



Charters Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**OPPORTUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012-2013**

# Part 1: School Overview & History

## School Overview and History

Opportunity Charter School (OCS) is a middle/high school serving approximately 418 students<sup>1</sup> in grades 6-12 during the 2012-2013 school year. It opened in 2004-2005, and is under the terms of its third charter. The school is currently functioning at scale.<sup>2</sup> The school is located in public<sup>3</sup> facilities in Manhattan within CSD 3.<sup>4</sup>

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report<sup>5</sup> for grades 6-8. The high school has not yet received a progress report grade.

**Progress Report Results for OCS (Grades 6-8)**

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	A	C	B	C
Progress	A	C	B	C
Performance	B	F	D	D
Environment	B	B	C	C
Closing the Achievement Gap	2.3	0	2.5	3.8

Opportunity Charter School enrolls new students in grades 6. There were 497 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>6</sup> To date the average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year is 88.8%.<sup>7</sup>

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Below Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Below Average on the Academic Expectations section. Forty-six percent of the school's parents, 63.0% of the school's teachers, and 79.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.<sup>8</sup>

Opportunity Charter School is in its third charter term, and received a five year renewal in the 2011-2012 school year, which will expire in June 2017. This report considers accountability goals as per the prior charter term which ended at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year. This report also references goals that are included in the current charter which began in the 2012-2013 school year,

Leonard Goldberg is the school's Executive Director/Head of school and has been there since the school's founding.

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>5</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>8</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each DOE-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, CSAS 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 the 2012-2013 school-year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS 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.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

### Essential Questions

#### ***Is the school an academic success?***

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall New York City Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district and high school graduation rates compared to the city,
- 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**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

#### ***Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?***

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS 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 NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>9</sup>.

CSAS also 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 NY SED,
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,

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<sup>9</sup>[http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- 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**. These ratings indicate whether there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school.

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

As it pertains to compliance, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and visited the school on May 2, 2013:

- Sonya Hooks, DOE
- Keisha Womack, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### **Summary of Findings**

Based on CSAS review, the school:

- has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress (p. 6 - 10).
- has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 11).
- has partially developed a stable school culture (p. 11).
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 12).
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others (p. 13).
- has plans to continue to serve students in grades 6-12 (p. 14).

This review included a desk audit and a self-evaluation completed by the school. CSAS visited the school on May 2, 2013.

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

OCS has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- On the 2011-2012 NY State exams, 9.6% of students in grades 6-8 scored a level 3 or 4 in English Language Arts (ELA), which is significantly below the CSD 3 ELA average of 55.5% proficient. Only 15.1% of students in grades 6-8 scored a level 3 or 4 in Math on the 2011-2012 NY State Exams compared to CSD 3 averages of 66.3% of students proficient.
- The school's middle grades scored a C on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report with a C in Student Progress and a D in Student Performance (see page 2).
- The school scored 67% in ELA and 42% in Math on the Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for ELA and Math as compared to the Peer Range in the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report.

In addition, based on submitted documents and a meeting with school leadership on May 2, 2013, the following is noted:

- The school has implemented new strategies over the course of the 2012-2013 year to increase student outcomes:
  - The middle school has been restructured. English Language Arts curriculum and teachers have been combined with Social Studies and Science into Humanities and Scientific Reasoning Blocks, respectively. Each block provides increased co-teaching throughout the middle school, combining ELA and content knowledge expertise, as well as an integrated approach to reading and writing strategies and literacy skills.
  - D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) time has been added to the middle school schedule and students have greatly increased the numbers of books and pages read throughout this year.
  - Math and Science have been integrated once a week for students' engagement in mathematics in real-world scientific lab contexts.
  - Curriculum teams have integrated content and themes across ELA, Social Studies, and Science where possible.
  - Middle School interim assessments have been rewritten in an effort to prepare students for the rigor of the new Common Core testing.
  - There are now grade level teams.
  - More common planning time was added to the schedule.
- The intake process for new students entering OCS has been reframed. Socio/emotional and academic evaluations are completed for all students to determine needs and programs are designed for each student accordingly.
- The school is working to create a new database to collect information for all students, which is expected to be running by fall 2013.
- While the data coordinator was able to discuss in detail the various information collected for each student, it was not evident that the information has been consistently presented to the Board of trustees in a detailed manner.

Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>10</sup>:

- The school has 8 academic goals in their current charter.<sup>11</sup>
- The school scored 67% in ELA and 42% in Math or above on the Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for ELA and Math as compared to the Peer Range on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, exceeding the goals for the 2011-12. The school's current goal is to score 60% or above on the Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for ELA and Math as compared to the Peer Range.
- The school scored a C on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, meeting the school's goal for 2011-2012.<sup>12</sup> The school's goal in the current charter term is to score a B or higher on the Student Progress portion of the Progress Report.

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<sup>10</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

<sup>11</sup> Opportunity Charter School's current executed charter agreement

<sup>12</sup> As reported in the school's Annual Report to NYSED, Progress Toward Goal Attainment.

- The school's 6-year graduation rate goal for 2011-12 was 55%. The 6-year graduation rate for OCS was 54% for 2011-2012. For each year of the current charter, the 6-year graduation rate goal is 75%.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Opportunity Charter School's current executed charter agreement

**Opportunity Charter School**

**Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School**

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	18.6	7.9	6.5	9.6
CSD 3*	75.5	50.8	52.9	55.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	40.1	6.8	21.0	15.1
CSD 3*	80.7	58.9	65.3	66.3

\*CSD data represents only common testing grades, for all years presented

**Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade**

Grade 6

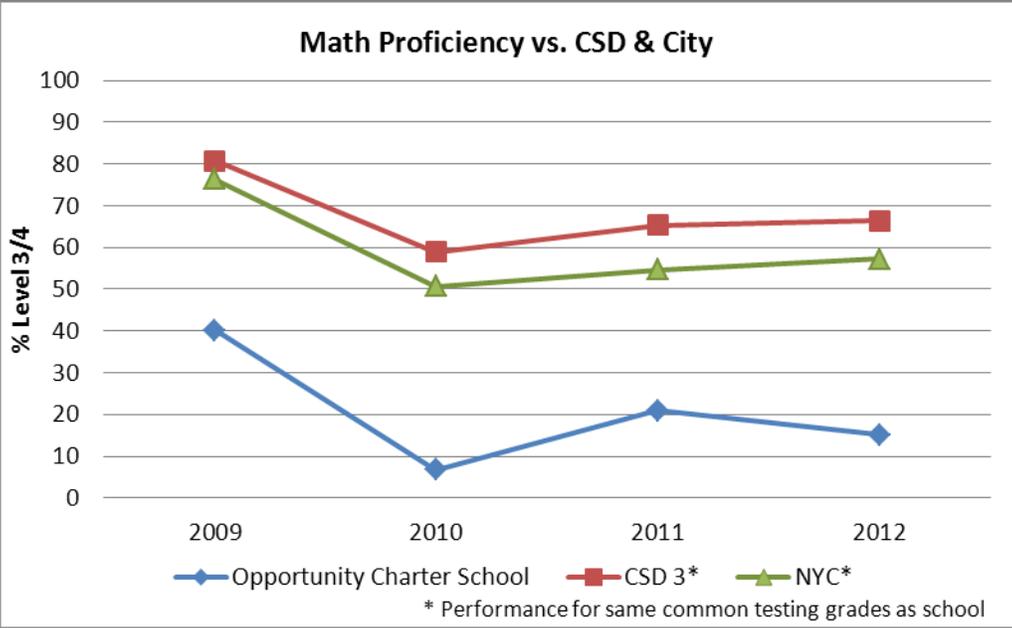
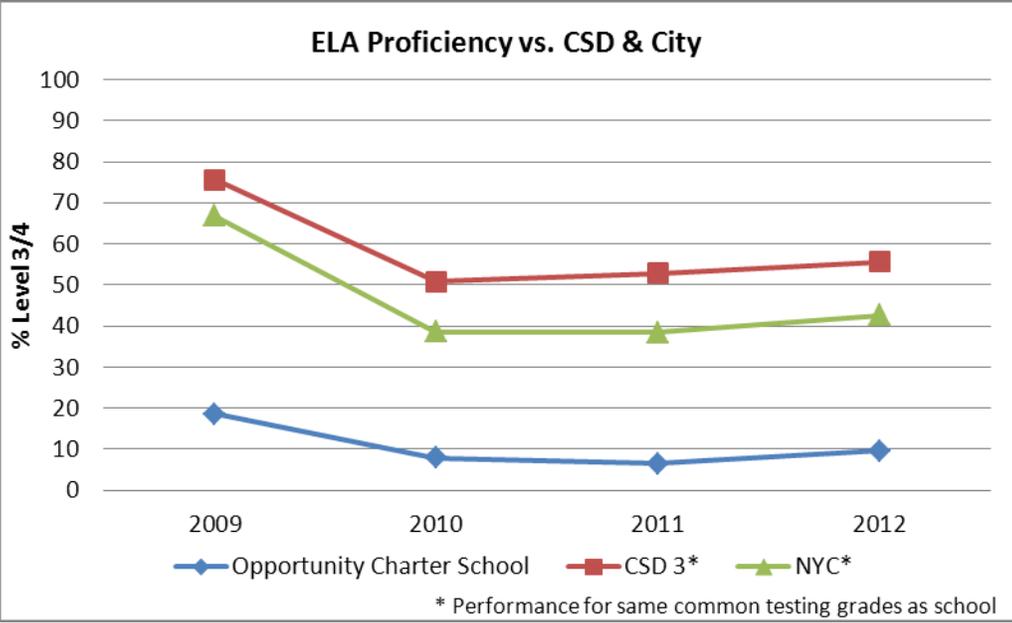
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	11.1	6.9	11.9	15.0
CSD 3*	81.3	49.4	60.0	58.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	50.0	8.5	22.4	15.0
CSD 3*	81.0	60.3	68.8	68.9

Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	29.6	10.3	4.7	9.4
CSD 3*	77.0	55.2	52.2	55.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	35.2	7.4	23.8	15.9
CSD 3*	83.8	62.7	65.6	69.8

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	15.3	6.2	3.3	4.7
CSD 3*	68.3	47.7	46.4	52.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Opportunity Charter School	35.6	4.6	16.7	14.5
CSD 3*	77.3	53.6	61.6	60.3



<b>2011-12 High School Regents Performance Results</b>			
<b>The Opportunity Charter School</b>			
<b>Regents Exams</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>% Passing</b>	<b>% at college ready threshold</b>
Mathematics			
Integrated Algebra	57	28%	3%
Geometry	45	14%	0%
Algebra 2/Trig	.	.	.
ELA			
English	52	25%	7%
Social Studies			
US History	60	44%	
Global History	59	46%	
Science			
Chemistry	.	.	
Physics	.	.	
Earth Science	.	.	
Living Environment	54	28%	
Languages			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	

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

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

To date, the Board of Trustees has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board has eight active members, including three new board members in the last year, which is consistent with charter law and the schools bylaws.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership and school staff as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Director of Operations report at every Board meeting, as recorded in the Board meeting minutes.
- The Board has provided CSAS with timely submission of some of the accountability reporting documents but not all.
  1. Annual reports and financial audits have been submitted in a timely fashion
  2. Board minutes have not been submitted to date.
- The Board has active and functioning committees: Finance, Fundraising/Community Outreach and Curriculum Committees, as indicated in the Board roster and recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board does not consistently demonstrate a quorum. As recorded in meeting minutes, only 3 of the last 9 meetings had quorum.
- The Board has held three meetings with quorum this school year, not meeting the minimum requirement of nine, as outlined in the Board's bylaws and as originally laid out in the 2012-2013 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar.

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

The school has a partially developed stable school culture.

- The school's leadership has remained stable since the school's founding.
- The school scored Below Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Below Average on the Academic Expectations section on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey<sup>14</sup>.
- The school's response rate for the NYC DOE School Survey was lower than the citywide averages. 46% (vs. 53% citywide) of the school's parents, 63.0% (vs. 82% citywide) of the school's teachers, and 79.0% (vs. 82% citywide) of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.
- From the end of last year to the start of this year, 84 students (19%) chose not to return and 36 students (8%) left between the start of the school year and February 2013<sup>15</sup>.

Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>16</sup>:

- The school's 2011-12 middle school student daily attendance was 92.5%; the goal for 2011-12 was 92%.<sup>17</sup>
- The school's 2011-2012 high school student daily attendance was 85.7%, compared to the goal of 85%.<sup>18</sup> The current year student attendance rate is 88.8% as of February 2013 (see page 2).
- The school's goal is to retain 70% of the staff each year. In 2011-2012, 49% of instructional staff did not return from the prior year.

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<sup>14</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

<sup>15</sup> ACR Data Collection Form, 2/20/13

<sup>16</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

<sup>17</sup> As reported in the school's Annual Report to NYSED, Progress Toward Goal Attainment.

<sup>18</sup> As reported in the school's Annual Report to NYSED, Progress Toward Goal Attainment.

## Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities over the next 12 months.
- The school is currently meeting its debt obligations.
- The school has a good debt to asset ratio and is currently operating within its means.
- The school has a strong cash flow, which has trended upward.
- The school can cover two months of operating expenses without the infusion of cash.
- The school is operating at a surplus indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school is currently located in a NYC DOE facility and therefore does not have any lease payments.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target.
- The school currently contributes to the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) of NYC. In FY12, the school contributed \$760,269 and contributed \$1,428,400 in FY11.
- The school received a clean audit with no material findings on its most recent audited financial statement.

### **Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations**

The school is compliant with some applicable laws and regulations but not others.

To date, the Board of Trustees is compliant with the following

- The Board member size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board has appropriate liability insurance for officers.
- The Board has provided CSAS with timely submission of accountability reporting documents, including:
  - Meeting minutes (currently awaiting June's),
  - Management, Staff and Board Retention report,
  - Lottery and recruitment plan,
  - Board approved budget for upcoming year.
- Board makes board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting them on the school website.

To date, the Board of Trustees is not compliant with the following:

- The Board maintains it has met the required number of Board meetings according to their bylaws, however 6 out of the last 9 meetings did not have quorum. While board minutes are available on the school's website, they have not all been submitted to CSAS to date.
- The Board has held three meetings with quorum this school year, which does not meet the minimum requirement of nine, as outlined in the Board's bylaws and as originally laid out in the 2012-2013 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar.

To date, the school is compliant with the following:

- The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school has submitted required documentation and proof of teacher certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
- The school has submitted a school safety plan which has been shared with the entire school community.
- The school is in compliance with NYS Section 917 law in regards to AED/ CPR certification.

To date, the school is not compliant with the following:

- The school's immunization rate is below the 98.8% threshold established by the NYC Department of Health. The immunization rate is 92.79%.

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

As reported by the school leadership and the Board, the following is noted:

- The school will continue to serve grades 6-12 in the next academic year.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

#### 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
- Meet student progress goals
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages
- Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)
- 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
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals
- NYC Progress Reports

##### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces
- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

- Mission statement, charter, external documents (parent and 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

### **1c. 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 standards and the new Common Core Curriculum.
- Use instructional models and resources consistent with school mission and that are 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
- Implement 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 curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

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

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

### **1d. Learning Environment**

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

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- 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
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported

- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

- 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
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate 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 laws and conflict of interest regulations
- 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 and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

### 2b. 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
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

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

- 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

## **2c. Financial and Operational Health**

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

- Consistently meet its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

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
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and 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 update-to-date charter is publicly available to staff, parents, and school community
- Implemented 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
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

- Met all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Comparable enrollment of FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location *or* are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages
- Implemented 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
- Conducted independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employed instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

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

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed 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 complying with NYC DOE CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYCDOE CSO, and where required, received CSO 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
- 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 schools may be considering various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment or altering their 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 address the 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:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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 (human resource policies for growing your own talent, for example, 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)

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

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization 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 if they don't make major changes through expansion or replication, they 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:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners