area	School	Success Bed Stuy 3		Success Bushwick		Success Far Rockaway		Success Flatbush		Success South Jamaica		Total
	Grade	K	1	K	1	K	1	K	1	K	1	
ELA		6	3		1	3	3	1	2	3	2	24
Math		1		3				3	4			11
Science				1			2			1		4
Other											1	1
Total		7	3	4	1	3	5	4	6	4	3	40

- Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives that build on students' previous skills and knowledge (38 of 40 classrooms observed). Teachers consistently reference skills that students have previously learned, such as mathematics problem-solving strategies and reading techniques. Further, classrooms in Success Academy charter schools benefit from a co-teaching model in which all teachers have clear roles in helping students reach lesson objectives.
- Teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding (31 of 40 classrooms observed). Teachers monitor student understanding using a variety of effective strategies, such as cold calling students by randomly selecting sticks with students' names on them and circulating around the classroom to monitor and check-in with students while they work independently. Based on these check-ins, teachers adjust instruction as appropriate.
- Lessons in Success Academy Charter Schools include opportunities to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking, and problem solving skills (32 of 40 classrooms observed). Teachers consistently pose open-ended questions to students and challenge them to defend and elaborate on their answers. Students frequently interact with peers, analyzing and interpreting challenging information. Assigned work at Success Academy Charter Schools develops students' higher-order thinking by consistently challenging them to solve problems in more than one way and respond to and evaluate their peers' arguments.
- Classrooms across Success Academy Charter Schools establish and maintain a consistent focus on academic achievement (35 of 40 classrooms observed). Teachers communicate a sense of urgency for learning and provide clear directions to students. Teachers at Success Academy are intellectually prepared to implement lessons; they have lesson materials readily available and script questions and discussions to predict potential misunderstandings. Additionally, students quickly internalize procedures and routines, minimizing disruptions and off-task behavior. Such practices maximize learning time across Success Academy classrooms.

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E:

Does the school have strong instructional leadership?

Success Academy has established strong instructional leadership to support the development of all instructional staff.

Robust instructional teams at the school and network level support teacher development with daily sustained and systemic coaching and professional development activities that interrelate with classroom practice. Teachers receive over 400 hours, on average, of professional development throughout the year, including inter-visitation opportunities for teachers and leaders to observe strong teaching across network schools, and data analysis days where staff members analyze benchmark assessments. Schools throughout the network set high expectations for teacher performance, measured largely by student achievement results. All schools use the SMS to monitor progress toward meeting network-wide performance goals as well as school-wide goals set by the leader.

Success Academy's particularly strong professional development program begins with summer "Teacher School," a three week network-wide pre-service training often referred to as "T-School." School leaders and network staff collaborate to determine topics and trainings designed to address student achievement and teacher pedagogical needs. In addition to network-wide activities, school leaders conduct weekly professional development sessions that build on topics and skills introduced in T-School, frequently differentiated by content area or grade level, in order to target teacher and student needs most precisely.

- In the middle of the school year, the principal at Success Bed Stuy 3 transitioned to another Success Academy school due to an urgent leadership vacancy. An interim principal led the school until a permanent replacement began in March. As a result of this leadership transition, teachers did not receive consistent coaching in the middle of the school year. However, regular coaching and feedback cycles resumed once the school's leadership stabilized.
- Success Academy Bushwick teachers have biweekly one-on-one meetings with the principal during which they discuss teachers' progress toward their professional goals. The school also conducts weekly walkthroughs to assess instructional quality and school culture.
- Success Academy Flatbush utilizes real-time teacher coaching as part of its professional development program. Teachers wear earpieces that enable school leaders to provide direct oral feedback while lessons take place. This allows teachers to adjust instruction in the moment and provides them with an additional layer of instructional support.
- Success Far Rockaway's instructional leadership team consists of a principal, assistant principal, and education manager. The robust structure allows for the school's leadership team to provide consistent and high quality support to all teachers. Leaders differentiate the intensity of support based on teachers' individual needs, working closely with teachers to ensure they are set up for success in teaching positions.
- Success South Jamaica's leadership team is thoughtful in ensuring three main priorities, including creating a joy and love for learning with plenty of celebration, establishing a high bar

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

of excellence for academic expectations, and incorporating strong team and family values across the school community.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F:

Does the school meet the educational needs of at-risk students?

Success Academy has a wide range of strong supports in place to meet the needs of at-risk students. Success Academy schools implement clear procedures for identifying and serving students with disabilities, English Language Learners (“ELLs”), and students at risk of academic failure.

Success Academy uses a tiered Response to Intervention (“RTI”) process to identify students struggling academically and to modify interventions as necessary. Teachers combine whole class instruction with flexible, ability-based groupings to respond to individual needs. Students identified as performing below grade level based on regular internal assessments receive progressive supports within the classroom setting and through pull-out tutoring. School staff identifies specific learning gaps and monitors students’ progress in meeting performance goals at the end of each intervention cycle. If a student does not make sufficient progress, school-based student support teams determine next steps such as additional small group or individualized interventions and referral to the district Committee on Special Education (“CSE”) as necessary.

Success Academy schools educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment in accordance with each student’s IEP while offering additional supports embedded in its existing programming. Success Academy schools offer students with disabilities related services (i.e., speech/language, occupational, physical, and psychological therapy), special education teacher support services (“SETSS”), integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classrooms, individual and group counseling, behavior intervention plans, and programming within the RTI framework.

Success Academy uses the Home Language Survey and the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”) to identify students requiring English acquisition supports. Success Academy implements a comprehensive English language immersion program, focused on increasing early literacy skills. Success Academy schools serve ELLs within the core academic program, which provides abundant opportunities for oral and written communication through its research-based curriculum. Schools monitor student progress annually with the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (“NYSESLAT”) and informally throughout the school year. Network professional development activities develop teachers’ skills in supporting ELLs with strategies such as intentional seating, visual demonstrations, and the use of supplementary audio materials.

- Prior to RTI meetings, Success Academy 3 teachers complete a tracking form that includes which interventions they have implemented with specific students and when. The tracker also includes weekly updates about each at-risk student’s performance. This process enables teachers to systematically track at-risk students’ progress and determine the effectiveness of interventions over time.

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS CONCLUSIONS

- Early in the school year, teachers at Success Bushwick identified speaking in English as ELLs' biggest struggle and prioritized holding students accountable for using complete sentences. Additionally, the school provided small group tutoring for ELLs four mornings per week.
- At Success Flatbush, the school's psychologist, education manager, and principal conduct regular school walkthroughs, during which they observe and discuss students in need of additional supports. They also meet with teachers to discuss these students and determine which interventions will best support them.
- Success Far Rockaway's at-risk student program focuses on providing in-class small group instruction for the majority of the school day. Teachers provide small group instruction in mathematics, phonics, grammar, and guided reading. School leaders pair students struggling academically with the most effective teachers to ensure students reach grade level proficiency.
- At Success South Jamaica, leaders work closely with the school's psychologist in order to provide evaluations and other assessments for students that the school recommends for special education services. The school received a few students with more restrictive settings on their IEPs, and leaders worked closely with families to ensure students were able to stay at Success South Jamaica with proper supports. The school also makes continual effort to ensure students remain engaged, such as incorporating "wobble breaks" into the lesson for students with behavioral needs.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C:

Does the school's organization work effectively to deliver the educational program?

Success Academy schools establish well-functioning organizational structures with staff, systems, and procedures that support high levels of student achievement and effective delivery of the comprehensive educational program.

Clear roles and responsibilities at both the school and network level allow school leaders to focus on student learning, instructional practice, and teacher development. Principals serve as primary instructional leaders, and operations staff members manage the day-to-day business of schools. Strong network supports and clearly established career paths assist Success Academy in recruiting and retaining high quality staff. Network-level managing directors visit schools regularly to conduct classroom observations, coach teachers, and develop leaders' communication, management, and data analysis skills.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Board of Trustees⁵

Board Member Name	Position	Board Member Name	Position
Sam Cole	Board Chair	Lorenzo Smith	Trustee
Bryan Binder	Vice Chair	Sandeep Chainani	Trustee
Scott Friedman	Treasurer	Suleman Lunant	Trustee
Gregory Sawers	Secretary	Andrew Stone	Trustee
Catherine Shinker	Trustee	Brian Levine	Trustee
Derrell Bradford	Trustee	Graham Officer	Trustee
Isela Bahena	Trustee	Jarrett Posner	Trustee
Khadijah Patrick-Pickel	Trustee	Rich Barrera	Trustee

Key Design Elements

Element	Evident?
A focus on student achievement;	+
Research-based, results-driven curriculum;	+
Frequent assessments produced and analyzed in real time;	+
Extended school day;	+
School leaders with the power to lead;	+
Highly-qualified, highly trained staff; and,	+
Strong school culture including reinforcement of ACTION principles (Agency, Curiosity, Try and Try, Integrity, Others and No Shortcuts).	+

School Visit History

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
June 7-9, 2017	Maureen Foley	Director for New Charters
	Chastity McFarlan, Ph. D.	School Evaluation Analyst
	Andrew Kile	Senior Analyst

School Characteristics

School	School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ⁶	Actual as a Percentage of Chartered Enrollment ⁷	Proposed Grades	Actual Grades
Success Bed Stuy 3	2016-17	190	95	50%	K-1	K-1
Success Bushwick	2016-17	190	132	69%	K-1	K-1
Success Flatbush	2016-17	190	144	76%	K-1	K-1
Success Far Rockaway	2016-17	190	147	77%	K-1	K-1
Success South Jamaica	2016-17	190	143	75%	K-1	K-1

⁵ Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the visit.

⁶ Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

⁷ The schools' enrollment percentages are a result of constraints resulting from facilities access.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Leaders

School	School Year(s)	Name(s) and Title(s)
Success Bed Stuy 3	2016-17	Rita Deng, Principal (August-February); Matt McSorley, Interim Principal (March); Molly Gortz, Principal (March-June)
Success Bushwick	2016-17	Katherine Haves, Principal
Success Flatbush	2016-17	Wintanna Abai, Principal
Success Far Rockaway	2016-17	Ty Redmond, Principal
Success South Jamaica	2016-17	Meghan Daly, Principal