



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**LEFFERTS GARDENS CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR  
JANUARY 2015**

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## Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

### I. Charter School Overview:

#### Background Information

Lefferts Gardens Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Tim Pratt, Tara Harrison
School Leader(s)	Michael Windram
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 17
Physical Address(es)	601 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn
Facility Owner(s)	DOE
School Opened For Instruction	2010-2011
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	12/14/2014
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-5
Current Authorized Enrollment	450
Proposed New Charter Term	1.5 years [December 15, 2014 – June 30, 2016]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-5
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	450
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-5: 3 sections per grade

## Overview of School-Specific Data

### School Evaluation of Academic Goals as stated in Annual Report to NYSED and Renewal Application to NYC DOE

Academic Goal Analysis					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Cumulative Charter Term Total
Total Achievable Goals	9	9	9	9	36
# Met	0	0	1	1	2
# Partially Met	0	0	0	0	0
# Not Met	1	2	3	5	11
# Not Applicable *	8	7	5	3	23
% Met	0%	0%	11%	11%	6%
% Partially Met	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% Not Met	11%	22%	33%	56%	31%
% Not Applicable *	89%	78%	56%	33%	64%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	0%	0%	25%	17%	15%

\* Some goals may not be applicable in all years. For example, goals related to the NYC Progress Report are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year as Progress Reports were not issued that year.

### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	-	-	8.2%	14.9%
CSD 17	-	-	17.7%	22.3%
Difference from CSD 17 *	-	-	-9.5	-7.4
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-19.9	-15.6
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-22.9	-15.7

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	-	-	8.2%	16.8%
CSD 17	-	-	21.7%	27.9%
Difference from CSD 17 *	-	-	-13.5	-11.1
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-24.9	-22.5
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-22.9	-19.4

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Student improvement on the state tests compared to other students

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School – All Students</b>	-	-	-	<b>75.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	90.6%
City Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	85.1%
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	-	-	-	<b>78.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	68.0%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	61.4%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School – All Students</b>	-	-	-	<b>74.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	69.2%
City Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	77.5%
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	-	-	-	<b>79.5%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	68.5%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	70.2%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

### Closing the Achievement Gap

Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	-	-	-
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	58.8%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	-	-	-
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	55.6%

\* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

## II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on the evidence presented herein and detailed below in Part II, the NYC DOE recommends a 1.5 year short term renewal with academic performance conditions.

The academic performance conditions are as follows:

1. In each year of the charter term, for each tested grade the percentage of students scoring at a Level 3 or above on the New York State ELA assessment must meet or exceed the Community School District of location percent proficient for each grade.
2. In each year of the charter term, for each tested grade the percentage of students scoring at a Level 3 or above on the New York State math assessment must meet or exceed the Community School District of location percent proficient for each grade.
3. As part of its oversight of Lefferts Gardens Charter School in its next term, the NYC DOE will require the school to submit to the NYC DOE English Language Arts and math interim assessment data for all grades a minimum of twice per year (baseline and end of academic year results) within 30 days of school receiving results for continued monitoring.

### Global Condition

By the time of evaluation for renewal, the School must have met or exceeded 70 percent of the applicable DOE mandated goals as set forth herein in Exhibit D in order to be eligible for renewal. Failure to meet at least 70 percent of the mandated goals may result in NYC DOE recommendation to the Regents for non-renewal at the conclusion of the charter term.

### A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Lefferts Gardens Charter School (Lefferts Gardens) has not yet demonstrated academic success.

### New York Charter Schools Act

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include:

#### § 2850 (2)

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Data available for Lefferts Gardens Charter School indicates that the school has not made progress towards meeting the majority of these objectives.

### Mission and Vision

Lefferts Gardens Charter School's mission is to "utilize an environmental science program to develop academically-motivated and civic-minded students to succeed in competitive high school and college programs. The proximity of several community-based environmental institutions provides a unique opportunity for learning that extends beyond the classroom. Graduates of Lefferts Gardens will leave with an understanding of the relationship among science, the environment, and the everyday world." The school executes against this mission by keeping the

science curriculum a central focus and integrating the study of science throughout the school. The school provides field studies for all grade levels with community-based environmental institutions. Teachers have received professional development that is specifically designed to help them understand and implement the school's mission. The school uses the standards set for elementary science education by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

### **School Specific Academic Performance**

The school entered its fifth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. As an elementary school that phased in one grade level per year after opening with kindergarten and first grades in the 2010-2011 school year, the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and four years of other academic data, such as data obtained through internal assessments and attendance information, to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Lefferts Gardens Charter School (Lefferts Gardens).

Lefferts Gardens has consistently struggled with poor academic performance during the current charter term.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS assessments were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As such, proficiency rates for school years prior to the 2012-2013 are not directly comparable. However, as this school had its first year of testing in 2012-2013, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS.

In 2012-2013, only 8.2% of Lefferts Gardens' students were proficient in math. Lefferts Gardens' math proficiency was lower than 94% of elementary schools citywide. In addition, when compared to elementary schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools) Lefferts Gardens' outperformed 0% of its peer schools. In 2012-2013, only 8.2% of Lefferts Gardens' students demonstrated proficiency in state tests in English Language Arts (ELA). With this level of proficiency, Lefferts Gardens' outperformed just 13% of elementary schools citywide. Additionally, Lefferts Gardens' outperformed only 3% of its peer schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the school's proficiency rates rose in both ELA and math. However, only 16.8% of Lefferts Gardens' students were proficient in math. Lefferts Gardens' math proficiency was lower than 84% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to elementary schools with student populations most like its own, Lefferts Gardens outperformed only 5% of similar schools. In 2013-2014, only 14.9% of Lefferts Gardens' students demonstrated proficiency in state tests in ELA. With this level of proficiency, Lefferts Gardens' outperformed just 25% of elementary schools citywide. Additionally, Lefferts Gardens' outperformed only 8% of its peer schools.

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, Lefferts Gardens' has met only 15% of its applicable academic charter goals.<sup>1,2</sup> Lefferts Gardens' met one of its six applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to CCLS in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state

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<sup>1</sup> This calculation does not include goals which have not been evaluated (not applicable) either as a result of the goal no longer being measurable (e.g. NYC DOE Progress Report grades for 2013-2014 school year and beyond) or the goal not yet measurable for the school at the time of the annual reporting (e.g. high school graduation rate for an academic year in which the school was not serving grade twelve students).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

regulation, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two. Further, due to the elimination of the accountability instrument, the DOE will not evaluate goals related to NYC DOE Progress Report grades beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The school has demonstrated low overall rates of goal attainment across the whole of its charter term, as well as a trend of decreased achievement of its stated charter goals over the last two years of the charter term under review.

In 2013-2014, Lefferts Gardens' ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 75.0% with a City Percent of Range of 85.1%, placing the school in the 93<sup>rd</sup> percentile of elementary schools citywide.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the school's peer and Community School District (CSD) percentiles were 100% and 80%, respectively. This means that all other elementary schools in Lefferts Gardens' peer group had an ELA median adjusted growth percentile less than Lefferts Gardens' median adjusted growth percentile.

In 2013-2014, Lefferts Gardens' math median adjusted growth percentile was 74.0% with a City Percent of Range of 77.5%, placing the school in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary schools citywide. Similarly, the school's peer and Community School District (CSD) percentiles were 68% and 80%, respectively. The school's math median adjusted growth percentile was above the average of both its peer group and CSD 17.

As indicated in Appendix A, third grade ELA proficiency decreased by 0.2 percentage points from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. The gap in third grade ELA proficiency between that of the school and CSD 17 increased by 3.5 percentage points over that time period. As indicated in Appendix A, while third grade math proficiency increased by 3.6 percentage points from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year, this increase was less than the comparable CSD 17 increase in third grade math proficiency. As a result, the gap in third grade math proficiency between that of the school and CSD 17 rose by 2.2 percentage points over that same period.

The school has shown mixed evidence of a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. Reports from past NYC DOE visits to the school indicate that the school has struggled with differentiation in the classroom, despite the use of a co-teaching model. In a visit to the school in May 2013, reviewers noted that there was "limited evidence of differentiation, such as scaffolded questioning" observed in the classrooms.<sup>4</sup> The leadership turnover experienced throughout the charter term has impacted the stability of the learning environment and instructional staff's ability to provide a responsive education program. For example, as noted in the May 2013 report, teachers interviewed were unclear on the school's expectations and procedures for teacher evaluation, as well as the school's policies or consequences for students in terms of behavior management.<sup>5</sup> However, since the current leadership team was assembled in June 2013, the school has made progress in terms of stabilizing the school culture, and providing the instructional staff with clear expectations and goals for student achievement. This is demonstrated in part by teacher responses on the NYC School Survey. In 2013-2014, 100% of teacher at Lefferts Gardens agreed or strongly agreed that "the principal at [their] school communicates a clear vision for our school". This is an improvement over the prior two years, in which only 67% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement in both years.

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, Lefferts Gardens' received a D grade in all sections except School Performance, for which the school received a C grade. This ranked

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<sup>3</sup> A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score the same or lower than the school under consideration. A City Percent of Range of 85.1% indicates that the school's median adjusted growth percentile was greater than one standard deviation above the average (that 85.1% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of Lefferts Garden), while a Citywide percentile of 93% indicates that Lefferts Gardens' ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than 93% of all elementary schools Citywide.

<sup>4</sup> Lefferts Gardens Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012

<sup>5</sup> Lefferts Gardens Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013

Lefferts Gardens' 37<sup>th</sup> out of 37 early childhood schools citywide that received a Progress Report grade. The school's overall score was 15.7 points, which placed it at the bottom of the D score range (15.7-21.7) for early childhood schools. In 2012-2013, the school was classified by the NYC DOE as an Early Childhood School; Early Childhood schools do not receive a percentile rank; therefore, no percentile rank was included in the Progress Report.

NYC DOE Progress Reports graded each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and were based on student progress, student performance, and school environment. Scores were based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of 30-40 schools with the most similar student population and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections. The grade in this section was based on Early Grade Progress, which measured how individual students' proficiency on State ELA and math exams exceeded their expected proficiency in third grade based on the student's demographic characteristics. Although the NYC DOE Progress Report was discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, individual academic performance metrics from the former NYC DOE Progress Report are included in this renewal report for all years for which data was available in the current charter term.

### **Closing the Achievement Gap**

NYC DOE-authorized charter schools are also assessed based on their ability to close the achievement gap for specific student populations. In school years prior to the 2013-2014 school year, schools received additional credit on the NYC DOE Progress Report for progress and performance of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who start in the lowest third of proficiency citywide. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, charter schools will be assessed on the actual performance as well as the academic growth of students in these populations compared with public school students in the CSD and throughout New York City.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 55.6% of Lefferts Gardens' students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Lefferts Gardens' above 77% of elementary schools citywide and above 70% of elementary schools within CSD 17. Similarly, 58.8% of Lefferts Gardens' students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this places Lefferts Gardens' above 74% of all elementary schools citywide but above only 50% of elementary schools within CSD 17.

In 2013-2014, Lefferts Gardens did not serve the minimum number<sup>6</sup> of students with disabilities to receive data on the percent of students with disabilities who experienced growth in math or ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting scores.

Similarly, Lefferts Gardens did not serve the minimum number of students designated as English Language Learners in 2013-2014 to receive data on the percent of English Language Learner students who experienced growth in math or ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting scores.

## **B. Governance, Operations & Finances**

Lefferts Gardens Charter School is a partially operationally sound, but fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

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<sup>6</sup> The minimum number of students for each metric in the Closing the Achievement Gap section is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student-sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's Board of Trustee bylaws;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's Board of Trustee meeting minutes;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's self-reported staffing data;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's financial disclosure forms;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's 2014-2015 staff handbook;
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's 2014-2015 student/family handbook; and
- Lefferts Gardens Charter School's FY15 budget.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and partially developed organizational design. The board currently has nine members, which is more than the minimum number of five and less than the maximum number of 11. There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees. The school's Board has been mostly stable, with any turnover immediately addressed by recruiting and onboarding new members. Additionally, the Board engages in annual retreats to define areas of action for the year, as well as review its priorities. The required number of meetings held with quorum was achieved in the 2012-2013 school year.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has not yet developed a stable school culture. The school has experienced significant leadership turnover, with three different principals and two different directors of operations during the four-year retrospective charter term. The current leadership team joined the school in the second half of the 2012-2013 school year, with Wendy Ramos, current Director of Operations joining as Interim School Leader in April 2013. Michael Windram, the current School Leader, was brought on in June 2013. The school hired a Director of Student Learning, who started at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, in order to further build the capacity of the school leadership team. Lefferts Gardens Charter School started the development of professional learning teams in the 2013-2014 school year, along with a positive behavior support system, in an effort to develop academic and cultural identity by both staff and students. Aside from the most recent school year (2013-2014), the school has had relatively high instructional staff turnover rates: 31% in 2010-2011, 43% in 2011-2012, and 32% in 2012-2013.<sup>7</sup> Over the course of the charter, the school has maintained an active Parents' Association.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has at least 121 days of cash on hand to meet current liabilities totaling \$512,564. Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits from FY12 to FY14.

### **C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations**

Over the charter term, Lefferts Gardens Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.

The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.

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<sup>7</sup> Reflects self-reported data submitted with Renewal Application in November 2014

For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 9, 2014, adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.

One or more of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

Over the course of the charter term, the school consistently submitted complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Currently, eight staff members are not appropriately certified.

The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is not in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization, as only 98.1% of students have been immunized.

The school has not posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law.

The school's Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year was determined to be out of compliance with federal law.

The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.

In November 2014 the Board updated its bylaws to comply with the Charter Schools Act, which requires a Board to hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months per year. Prior to that, the Board's bylaws required no fewer than 11 meetings per year. The Board held the required number of meetings per the Board's bylaws in all years of the current charter term. The Board has been in compliance with making Board agenda items and minutes available to the public for inspection via posting on the school's website. The Board has mostly been consistent in submitting board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and if necessary, approval; however, during the charter term, documents were not submitted per the required timeframe for one board member.

#### **D. Plans for Next Charter Term**

The school did not apply for any material revisions to its charter. The school did not indicate any plans to replicate or expand its enrollment or grade levels in the next charter term.

## Part 2: School Overview and History

Lefferts Gardens Charter School is an elementary school serving 454 students<sup>8</sup> in kindergarten through fifth grade during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2010-2011 school year with kindergarten and first grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's authorized full grade span is for grades kindergarten through five, which it reached this year, 2014-2015. The school's current charter term expires on December 14, 2014.<sup>9</sup> The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a New York City Department of Education<sup>10</sup> (NYC DOE)-operated facility in Community School District 17 in Brooklyn and is co-located with P.S. 92 Adrian Hegeman.<sup>11</sup>

The school's mission is to utilize an environmental science program to develop academically-motivated and civic-minded students to succeed in competitive high school and college programs. The proximity of several community-based environmental institutions provides a unique opportunity for learning that extends beyond the classroom. Graduates of Lefferts Gardens will leave with an understanding of the relationship among science, the environment, and the everyday world. Lefferts Gardens engages students in learning about environmental science through field studies at community-based environmental institutions, including the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, the Wildlife Center at Prospect Park, and the Audubon Center at Prospect Park.

Lefferts Gardens' Board of Trustees is led by two co-chairs, Tim Pratt and Tara Harrison. The elementary school is led by Michael Windram, who has been at the school since the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. The school has a Director of Operations, Wendy Ramos, who has been with the school since April 2013.

The school typically enrolls new students in kindergarten, and the school has indicated that it does backfill empty seats from the waitlist during the school year for grades kindergarten through five. There were 263 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery.<sup>12</sup>

Over the charter term, the school enrolled and served students as follows with average class size and section count noted for the most recently completed school year, 2013-2014.

### Enrollment

Grade-Level Annual Enrollment *	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Kindergarten	75	80	81	76
Grade 1	72	78	79	78
Grade 2	-	76	82	80
Grade 3	-	-	77	79
Grade 4	-	-	-	73
Grade 5	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	147	234	319	386

\* Enrollment figures reflect ATS data as of October 31 for each school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> ATS data as of October 31, 2014

<sup>9</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>10</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>11</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System

<sup>12</sup> Self-reported information collected through the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

### Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Kindergarten	3	25
Grade 1	3	26
Grade 2	3	27
Grade 3	3	26
Grade 4	3	24
Grade 5	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	60	

\* Lottery and section count information are based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. Average Class Sizes were determined by dividing ATS enrollment as of October 31, 2013 by the appropriate grade-level section count.

Please see additional demographic data in Section 4 of this report for information regarding the enrollment of special populations at Lefferts Gardens Charter School. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages, as well as targets proposed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Board of Regents authorized charter schools, including those authorized by NYC DOE, will be held accountable to enrollment targets once established by NYSED for students with disabilities, English Language Learner students, and students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch.

## Part 3: Renewal Report Overview

### Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding the charter school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during the current charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to evaluate and monitor the charter school's academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the NYC DOE Chancellor. The Chancellor's determination, and the findings on which that decision is based, are then submitted to the New York State Board of Regents.

### Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following (as appropriate for grades served):

- New York State ELA and math assessment absolute results; New York State Regents exams passage rates;
- Comparative proficiency for elementary and middle schools, including growth rates for ELA and math proficiency;
- Comparative graduation rates and Regents completion rates for high schools;
- Closing the achievement gap performance relative to CSD or New York City public schools;
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments; and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated.**

### Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization, OSDCP focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Core Performance Framework.<sup>14</sup>

The NYC DOE considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws;
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes;
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED);
- NYC DOE School Surveys;
- Data collection sheets provided by schools;
- Student, staff, and Board turnover rates;
- Audits of authorized enrollment numbers; and
- Annual financial audits.

A school's Governance Structure & Organizational Design and Climate & Community Engagement are rated as **Developed, Partially Developed, or Not Yet Developed.** A school's Financial Health is rated to indicate whether there are concerns about the near-term financial obligations and the financial sustainability of the school.

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<sup>14</sup> Please refer to the following website for more information:  
[http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance\\*20framework&c=82](http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82)

**Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?**

As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations as identified in the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework.

**Staff Representatives**

The following experts participated in the review of this school, including the renewal visits to the school on May 14–15, 2014 and September 29, 2014:

- DawnLynne Kacer, Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Maria Campo, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kaitlin Padgett, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Ola Duru, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Caitlin Robisch, Director of Analytics, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Paul Yen, Data Analyst, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships

## Part 4: Findings

### Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal, Lefferts Gardens Charter School has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

#### High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: The 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 ELA and math proficiency percentages should not be compared directly with prior-year results. Unlike prior years, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were based on the Common Core Learning Standards – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career readiness. However, as Lefferts Gardens had its first year of testing in 2012-2013, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS.

#### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	-	-	8.2%	14.9%
CSD 17	-	-	17.7%	22.3%
Difference from CSD 17 *	-	-	-9.5	-7.4
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-19.9	-15.6
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-22.9	-15.7

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	-	-	8.2%	16.8%
CSD 17	-	-	21.7%	27.9%
Difference from CSD 17 *	-	-	-13.5	-11.1
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-24.9	-22.5
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-22.9	-19.4

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Elementary School Progress Report Grades	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	-	-	D	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	-	-	D	
Student Performance	-	-	C	
School Environment	-	-	D	

### Mission and Academic Goals

According to the school's Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE, as well as annual reports submitted to NYSED, over each of the four years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school met academic goals as follows:

- 0 of 1 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 0 of 2 in the second year,
- 1 of 4 in the third year,<sup>15</sup> and
- 1 of 6 in the fourth year.

### Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals \*

Academic Goals	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. The school will score in the 75th percentile of all schools on "Performance" Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>	N/A
2. 75% of third through fifth graders enrolled at the school for at least two years will score a 3 or 4 in ELA.	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>
3. 75% of third through fifth graders enrolled at the school for at least two years will score a 3 or 4 in Math.	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>
4. 75% of fourth graders at school for at least two years will score 3 or 4 in Science.	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Met</b>
5. For years 4 through 5 of the proposed charter, grade-level cohorts of the same students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA exam. For schools in which the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeded 75 percent on the previous year's ELA exam, the school is expected to demonstrate growth in the current year.	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and Math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that refer to comparative academic performance of the school (e.g. to the Community School District) were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

Academic Goals		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
6.	For years 4 through 5 of the proposed charter, grade-level cohorts of the same students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State Math exam. For schools in which the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeded 75 percent on the previous year's Math exam, the school is expected to demonstrate growth in the current year.	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>
7.	The school will be deemed "In Good Standing" on the NYS Annual Report.	N/A	N/A	<b>Met</b>	N/A
8.	At least 75% of kindergarten through second grade students will perform at or above grade level on the end-of-year test using the TerraNova test.	N/A	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	N/A
9.	The school will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95%.	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>

\* Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's Renewal Application submitted to NYC DOE and 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED.

## Responsive Education Program

The school administered the TerraNova test for a majority of its charter term, as necessary to meet one of its charter goals (goal #8 in the above table). The following data was found:

- In the three years the test was administered, the percent of students in kindergarten through second grade scoring at or above an NCE<sup>16</sup> of 50 ranged from 13% to 51% in Reading and from 11% to 60% in Math. Although no cohort met the 75% charter goal, there was a trend of increased performance year over year for the same grade level from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year.
- Students performing at grade level on the TerraNova Assessments achieve a Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) of 50 or above.

In 2013-2014, the school's first year serving fourth grade students, 92.9% of all fourth grade students scored a Level 3 or 4 on the New York State Science examination. This proficiency rate was well above the school's charter goal of 75%.<sup>17</sup> Since a portion of the school's mission is to "utilize an environmental science program to develop academically-motivated and civic-minded students" and implements this by providing a comprehensive science curriculum, these results demonstrate progress and achievement aligned with the school's priorities.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on May 14-15, 2014 and September 29, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

<sup>16</sup> NCE is the Normal Curve Equivalent. This curve was designed to be used in the evaluation of compensatory education and other special programs. The range is from 1 to 99 and coincides with the NP scale at 1, 50, and 99. NCEs are normalized equal interval scores and are not recommended for use in reporting individual student scores since the NCE is easily confused with the NP.

<sup>17</sup> According to NYS assessment results, 58.6% of tested fourth grade students at Lefferts Garden scored a Level 3 on the 2013-2014 NYS Science exam; 34.3% of tested fourth grade students at Lefferts Garden scored a Level 4 on the 2013-2014 NYS Science exam.

- **Alignment with Common Core:**

- School leadership reported that adjustments were made to the core curriculum by adopting EngageNY, as well as the Core Knowledge curriculum in grades kindergarten through two and the Expeditionary Learning curriculum in grades three through five for literacy. Materials within the ELA and math curriculum were piloted in the fourth grade during the 2013-2014 school year, and have subsequently been fully implemented across grade levels in the 2014-2015 school year after school leadership received input from teachers and student growth data showed growth of the fourth grade cohort.
- Since the school has a focus on science, the school has ensured alignment of its science curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards for ELA by integrating non-fiction texts into each science module. Specifically for grades three through five, professional learning teams received National Geographic Ladders non-fiction classroom libraries.
- The school utilizes its field studies, as part of the science curriculum, to provide students with inquiry-based and hands-on learning experiences.

- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**

- The school has three Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms per grade level, and one SETSS provider for the school. The Director of Student Learning and Special Education Coordinator oversees the coordination of external related services providers and ensures that students are receiving services as outlined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- The school has served a low percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students over the charter term, with ELLs comprising only 2% of the school's total student population in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 and 3% in 2013-2014. The school employs a part-time English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor to provide support to the ELL students.
- The school is continuing to develop the intervention program, similar to Response to Intervention, by gathering data to identify the students at risk, determining intervention strategies through a tiered intervention plan, and tracking the progress of the students (typically on a six-week cycle).
- The school added a Director of Student Learning to the leadership team beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The Director of Student Learning has an extensive background in special education and has put that as her priority in providing support to the Special Education Coordinator and the instructional staff. The school also has a full-time Academic Intervention Specialist and Reading Specialist on staff. The Special Education Coordinator, a full-time position, is also responsible for providing Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) services.

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

- The school added a Director of Science in the 2013-2014 school year to improve the science curriculum and to ensure consistency among the instructional staff on delivery of the science program.
- Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the school leadership team has made a shift to the use of data driven instruction. As part of those efforts, the school contracted with the Achievement Network to have access to Common Core Learning Standards-aligned interim assessments and professional development that facilitates analysis of student performance data.
- During the 2013-2014 school year, in an effort to elevate the rigor of instruction, school leadership provided professional development on Bloom's Taxonomy to the instructional staff. The school leaders' goal was to provide a framework for teachers to plan instruction that would require higher-order thinking.
- At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, the new school leadership team recognized that, due to high rates of leadership and staff turnover, the school needed a

cultural reset, and focused some professional development on developing a positive school culture and positive behavior management strategies. The school leaders brought in the digital program Kickboard in the 2014-2015 school year to track student behavior and improve communication between administrators and teaching staff.

- During the renewal visit, 39 classrooms across grades kindergarten through five were observed with the school's School Leader, Director of Student Learning, Director of Student Support, and Director of Science.
- In most observed classes, teachers were following a co-teaching instructional model, including parallel teaching, one teach and one assist, and one teach and one monitor.
- Class-sizes observed ranged from 18 to 27 students in size, with two or three teachers in each classroom, except for one observed classroom with one teacher.
- Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations included some challenging students to analyze and apply, but mostly basic recall and challenging students to demonstrate understanding.
- In most rooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and exit tickets, were observed.
- In most observed classrooms, no differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. Although, in a few classrooms teachers worked with students in smaller groups, no differentiation was observed.
- In most observed classes, at least two to four students were not on task. Off-task students tended to stay off task with little to no redirection by the teachers.
- Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team, some, but not all, of the visited classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.

## **Learning Environment**

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 22 teachers, the Special Education Coordinator/SETSS Provider, and one reading specialist. The following was noted:

- Some interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development weekly during the school year, with the administration providing resources. Some interviewed teachers voiced that they would like more opportunities for professional development outside of the school.
- Some of the interviewed teachers mentioned that the school uses professional learning teams (PLTs), as a way for the teachers to collaborate and discuss best practices. They also use it as a time to discuss successes and challenges, as well as share any materials and resources.
- All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (e.g. Fountas and Pinnell, Achievement Network) and informal assessments (e.g. homework, exit slips). They also reported that the new school leadership team implemented Data Days, where school leaders and teachers examine student results to find overall trends of who may be struggling, which concepts are most difficult, and why students got certain answers wrong. After the analysis, the teachers create action plans that include intervention strategies and targeted objectives.

For fourth grade, two different groups of 10 students were interviewed. For fifth grade, a group of 10 students was interviewed. Based on the student interviews conducted on May 15, 2014 and September 29, 2014 visits to the school, the following was noted:

- Students interviewed reported that homework was an opportunity for them to practice what they were thinking, as well as a way to not forget their lessons and for their teachers to check to see what they may need help with and what they are getting right.
- Students interviewed reported that parent-teacher communication could be for either positive or negative reasons, such as misbehaving or using bad words, or notifying the parent of any health

concerns about the student.

According to the 2013-2014 School Environment Survey, most parents strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and most parents who responded to the survey strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”<sup>18</sup>

According to the 2013-2014 School Environment Survey, only 58% of teachers agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and 24% agree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 68% of parent respondents strongly agree that Lefferts Garden Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 29% agree with the statement. Similarly, 68% of parent respondents strongly agree that Lefferts Garden Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 29% agree with the statement.

<sup>19</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 9% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at Lefferts Garden Charter School; another 48% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 3% marked that they strongly agree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; another 21% of teacher respondents marked ‘agree’ to the statement.

## **Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally and Operationally Sound, Viable Organization?**

### **Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has developed its governance structure and partially developed its organizational design.

On October 16, 2014 as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE attended a meeting of the school's Board of Trustees and met with a representation of the school's Board of Trustees independent of the school leadership team. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has nine active members. This level of membership is consistent within the minimum of five members and maximum of 11 members established in the Board's bylaws; however, the Board's bylaws indicate that the number of Trustees constituting the board must be an odd number and over the course of the charter term the Board had an even number of members.
- The Board's Treasurer and Secretary positions are specified positions in the bylaws and are currently filled with no vacancies; however, the Board's bylaws indicate that the structure should also include a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Presently, the school uses a Co-Chairperson model.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in minutes from 21 meetings from 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.
- The Principal updates the Board on academic progress and a consultant from Charter School Business Management, a financial consultancy company that the school contracts with for financial services, provides updates on the financial standing at the school regularly, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, as required by its bylaws, including Governance, Development, Finance and Technology, and Academics, as recorded in the Board roster and as observed at the October 16, 2014 Board meeting.
- One of the school's current Co-Chairs, Tim Pratt, has been on the Board since the school's inception. Tara Harrison, the second Co-Chair, has served on the Board since January 2014.
- The elementary school leader is Michael Windram, who has been at the school since the start of the 2013-2014 school year. Mr. Windram is the school's fifth leader. For the first two years of the charter, Marc Magnus-Sharpe was the school's leader. During the 2012-2013 school year, Deborah Bartley-Carter, who succeeded Mr. Magnus-Sharpe, left the school. After Ms. Bartley-Carter's departure, the school had three interim leaders: Karen Palmer, (the school's founding Director of Operations), Marc Dicus, (the school's former Director of Finance) and Wendy Ramos.

### **School Climate & Community Engagement**

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has not yet developed a stable school culture, but is showing signs of progress in the recent academic year.

- To date, the school has not met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95%. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is 92.7% according to the data in the table below, which is also below the citywide average.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The table reflects school self-reported attendance data for school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 and attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) database for school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported different attendance rates than those recorded in ATS for the last two years, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The school self-reported attendance rates of 94.0% for both school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

## Average Attendance\*

Elementary School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School *</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>92.2%</b>
NYC **	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	-0.2	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0

\* Attendance was self-reported by the school for school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. For school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 attendance was taken from ATS.

\*\* NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools as reflected in ATS.

- Staff turnover has not been consistent over the charter term but has improved over the last year. In year one, year two, and year three of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013), 31%, 43%, and 32% of instructional staff did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year. However, for the most recent period, staff turnover was only 5%.<sup>21</sup>
- Student mobility is presented below for the charter term without comparison to other schools, the CSD, or NYC as final student retention goals were not established by the New York State Education Department for the retrospective charter term. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD, or NYC averages, the school had some challenges with retaining students in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, but made some improvement in the 2013-2014 school year.

## Mobility

Student Mobility out of Lefferts Gardens Charter School *				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	17	35	69	48
Percent of Students who Left the School	11.6%	15.0%	21.6%	13.9%

\* Figures are based on student enrollment as of October 31 for each respective school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012. Students in terminal grades are not included.

- The NYC DOE has made changes to the NYC School Survey during the entirety of the retrospective charter term. Questions asked have been altered, added or deleted from year to year. Also, beginning with the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, survey categories will not be measured in total points out of 10 possible points. To allow for consistency during the evaluated charter term, selected questions, consistent with the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework were identified as relevant for charter schools. These are presented below for the duration of the retrospective charter term. In the most recent year of survey results, 2013-2014, the percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was below citywide averages for three of four selected questions; the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was below citywide averages for two of three selected questions.
- NYC School Survey Response Rates should be comparable over time, however, as the measurement of these has remained consistent. Response rates for parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. The response rates for Lefferts Gardens Charter School parents and Lefferts Gardens Charter School teachers have been above NYC averages in three of the four years of the current charter term.

<sup>21</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in November 2014

## NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Lefferts Gardens Charter School				Citywide Average
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	-	-	-	-	-
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	-	-	-	-	-
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	-	-	-	-	-
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	98%	95%	94%	92%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	96%	94%	91%	93%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	100%	97%	99%	95%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	75%	35%	54%	58%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	83%	67%	67%	100%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	66%	62%	59%	91%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	72%	66%	70%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

\*\* This question was phrased as "My teachers inspire me to learn" in the 2009-2010 through 2012-2013 School Surveys.

\*\*\* This question was not introduced until the 2011-2012 School Survey.

## NYC School Survey Results

		Response Rates			
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Lefferts Gardens Charter School	-	-	-	-
	NYC	-	-	-	-
Parents	Lefferts Gardens Charter School	37%	86%	72%	67%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Lefferts Gardens Charter School	86%	100%	52%	89%
	NYC	82%	81%	83%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

- The school's charter goals include, "parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 70% or more of the parents participate in the survey." The school did not meet this goal in the 2010-2011 school year,<sup>22</sup> but met it in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. This goal is not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "staff will express satisfaction with school leadership and professional development opportunities as determined by the NYC School Survey in which the

<sup>22</sup> The school did receive scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four parent survey domains in the 2010-2011 school year, however, the parent survey response rate of 37% was below the required 70% to meet the goal.

school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 95% or more of teachers participate in the survey.” The school did not meet this goal in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, or 2012-2013 school years. This goal is not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

- The school’s charter goals include, “students will express satisfaction with the school’s program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect.” This goal is not applicable because the school did not serve any students who are eligible to take the survey during the course of the retrospective charter term.

As part of the renewal process, representatives for the NYC DOE have collected evidence relevant to the school’s climate and community engagement over the school’s charter term. Based on discussion, document collection and review, and observation, the following was noted:

- Over the course of the charter, the school has maintained an active Parents’ Association.
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on May 29, 2014 at Lefferts Gardens Charter School, 601 Parkside Avenue Brooklyn, NY, 11226 for the school in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 110 participants attended the hearing with 41 persons speaking in support of the school’s renewal and no one speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents/guardians from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to parents/guardians were made during October 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 90% of parent/guardian respondents provided positive feedback regarding the school, 5% were neutral, and 5% were negative.

## **Financial Health**

**Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations.**

- Based on the fiscal year 2014 (FY14) financial audit, the school's current ratio of 3.36 indicates a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash of 121 days of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of September 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

## **Financial Sustainability**

**Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.**

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14, the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the F14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.24 indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits from FY12 to FY14.

### **Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?**

Over the charter term, Lefferts Gardens Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

As of the review on November 2014, the Board of Trustees for Lefferts Gardens is in compliance with:

- **Membership size.** Over the charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 11 members.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents that have been submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.<sup>23</sup>
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting on the school's website.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has mostly been consistent in submitting board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval. During the charter term, documents were not submitted per the required timeframe for one board member.
- **Required number of Board meetings.** In November 2014, the Board updated its bylaws to comply with the Charter Schools Act, which requires a Board to hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months per year. Prior to that, their bylaws required no fewer than 11 meetings per year. The Board did held the required number of meetings per the Board's bylaws in years for all years of the current charter term.

As of the review on November 2014, the Board of Trustees for Lefferts Gardens is out of compliance with:

- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. However, the school has not posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law.

As of the review on November 2014, the charter school is in compliance with:

- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 9, 2014, adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.
- **Fire Emergency.** One or more of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **Timely Submission of Invoicing and Reconciliation Documents.** Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

As of the review on November 2014, the charter school is out of compliance with:

- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being

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<sup>23</sup> Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Currently, eight staff members are not appropriately certified.

- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is not in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization, as only 98.1% of students have been immunized.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be out of compliance with federal law.

## Enrollment and Retention Targets

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
  - The law directs schools to demonstrate “that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students” in the event it has not yet met its targets.
  - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school’s performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
  - As of November 1, 2014, charter school enrollment and retention targets as required by the NYS Charter Schools Act are still in a *proposed* status. The information presented below for enrollment is compared to NYC CSD and NYC averages, however, these averages should not be assumed to be similar to the final enrollment targets to be released by NYSED.<sup>24</sup>
- In all years of operation, including the most recent completed school year 2013-2014, Lefferts Gardens Charter School:
  - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to both the CSD 17 and citywide percentages;
  - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to the citywide percentage;<sup>25</sup> and
  - served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to both the CSD 17 and citywide percentages.

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<sup>24</sup> Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

<sup>25</sup> Lefferts Garden Charter School served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to the CSD17 percentage in two of the four years of the retrospective charter term.

## Enrollment of Special Populations<sup>26</sup>

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	<b>74.8%</b>	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>75.9%</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>92.9%</b>
	CSD 17	96.5%	95.1%	95.3%	94.0%	
	NYC	80.7%	83.3%	82.6%	82.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
	CSD 17	11.5%	12.0%	13.5%	17.4%	
	NYC	14.5%	15.2%	16.7%	19.3%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
	CSD 17	12.5%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	
	NYC	20.2%	18.8%	17.7%	16.6%	

Additional Enrollment Information				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4
CSD(s)	17	17	17	17

<sup>26</sup> Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1 and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

State enrollment targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific enrollment target. The CSD for a multi-district school is the primary CSD as determined by each school. The enrollment is determined by the total number of students enrolled as of October 31, 2013. Any school with an unusual grade configuration (i.e. K, 6-9) should use an available grade configuration provided by SED that is most aligned as determined by the NYC DOE, otherwise a school's actual grade span is used. For more information regarding SED's methodology behind the calculation of charter school enrollment and retention targets, please refer to the memo at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/July2012/712brca11.pdf>.

#### **Essential Question 4: What are the School's Plans for the Next Charter Term?**

As reported by school leadership and the school's Board, the following was noted:

- The school did not apply for any material revisions to its charter.
- The school's plans for organizational sustainability include further developing Board membership and practices, strengthening the culture of Professional Learning Teams, and investing in technological upgrades for the students.

## Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### Renewal Process

In the final year of its charter, a NYC DOE Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the current charter term and establish goals and objectives for the next charter term. Ultimately, the renewal process offers an opportunity for the school community to reflect on its experiences during its prior term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term and, if renewed, to carry out an ambitious plan for the future.

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City public school students. To make such determinations, the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) renewal team performs a comprehensive review of the school's academic, operational and fiscal performance over the course of the charter which includes an analysis of the school's renewal application. This application is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?
3. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

The school presents evidence to support its application for renewal by providing a compelling response to these overarching questions that demonstrates its students have made significant academic progress, is serving students equitably, has sustainable operations to be successful in the next charter term, and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its current charter. In addition, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges and the lessons learned.

While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are also important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how OSDCP makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework overview in Part 6 of this report.

### Statutory Basis for Renewal

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") authorizes the creation of a system of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

#### **§2850:**

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and

- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.<sup>27</sup>

The Act states the following regarding the renewal of a school's charter:

**§2851.4:**

Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:

- (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
- (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the board of regents.
- (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.
- (d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction.
- (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.

The determination of whether to approve a renewal application rests in the sole discretion of a charter school's authorizer.

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.<sup>28</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYC DOE") institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act's renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;

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<sup>27</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>28</sup> See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction; and
- The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal.<sup>29</sup>

Where the NYC DOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

<sup>30</sup> See § 2852(5).

## Part 6: NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

The Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) team may recommend to the Chancellor three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal.

After the OSDCP renewal site visit, the OSDCP team incorporates its findings from the visit into this renewal report. The evidence and findings align to the four essential questions of the NYC DOE accountability framework and may include classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in this report. If the OSDCP renewal team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If OSDCP approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, OSDCP will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

### ***Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic attainment and/or consistent and significant student academic progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has demonstrated operational viability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

### ***Short Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where any school has demonstrated mixed academic results or has uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal with or without conditions may be considered.

### ***Non-Renewal***

Renewal is not automatic. Schools that have not demonstrated significant progress or high levels of student achievement and/or are in violation of their charter will not be renewed.

### ***Grade Expansions or Enrollment Changes***

A school may seek material charter revisions as part of the renewal process. In the case of a grade expansion or change in authorized enrollment, these material charter revisions are considered separately from the charter renewal. Charter renewal, with or without conditions, is not a guarantee of approval for a proposed material charter revision.

## The NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

To help Chancellor-authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the OSDCP team has developed an Accountability Framework built around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?
3. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of factors (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school. These factors include academic, fiscal, operational and environmental indicators of a charter school's performance. Additionally, some of the indicators we evaluate relate to expected performance as defined in the New York State Charter Schools Act including evidence of improved student learning and achievement, special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure, use of different and innovative teaching methods, parent and student satisfaction, and enrollment and retention of special student populations. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided beginning on page 17 of the NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Schools Accountability Handbook for 2014-2015.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what OSDCP looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, and the duration of the charter term recommended by NYC DOE. As schools use the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so the schools are high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city's commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school's performance, while also recognizing the importance of closing the achievement gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

#### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- Meet absolute performance goals established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- Meet other rigorous academic goals as stated on school charter
- Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing academic performance measures of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing academic performance measures compared with district/city proficiency averages

Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations:

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation
- Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College
- Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic Goals
- School-reported internal assessments
- NYC DOE Progress Reports or School Quality Reports<sup>31</sup>

### **1b. Instructionally Sound and Responsive Education Program**

Schools with successful education programs have many of the characteristics below:

- Are self-reflective and examine practice based on outcomes against goals
- Have well-thought out curricular programs that are aligned with NYS learning outcomes as described by state and Common Core Learning Standards
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Utilizes a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

<sup>31</sup> Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE replaced the DOE Progress Report with the DOE School Quality Report. The 2012-2013 school year is the last year NYC public schools will have a Progress Report score. The Progress Report and School Quality Report contain similar indicators of performance.

Evidence for successful education programs, in addition to positive results, may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- Classroom observations
- Instructional planning documents (alignments, scope and sequences, curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, etc.)
- Instructional leader and staff interviews
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- Student/teacher schedules
- Student Intervention / Response to Intervention program description and resources
- Interim assessment results
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation

### **1c. Learning Environment**

Schools with successful learning environments have many of the characteristics below:

- Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student learning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)
- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Have formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

Evidence for successful learning environments may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- Classroom observations
- NYC DOE School Survey results (students, parents and teachers)
- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with school leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, students
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)
- School calendar and class schedules

## 2. Is the School a Fiscally and Operationally Sound, Viable Organization?

### 2a. Mission and Goals

Schools with a successful mission and goals have many of the characteristics below:

- Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace
- Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

Evidence for a successful mission and goals might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mission Statement
- School charter and external documents (student/family handbooks, school website, etc.)
- Annual Reports, school improvement plans, leadership/Board reports
- Board agendas and minutes
- Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction surveys
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder interviews (board, parents, staff, students, etc.)

## 2b. Leadership and Governance Structure

Schools with successful leadership and governance structures have many of the characteristics below:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly, but not limited to, Open-Meeting Law and conflict of interest laws, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

Evidence for school governance and organizational design may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook and core operational policies
- School calendar
- Professional development plans
- Stakeholder interviews (board, school leadership and staff)

## 2c. School Climate and Community Engagement

Schools with a sustaining school climate and engaged parent and community support have many of the characteristics below:

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student-centered, and open to parents and community support
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school
- Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer
- Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives

Evidence for school climate and community engagement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- NYC DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Participation in NYC DOE initiatives and efforts to collaborate/partner with other NYC schools
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

## 2d. Operational Health

Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by SED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010)
- Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees

Evidence of an operationally viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational organizational chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan
- Immunization completion rate information
- Appropriate AED/CPR certifications

## 2e. Financial Sustainability

Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program
- School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per-pupil and space-related cost projections

Evidence for a financially sound, viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial audits, escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships

### **3. Is the School in Compliance with its Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations?**

#### **3a. Approved Charter and Agreement**

Schools in substantial compliance with the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- Implement the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and, if appropriate, as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that up-to-date charter is available on request to staff, parents, and school community
- Implement comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision

Evidence for a school's compliance with the terms of its charter and charter agreement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Annual Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/Board and staff interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

#### **3b. Applicable Federal and State Law**

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location<sup>32</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all certification requirements

<sup>32</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from the NY State Education Department. This requirement of the New York State Charter Schools Act applies to schools renewed after 2010.

Evidence for compliance with applicable federal and state law may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School reporting documents
- School's NYSED Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student/Family Handbook
- Student discipline policy and records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

### **3c. Applicable Regulations**

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have the characteristics below:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members
- Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents
- Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents
- Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents
- Charter revision requests
- Revised or new contracts
- Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results
- Stakeholder interviews

## 4. What Are the School's Plans for its Next Charter Term?

### 4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments
- Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.
- Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's proposed growth plans
- Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school's new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)

Evidence for likely success in planning for school growth in a new charter term may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter revision or merger applications
- Leadership and Board interviews

### 4b. Organizational Sustainability

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)
- School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios

Evidence for organizational sustainability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Charter renewal application
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organizational chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

#### **4c. School or Model Improvements**

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- Review performance carefully and even without major changes through expansion or replication, are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success
- Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission

Evidence for successful improvements to a school's program or model may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

## Appendix A: School Performance Data

### Students scoring at or above Level 3

Grade-Level Proficiency in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	8.2%	8.0%
Grade 4	-	-	-	21.9%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 17 *</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	-9.5	-13.0
Grade 4	-	-	-	-1.8
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	-19.9	-21.9
Grade 4	-	-	-	-9.2

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Lefferts Gardens Charter School</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	8.2%	11.8%
Grade 4	-	-	-	21.9%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 17 *</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	-13.5	-15.7
Grade 4	-	-	-	-6.4
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 3	-	-	-24.9	-26.8
Grade 4	-	-	-	-18.1

\* CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

## Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

### NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)