



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**CULTURAL ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL AT SPRING CREEK
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR
JANUARY 2015**

Table of Contents

PART 1: SUMMARY OF RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION	2
I. CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW:	2
<i>Background Information</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Overview of School-Specific Data</i>	<i>3</i>
II. RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE	5
PART 2: SCHOOL OVERVIEW AND HISTORY.....	13
PART 3: RENEWAL REPORT OVERVIEW	15
PART 4: FINDINGS	17
<i>Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally and Operationally Sound, Viable Organization?.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations? ...</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Essential Question 4: What are the School’s Plans for the Next Charter Term?.....</i>	<i>34</i>
PART 5: BACKGROUND ON THE CHARTER RENEWAL PROCESS	35
PART 6: NYC DOE OSDCP ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK.....	38
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE DATA	50
APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY DATA	51

Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

Background Information

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	
Board Chair(s)	Dr. A.R. Bernard
School Leader(s)	Dr. Laurie B. Midgette
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 18
Physical Address(es)	1400 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2010-2011
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	2/8/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	280
Proposed New Charter Term	2.5 years [February 9, 2015 – June 30, 2017]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-5
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	280
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-5: 2 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	10	10	10	10	40
# Met	1	2	2	3	8
# Partially Met	0	0	0	0	0
# Not Met	1	0	3	4	8
# Not Applicable *	8	8	5	3	24
% Met	10%	20%	20%	30%	20%
% Partially Met	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% Not Met	10%	0%	30%	40%	20%
% Not Applicable *	80%	80%	50%	30%	60%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	50%	100%	40%	43%	50%

* 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
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	-	-	23.1%	29.8%
CSD 18	-	-	20.6%	23.3%
Difference from CSD 18 *	-	-	2.5	6.5
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-5.0	-0.7
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-8.0	-0.8

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	-	-	20.0%	13.1%
CSD 18	-	-	22.3%	25.8%
Difference from CSD 18 *	-	-	-2.3	-12.7
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-13.1	-26.2
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-11.1	-23.1

* 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
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek - All Students	-	-	-	54.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	30.5%
City Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	19.9%
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	59.0%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	26.6%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	5.8%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek - All Students	-	-	-	25.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	0.0%
City Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	0.0%
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	42.5%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	3.8%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	0.0%

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 *	-	-	-	33.3%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	44.4%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	-	-	33.3%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	13.6%

* 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 2.5 year short term renewal with three academic performance conditions, two operational conditions, and one compliance condition. Based on the evidence presented in this report and the school partially demonstrating academic achievement and progress, the NYC DOE is authorizing the school to serve only grades kindergarten through five in the next charter term. The school indicated in its renewal application that it wishes to continue with phase-in as presented in the original charter application to serve grades kindergarten through 12 at scale. If the academic, operational and compliance conditions placed on the school are met during the charter term, the NYC DOE will re-evaluate the school's expansion plan.

The academic performance conditions are as follows:

1. As part of its oversight of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek in its next charter term, the NYC DOE will require the school to submit an academic improvement plan to address concerns regarding performance and growth on the NYS math assessments. This plan should include timelines, interim progress goals, details on data-driven instructional program design, professional development and assigned responsibilities. A draft of the plan should be submitted to the NYC DOE no later than April 15, 2015.
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. 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.

The operational conditions are as follows:

1. The school will submit a revised 2.5 year budget and budget memorandum that reflect the school's future authorized enrollment of 280 students in grades kindergarten through five to the NYC DOE no later than February 27, 2015. The revised budget memorandum must include strategies for how the school will increase its unrestricted

- days of cash on hand from eight to at least 30, without an infusion of cash, by the end of the 2015 fiscal year (June 30, 2015). In addition, the school will submit quarterly financial statements to the NYC DOE within 45 days of the close of each fiscal quarter.
2. The school will develop and submit a plan to increase the percentage of English Language Learners enrolled in the school beyond 0%; the plan must align to the expected outcome that the percentage of ELLs enrolled by the school will meet or exceed the Community School District percentage of English Language Learners by the end of the next charter term. The plan should detail recruitment strategies that will increase the percentage of English Language Learners that apply and subsequently enroll in the school, the school's efforts to retain these students, specific initiatives to engage families of English Language Learners, and how the school will specifically serve this special population once enrolled. A draft of the plan shall be submitted to the NYC DOE on or before February 15, 2015. The school should expect to begin implementation of these strategies prior to the lottery for the 2015-2016 school year.

The compliance condition is as follows:

1. The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold 12 meetings a year. In each year of the charter term, the Board is required to hold the required number of monthly meetings and report semi-annually to the NYC DOE on January 1 and July 1 the status of board meeting completion. Board meetings held are those that meet quorum. The Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months per year.

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has partially 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek indicates that the school has made some progress towards meeting these objectives.

Mission and Vision

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's mission is to provide a college preparatory education with exemplary cultural arts proficiency to young leaders who will profoundly impact the human condition.

School Specific Academic Performance

The school entered its fifth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic 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 indicators to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek.

English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency rates for Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek have consistently exceeded those of Community School District (CSD) 18, though math proficiency rates for the school have consistently underperformed those of CSD 18.

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 school year 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, 20.0% of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's students were proficient in math. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's math proficiency was greater than or equal to that of only 36% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to elementary schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek outperformed only 21% of similar schools. However, the school outperformed 62% of CSD 18 elementary schools. In 2012-2013, 23.1% of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's students demonstrated proficiency in NYS assessments in ELA. With this level of proficiency, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek outperformed 55% of elementary schools citywide. Additionally, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek outperformed 28% of its peer schools and 77% of CSD 18 elementary schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek who were proficient in math fell to 13.1%. For 2013-2014, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's math proficiency was higher than only 12% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to peer schools, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek outperformed 0% of similar schools, and the school outperformed only 7% of CSD 18 elementary schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek who demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in ELA increased to 29.8%. With this level of proficiency, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek outperformed 60% of elementary schools citywide, 43% of its peer schools and 93% of elementary schools in CSD 18.

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has met 50% of its applicable academic charter goals.^{1,2} Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek met three of seven applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to CCLS in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include 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 regulation, the NYC DOE will not evaluate 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 an inconsistent trend of

¹ 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 12 students).

² 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.

achievement of its stated charter goals during the retrospective charter term, with a drop in its goals met rate between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, and no significant change the following year.

In 2013-2014, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 54.0% with a City Percent of Range of only 19.9%, placing the school in the 10th percentile of elementary schools citywide.³ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 13% and 7%, respectively. This means that nearly all other elementary schools in Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's peer group and CSD had ELA median adjusted growth percentiles greater than Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

In 2013-2014, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's math median adjusted growth percentile was 25.0% with a City Percent of Range of 0.0%, which placed it in the bottom percentile (0%) of elementary schools citywide.⁴ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were both 0%, as well. This means that all other elementary schools in Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's peer group and CSD had math median adjusted growth percentiles greater than Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's math median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

The school has shown evidence of efforts to establish a strong focus on collecting and analyzing data, which, if implemented with fidelity, can positively impact academic rigor and the quality of instruction. Reports from past NYC DOE visits to the school indicate that the school is using a variety of assessments including Fountas and Pinnell and Scantron Achievement Series assessments, in addition to curriculum-based programs, to measure student performance; students have achievement goals and track their own progress. The lesson plans prepared by instructors include a reflection portion entitled, "Daily Qualitative Data" where instructors reflect on the percent of students who mastered the lesson's objective and present adjustments that might be necessary to ensure 90% mastery.⁵

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek received an Overall C grade, earning a B in School Environment and a C in both the Student Progress and Student Performance sections. The school's overall score of 28.8 points ranked the school 30th out of 37 early childhood schools citywide that received a Progress Report grade for 2012-2013. 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. For schools designated as Early Childhood schools, 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

³ 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 19.9% indicates that the school's median adjusted growth percentile was more than one standard deviation below the average (that only 19.9% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek), while a Citywide percentile of 10% indicates that Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 10% of all elementary schools Citywide.

⁴ A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A City Percent of Range of 0.0% indicates that the school's math median adjusted growth percentile was two standard deviations below the average. A Citywide percentile of 0% indicates that Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's math median adjusted growth percentile was the lowest of all elementary schools citywide.

⁵ Cultural Arts Academy Charter School Annual Comprehensive Report April 2012

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 the school's 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 (ELLs), 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, 13.6% of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek in the bottom 2% of elementary schools citywide. In the same year, 44.4% of 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek in the 26th percentile of all elementary schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 33.3% of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's students with disabilities 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek in the 24th percentile of elementary schools citywide. Similarly, 33.3% Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's students with disabilities 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek in the bottom 10% of all elementary schools citywide.

In 2013-2014, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek did not serve the minimum number⁶ of students designated as English Language Learners 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

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is a partially operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's 2014-2015 staff handbook;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's 2014-2015 student/family handbook;

⁶ 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.

- On-site review of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's financial and operational records;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's FY15 budget and five-year projected budget;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's self-reported staffing data;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's Board of Trustees meeting minutes;
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's Board of Trustees bylaws; and
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's financial disclosure forms.

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

The Board currently has six members, which is consistent with the established bylaws, and all members have been part of the Board since the school's inception. The bylaws reference specific committees, though the Governance, Development, Academic, and Parental Engagement committees are not currently active per a review of Board minutes.

There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.

Currently, the Board's bylaws require that the Board hold 12 meetings per year. The Board has not adhered to this in the two most recent years of the current charter term since the bylaws were amended to hold 12 meetings per year. Quorum was not achieved at all Board meetings over the course of the charter term. If quorum was not achieved, the Board did not vote, as recorded in meeting minutes.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture. School leadership, as defined by the school, has not experienced any turnover since the school's inception. The founding school leader, Dr. Laurie B. Midgette, and the founding Board Chair, Dr. A.R. Bernard, have been serving as Principal and Board Chair, respectively, since the school's inception.

For the most recent school year, staff turnover was 12%; three instructional staff members from the 2013-2014 school year did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the 2014-2015 school year. This turnover rate was above the rates in previous years, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, which saw turnover rates of 7% and 11%, respectively, but was below the 15% turnover rate for the 2010-2011 school year.

Overall, the school is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's current ratio is 0.30, and the school only has \$299,121 unrestricted cash on hand to meet current liabilities totaling \$458,308. Cash on hand represents only eight days of operating expenses.

Overall, there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school based on its current practices. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek operated at a deficit in three of the past four years and has relied upon outside funding to supplement its revenue in order to meet operating expenses.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the retrospective charter term, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

The Board has not consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting them on the school's website. Board meeting minutes and agendas are not available on the school's website for the first half of the 2013-2014 school year and the 2014-2015 school year.

The school's current bylaws (amended prior to the 2012-2013 school year) indicate that the Board is to hold 12 meetings per year. In the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, the Board held 11 meetings each year, but only nine and 10 meetings, respectively achieved quorum.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 3, 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.

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 regarding due process policies and disciplinary measures for students with disabilities.

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. The school has posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law; however, the FY13 audit and the FY14 audit posted to its website are missing pages 12-17 and 12-15, respectively. These pages contain the auditor's report and findings in each of the audits.

The board has consistently submitted board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval.

The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is 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.

The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.

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

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

At least one of the school leaders was 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 did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek indicated in its renewal application that the school wishes to continue with its plans set forth in the original charter application to expand to serve grades kindergarten through 12. The school's plan would include a new enrollment plan, school calendar, daily schedule and instructional time compliance, curriculum framework for added grades, facility projections, and college and career readiness programming.

Part 2: School Overview and History

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is an elementary school serving 297 students⁷ in grades kindergarten through five 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 twelve, consistent with the school's original charter application and approval; however, the school is authorized to serve grades kindergarten through five only in the current school year, 2014-2015. The school's current charter term expires on February 8, 2015.⁸ The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a privately-operated facility in Community School District 18 in Brooklyn.

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is an elementary school located in the East New York/Canarsie/Spring Creek section of Brooklyn. The school's mission is to provide a college preparatory education with exemplary cultural arts proficiency to young leaders who will profoundly impact the human condition. The school's research-based curriculum and instructional practices reflect an arts-infused approach that is interwoven into the subjects such as sciences, humanities and mathematics. This integration will enable students to think independently, reason cogently, and gain skills in decision-making, problem-solving, collaboration and self-management, and assist them in mastering the New York State Common Core Standards.

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek manages student information via PowerSchool and the DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system and invoices through the NYC DOE vendor portal. The annual budget is created by the Board of Trustees of the school. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's Board of Trustees is solely responsible for complying with all requirements of grants for the School, the School's governing charter, and all applicable laws and regulations.

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's Board of Trustees is led by Board Chair Dr. A. R. Bernard. The school's founder, Dr. Laurie B. Midgette, is the current Principal and has been at the school since the school's inception.

The school typically enrolls new students in all grades. There were 408 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery. The school does not backfill students from the waitlist during the school year.⁹

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	61	41	43	42
Grade 1	60	63	48	42
Grade 2	-	65	64	48
Grade 3	-	-	65	61
Grade 4	-	-	-	64
Grade 5	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	121	169	220	257

* 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.

⁷ ATS data as of October 31, 2014

⁸ NYC DOE internal data

⁹ 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	2	21
Grade 1	2	21
Grade 2	2	24
Grade 3	3	20
Grade 4	3	21
Grade 5	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	46	

* 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages, as well as targets proposed by the NYSED.¹⁰

¹⁰ 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, is 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.¹¹

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.

¹¹ Please refer to the following website for more information:
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 visit to the school conducted on October 15 and October 16, 2014

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Meera Jain, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kim Wong, 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and two years of 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 21st century college and career readiness. However, as Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek 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
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	-	-	23.1%	29.8%
CSD 18	-	-	20.6%	23.3%
Difference from CSD 18 *	-	-	2.5	6.5
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-5.0	-0.7
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-8.0	-0.8

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	-	-	20.0%	13.1%
CSD 18	-	-	22.3%	25.8%
Difference from CSD 18 *	-	-	-2.3	-12.7
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-13.1	-26.2
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-11.1	-23.1

* 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 Report¹²

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

Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek, as well as annual reports submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), over each of the four years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 1 of 2 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 2 of 2 in the second year,
- 2 of 5 in the third year,¹³
- 3 of 7 in the fourth year.

Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals *

Academic Goals	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. Each year, 75% of third through fifth grade students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
2. Each year, 75% of third through fifth grade students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS math exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
3. Each year, 75% of fourth grade students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Science exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met

¹² For purposes of the NYC DOE Progress Report, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek was classified as an early childhood school for the 2012-2013 school year.

¹³ 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
4.	For years two through five, third through fifth grade students of the same cohort (i.e. students who were enrolled in the school for two years in a row) will reduce the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's ELA exam and 90% at or above Level 3 on the current year's ELA exam. If the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeds 90% on the previous year's ELA exam, the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will demonstrate growth (from proficient to advanced) in the current year.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
5.	For years two through five, third through fifth grade students of the same cohort (i.e. students who were enrolled in the school for two years in a row) will reduce the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's math exam and 90% at or above Level 3 on the current year's math exam. If the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeds 90% on the previous year's math exam, the Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will demonstrate growth (from proficient to advanced) in the current year.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
6.	Each year, 75% of third through fifth grade students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	N/A
7.	Each year, 75% of third through fifth grade students performing at or above Level 3 on the State math exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	N/A
8.	Each year, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will earn a score sufficient to place it in the 75th percentile of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	N/A
9.	Each year, the school will be deemed In Good Standing on the NYS Report Card.	Met	Met	Met	Met
10.	Each year, utilizing the NYC DOE's basis of measurement, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95% of the students enrolled in Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek.	Not Met	Met	Met	Met

* 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 administers the Scantron Achievement Series, a web-based assessment program that allows Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek to develop and administer online and paper-based tests, capture immediate results, and produce standards-based reports. This program can be used for all assessed grade levels and subject areas, and gives teachers and administrators the data needed to monitor student progress and guide instruction. The following was noted:

ELA	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013**	2013-2014	2014-2015*
K	90.2%	37.9%	N/A	N/A	100.0%
1	89.8%	31.1%	25.0%	N/A	60.5%
2	N/A	40.0%	53.2%	66.5%	66.0%
3	N/A	N/A	23.0%	63.3%	75.5%
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.3%	36.0%
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	41.6%

*2014-2015 is beginning of the year i-Ready data

**In 2012-2013, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek switched to the online Scantron Achievement Series.

Math	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013**	2013-2014	2014-2015*
K	82.0%	66.70%	N/A	N/A	100.0%
1	59.3%	74.2%	40.5%	N/A	55.0%
2	N/A	60.0%	42.2%	85.0%	50.0%
3	N/A	N/A	20.0%	63.6%	55.5%
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.7%	49.7%
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.0%

*2014-2015 is beginning of the year i-Ready data

**In 2012-2013, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek switched to the online Scantron Achievement Series.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on October 15 and October 16, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**

- NYC launched the Common Core initiative in 2010-2011, which was Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's inaugural year.
 - School leadership reported that all areas of study at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School align assessments and instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards.
 - Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has spent \$62,747 on Pearson Products for ELA and math since 2011 to ensure sufficient assessment tools and supporting curriculum were in place to adequately prepare students for the new CCLS-aligned exams.
 - The school sent the Director of Content and Curriculum to Harvard University in November to a training called, "*The Inner Strengths of A Successful Leader*", a four-day leadership development program designed specifically to help him develop the essential skills and strategies to build capacity and improve student outcomes in the context of high-stakes testing.

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

- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek employs three certified special education teachers and a Guidance Counselor who is fully certified in Special Education to support all students with Individualized Education Plans.
 - The school uses an academic intervention program (AIS) to address the needs of students from their baseline assessments given in the beginning of the year and results from the midyear assessments.
 - The AIS program looks to boost scholars with needs in literacy such as phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, etc. The AIS teachers use the supplementary curriculum Sidewalks from the Reading Street 2011 curriculum.
 - AIS students include special needs, scholars who are mandated with SETTS, and scholars in the bottom third.
 - In terms of math, scholars are pulled out for AIS who struggle with number sense and are given the strategic intervention from Envision Math 2012-2013.
 - In addition to AIS, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek had Test Prep Saturdays for all of our 3rd grade scholars and parents. It is mandatory that the parents attend test prep, working side-by-side with their scholar.
- To support all students in need of academic interventions, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has adopted Pearson's Response to Intervention (Rtl) model that consists of a multi-level system that includes: intro to Screening/Diagnostic/Progress Monitoring, using assessments to determine student needs, providing high-quality intervention matched to the student, monitoring progress frequently to inform instruction, and making decisions based on child response data.
 - The embedded diagnostic assessments in Pearson's Rtl programs help teachers pinpoint exactly where each student is struggling.
 - The school's instructional staff tracks progress during and after reading with success predictors, weekly tests, and fresh reads.
- The school provides educational supports for students from special populations including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. These supports include:
 - Differentiating instruction through flexible grouping
 - Use of programs like i-Ready, netTrekker, Reading Street and Sidewalks for ongoing assessment and building reading phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension skills
 - When students enter Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek, a Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) must be filled out by the parent.
 - If a language other than English is used in the home, then the student must take a Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R) test in English. If the student scores below a minimum cut-off on the LAB-R, he or she is eligible for either bilingual education or ESL, but must at a minimum take ESL.
 - If a student is identified as needing bilingual education or ESL based on his/her LAB-R score, he or she will be placed in ESL or bilingual classes within 10 days of enrollment in the school. Parents must express their choice in writing to the school.
- The school provides additional educational supports for students at academic risk. These supports include:
 - Test Prep Saturdays
 - Afterschool Academic Intervention Program

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

- During the renewal visit, 11 classrooms across grades kindergarten through five were observed with the school's Director of Content and Curriculum, Director of Accountability, and Director of Educational Technology and Integration.
- In all observed classes, teachers were following a team teaching model.

- Class sizes observed ranged from 16 to 24 students, with two teachers in all classrooms.
- Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations included mostly basic fact recall, but some teachers challenged students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply.
- In most classrooms, checks for understanding that were observed included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk.
- In a few observed classrooms, differentiation of tasks and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These methods were consistent with the school model.
- In most observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
- In most observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task.
- Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, most classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.
- Other instructional methods and strategies provided by the school include:
 - Character Education
 - The Leader In Me Program; Project Wisdom Curriculum; Mentoring Program by an assigned Dean and Parent Representative; Anti-Bullying Program, Visual Arts and Performing Arts and Music Programs, Afterschool Sports and Activities
 - Extended Instructional Time
 - Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek's school day and school year are longer than other schools in order to afford students more opportunity to meet or exceed the NYS Common Core Learning Standards.
 - Portfolio Assessment
 - Students in Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will participate in the portfolio development for accountability and assessment. These portfolios will represent evidence of achievement of content-driven, performance and applied standards in the form of inquiry-based activities and project-based learning with extended extra-curricula cultural experiences and city, state and national standardized examinations. These portfolio assessments will involve evaluation using a rubric of student performance on complex tasks such as textual analysis or complex problem solving across the content areas.
 - Data-Driven Instruction
 - Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will use data to monitor each student's academic progress and make specific instructional decisions that will assist each student meeting the Common Core Standards.
 - Collaborative Learning
 - Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek will implement collaborative learning as one curricular approach. Collaborative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it. Collaborative learning promotes student learning and academic achievement, increases student retention, enhances students' satisfaction with their learning experience, helps students develop skills in oral communication, develops students' social skills, and promotes student self-esteem.
 - Differentiation

- In classrooms, some students struggle with learning, others perform well beyond grade-level expectations, and the rest fit somewhere in between. Within each of these categories of students, individuals also learn in a variety of ways and have different interests. To meet the needs of its diverse student population, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek teachers will differentiate instruction. Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek teachers will differentiate instruction in four different ways based on each student's readiness, interest, or learning profile: (1) content--what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information; (2) process--activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content; (3) products--culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit; and (4) learning environment--the way the classroom works and feels.
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is in process to receive designation as a Lighthouse School in the Leader In Me Program. Lighthouse recognition comes because of the results a school is achieving and the impact it is having on staff, students, parents and the greater community. It typically takes two to three years, but can be achieved sooner if schools make it a priority to achieve results sufficient to pass the Lighthouse review.
 - The review evaluates the schools performance against nine criteria:
 - A Lighthouse team is in place at the school, meets regularly and oversees school-wide implementation of the leadership model with students, staff, parents and community members.
 - The school campus environment reinforces the model by adding leadership language displays and bulletins to hallways and classrooms that emphasize individual worth and leadership principles.
 - Teachers integrate leadership language into school curriculum and instruction daily.
 - The staff collaborates and works together to effectively build a culture of leadership in classrooms and throughout the school.
 - The students are provided with meaningful student leadership roles and responsibilities.
 - The parents of students understand The Leader in Me model and the 7 Habits and are involved in activities that support the leadership model.
 - A system is in place for setting and tracking school-wide, classroom, academic and personal goals.
 - The school sees improvements resulting from implementing The Leader in Me process, which includes measuring, collecting baseline data and tracking results to determine how the leadership model is bringing improvements.
 - The school holds events to share their leadership model with the community and other schools and hosts a mini or full Leadership Day or a similar event that includes parents, business partners and educators.
- Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has also applied to become an International Baccalaureate World School and is currently in year two of a three year process.
 - The International Baccalaureate Program aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who celebrate cultural differences in other people.

Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 10 teachers. The following was noted:

- Most interviewed teachers reported that they collect, analyze and use data from interim and summative assessments for lesson planning and instruction. Some teachers also reported to have received professional development on how to use data.
- Most of the interviewed teachers mentioned being observed by leadership and receiving feedback both informally and formally to improve their instructional practice.

- According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 99% of parents agree or strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and 99% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”¹⁴
- According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, only 48% of teachers agree or strongly agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and only 64% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”¹⁵

¹⁴ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 71% of parent respondents strongly agree that Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 28% agree with the statement. Similarly, 87% of parent respondents strongly agree that Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek has high expectations for their child; another 12% agree with the statement.

¹⁵ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 12% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek; another 36% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 28% strongly disagree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 36% of teacher respondents disagree with the statement; 28% agree with the statement; and 8% strongly agree with 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 partially developed its governance structure and organizational design.

On October 15, 2014 as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE attended a meeting of the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has six 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.
- The Board's President, Vice President and Treasurer, specified positions in the bylaws, are currently filled with no vacancies. However, the Board's Secretary position is currently vacant.
- The Board has not consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes across 20 meetings reviewed from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years and school reported data.
- The Principal updates the Board on academic progress and school operations. The Chief Financial Officer, not the Board Treasurer, updates the Board on financial standing at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes across 20 meetings reviewed.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organizational structure.
- The Board's bylaws reference the following committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Governance Committee, Development Committee, Academic Committee, and Parental Engagement Committee. The meeting minutes do not indicate that the Governance, Development, Academic, and Parental Engagement committees are active.
- The founding Board Chair, Dr. A.R. Bernard, is still serving as Board Chair. The founding Principal, Dr. Laurie B. Midgette, has been the school principal since the school's inception.

School Climate & Community Engagement

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% over each of the last three years. Average daily attendance for students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek over the course of the charter term is 95.7% according to the data in the table below, which was above the citywide average each year.¹⁶

Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek*	94.2%	96.9%	95.9%	95.6%
NYC**	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	1.0	3.0	2.3	2.4

* 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.

¹⁶ 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) system for school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported a different attendance rate than that recorded in ATS for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The school self-reported an attendance rate of 98.0% for 2012-2013 and 95.0% for 2013-2014.

- Staff turnover has been somewhat consistent over the charter term, but has been increasing since year two of the charter term. In year one, year two, and year three of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013), 15%, 7%, and 11% of instructional staff did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year. For the most recent period, staff turnover was 12% or three instructional staff members not returning, by choice or request at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.¹⁷
- 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 has not had significant challenges with retaining students.

Mobility

Student Mobility out of Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek*				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	9	2	16	20
Percent of Students who Left the School	7.4%	1.2%	7.3%	8.5%

* 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 at or above citywide averages for only two of four selected questions. The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for two of the 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 Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek parents and teachers have been above NYC averages in all years of the retrospective charter term.

¹⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in December 2014

NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek				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%	99%	100%	98%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	91%	89%	92%	92%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	97%	95%	98%	96%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	85%	75%	50%	48%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	100%	95%	100%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	100%	94%	95%	92%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	88%	85%	79%	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*	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	-	-	-	-
	NYC	-	-	-	-
Parents	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	77%	58%	82%	91%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	100%	100%	100%	100%
	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 met this goal in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. This goal was 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 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 has partially met this goal. The school met this goal in the 2010-2011 school year, and partially met the goal in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.¹⁸ This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

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:

- An internal survey performed by the school during the 2012-2013 school year indicated that 95% of parents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their child's education. (Less than 50% of the schools families participated in the survey.)
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on October 16, 2014 at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek located at 1400 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn, NY 11212 in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 136 participants attended the hearing with 17 persons speaking in support of the school's renewal and none 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 school parents/guardians were made in November 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 100% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

¹⁸ In 2011-2012 the school received a score greater than or equal to 7.5 in only one of the four categories based on teacher responses (Academic Expectations). In 2012-2013 the school received a score greater than or equal to 7.5 in three of the four categories based on teacher responses (Academic Expectations, Communication, and Engagement).

Financial Health

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

- Based on the fiscal year 2014 (FY14) financial audit and follow up, the school's current ratio of 0.30 indicated a risk that the school may be unable to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit and follow up, the school's unrestricted cash availability of eight (8) days cash on hand indicated a risk that the school will be able to cover at least one month of its 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 met its debt obligations.

Financial Sustainability

Overall, there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school based on its current practices.

- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school operated at a 1.3% deficit, indicating that the school is/may not be operating within its resources at the time of the FY14 financial audit.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit and follow up, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.3 indicated that the school had more total liabilities than it had total assets.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, though the school had negative cash flow in FY13. However, based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school recorded deficits in FY11, FY13, and FY14. The school indicated that it received outside funding to supplement its revenue in order to meet operating expenses.

There was no material weakness noted in the FY11 and FY12 independent financial audits. While the school provided complete versions of the FY13 and FY14 independent audits to NYSED, the versions that are publicly posted on the school's website are missing pages that contain the auditor's report and findings of those audits.

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

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek 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.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** Due to addition of no new members/resignations during the charter, the board did not submit board resignation notices or new board member credentials.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.¹⁹

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek is out of compliance with:

- **Required number of monthly meetings.** The original bylaws indicated that the Board was to hold 10 meetings a year; the bylaws were amended to increase the number of board meetings from 10 to 12 meetings per year beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. In years one, two, three, and four of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014), the Board did not hold the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by school reported data. Required meetings are those which met quorum.
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has not consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting them on the school's website. Board meeting minutes and agendas are not available on the school's website for the first half of the 2013-2014 school year and the 2014-2015 school year.
- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the NYSED by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. The school has posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law, however the audits for FY13 and FY14 are incomplete.

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

- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 3, 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.
- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is 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.
- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Fire Emergency.** At least one of the school leaders was 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.

¹⁹ Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

As of the review in December 2014, the charter school is out of compliance with:

- **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 regarding due process policies and disciplinary measures for students with disabilities.

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.²⁰
- In all years of the charter term including the most recent school year, 2013-2014, Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek:
 - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to both the CSD 18 and citywide percentages;
 - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD 18 and citywide percentages (the only exception being the school’s first year of operation, in which it served a higher percentage of students with disabilities than the CSD but still lower than the citywide rate); and
 - served 0% English Language Learner students, which is below the CSD 18 percentage and far below the citywide percentage.

²⁰ Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

Enrollment of Special Populations²¹

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) ²²	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	0.0%	26.6%	37.4%	58.8%	86.7%
	CSD 18	89.9%	88.9%	89.2%	90.3%	
	NYC	80.7%	83.3%	82.6%	82.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	12.4%	8.9%	9.5%	10.9%	10.7%
	CSD 18	10.5%	11.3%	13.1%	15.5%	
	NYC	14.5%	15.2%	16.7%	19.3%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%
	CSD 18	4.9%	4.9%	3.9%	3.8%	
	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)	18	18	18	18

²¹ 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 31st, 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 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>.

²² The school used a private vendor for school lunch services for the entirety of the retrospective charter term. As a result, the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch in each year was self-reported by the school as part of its Renewal Application dated December 2014. Please note that the NYC DOE's ATS records indicate that 29.8%, 36.1%, 54.5% and 44.4% of students at Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on HRA eligibility for school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively.

Essential Question 4: What are the School’s Plans for the Next Charter Term?

Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek indicated in its renewal application that the school wishes to continue with its plans set forth in the original charter application to expand to serve grades kindergarten through 12. The school’s plan would include a new enrollment plan, school calendar, daily schedule and instructional time compliance, curriculum framework for added grades, facility projections, and college and career readiness programming.

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 their 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.²³

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.²⁴ 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;

²³ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.²⁶

²⁵ § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

²⁶ 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 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 Reports²⁷

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

²⁷ 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 location²⁸ 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

²⁸ 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
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek				
Grade 3	-	-	23.1%	33.9%
Grade 4	-	-	-	25.4%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 18 *				
Grade 3	-	-	2.5	12.4
Grade 4	-	-	-	0.1
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	-	-	-5.0	4.0
Grade 4	-	-	-	-5.7

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cultural Arts Academy Charter School at Spring Creek				
Grade 3	-	-	20.0%	17.7%
Grade 4	-	-	-	8.3%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 18 *				
Grade 3	-	-	-2.3	-7.9
Grade 4	-	-	-	-17.7
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	-	-	-13.1	-20.9
Grade 4	-	-	-	-31.6

* 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 Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)

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

[Annual Comprehensive Review 2012-2013](#)