



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships  
2014-2015

**BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview

### Charter Authorization Profile

Brownsville Ascend Charter School	
Authorized Grades	Grades K-8
Authorized Enrollment	1,004
School Opened For Instruction	2009-2010
Charter Term Expiration Date	June 30, 2017
Last Renewal Term Type	Short Term (3.5 years)

### School Information for the 2014-2015 School Year

Brownsville Ascend Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Stephanie Mauterstock
School Leader(s)	Erica Murphy (ES), Emily Fernandez (MS)
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 23
Borough(s) of Location	Brooklyn
Physical Address(es)	1501 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Type	Elementary/Middle School
Grades Served 2014-2015	Grades K-6
Enrollment in 2014-2015*	785
Charter Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program	No

\* Enrollment data as of October 1, 2014

<b>Enrollment Policies (School Year 2014-2015)*</b>	
Primary Grade Level(s) for Which Student Applications for Admission are Accepted	Kindergarten
Additional Grade Level(s) for Which Student Applications for Admission are Accepted	Grades 1-6
Does School Enroll New Students Mid-Year	Yes
Number of Applicants for Admission	1,063
Number of Students Accepted via the Charter Lottery	120
<b>Lottery Preferences (School Year 2014-2015)**</b>	
Attends a Failing School	No
Does Not Speak English at Home	No
Receives SNAP or TANF Benefits	No
Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	No
Has IEP and/or Receives Special Education Services	No
Homeless or Living in Shelter or Temporary Residence	No
Lives in New York City Housing Authority Housing	No
Unaccompanied Youth	No

\* Enrollment policy information is based on self-reported data from the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey.

\*\* Preferences were recorded from the NYC Charter School Center's Online Application. For schools that do not participate in the Common Application, their preferences were self-reported from the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. If a field is marked "N/A", the school did not provide the information.

Management or Support Organization (If Applicable)	
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Ascend Learning, Inc. (“Ascend” or “Ascend Learning”)
Other Partner(s)	N/A
Services Provided	<p>Ascend Learning is responsible for designing, selecting, acquiring, and implementing the school’s educational program, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• curriculum and pedagogy;</li> <li>• Limited English Proficient (LEP) / English Language Learner (ELL) education;</li> <li>• special education services and programs;</li> <li>• school-year and school-day requirements;</li> <li>• student assessment systems and materials;</li> <li>• extracurricular activities and programs; and</li> <li>• instructional and curricular materials, equipment, and supplies.</li> </ul> <p>Ascend Learning is also responsible for recruiting, recommending, and training the school director, and assisting the school director with selecting, reviewing, managing, and terminating all other school personnel; designing and implementing professional development activities for all school personnel; recommending the number, positions, and titles of all school personnel; and establishing all other employment practices and policies relating to school personnel.</p> <p>Lastly, Ascend Learning manages the day-to-day business of the school, including but not limited to the school’s business administration; payroll; human resources and benefits administration; contracts with public or private entities for transportation, custodial, and food services, and all other services procured for the school; facilities and equipment; purchases and leases; and procurement of all other goods, services, or equipment that Ascend Learning deems necessary to attain the school’s educational objectives.</p>
Management Fee	12%

For the self-reported mission of this charter school, please see their NYC Charter School Directory listing at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/charters/information/directory.htm>.

School Reported Current Key Design Elements	
Key Design Element	Description
Liberal Arts Education	The school's course of K-12 study develops children's full academic, social, artistic, and ethical potentials through courses in math, ELA, science, foreign language, music, the arts, and movement.
The Ascend Curriculum	The school teaches a challenging, sequential, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) -aligned college-preparatory curriculum.
The Ascend Culture	The school's warm and supportive student culture is rooted in the practices of Responsive Classroom in its lower school and Origins in its middle school.
Building Family/Community	The school actively builds a community through curriculum workshops, school events, an involved Family Association, and dialogue.
Varied Pedagogy	Direct instruction is used in courses like phonics and grammar. In other courses, such as Number Stories, Literature Circle, and Humanities, teachers tap inquiry-based learning experiences, cognitively guided instruction, and college-style discussion.
The Assessment Feedback Loop	Students are assessed; CCLS proficiency is estimated; weaknesses are diagnosed; teaching deficits are identified and remedied; and students are re-assessed.
Comprehensive Professional Development	Teachers grow through professional development activities focused on content mastery.

Grade-Level Enrollment (School Year 2014-2015)		
Grade Level	Number of Students	Section Count
Kindergarten	111	4
Grade 1	115	4
Grade 2	117	4
Grade 3	138	5
Grade 4	116	4
Grade 5	105	4
Grade 6	83	3
Grade 7	-	-
Grade 8	-	-
Total Enrollment	785	28

\* Enrollment data as of October 1, 2014

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE Chancellor-authorized charter school to investigate three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, OSDCP also inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during school year 2014-2015. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, the NYC DOE may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

### Essential Questions

#### ***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.

#### ***Is the school a fiscally 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 Authorizers' Core Performance Framework.<sup>1</sup>

OSDCP 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.

#### ***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.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the following website for more information:  
[http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance\\*20framework&c=82](http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82)

## Part 3: Summary of Findings

### Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

#### Overview of School-Specific Data Since 2012-2013

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

% Proficient in English Language Arts		
	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>
CSD 23	10.9%	11.4%
Difference from CSD 23*	13.7	10.8
NYC	27.7%	29.8%
Difference from NYC *	-3.1	-7.6
New York State **	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-6.5	-8.4
% Proficient in Mathematics		
	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>39.3%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
CSD 23	11.0%	13.8%
Difference from CSD 23*	28.3	14.7
NYC	34.2%	39.1%
Difference from NYC *	5.1	-10.6
New York State **	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	8.2	-7.7

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

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

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

<b>Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts</b>		
	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School - All Students</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>49.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	63.8%	13.9%
City Percent of Range- All Students	46.7%	4.3%
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School - School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	44.4%	37.3%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	22.0%	24.9%
<b>Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics</b>		
	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School - All Students</b>	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	45.6%	0.0%
City Percent of Range- All Students	34.1%	0.0%
<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School - School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>48.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	30.8%	6.9%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	13.3%	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**

<b>Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts</b>		
	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
Students with Disabilities *	-	80.0%
English Language Learner Students	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	41.7%	45.0%
<b>Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics</b>		
	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
Students with Disabilities *	-	10.0%
English Language Learner Students	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	33.3%	28.1%

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

**Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals in 2013-2014<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Academic Goals</b>	
<b>Charter Goals</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
1. Each year, at least 75% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA Exam, except for the 2013-2014 school year, which will serve as a transition year for the Common Core, during which at least 50% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA Exam.	<b>Not Met</b>
2. Each year, at least 75% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math Exam, except for the 2013-2014 school year, which will serve as a transition year for the Common Core, during which at least 50% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math Exam.	<b>Not Met</b>
3. Each year, 75% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Science Exam.	<b>Met</b>
4. Each year, 75% of third through seventh grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Social Studies Exam.	N/A
5. Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percentage at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS ELA Exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS ELA Exam.	<b>Not Met</b>
6. Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percentage at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS Math Exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS Math Exam.	<b>Not Met</b>
7. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA Exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the Community School District in which the school is located.	<b>Met</b>
8. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math Exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the Community School District in which the school is located.	<b>Met</b>
9. Each year, the school will score a "B" or better on the Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A
10. Each year, the school will be deemed "In Good Standing."	<b>Met</b>
11. Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95%. This will be measured by school reported data from an attendance tracking system such as ATS on the Annual Report submitted August 1.	<b>Met</b>

<sup>2</sup> Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED. It should be noted that 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.

## Self-Reported Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment<sup>3</sup>

### Curriculum Changes and/or Adjustments

- Foundations, based on the Wilson Reading System principles, replaced the SABIS phonics, spelling, and grammar curricula. In kindergarten, the writing program is Units of Study in Opinion, Informational, and Narrative Writing by Lucy Caulkins. Voyages in English: Grammar and Writing is now used to help students in upper grades of the elementary school with the mastery of grammar, writing, and the use of the English language.
- Ascend's Literature Circle program was adopted at Brownsville Ascend Charter School to promote student discussion as teachers help students mine the deepest meaning of the finest children's literature, develop the habits of excellent readers, and build reading comprehension skills. Guided Reading, a separate reading class, has been expanded at the school. It creates a bridge between shared reading and independent reading. The program, which has been highly successful at several Ascend schools, is taught in small groups of students who are on the same reading level, as determined by individual one-on-one reading assessments.
- In the new social studies/shared text component, the teacher models the habits of a skilled reader, and leads students briskly to the meaning of a short complex text. Students are guided in answering Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-style comprehension questions and short response questions. In the lower school, shared text is a companion component of Literature Circle. Texts are selected to give historical context to the Literature Circle book under discussion.
- Singapore Math replaced the SABIS elementary school math curriculum as the primary math program in kindergarten through fifth grade. The program focuses on building problem-solving skills and an in-depth understanding of essential math skills. It is closely aligned with curricular focal points recommended by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Common Core Learning Standards.
- In Number Stories, students spend an entire period studying a single CCLS-style math problem, constructing their own solutions, defending their thinking, and comparing their approaches. For approximately 10-20 minutes a day, students will practice Math Routines to build automaticity and fluency in computation.
- In the middle school, one of the 45-minute daily math periods is deployed for EngageNY. The second math period is dedicated to Number Stories and Math Routines.
- MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's A Closer Look science program was selected as the new curriculum for the lower school because of its strong CCLS alignment, integration of rich content with well-conceived inquiry experiments, and vibrant, engaging textbooks. In the middle school, students learn standards-based science in the context of intriguing personal and societal issues through the Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP), developed at the University of California at Berkeley. Other science middle school curricula include Issues and Earth Science, Issues and Life Science, and Issues and Physical Science. Several curriculum changes and adjustments were made for the 2014-2015 school year:
- Sube (used in kindergarten and first grade) replaces the SABIS Spanish curriculum as a complete curriculum kit whose goal is to teach Spanish to students in a full-immersion environment. The students will learn Spanish through music, art, and literature, and about Hispanic culture through dance and other authentic cultural activities. Descubre (used in second through fifth grade) aims to make learning and teaching Spanish an experience that is motivating, enriching, and effective for students. ¡Avancemos! by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (for grades six through eight) is a curriculum designed to reach all students in the Spanish classroom by providing a wide-range of materials including literature, videos of Spanish speakers, music, technology, and diverse exercises to sharpen the skills of all students in the classroom.

### Interim Assessments

- The school uses Ascend-created benchmarks aligned to EngageNY and the NY Ready Practice Tests made by Curriculum Associates. Students are assessed against these benchmarks four times during the school year. Scores on these assessments administered in the spring of 2013

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<sup>3</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted ACR self-evaluation form on May 1, 2015.

proved to be predictive of Ascend student performance on the state exam later that spring. Additionally, the school replaced the STAR reading assessment, which provided erratic and an inconsistent measure of reading skills. The school has been accepted into the University of Chicago's STEP running record assessments in grades kindergarten through four. The tests are administered approximately every nine weeks. The school uses the TerraNova, a national norm-referenced test, to provide school staff and external parties with a measure of how students are performing relative to their peers in other New York City schools and nationwide. The school also uses Ascend-created content- and unit- based assessments, administered every three to four weeks.

#### Approach to Data-Driven Instruction

- Brownsville Ascend Charter School has improved its academic feedback loop by which students are assessed, their proficiency on the CCLS is estimated, their weaknesses are diagnosed, teaching deficits are identified and remedied, and then students are re-assessed. Further, the school has adopted an assessment system that provides more useful information. In the current approach, assessment advances five purposes: (1) identify student strengths and weaknesses on CCLS, (2) evaluate student mastery of taught curriculum content, (3) evaluate student tenacity on long and varied assessments, (4) enable customized literacy instruction, and (5) report student performance against national norms.
- The school administers "benchmark assessments" on recently taught content four times during the year. Data from these assessments is then entered into Illuminate DNA, the school's data system. Using this program, teachers and leaders are able to analyze their class results in a variety of different ways. For example, teachers and leaders can compare their overall averages to other classes in the building or across the Ascend network; they can create reports that demonstrate students' correct or incorrect responses broken down by standard or question; and they can look at the frequency of distractor answers selected. Once this data is entered, teachers and deans of instructions hold data meetings to analyze the data results and create appropriate action plans.

#### Philosophy on Special Education and English Language Learner Service Provision

- The school educates all students and is committed to providing all with the services needed to be successful. During the 2014-2015 school year the school had six integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms, as well as a full-time "special education teacher support services" (SETSS) teacher and special education (SPED) coordinator to oversee the provision of services for the SPED population.
- The first component of the school's approach to SPED is the SETSS model, in which students with special needs remain with their general education peers for as much of the school day as is practical, pulling-out into the SPED classroom for between three and 10 periods a week, or receiving push-in support.
- The second approach is the ICT model, which is an integrated service through which students with disabilities are educated with age-appropriate peers in the general education classroom. It provides them the opportunity to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers with the full-time support of a SPED teacher to assist in adapting and modifying instruction.
- The school serves English Language Learner students (ELLs) using several intervention programs including Wilson Reading Intervention, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Visualizing Verbalizing, as well as aspects of the general education curriculum. In the coming year, the school plans to provide additional support across its Ascend sister campuses through a pull-out model of intervention focused on vocabulary acquisition, reading and listening comprehension, and written and oral expression.

#### Professional Development Opportunities

- The three to four week pre-service Summer Institute has four components: the school's approach to student culture and discipline; training on the instructional programs; school-wide policies and procedures, including the "Ascend Teaching and Learning Framework" (the "Framework") and teacher evaluation tool; and team-building.

- The school uses weekly instructional observations and one-on-one coaching of teachers by the dean of instruction assigned to a teacher. This model is based on the weekly observation and coaching cycle detailed in Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's book, *Leverage Leadership*. Each teacher is observed for 20-30 minutes weekly by his or her Dean of Instruction. The dean then meets with the teacher within 1-2 days to establish a personalized "bite-sized" goal for the teacher based on the teacher's current skill level.
- On a weekly basis, staff development sessions are held on the school's Friday early dismissal day. The content of the weekly staff development sessions is driven by two factors: the upcoming units of study in various content areas as well as the school's skill development needs. In sessions focused on the upcoming units of study, leaders guide teachers through sessions where the "bottom lines," or critical understandings of the units, are established. Sessions may revolve around instruction, culture, and the implementation of new policies and procedures.
- Leadership teams from across the network met three Wednesdays each month during the 2014-2015 school year. For each benchmark assessment, leaders collaborated with Ascend curriculum developers and instructional leaders to complete a thorough analysis of math and ELA results. The leaders started the day with classroom observations, focusing on the implementation of the curriculum. They spent 60-90 minutes in classrooms and then debriefed about the lessons observed. The second part of the day involved content-focused professional development (PD) for leaders on upcoming units of study. The third part of the day provided time for leaders to plan what they would turnkey to teachers and when. In the last part of day, deans met with their school director and revised their PD plans for upcoming weeks as necessary. As the year progressed, teachers joined Ascend curriculum developers and school-based leadership teams across the network to collaboratively draft plans intended to address deficits uncovered in the data analysis.
- Weekly team meetings provide a time for teachers within a grade level or subject discipline to collaborate with one another, and discuss upcoming lesson plans. These meetings are planned and facilitated by grade team leaders.
- Quarterly professional development days provide teachers with ample time to investigate student performance data and to plan to alter instruction accordingly.
- Select teachers who are on the path to leadership have the opportunity to become a mentor teacher and coach other teachers in their grade.
- Select teachers who are on the path to leadership have the opportunity to lead their grade team. Responsibilities include leading grade-level team meetings, planning field trips, and working with deans to plan academy wide events.

#### Teacher Evaluation

- The first line of teacher evaluation is teacher self-assessment, which is accelerated by giving teachers feedback on their students' performance directly upon the student taking assessments. Every six weeks in math and ELA, students take benchmark assessments for which each question is coded based on the CCLS. To assess teachers' efficacy, the school director and deans rely heavily on reports from the Illuminate DnA system. Importantly for accountability purposes, the system delivers an array of reports on academic performance, from that of a child in a single subject to the school as a whole. Additionally, Brownsville Ascend Charter School uses STEP in grades kindergarten through four. Rigorous and frequent classroom observations and other measures likewise closely assess students' progress and teachers' performance.
- The deans of instruction evaluate all instructional staff formally at mid-year and again at year's end, using an evaluation form. The instrument has six sections: lesson planning, classroom environment, instruction, data-driven assessments, professional responsibilities and partnerships, family and community. The tool is based on the Ascend Teaching and Learning Framework which is itself loosely based on the Danielson framework. If at any time instruction is found lacking, lead teachers, the deans of instruction, the school director, and/or instructional experts from Ascend will take immediate action, using pre-defined interventions, to bolster teacher effectiveness.

#### Differentiated Instruction

- The school adopted a new practice for meeting the needs of students at risk of academic failure based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. RTI is a multi-tiered model, which denotes that

each stage provides more intensive support than the one before it. Struggling students receive additional support beyond what is provided in class, though they continue to attend their main subject classes while they receive such extra support. For instance, the school staffs many of its grades with intensives (remedial) teachers who work with at-risk students in small groups. Teachers conference with individual students, pull small groups during independent practice, modify handouts and materials, and collaborate with the deans of instruction, special education coordinator, and one another. Student progress is monitored regularly by teachers, and support staff if appropriate, to ensure that students exhibit improvement toward mastery of grade-level standards. Changes to the frequency, time, or intensity of the intervention depend on students' individual needs and progress. In the case of unsuccessful interventions, the RTI Team moves to refer the student to the regional Committee on Special Education (CSE) for an evaluation to determine if the student qualifies as a student with a disability. Students with IEPs are supported with both inclusion settings and small group work to best target their goals.

#### Adjustments Based on 2013-2014 Data

- Brownsville Ascend Charter School adopted changes to the school design model in the 2014-2015 school year in four important areas:
  - leadership team and faculty structure;
  - curriculum;
  - assessment; and
  - professional development.
- Detailed educational model improvements are identified in the Curriculum Changes and/or Adjustments section on page 9 of this report. The new educational model provides students with explicit instruction in new concepts, methods and time to attack complex problems in multiple ways and time to develop basic number sense and fluency. All aspects of the curriculum promote problem solving, conceptual understanding and discussion amongst students.

#### Learning Environment

- Brownsville Ascend Charter School adopted a culture rooted in Responsive Classroom in the elementary grades, and Origins Developmental Designs (DD) in middle school. Since the school believes that student success relies on a blend of good relationships, social skills, and engagement with learning, Responsive Classroom and DD practices integrate social and academic learning. Brownsville Ascend Charter School strives to foster children's social and emotional competencies.
- Brownsville Ascend Charter School uses a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment.

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

**Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

School Leadership Team (School Year 2014-2015)		
Title	Name	Number of Years With the School
1. Dean of Instruction	Vriti Saraf	5
2. Dean of Instruction	Tara McDonald	2
3. Dean of Instruction	Billie Quigley	4
4. Dean of Students	Narissa Reid	6
5. Dean of Students	Courtney Crawford	2
6. Dean of Students	Coelette Martindale	5
7. Dean of Students	Arlise Carson	1
8. School Director	Emily Fernandez	3
9. School Director	Erica Murphy	3
10. Director of Operations	Aaron Daly	3
11. Student Services Coordinator	Kimberly Delgado	4

Board of Trustees (School Year 2014-2015)		
Board Member Name	Position – <i>Committee(s)</i>	Was all Documentation Submitted to OSDCP? Was Board Member Approved by OSDCP?
1. Stephanie Mauterstock	<b>President</b> - <i>Executive, Finance, Nominating</i>	Yes
2. Amanda Craft	<b>Secretary</b> - <i>Executive, Education &amp; Accountability, Hiring</i>	Yes
3. Lisa Smith	<i>Executive, Education &amp; Accountability, Nominating</i>	Yes
4. Kathleen Quirk	<b>Treasurer</b> - <i>Executive, Finance, Education &amp; Accountability, Hiring</i>	Yes
5. Christine Schlendorf	<i>Executive, Finance</i>	Yes

Board of Trustees Committees (School Year 2014-2015)		
Committee Name	Is This an Active Committee?	Evidence of Committee Activity (Roster, Committee Meeting Minutes, etc.)
1. Executive	Yes	Yes
2. Finance	Yes	Yes
3. Education & Accountability	Yes	Yes
4. Hiring	No	No
5. Nominating	Yes	Yes

## School Climate & Community Engagement

Brownsville Ascend Charter School	
Instructional Staff Turnover (School Year 2013-2014)*	24.4%
Instructional Staff Turnover (School Year 2014-2015)**	8.1%
Number of Instructional Staff Members Not Returning from the Previous Academic Year*	5
Does the School have a Parent Organization?	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If Yes, how many times did it meet?</li> </ul>	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If Yes, how many parents attended these meetings?</li> </ul>	10
Average Daily Attendance Rate (School Year 2013-2014)***	94.9%

\* Reflects 2013-2014 instructional staff who did not return to the school, either by choice or request, at the start of the 2014-2015 school year or who left the school during the 2013-2014 school year.

\*\* Reflects 2014-2015 instructional staff left the school between July 1, 2014 and April 1, 2015.

\*\*\* Attendance was taken from ATS.

## NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree				
Survey Question		Brownsville Ascend Charter School		Citywide Average
		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%	97%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	90%	94%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	96%	97%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	33%	67%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	100%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	94%	92%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.	54%	57%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five (or all students enrolled in a designated elementary school) do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

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

NYC School Survey Response Rates			
		2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Brownsville Ascend Charter School	-	-
	NYC	-	-
Parents	Brownsville Ascend Charter School	55%	75%
	NYC	54%	53%
Teachers	Brownsville Ascend Charter School	58%	98%
	NYC	83%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five (or all students enrolled in a designated elementary school) do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

## Financial Health

Short-Term Financial Health				
	Indicator	Benchmark	School's Measure	Status
<b>Cash Position</b>	Number of days of operating expenses the school can cover without an infusion of cash	60 days (2 months)	19	Weak
<b>Liabilities</b>	School's position to meet liabilities expected over the next 12 months	Current assets sufficient to cover current liabilities (ratio should be greater than or equal to 1.00)	1	Weak
<b>Projected Revenues</b>	Actual enrollment for 2014-2015 is compared to projected enrollment for 2014-2015 to allow for accounts receivable of budgeted per pupil revenues	Actual enrollment within 15% of authorized enrollment (ratio should be greater than or equal to 0.85)	1.00	Strong
<b>Debt Management</b>	School debts as provided in audited financial statements, as well as payments on those debts	School is meeting all current debt obligations	Not in Default	Strong

Long-Term Financial Sustainability				
	Indicator	Benchmark	School's Measure	Status
<b>Total Margin</b>	Did the school operate at a surplus or deficit during the previous fiscal years?	Value should be greater than 0.00	-0.06	Weak
	Did the school operate at a surplus or deficit during the past three fiscal years?	Value should be greater than 0.00	-0.02	Weak
<b>Ratios</b>	Debt to Asset Ratio	Ratio should be less than 1.00	0.75	Strong
	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Ratio should be greater than 1.00	0.00	Strong
<b>Cash Flow</b>	Most recent fiscal year's cash flow	Value should be greater than 0.00	\$59,331	Strong
	Trend of cash flow over the past three fiscal years	Value should be greater than 0.00	\$144,771	Strong

An independent audit performed for fiscal year 2014 (FY14) showed no material findings.

**Essential Question 3: Is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations?**

**Board Compliance**

Board of Trustee Compliance*	
Total Number of Board Members as of April 1, 2015	5
Number of Board Members Required per the Bylaws	5
Number of Board Members Who Either Did Not Return Following the 2013-2014 School Year or Who Left During the 2014-2015 School Year:	0
Number of Board Members Who Joined the Board Prior to or During the 2014-2015 School Year	0
Board Meeting Minutes From Most Recent Meeting Posted on the School's Website?	Yes
Number of Board Meetings in the 2014-2015 School Year with a Quorum of Board Members Present / Number Meetings Required per Bylaws**	7/12

\* All data presented above is as of April 1, 2015.

\*\* Section 2851(2)(c) of the NYS Charter School Act states that charter schools shall have a "procedure for conducting and publicizing monthly board of trustee meetings at each charter school..."

**School Compliance**

Based on a document review and based on information provided elsewhere in this report, the school is in compliance with:

Compliance Area	Compliance
Teacher Certification <sup>4</sup>	No
Employee Fingerprinting	Yes
Safety Plan/Emergency Drill	Yes
Immunization Record <sup>5</sup>	Yes
Insurance	Yes
Lottery	Yes
Annual Report Submitted to SED 2013-2014	Yes
Financial Audit Posted 2013-2014	No

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> The Department of Health standards require an immunization rate of 99%.

Teachers (School Year 2014-2015)						
Number of Teachers:	Number of NYS Uncertified Teachers:	Percent NYS Uncertified Teachers:	Number of Highly Qualified Teachers:	Percent Highly Qualified Teachers:	Number of Teachers without Fingerprint Clearance:	Percent of Teachers Not Fingerprinted:
58	25	43.1%	58	100.0%	0	0.0%

### Student Discipline

Based on a document review, the school's discipline policy contains written rules and procedures for:

Compliance Area	Evidence Submitted?	Language of Compliance Evident in the Documents Submitted?
Disciplining students	Yes	Yes
Removing students (i.e., suspending)	Yes	Yes
Procedures for expelling students	Yes	Yes
Notice and opportunities to be heard for Short Term Removals (10 days or fewer)	Yes	Yes
Notice and opportunities to be heard for Long Term Removals (more than 10 days)	Yes	Yes
Appropriate procedures for providing alternative education to students when students are removed (i.e., suspended)	Yes	Yes
Specifically addresses student discipline policy for students with disabilities	Yes	Yes
Does the school distribute the student discipline policy to all students and/or their families?	Yes	Yes
Number and percentage of students suspended in 2014-2015	In School Suspensions: 7 (1%) Out of School Suspensions: 41 (5%)	

### Enrollment and Retention Targets<sup>6</sup>

New York State (NYS) charter schools are required to demonstrate the means by which they will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities (SWDs), English Language Learners (ELLs), and students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). As per the NYS Charter Schools Act, enrollment and retention targets have been finalized by the Board of Regents (BoR) and the board of trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY). These targets are meant to be comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of the Community School District (CSD) in which the charter school is located.

<sup>6</sup> State enrollment and retention targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). The NYC DOE used the calculator posted on the SED website as of April 1, 2015. Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific 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 1 for each school year. 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>.

Charter schools are also required to demonstrate “good faith efforts” to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of SWDs, ELLs, and students eligible for FRPL.

As a consideration of renewal, charter schools are required to “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for SWDs, ELLs, and students who are eligible for FRPL. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.

- In school year 2014-2015, Brownsville Ascend Charter School served:
  - a lower percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch compared to its SED-derived enrollment target for students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch;
  - a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to its SED-derived enrollment target for English Language Learner students; and
  - a lower percentage of students with disabilities than its SED-derived enrollment target for students with disabilities.
- From October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014, Brownsville Ascend Charter School retained:
  - a higher percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch compared to its SED-derived retention target for students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch;
  - a higher percentage of English Language Learner students compared to its SED-derived retention target for English Language Learner students; and
  - a higher percentage of students with disabilities than its SED-derived retention target for students with disabilities.

#### Enrollment of Special Populations

Special Population		2013-2014	2014-2015
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) <sup>7</sup>	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>81.8%</b>
	Effective Target	92.1%	92.5%
	Difference from Effective Target	-7.3	-10.7
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
	Effective Target	16.1%	16.6%
	Difference from Effective Target	-4.5	-4.4
English Language Learners (ELL)	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
	Effective Target	4.5%	4.8%
	Difference from Effective Target	-3.9	-3.0

<sup>7</sup> The school used a private vendor for lunch services for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. As a result, the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch in the above table may not accurately capture all students who were eligible for the program. Please note that the above figures are based on the NYSED methodology as of April 1, 2015 for calculating enrollment of special populations and utilize the NYC DOE’s Automate the Schools (ATS) records.

### Retention of Special Populations

Special Population		2013-2014	2014-2015
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	Effective Target	71.3%	-
	Difference from Effective Target	+16.9	-
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>92.1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	Effective Target	62.1%	-
	Difference from Effective Target	+30.0	-
English Language Learners (ELL)	<b>Brownsville Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	Effective Target	37.0%	-
	Difference from Effective Target	+63.0	-

Enrollment Information Used to Generate Targets		
	2013-2014	2014-2015
Grades Served	K-5	K-6
Enrollment	657	785
CSD(s)	23	23

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

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

- Brownsville Ascend Charter School served students in grades kindergarten through six in school year 2014-2015. During school year 2015-2016 the school will serve students in grades kindergarten through seven. The school will continue to add a grade each year until the school grows to scale as a K-12 school in 2020-2021. Please note that the school is currently only authorized to serve grades kindergarten through eight, though the school has indicated that it plans to apply to serve students in all grades kindergarten through twelve as part of its 2016-2017 renewal application.
- Brownsville Ascend Charter School intends to merge with Brooklyn Ascend Charter School, Bushwick Ascend Charter School, and Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School as one education corporation. The school's intended authorizer post-merger would be the State University of New York Board of Trustees.

*Please note that the school's identification of future plans as presented above does not construe application by the school or approval by the NYC DOE of any associated revision. The information presented above is for informational purposes only; it reflects proposed, not approved, future plans of the school. A formal non-material or material charter revision request would need to be submitted as appropriate, consistent with the NYC DOE's timelines and requirements, as the charter authorizing entity.*