



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
2013-2014

**DREAM CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview

School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	Dream Charter School
Board Chair(s)	Richard Berlin
School Leader(s)	Eve Colavito
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	Harlem RBI
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 4
Physical Address(es)	433 East 100th Street, New York 10029 (K-1)
	232 East 103rd Street, New York 10029 (2-6)
Facility Owner(s)	DOE

School Profile

- DREAM Charter School (DREAM) is an elementary and middle school, which served 343 students¹ in grades K-6 during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in 2008-2009, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's authorized grade span is K-8 which it expects to reach in the 2015-2016 school year. The school is split-sited in two publicly operated facilities in Manhattan within CSD 4.²
- DREAM Charter School enrolls new students in kindergarten but backfills in all grades. There were 1,260 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.³ The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 94.3%.⁴
- Dream Charter School was renewed during the 2012-2013 school year for a period of five years, and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership team during the 2012-2013 school year included Eve Colavito, Head of School; Robin Rubenstein, Elementary School Principal; Jacky Frey, Director of Special Education; Michael McCarthy, Director of School Culture; Emily Parkey, Director of Family Engagement and Traci Douglas, Director of Operations. The Head of School has been with the school since the 2009-2010 school year.
- DREAM Charter School had a student to teacher ratio of 12.5:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served 14 sections across all grades, with an average class size of 25.⁵
- The lottery preferences for DREAM Charter School's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school, as well as incoming kindergarteners who live in NYCHA housing in Community District 4.⁶

¹ Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.

² NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

³ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

⁴ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

⁵ Self-reported information given on 9/12/14.

⁶ DREAM Charter School's 2013-2014 application.

Part 2: Summary of Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

Students scoring at or above Level 3 on the NYS assessment, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Dream Charter School	-	25.5%	55.1%	19.4%
CSD 4	-	40.9%	47.2%	22.6%
Difference from CSD 4	-	-15.4	7.9	-3.2
NYC	-	48.1%	50.6%	28.0%
Difference from NYC	-	-22.6	4.5	-8.6
New York State	-	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-	-27.3	0.0	-11.7

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Dream Charter School	-	36.2%	58.4%	22.3%
CSD 4	-	48.4%	59.6%	25.2%
Difference from CSD 4	-	-12.2	-1.2	-2.9
NYC	-	54.8%	61.3%	32.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-18.6	-2.9	-10.4
New York State	-	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-	-27.1	-6.4	-8.8

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	C	A	C
Student Progress	-	F	A	D
Student Performance	-	D	B	B
School Environment	-	A	A	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	2.0	4.2	3.1

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), DREAM Charter School fully met three, partially met four, and did not meet six of its 18 applicable academic performance goals identified in its charter. Five goals were not able to be reported at the time of the report's submission or were no longer applicable.

Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment⁷

- Over the last school year, DREAM began making revisions to both ELA and math curriculum to ensure that the rigor, objectives, and standards are all Common Core aligned.
- DREAM continues to use Cognitively Guided Instruction (“CGI”), a strategy-driven approach to math instruction that encourages students to develop and explain strategies to problem solving by focusing on word problems.
- The school made improvements to the Interim Assessment (IA) program by instituting a “Reteach Week” at the conclusion of each data cycle and upon a comprehensive review of data collected from the IAs. Partnering for the second year with Achievement Network (“ANet”), DREAM was able to assess students against the Common Core Standards as well as the performance of peer schools, four times a year.
- The school hired a Data and Assessment Manager at the end of the 2012-2013 school year to take on the primary responsibility for collecting and interpreting assessment data for instructional staff, leadership, and the Board of Trustees.
- DREAM administers a variety of summative and formative assessments including but not limited to IAs, Fountas & Pinnell assessments, Running Reading Records, Wilson Reading Systems assessments, and DIBELS Progress Monitoring to ensure students’ rate of acquisition are in line with the students’ growth plans for achieving academic targets and closing the achievement gap.
- The school implemented a Response to Intervention (“RtI”) program to detect struggling students early on and intervene proactively. The program addresses the needs of each student individually and includes an early morning tutoring component that provides additional, intensive supports for selected students. The RtI program provides support for struggling students across all grades and is delivered three to five times per week for 45 minutes depending on individual student strengths and needs.
- DREAM continued a Saturday Academy program providing instruction to targeted groups of students in their test-taking grades, offering 3-hour sessions in both ELA and math in small cohorts grouped by reading levels and math proficiency.
- Responsive education at DREAM includes the above Saturday Academy program and a Saturday tutoring program for a select group of students in grades 1-2 who have been identified as needing additional support.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, DREAM hired an ELL Coordinator to develop the school’s ELL program. The school’s ELL Coordinator meets regularly with ELL students to provide language development and other related interventions.
- “Scholar Talk” meetings are held weekly at each grade level to address individual, small group, class, and grade concerns as they arise over the course of the school year. Teachers, staff, and family members address patterns in behavior at these regular meetings.
- The school provides professional development and leadership support to enhance teachers’ capacity to incorporate IA data into daily planning and instruction, as well as deepen the content knowledge of staff in both ELA and math.
- DREAM continues to provide professional development in co-teaching models to maximize the impact of both adults in the classroom at all times.
- DREAM uses the Marshall Evaluation to distinguish tiers of teacher support, and to set observation feedback targets for all instructional staff members. The observation feedback cycle consists of two to four classroom observations a month, followed by feedback sessions that follow a six-step process for giving effective feedback and establishing next steps.
- DREAM staff participates in regular professional development sessions, including full days for data review, analysis, and action planning, weekly all-staff professional development sessions, and weekly grade-level professional development sessions.
 - DREAM provides an additional professional development opportunity to instructional staff during the school’s weekly/biweekly Practice Lab sessions. Practice Lab sessions focus on developing and practicing isolated taxonomy skills and concepts based on Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion*.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted self evaluation form on 2/14/14.

Essential Question 2: Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

After reviewing information and documentation concerning Board turnover, Board minutes, reporting structure, organizational chart, annual accountability reporting documents, Board agendas, and the school's website, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- During the 2013-2014 school year, the Board had nine voting board members. The Board Chair, Rich Berlin, has been on the Board since 2008.
- As recorded on Board rosters, two members who were serving as of January 2012, no longer served on the Board as of December 2013.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic and operational performance to the Board and its committees.

School Climate & Community Engagement

After reviewing information and documentation concerning leadership turnover, staff turnover, attendance rate, student turnover, NYC School Survey results and response rates, and PTO meetings, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The school experienced no leadership turnover in the 2013-2014 school year.
- Instructional staff turnover from the 2012-13 school year was 10%, with three out of 41 instructional staff members choosing not to return and one out of 41 not being asked to return for the 2013-14 school year. As of February 2014, three instructional staff members had left the school during the 2013-2014 school year.
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during the 2013-14 school year was at 94.3%, which is lower than the school's charter goal of at least 95%.⁸
- 9% of the students who completed the 2012-2013 school year did not return at the start of 2013-2014 school year, and 7% of the students left the school between the start of the school year and February 2014.⁹
- The school reports that they have a parent association called the DREAM Family Action Council (DFAC), as evidenced in the school's ACR self-evaluation.

2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results¹⁰

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Average		Parents	81%	54%
Communication	Above Average		Teachers	100%	83%
Engagement	Average		Students	N/A	83%
Safety & Respect	Average				

⁸ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

⁹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

¹⁰ Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

Financial Health

Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than one month without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of the last day for the 2013-2014 school year revealed that the school met its enrollment target.
- As of the FY13 financial audit the school had no debt obligations.

Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years though the school operated at a 3% deficit during FY12.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13, though the school had negative cash flow during FY11.

Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed for FY 13 showed no material findings.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with charter and all applicable laws and regulations?

After a review of documentation submitted for the NYC DOE annual accountability reporting requirements for the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE finds the following:

Board Compliance

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, no fewer than three and no more than 25 members.
- Currently, officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- As of February 2014, based on submitted minutes, the Board has held three of the required 10 Board meetings for the 2013-2014 school year, not adhering to 2010 Charter Law.

School Compliance

The school is in compliance with (as reviewed during May 2014):

- All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- The school had an application deadline of April 4, 2014 and lottery date of April 10, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- The school has posted its 2012-2013 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.
- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- The school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school does not have the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.

Essential Question 4: What are the school's plans for the next charter term?

As reported by the school's leadership, the following is noted:

- DREAM will be at full scale in the 2015-2016 school year, with 450 students in grades K-8.
- DREAM will be in its new non-DOE operated school building, which is adjacent to its current PS 38 site as of the 2015-2016 school year.
- DREAM plans to explore the possibility of opening a Pre-K with its institutional partner, Harlem RBI, in the 2015-2016 school year.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- 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.
- For the 2013-2014 school year, DREAM served a higher percentage of students with disabilities compared to CSD 4 and citywide averages. The school served a smaller percentage of English Language Learner students compared to CSD 4 and citywide averages. The school served a rate of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch higher than that of the citywide average but lower than the CSD 4 percentage.

Special Populations

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
School	82.3%	84.0%	87.1%	82.9%	76.1%	18.4%	18.0%	17.7%	18.4%	24.2%	6.1%	7.0%	8.5%	11.6%	7.9%
CSD 4	70.7%	73.1%	74.7%	74.8%	77.3%	21.3%	21.6%	21.5%	21.8%	23.8%	14.0%	14.3%	13.1%	12.7%	11.7%
NYC	62.1%	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	73.5%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	17.1%	16.1%	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.7%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-2	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6
CSD(s)	4	4	4	4	4

Comparisons to both the CSD(s) and City are made against students in grades K-8, 9-12 or K-12 depending on the grades the school served in each school year. Special population figures are as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.