



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013**

**ST. HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

St. HOPE began operation in 2008 and is in its first charter term, which expires on January 14, 2013. The school is located in the Harlem section of New York City, within CSD 5, in a DOE facility at 222 West 134th Street, New York, NY 10030. It currently serves a population of roughly 300 students in grades 5-8¹. The school's primary intake grade is grade 5 but it accepts applications and fills available seats at all grades. It received a little over 200 applications, grades 5-8, for its spring lottery. Below are the school's 2012 Progress Report grade and overall assessment results and demographic data for the school and CSD.

During the 2011-12 school year, the average attendance at St. HOPE Leadership Academy was 92%². The school scored well above average on all four satisfaction categories (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect on its 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey with 97% of Parents, 100% of Teachers, and 98% of Students responding to the survey³.

St. HOPE Leadership Academy Charter School is an independent charter school that is no longer associated with the St. HOPE Public Schools charter management organization (CMO); however, the school has retained "St. HOPE" as part of its name.

	2011-12 PR overall grade	2012 ELA, 3+%	2012 Math, 3+%	FRL %	SWD %	ELL %
School ⁴	B	28.4	53.3	91	16	9
CSD 5 ⁵		29	39.5	80	16.5	10.6

Renewal Recommendation:

In order for a charter school to be renewed it must demonstrate that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. 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

¹ Self reported in Renewal Application, Renewal Visit Data Collection form (8/31/12)

² Self-reported in Progress Towards Charter Goals submission with Renewal Application (8/31/2012)

³ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

⁴ Proficiency rates from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>. Demographics from ATS 11/20/12.

⁵ CSD ELA and Math data from NYC DOE website and measures average performance of common grades only. Demographics from ATS 11/26/12 data pull.

organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are important factors that inform a renewal decision.

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Full-Term Renewal** of the charter for St. HOPE Leadership Academy.

Part 2: Renewal Decision and Findings

Renewal Framework:

The New York State Charter Schools Act (“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. 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.

(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.

The Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

Full-Term Renewal

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 yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Renewal with Conditions

In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application or new charter, new performance measures, or both. These may include changes to curriculum, leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

Short-Term Renewal

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In very limited circumstances, a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal if the school's most recent year results are good (for example, an A or B on the NYC DOE Progress Report) while the previous year's results may have been poor (D or F).

Non-Renewal

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.

NYC DOE CSAS Renewal Recommendation:

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Full-Term Renewal** of the charter for St. HOPE Leadership Academy for reasons that include the following:

1. The first listed objective of charter schools, in accordance with the NY Charter Schools Act of 1998, is to improve student learning and achievement (Education Law Section 2850(2)(a)).
St. HOPE has demonstrated student progress and achievement for the following reasons:

- i. St. HOPE has received overall Progress Report grades of B (09-10), C (10-11), and B (11-12).
- ii. In 2012 the school improved its overall proficiency levels from the prior year (Level 3 and above) in both Math (+15.9 points to 53.1%) and ELA (+10.7 points to 29.1%), receiving a B for Student Progress on its 2012 PR.⁶
- iii. In 2012, St. HOPE outperformed the district's percent proficiency in all four common tested grades in Math but in only one of four common tested grades in ELA.⁷
- iv. The school has not yet met the academic goals in its charter but had demonstrated progress toward those goals.

2. In accordance with Education Law Section 2852(2)(b), a charter applicant must demonstrate the ability to operate the school in a educationally and fiscally sound manner.

St. HOPE has proven to be an effective and viable organization:

- i. The school is financially and operationally sound, with tight financial and operational controls in place.
- ii. Between 2009 and 2011 parent satisfaction on the NYC School Survey declined in critical areas, but in 2012 Survey responses exceeded the city-wide averages in all categories.⁸
- iii. The school has consistently met the fiscal and operational goals in its charter.

3. In accordance with Education Law Section 2853(1)(f), the board of trustees of the charter school shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the school.

The board of SHLA has proven to be effective for the following reasons:

- i. The board effectively overcame a number of challenges during its first charter term, including managing the separation from its CMO, establishing more concrete accountability for school leadership, and re-organizing school leadership structure.
- ii. The school recruited a successor to St. HOPE's founding school principal and has provided sound oversight to academic and operational performance over the course of the first charter term.

4. In accordance with Education Law Section 2855(1)(b) and Education Law Section 2855(1)(c), a charter may be terminated or revoked in the event of serious violations of law, and/or material and substantial violations of the charter.

The school is compliant with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

5. As defined by Part 4 of the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework, a school is to be assessed on its plan for its next charter term.

St. HOPE has demonstrated viable plans for its next term for the following reasons:

⁶ 2010-11 and 2011-12 Progress Reports.

⁷ <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

⁸ 2011-12 NYC School Survey.

- i. The school presented a clear, reasonable plan for sustaining and accelerating its academic progress in the next charter term.

Part 3: Charter School Goals

Below is the school’s report on its progress toward meeting its charter goals.

Please note that information in this section is provided by the school, and may vary from data reported by the NYC DOE because, among other reasons, the NYC DOE reports on all students, while certain school goals may only apply to students falling under a given criteria. All data errors, discrepancies, or omissions in this section are not the responsibility of the NYC DOE.

	Goals	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Result	Result	Result	Result
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No

	<p>K - 8 graders will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. (schools serving grades K-8)</p>	<p>The school did not meet the performance goal for ELA (55% of scholars scored a Level 3 or higher).</p> <p>Our plan for the upcoming school year is to ensure that scholars spend more time with smaller groups of scholars on standards-based reading and writing instruction. We have created a co-teaching model, revised our ELA curriculum, and strengthened our interim assessment system to ensure that scholar performance data, assessed frequently, truly drives daily instruction.</p> <p>We have also hired one learning specialist per grade level to ensure that our scholars with IEP's</p>	<p>Like the majority of schools across New York State, SHLA's test scores dropped significantly this year. One major reason is the increased requirements for passing scores as compared to past years. For example, in 2009, 68.8% of students in New York City passed the ELA exam compared to only 45% in 2010. City-wide, this represents a drop of 28.3%. In 2009, 78.7% of students in NYC passed the math exam compared to 52.9% in 2010. This represents a drop of 25.8%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% Scored proficient or advanced in ELA (27% district average) • 41% Scored proficient or advanced in math (38% district average) 	<p>For the upcoming year, we have launched several initiatives to help us reach our goal of having at least 75% of our scholars score a 3 or 4 on the State ELA and math exams. These include continued improvements to our interim assessment system to ensure stronger alignment with the State exams and Dress Rehearsals that model actual testing conditions.</p> <p>We will also continue our partnership with Columbia University's Teacher's College to help improve our scholars ELA's scores. Teachers attend workshops at Columbia covering various aspects of teaching reading and writing. We will also continue to work with a</p>	<p>SHLA's overall proficiency rates increased 8.4% from 2011 to 2012, including an 11th increase in 8th grade. The improvements are a direct result of improvements and changes that school staff made in response to ELA test scores in previous years. These changes and improvements include-</p> <p>Increased support for ELA teachers: supervision and support of the ELA department was shared between SHLA's principal and literacy coach, which was a new position created for the 2011/2012 school year. Additionally, the school continued its partnership with the Teacher's College Reader and Writer's Project, including the campus-based on site workshops and support. Focus on Differentiation: creating co-teaching partnerships in</p>
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		<p>and our most struggling scholars get the support that they need to succeed academically.</p>	<p>While the overall goal was not met, we did see growth in raw scores with the majority of our scholars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% of 5th grade scholars saw an increase in their raw scores for math and ELA. • 61% of 6th grade scholars saw an increase in their raw scores for math, and 60% for ELA. • 63% of 7th grade scholars saw an increase in their raw scores for ELA. <p>For the next school year, we have launched several initiatives to help us reach our goal of having at least 75% of our scholars score a 3 or 4 on the State ELA and math exams. These include an improved interim assessment system with exams that are better aligned to the</p>	<p>staff developer throughout the year to model techniques for teachers and to help the school strengthen its ELA program.</p> <p>Additionally, the school will add three key positions to the SHLA staff to better support teachers, including a literacy coach, a math coach and an assistant principal.</p>	<p>every reading and writing classroom. SHLA created a co-teaching framework, which clearly delineated the role of each teacher during a reading and writing block. Professional development focus on training teachers to more effectively run guided reading groups and to conference individually with scholars. Stronger data collection and analysis system: the ELA department, working with SHLA's principal and literacy coach, re-designed the data collection and analysis system to be used during the 2011/2012 school year. In addition to interim assessments administered every six weeks, SHLA utilized a biweekly reading and writing assessment to monitor scholar growth. The assessments contained reading passages that were leveled in</p>
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			<p>more rigorous State tests that will allow teachers to purposefully target instruction. We have also started a partnership with Columbia University's Teacher's College to help improve our scholars ELA's scores. Teachers attend workshops at Columbia covering various aspects of teaching reading and writing. We also work with a staff developer throughout the year to model techniques for teachers and to help the school strengthen its ELA program. Additionally, we have created new acceleration programs for some of our lowest performers, including a new Reader's Theater program and use of Study Island software.</p>		<p>two ways – some were at grade level and others were at the individual level of scholars taking the exam. By utilizing this approach, ELA teachers were able to determine if a scholars' struggles with certain material was due to not understanding the concept, to their low reading level, or both.</p>
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Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of K - 8 graders will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination. (schools serving grades K-8)	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No
		The school met the goal for math with 77% of scholars scoring at or above Level 3 on the State math exam.	See Above	See Above	The school is making significant progress towards attaining this goal. In total, 53.4% of SHLA scholars scored proficient or advanced on the 2012 State math exam, increasing from 39% in 2011. The number of scholars scoring Level 4 increased from 2% in 2011 to 16% in 2012. The increase in student achievement in math is a direct result of improvements and changes that school staff made. Some of the changes include: Increased support for math teachers: supervision and support of the math department was assigned to SHLA's Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction. Creation of daily, 55 minute, Problem Solving period to ensure that scholars apply math skills and concepts. Stronger data

					<p>collection and analysis system: The math department, working with their supervisor, re-designed the data collection and analysis system to be used during the 2011/2012 school year. Every math class employed daily exit slips, and the data was reviewed on a daily basis by math teachers. Interim assessments were administered every six weeks, and professional development days scheduled for extensive review of scholars' results and training for teacher on how to more effectively teach the material.</p>
Absolute	<p>Each year, 50 percent of 4th graders and 75 percent of 8th graders who have been at St. HOPE Leadership Academy Charter School for at least two years will perform at Level 3 on the New York State Science</p>	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met: No
		<p>First Year of Operations - Did Not Admit an 8th Grade Class</p>	<p>78% of 8th grade students who had been at SHLA the previous year scored level 3 or level 4 on the science exam, demonstrating that the school met the goal.</p>	<p>In order to meet the goal of 75% of 8th grade students scoring proficient or advanced on the science exam, several initiatives have been put in place. The first is that scholars will be</p>	<p>In addition to the initiatives put in place last year, scholars will complete a science interim exam in January and March modeled on last year's State exam, using clickers to enable immediate turnaround of student data for</p>

	examination.			<p>exposed to the types of labs they will be required on the exam starting in 6th grade. By starting to teach the laboratory skills in earlier grades, scholars will have increased opportunities to be prepared for the exam. Another initiative is conducting training with our science teachers around the specific content and skills covered on the exam, and ensuring that our curriculum matches those requirements. Finally, we will administer practice exams to our scholars so teachers can use the data to target instruction before the exam.</p>	<p>instruction. Scholars will also complete chunks of the hands-on section of last year's exam throughout the winter and spring. In May, all scholars will participate in afterschool review for the May test.</p>
Absolute	Each year, 50 percent of 5 th and 75 percent of 8 th graders who have been at St. HOPE Leadership Academy	N/A	Met: Yes 5th Grade: 59% 8th Grade: N/A, first year	N/A - Exam is no longer Administered	N/A - Exam is no longer Administered
		First Year of Operations - Did Not Admit an 8th			

	Charter School for at least two years will perform at Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies examination.	Grade Class			
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of each cohort will pass the New York State Regents examinations in Math. (schools serving grades 9-12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of the students in each cohort who have been at St. HOPE Leadership Academy for at least two years will pass the New York State Regents examinations in Science.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of the students in each cohort who have been at St. HOPE Leadership Academy for at least two years will pass the New York State Regents examinations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	in US History and Government and Global Studies.				
Absolute	Each year, 8 th grade students will complete a 2000 word historical research paper. 90 percent of students will meet or exceed the academic standards measured by this assignment.	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
		First Year of Operations - Did Not Admit an 8th Grade Class			
Absolute	Each year, 12 th grade students will complete a senior portfolio. 90 percent of students will meet or exceed the academic standards measured by this assignment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Value-Added	For years 2	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No

	<p>through 5 of the proposed charter, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA exam.</p>		<p>Given SHLA's scores on ELA and math, this goal was not met. However, with the changes to the State exam scoring guidelines, schools throughout New York State saw significant declines in their passing rates. However, a large percentage of our scholars made growth on their overall raw scores (please see goal #1).</p>	<p>In addition to the measures described above, there were several strategies that SHLA staff implemented to increase scholar achievement. This included partnering with Teach for America to provide a four-week summer school program for our scholars. The goal was to ensure that retention of information was not lost during the summer and to better prepare scholars to begin the current academic year. We also began a Saturday academic support program for our most struggling learners. The program, taught by SHLA staff, focuses on re-teaching math and ELA content and skills that are essential to each grade level's curriculum.</p>	<p>In addition to the measures described above and to the initiatives from the prior year, SHLA planned and implemented various strategies to allow for greater focus and understanding of every scholar's learning needs, and the ability to respond to them. The changes were planned during the spring of 2010, and implemented during the 2011/2012 school year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-teaching model for all reading, writing, math classes 2. Focus on independent and guided reading and math instruction, targeting scholars at their individual levels. 3. Specialized training for all teachers around different learning styles and approaches 4. A defined Child Study Team process and RTI Plan
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Value-Added	For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State Math exam. (schools serving grades K-8)	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No
			See Above	See Above	The school is making significant progress towards attaining this goal. In total, 53.4% of SHLA scholars scored proficient or advanced on the 2012 State math exam, increasing from 39% in 2011. The number of scholars scoring Level 4 increased from 2% in 2011 to 16% in 2012. The increase in student achievement in math is a direct result of improvements and changes that school staff made. Some of the changes include: Creation of daily, 55 minute, Problem Solving period to ensure that scholars apply math skills and concepts. Stronger data collection and analysis system: The math department, working with their supervisor, re-designed the data collection and analysis

					<p>system to be used during the 2011/2012 school year. Every math class employed daily exit slips, and the data was reviewed on a daily basis by math teachers. Interim assessments were administered every six weeks, and professional development days scheduled for extensive review of students' results and training for teacher on how to more effectively teach the material. Increased support for math teachers: supervision and support of the math department was assigned to SHLA's Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction.</p>
Value-Added	<p>For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, each cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between percent passing the ELA Regents examination</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	and the previous cohorts' passing rate on the ELA Regents examination. (schools serving grades 9-12)				
Value-Added	For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, each cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between percent passing the Math Regents examination and the previous cohorts' passing rate on the Math Regents examination. (schools serving grades 9-12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparative Performance	Each year, the percent of 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. (schools serving grades K-8)	Yes	No	No	Data not yet available.
			See Above	See Above	

Comparative Performance	Each year, the percent of 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. (school serving grades K-8)	Yes	No	No	Data not yet available.
			See Above	See Above	
Comparative Performance	Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the ELA Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools[3]. (school serving grades 9-12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparative Performance	Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the Math Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools. (schools serving grades 9-12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
AYP Status	Each year, the school will make Adequate Yearly	Met: Yes in math. Yes in ELA	Met: Yes in math. No in ELA.	Met: No in Math (did not meet AYP for students with disabilities).	Data Not Yet Available

	Progress (AYP) in ELA, math and, for Grades 9 – 12 only, in graduation rate.			No in ELA	
			See Above	We anticipate that the various initiatives around increasing academic performance mentioned above will ensure that SHLA meets AYP in all grades, subjects, and sub-groups. We are also providing tutoring services for scholars to support them in mastering the grade-level standards and scoring proficient or advanced on the State exams.	
Graduation Rates (high school only)	Each year, at least 75 percent of each student cohort graduates after four years.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School-Specific Educational Indicators	Each year, 80 percent of students will be accepted to a four-year college.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

St. HOPE Leadership Academy Charter School - Organizational Goals					
Goals	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	

		Result	Result	Result	Result
Student Engagement	Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.	Met: Yes, 95%	Met: No, 93%	Met: No, 85%	Met: No, 92%
				As a result of low student engagement and achievement scores, leadership focused on staff and student culture, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and consequences. "HARLEM in action" weekly paychecks system was implemented in 2011-12 school year to provide clear expectations to students for behavior.	School was in first year of implementing revised and clarified culture system. Improvement was seen over previous year.
Student Engagement	Each year, 95 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.	N/A	Met: No, 87% Returned	Met: No 84% Returned	Met: No, 84% returned
			Scholars who did not return typically moved out of the area.	Scholars who did not return typically moved out of the area. Approximately seven scholars did not return as they were recommended for retention.	Scholars who did not return typically moved from the area. Five scholars did not return as they were identified for retention.

Adherence to Contract Terms	Each year, the school will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and contract terms including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
School-Specific Non-Academic Indicators	Each year, 100 percent of teachers will engage in a faculty evaluation process including quarterly written performance reviews.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
School-Specific Non-Academic Indicators	Each year, 100 percent of faculty will participate in individualized and team-focused professional development.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
Enrollment Stability	Each year, student enrollment will be within 15 percent of full enrollment as defined in the school's contract. This will be maintained on an ongoing basis and monitored bi-monthly.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
		138 of 150 (92%)	199 of 225 (88%)	304 (over 100%)	274 of 300 (91%)
Financial Compliance	Upon completion of the school's first year of operation and every year thereafter, the school will undergo an independent financial audit that will result in an unqualified opinion and no major findings.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
Financial Viability	Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget and maintain a stable cash flow.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
Parent Satisfaction	Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least 80 percent of all parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes

	Goals	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
		Result	Result	Result	Result
Student Character	Each year, students in grades K-8 complete at least three community service projects and students in grades 9-12 complete 40 hours of community service.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
Student Character	Each year, disciplinary actions, suspension and expulsion rates will be below comparable schools within NYCDOE.	NA: Data Unavailable – figures for disciplinary actions, suspension and expulsion rates for similar NYCDOE schools is not yet available	NA: Data Unavailable – figures for disciplinary actions, suspension and expulsion rates for similar NYCDOE schools is not yet available	NA: Data Unavailable – figures for disciplinary actions, suspension and expulsion rates for similar NYCDOE schools is not yet available	NA: Data Unavailable – figures for disciplinary actions, suspension and expulsion rates for similar NYCDOE schools is not yet available
Student Character	Each year, 100 percent of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 will complete a study skills unit.	Met Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes
Student Character	Each year, 100 percent of students will work collaboratively within a small group to complete and present a group project in at least one class. Students will be evaluated on teamwork.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes

Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School⁹

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	54.3	20.6	19.9	28.4
CSD 5*	66.3	27.8	28.5	29.0
NYC*	72.7	40.5	41.0	45.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	76.6	40.7	38.7	53.3
CSD 5*	74.0	37.6	40.7	39.5
NYC*	81.1	52.9	56.7	59.3

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

Grade 5

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	49.0	16.2	26.4	36.1
CSD 5	62.8	27.2	32.7	30.9
NYC	74.7	46.2	49.0	52.2
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	70.8	48.6	45.8	56.6
CSD 5	48.0	37.0	72.0	83.0
NYC	85.5	59.7	62.9	65.2

Grade 6

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	48.9	25.7	21.4	31.3
CSD 5	71.3	31.2	30.1	31.6
NYC	72.6	40.1	43.6	45.3

⁹ All data from NYC DOE website. <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

*CSD and City data represent the average performance of the same testing grades of the school.

<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	78.7	50.0	30.0	53.7
CSD 5	72.7	38.6	39.7	39.5
NYC	77.0	53.0	56.0	59.3

Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	66.7	22.9	15.6	17.2
CSD 5	64.9	28.7	24.0	26.5
NYC	70.9	38.2	36.5	43.3
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School	81.0	39.6	42.9	46.6
CSD 5	73.8	37.7	38.3	37.9
NYC	80.8	52.6	55.5	57.3

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School		13.6	14.3	25.4
CSD 5		24.1	27.3	26.8
NYC		37.5	35.0	39.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School		20.5	33.3	54.7
CSD 5		35.7	42.5	39.1
NYC		46.3	52.5	55.2

Part 5: St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School Charter Renewal Visit



Charter School Renewal Visit Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

ST. HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL VISIT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2012

Part A: Executive Summary

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts renewal visits of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The renewal visit is designed to address four questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations; and what are the school's plans for its next charter term? The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and may also include the district superintendent and other DOE staff or consultants. The visits last the duration of two to three school days. The renewal visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. They also review academic and operational documents. Additionally, reviewers meet with one or more of the school's Board representatives and speak to a sampling of the school's parents. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The renewal visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on September 27-28, 2012:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Simeon Stolzberg, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS
- Gale Reeves, Superintendent, Community School District 5.

Part B: Renewal Visit Observations

Areas of Strength

The school has an instructional leadership team with the capacity to support teachers' growth and raise student achievement.

- The school received a B on its 2012 Progress Report, the school's second B in three PRs, with a B for Student Progress. Its overall proficiency levels (% of students scoring at Level 3 or above on NYS ELA and Math assessments) improved by 10.7 points in ELA and 15.9 points in Math in 2012.¹⁰ In Math, the school has consistently outperformed the district, 11 times out of 15 when comparing yearly grade to grade proficiency levels % and the school's overall Math proficiency in 2012 is higher than the district's (53% compared to 39%) but below that of the city's (60%).
- The school had put in place a new instructional leadership structure in 2011 that focused on improving teacher support and instructional performance, adding a literacy coach and adding assistant principals focused on instruction.
- The school leadership team now includes a new Principal and an Assistant Principal for Instruction and Teacher Development, Assistant Principal for Support Services, Assistant Principal for Student Affairs and a Literacy Coach. The school is currently seeking to fill a Mathematics Coach position. The leadership team meets twice per week.
- The leadership team is in the process of developing school-wide goals, which are expected by the end of October. Through professional development sessions, goal-setting exercises with teachers, planning meetings and regular classroom observations and feedback, school leaders have articulated their priorities, including raising the rigor of curriculum and instruction and maximizing the use of co-teaching.
- School leadership has committed ample resources toward improving services for at-risk students.
 - The school ELL teacher's role was increased from consultant to part-time to full-time and the school is paying for eight teachers to obtain special education certification to enhance the use of the co-teaching model.
 - The school joined the NYC Special Education Collaborative last year and sends staff to participate in regular trainings. The pull-out room has doubled in size and includes relevant resources and space for independent reading. The school is also using Achieve 3000 this year, which can provide multiple texts addressing the same topic to engage students at different reading levels.
 - A new tool for teachers to communicate about individual students receiving interventions from year to year was created; the Pass the Torch system allows teachers to document their experiences with, and suggestions for, each student and make that information available to teachers in other subjects and subsequent years. The school intends to expand the program to all students. Additionally, the school has created "IEPs At a Glance" that summarize testing

¹⁰ 2010-11 and 2011-12 Progress Reports.

modifications, related service needs, and high-inference observations for all students with IEPs.

- Schedules have been modified to allow special and general education teachers to meet and plan lessons together. Co-teaching has reportedly increased the school's ability to implement inclusion practices that eliminate the stigma for students with disabilities. In addition, all teachers have office hours to provide students with individualized attention.
- The school has an active curriculum committee that is in the process of revising and documenting curriculum in order to align it to Common Core Learning Standards and state assessments.

The school has established a positive and orderly environment conducive to learning.

- On the days of the visit, students were respectful and adhered to the school's behavioral expectations. Students were consistently responsive to teachers' directions and compliant with rules and regulations, known as "HARLEM in Action." Posters with the school pledge and HARLEM values were visible throughout the school.
- The school is safe and organized. Transitions in halls were generally quiet and efficient with teachers and administrative staff present to facilitate passage between classes.
- The school uses a paycheck system that recognizes students for positive behavior and infractions. Students receive a weekly paycheck that they take home for parents to sign. With their paychecks, students earn free dress days, special field trips and prizes.
- The school contracted with The Center for Transformative Teacher Training to implement its No Nonsense Nurturing approach throughout the school, including training its leadership team on effective teacher coaching. New teachers are observed by both their supervisors and a member of the school's Student Affairs Team to ensure that No Nonsense Nurturing is implemented consistently by staff at all levels. Teachers were observed throughout the school using common classroom management techniques in the service of instruction. They also consistently used positive praise of multiple students to reinforce desired behaviors, a No Nonsense Nurturing strategy.
- The school has implemented a daily Advisory program where students meet in small groups with an adult. Its curricular focus is "social skill and study skill development, college preparation, academic guidance, and character development through leadership and service." Advisory groups adopt service projects, such as cleaning the school yard, designing public service announcements and participating in a breast cancer walk. The school is also beginning to fulfill its mission component of developing student leadership. For example, a student senate is being formed this year. School leaders reported that teachers have been actively involved in improving school culture, including the enhanced role of grade team leaders. Teachers with only five instructional periods are required to teach Advisory; teachers with six instructional periods are not required to teach Advisory but some teachers do so voluntarily.

The school has improved its professional climate, alignment with the school mission, and staff satisfaction.

- In addition to leadership changes, the school experienced significant teacher turnover during its first charter term, particularly between its second and third year of operations. Board and leadership efforts have reduced the turnover rate, though it remains high. Teachers interviewed during the renewal visit consistently expressed optimism about the direction of the school. One stated that this year the school, “[F]eels more intense, in the right way. The rigor for staff has increased.” Another provided this summary: “Last year we found the base of what works, and now we’re refining the details.”
- Teacher satisfaction increased significantly on the 2011-12 NYC School Survey in all four categories, Academic Expectations (AE), Communication (C), Engagement (E), and Safety and Respect (SR): from 7.0 to 9.2 in AE, from 5.9 to 8.9 in C, from 5.8 to 9.1 in E and from 6.0 to 9.1 in SR.
- Interviewed teachers indicated that the leadership transition has been smooth, and consistently stated that they found administration at both mid- and upper levels to be supportive, accessible, and receptive to their needs.
- The school provides ongoing opportunities for professional development and growth. Summer training focused on a range of topics, including curriculum development, school culture, and co-teaching. During the year teachers meet as departments and grade level teams for planning and training. Instructional leaders also differentiate professional development by subject and teacher experience level. Teachers have been surveyed about their needs and interests.
- Instructional leaders have increased observation and feedback to teachers with a clear focus on engagement and rigor; they review lesson plans, participate in planning, model instruction and provide teachers with strategies and resources. The school also utilizes consultants with subject area expertise to support school leaders and teachers.
- The school is transitioning to the Danielson framework, from Marshall, for coaching and evaluation. As the renewal visit occurred at the beginning of the school year, instructional leaders and teachers were in the process of conducting a first round of goal-setting. Formal evaluations are held mid-year and at the end of the year using the entire Danielson rubric; informal check-ins are done monthly to review goals.
- School leadership has enhanced opportunities for collaboration. In addition to grade team and department meetings, in an effort to increase cross-curriculum connections, they created a humanities department that encompasses ELA, Social Studies and Art, while the STEM department includes Math, Science and Health.

The school has a responsive and reflective Board of Trustees that provides effective oversight and strategic guidance to the school.

- The board effectively overcame a number of challenges during its first charter term, including managing the separation from its CMO, establishing more concrete accountability for school leadership and re-organizing school leadership structure.
- The school’s current leader, who started in this school year, was selected by a committee comprised of Board members, teachers, and parents. Both the former

leader's resignation and the current leader's hiring were communicated to parents and teachers by the leader with Board members present to answer questions.

- As the result of consistent monitoring and its responsive action, the board has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and has led to Board actions that improved accountability, school organization, and the decision not to expand to high school grades until satisfied that the middle school is performing to expectations.

Parents are actively involved and supportive of the school.

- The school has an active Parent Council that has met ten times each of the years of the first charter term, with parent attendance at PC meetings reported to be approximately 25% at these meetings. The Parent Council executive committee meets weekly.
- Parent participation on Parent-Teacher conferences have increased over the term of the charter, starting below 50% in the first year and reaching an average a little over 70% in the two most recent years.
- Parent participation in the NYC School Survey has been well above citywide averages in each of the four years it has been administered, twice topping 95%, including 2012's 97%.
- With the exception of 2011, the school's overall parent satisfaction scores have been above or well above average.
- The school is working to enhance parent engagement, and has shifted the primary responsibility for this from its part-time consultant to its AP of Student Affairs.
 - The school has started offering monthly academic workshops for, on topics such as how to read a report card and how to interpret the school's progress reports.
 - Parents, in addition to students, are expected to do 30 hours of community service, and participation in parent workshops counts towards their hours. The school will start formally tracking these hours this year.
 - The school has begun communicating with parents on a weekly basis via progress reports, a newsletter, and Call-Em-All automated messages. Additionally, it requires students to have their parents sign weekly paychecks and is launching a parent-student book club.
 - The school's board of trustees has added an ex-officio parent position, which is has filled.

The school recruits and retains a student population that is generally comparable to that of its district's schools.

- According to a November 2012 data pull from ATS, the school's student body includes 91% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (compared to 79.8% in the district), 9% English Language Learners (compared to 10.6% in the district), and 16% special education students (compared to 16.5% in the district).

The school is financially and operationally sound.

- The school has met its enrollment targets each year of its first charter term and has operated with a budget surplus with a cash reserve. In each year of its first charter term the school has received clean independent audits.
- School has clear division of roles and responsibilities among financial and operational staff.
- The school has solid financial controls at the Board and school level.
- Student and staff records are appropriately secured and in good order.
- The school conducts an independently verified fair and open lottery each year.

Areas of Growth

The school should continue to raise the level of student achievement in order to meet the academic goals outlined in its charter and to sustain its progress in Math while also accelerating growth in ELA academic performance.

- Despite a setback in 2011, the school has demonstrated growth on its 2012 state assessment results and exceeded its 2010 overall proficiency levels. However over its first charter term, the school has not met the majority of its applicable academic performance and progress-related charter goals. Its Student Performance grade has been a C in all three years that the school has received a PR.
- While the school has shown progress, as noted earlier in this report, in both Math and ELA proficiency, its ELA scores remain low when compared grade by grade to the district and city averages—only twice in 15 instances over the course of the first term has St. Hope exceeded district proficiency levels in ELA (in Grade 7 in 2009 and Grade 5 in 2012) and it has never equaled or surpassed citywide proficiency averages in ELA. The school has been identified by NYSED as a Focus Charter school in 2012-13, for its ELA results.
- While the school has exceeded the district in its Math proficiency levels it remains below city averages—only twice in 15 instances over the course of the first term has St. Hope exceeded city proficiency levels in Math (in Grades 6 and 7 in 2009). As noted above, it hasn't yet met its absolute charter performance goals in Math.

The school should continue to develop and refine its education program to achieve its academic goals and meet the needs of its students.

- The school continues to work on its implementation of the Columbia University Teachers College (TC) reading and writing program, now in its third year of use at St. HOPE. According to school leader interviews, the TC program was not implemented with fidelity during its first year but was last year. Working with TC consultants the school, led by its literacy coach, is focused on continuing to improve implementation and to adjust the program in response to the Common Core standards. For example, they have increased the amount of evidence-based, organizational essay writing and pushed coverage of the program's poetry unit to earlier in the year.

- Leadership and faculty (curriculum committee) are evaluating other current programs and researching alternatives as they decide what to keep and what to change or augment.
- The school is developing rubrics to set expectations for student learning, but these are not yet available. Similarly, school leaders have plans for identifying anchor papers and exemplars of grade level work and using them to look at student work and norm expectations across the faculty, although these plans still need to be solidified to become actionable and measurable.
- Curriculum resources are in various stages of development. Reviewers examined curriculum maps and scope in sequences; their completeness and depth varied considerably by both grade and subject. Some included state standards, essential questions, content and skills, assessments, but many had only one or two of these categories documented. The format and depth of lesson plans also varied widely; objectives did not consistently articulate clear goals for student understanding or skill development nor did learning activities always align with stated objectives. For example, some objectives were descriptions of activities and did not describe what students would know or be able to do as a result of the lesson. Though some unit plans included essential questions, these were not referenced in observed lessons.
- The rigor of instruction varied across observed classrooms. While some teachers presented students with challenging texts, tasks and questions, and demanded the use of subject-specific vocabulary, in other classes the level of rigor was not high. For example, questioning was at the basic recall level and never asked students to explain or support answers with evidence. Additionally, a number of interviewed students said their classes were easy and they did not feel challenged. They also indicated the desire for more challenging and interesting reading books.
- The pacing of lessons did not consistently engage students and push them towards deeper learning. Some teachers had established clear procedures and routines and they maintained a sense of urgency around learning time. However, at the time of the visit, which was early in the school year, procedures and routines had not been fully internalized by students. In some observed classrooms, a disproportionate amount of time was spent on teacher talk compared to student talk or activities. For example, a teacher spent a significant amount of time instructing students on how to organize papers and notebooks on their desktop and in another class debriefing a Do Now activity took up over a third of class instructional time. Consequently, though students were usually attentive, they were not always cognitively engaged in learning.
- The use of multiple adults in the classroom is not maximized. The school has increased its use of co-teaching across subjects and is researching best practices, but leadership has not yet established clear expectations for implementation of the co-teaching model.
 - In a number of classes two, three or even four adults were present, but usually one took the lead while the others circulated among students and monitored behavior and engagement. Despite having multiple adults in most core subject classes, there was limited evidence of differentiation. A notable exception was a

mathematics class that used differentiated materials during independent work time.

- School leaders indicated the focus last year was on improving whole class instruction; this year they are focused on increasing teachers' capacity to effectively conduct small group instruction within their classrooms. They expect to begin guided reading with small groups in October.
- In observed classrooms there was limited evidence of checks for understanding, mostly by questions addressed to the whole class but responded to by individual students without a way to determine if all students grasped the answer.
- School leaders indicated a focus on increasing student accountability for learning, but this was not demonstrated in many classrooms. Many observed lessons were very teacher-centered and did not include opportunities for students to engage deeply with the topic. While techniques like "turn and talk" were employed, time allotted was not always proportionate to purpose—some were too long for the assigned task or discussion topic and others not long enough for a deep discussion of a higher level topic.

The school should continue to build and implement systems and procedures for collecting and analyzing data to inform instructional and organizational decision-making.

- The school administers a number of useful assessments, including Fountas and Pinnell (F&P), math diagnostics, and interim assessments but is still refining its assessment system and identified effective use of data as a growth area.
- The school has hired Achievement Network (ANET) and is in the beginning stages of implementing its tools and approach. Interim assessments have been built for the year that will be administered every eight weeks; school leaders expect them to be more predictive of student performance on state tests than their past assessment instruments. A schedule has been developed for ongoing cycles that include planning with leadership, administration and data collection, data analysis meeting with staff, and action planning. One of the reasons the school hired ANET was to develop staff's use of data to inform student grouping and targeted instruction and interventions. While staff is optimistic about this approach, its efficacy remains to be seen and will depend on effective implementation and staff training.
- The Pass the Torch system is considered a valuable tool by teachers for sharing information about individual students across classes and years and the school should follow through on its intention to extend tool for all students.
- Teacher-created rubrics were in evidence in some classrooms, some of which appeared designed for specific tasks and projects, and given the variation in rigor during classroom observations it is not clear that rubrics and their application represent a consensus around what level of rigor and quality performance is expected for students and how that aligns with Common Core expectations. The school is in the process of developing writing and other performance rubrics and should continue this work, ensuring that teachers and students have a consistent understanding of what rigorous quality work is.

The Board and school leadership should continue to monitor the school's many developing initiatives and its strategic planning and goal setting process to focus priorities and establish measures for monitoring progress.

- The school has undertaken significant changes to improve student achievement and is simultaneously implementing, monitoring and evaluating many components of the school program. School leaders are in the process of establishing goals and, given the large amount of flux, have not yet established clear priorities or timelines to focus their work and guide the staff.
- While leadership is clearly focused on improving teachers' skills, the school does not currently have a school-wide approach to supervision or systems for collecting information about teacher performance. The school has many new and novice teachers and school leaders are understandably still getting to know them; however, as they try to enhance teacher performance in areas such as co-teaching and lesson planning, the absence of clear expectations articulated through the evaluation system may make it difficult to hold staff accountable. In addition, the operations staff has not been evaluated in recent years.
- The school is making strides to monitor its programs and services for at-risk students. A needs assessment for the ELL program identified the need to increase the number of teachers training in intervention programs such as Wilson and Rewards, enhance instructional resources and text in Spanish and adequately serve students at a range of levels with limited staff.

The school should continue to address student recruitment, retention and attendance.

- School leaders recognize the decline in applications, which is most significant in 5th grade, the school's intake grade (from 334 applications for school year 2011-12 to 171 applications for 2012-13). They report that through staffing changes and enhanced recruitment efforts the school again has a waiting list.
- The school has missed reaching its attendance-related charter goal (average yearly attendance of 95%) for the past three years. The school is addressing this by increasing parent communication with parents, refining its attendance procedures, and clarifying consequences for absences. Staffers now receive a daily e-mail about attendance, and parents are contacted with more consistency when students are absent.

The school has similarly missed its retention goal (95% retention in September of students enrolled during the course of the previous year) for several years in a row. School leaders attribute this to families moving out of the district; however, they also recognize that working to maintain the school's culture may help support retention efforts.

Part 6: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

I. PROCESS BACKGROUND

A. Statutory Basis for Renewal

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“the Act”) authorizes the creation 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:

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹¹

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.¹²

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.¹³ As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) 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;
- 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;

¹¹ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

¹² See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

¹³ See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- 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.

Where the NYCDOE 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.¹⁴

B. NYCDOE's Charter Renewal Process

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE's processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.¹⁵

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the initial 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 first term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to build an ambitious plan for the future.

Consistent with the requirements of § 2851(4) of the Act, a school applying for renewal of its charter must use data and other credible evidence to prove its success, a case that can be organized into three questions:

1. Has your school been an academic success?
2. Has your school been a viable organization?
3. Has your school complied with applicable laws and regulations?

A school will answer these overarching questions by demonstrating that its students have made significant academic progress and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its initial 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.

¹⁴ § 2852(5)

¹⁵ The NYCDOE charter renewal application is available on the Office of Charter Schools website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/default.htm>

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYCDOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizing entities, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYCDOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, completion of student achievement data templates, and a school visit by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team of the NYCDOE ("NYCDOE CSAS").

The NYCDOE CSAS then prepares a draft report and provides a copy to the school for its review and comment. The draft contains the findings, discussion, and the evidence base for those findings. Upon receiving a school's comment, the NYCDOE CSAS reviews its draft, makes any appropriate changes, and reviews the amended findings to make a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor's final decision, and the findings on which that decision is based, is submitted to the Board of Regents for a final decision.

Part 7: The CSAS Accountability Framework

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following Accountability Framework to monitor Charter School success:

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the CSAS 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 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?

There is no strict, number-driven point scale for applying the framework to a school's overall performance record. 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.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what CSAS looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions. As schools use the Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so they can be 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.

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
- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with 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:

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- 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)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- 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 laws and conflict of interest regulations, 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 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the

effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook

- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide 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, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- 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
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- 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

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- 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
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as 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
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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 leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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, 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
- 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location¹⁶ 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 with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline 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:

- 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 CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

¹⁶ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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:

- 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 (replication) Application
- 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:

- 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
- 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:

- 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
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

Part 8: NYC DOE School Progress Reports

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.

Part 9: Annual Site Visit Report

Please see below the historical annual site visit reports for this school.



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2011-2012

ST. HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MARCH 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School (St. Hope) is a middle school serving approximately 278 students from fifth through eighth grade in the 2011-12 school year.¹⁷ The school is in the fourth year of its first charter term and, if approved for renewal, plans to continue serving grades 5 through 8 during its next charter term and eventually to expand to serve high school grades.¹⁸ St. Hope is currently co-located in an NYC DOE building in District 5. The school's student body includes 84.8% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 8.3% English Language Learners, and 15.5% special education students.¹⁹

The school currently has 297 students on its waitlist.²⁰ The average attendance rate for school year 2011-12 was 95%.²¹ The school has had one leader, Ventura Rodriguez, since its founding.

St. Hope received a B on its NYC DOE school Progress Report in 2009-10 and a C in 2010-11, receiving a D in Progress, a C in Performance and a B in Environment.²² The school's scores on the NYC DOE School Survey in 2010-11 were below average on each category (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, Safety and Respect), with 74% of parents, 86% of teachers, and 97% of students participating.²³ The school is currently in good standing with state and federal accountability measures.²⁴

St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School is an independent charter school that is no longer associated with the St. Hope Public Schools charter management organization (CMO); however, the school has retained "St. Hope" as part of its name.

Annual Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) office of Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) conducts an annual site visit of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The site visit is designed to address 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, we also ask about the school's plans for its next charter term. The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins

¹⁷ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (3/2/12)

¹⁸ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Self-Evaluation Form (March 2012)

¹⁹ NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012; the school's self-reported numbers (3/2/12) are similar to those from the ATS system pull with regard to students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (84%; 234 out of 278 and English Language Learners (8%; 21 out of 278), but vary with regard to special education students (19%; 53 out of 278), although this number includes both students with IEPs and students with 504 plans.

²⁰ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (3/2/12)

²¹ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (3/2/12)

²² NYC DOE Progress Report webpage: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>

²³ NYC DOE website: http://schools.nyc.gov/OA/SchoolReports/2010-11/Survey_2011_M388.pdf

²⁴ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators and teachers. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The site visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on March 13, 2012:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSAS
- Simeon Stolzberg, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school has established a warm and respectful climate conducive to learning.
 - The school has focused attention this year on increasing the consistency of behavioral expectations, classroom management, and discipline procedures. Professional development has been devoted to building common language and protocols to enhance school culture. The school pillars, expectations for behavior, and escalating consequences for misbehavior were clearly posted throughout the school.
 - Teachers used clear and explicit classroom procedures, including common signals to gain attention or put down pencils and track speakers. Additionally, the school has implemented formal transition plans for each floor. Most students appeared to have internalized these expectations and were well-behaved, polite, and respectful during observed classes and class transitions.
 - The school has implemented a “paycheck” system to help students recognize and reflect on their behavior. Points associated with key values are tracked. Students earn points that can be used for a variety of rewards, including lunch with teachers and field trips, and regular paychecks are sent to parents to inform them about their child’s behavior. On the day of the visit teachers were observed awarding and deducting points to reinforce expectations. According to staffers, the system has contributed to a significant decrease in student suspensions from this time last year, from approximately 44 students suspended in March 2011 to 19 students suspended in March 2012. Additionally, a full 50 percent of total suspensions at this point in the year are repeat offenses by 8 percent of students, according to the school’s estimates.
 - Faculty and administration share responsibility for meeting and greeting students in the morning and monitoring students in public spaces.

- The school has devoted a range of resources to meeting the needs of at-risk students.
 - The school implemented integrated co-teaching (ICT) in each grade along with SETTS push-in and pull-out supports for students with disabilities.
 - Co-teaching is used throughout the school to provide opportunities for targeted small group instruction for all students. On the day of the visit, multiple adults were observed in most core classrooms.
 - According to school leadership, the support services team was enhanced this year with new staffers, weekly meetings between support and content staff, and co-teaching support from the NYC Charter School Center. Learning specialists work with some students to preview material in order to prepare them to participate in their regular classrooms.
 - The school provides a number of interventions for struggling students, including tutoring, Saturday school, and the computer-based Achievement 3000 program. Teachers recently introduced afterschool office hours to help students.

- The school has worked to improve its professional culture for teachers and administrators and has devoted a range of resources to improving instructional and leadership skills.
 - The school's leadership team has been reorganized and expanded to include three assistant principals and a literacy coach. Each member of the leadership team is assigned to supervise a small number of teachers, allowing them to provide targeted support and guidance. Teachers interviewed stated that the new structure is a "huge help" and felt attention was more focused on meeting their individual needs.
 - External consultants have been brought in to assist the school's leadership team with its own development with assistance with a particular focus on enhancing instructional leadership skills.
 - The school has created and implemented a rubric defining expectations for instructional practice; teachers were instrumental in its development and those interviewed reported substantial buy-in. Domains included in the rubric include planning and preparation, classroom management, delivery of instruction, assessment, family outreach, and professional responsibilities.
 - School leaders recognized clear strengths and areas for improvement during classroom observations.
 - Students are released early on Wednesday to provide staff with the opportunity for weekly professional development. The school utilizes its own staff and well as external consultants to provide teachers with an array of training, including Teacher's College Writing Workshop and No-Nonsense Nurturing sessions.
 - The schedule has been designed to support regular grade team and subject area meetings, which are used for analyzing student data and planning purposes. Support staffers also participate in these meetings to coordinate interventions for struggling students and provide general education teachers with strategies for supporting their at-risk students. In addition, a morning half-hour "zero period," carved out for teachers before students start their day, provides additional time for teachers to plan and collaborate.
 - The principal has foregone a private office to allow for a student resource room and teacher work room. Staffers interviewed reported that the latter has enhanced staff collaboration.

- The school regularly administers useful assessments and is developing its capacity to use results to drive instructional and programmatic decision-making.

- Through the use of frequent reading level tests, interim assessments and “dress rehearsals” for state exams, administrators and teachers have identified specific areas of need. For example, based on analysis of performance data they have focused instruction on developing their students’ writing and listening skills. In one observed classroom, a teacher modeled an assignment on making connections between texts by reading out loud rather than presenting a sample paragraph and asking students to identify themes and evidence.
- Though there was limited evidence in observed classrooms on the day of the visit, both school leaders and teachers interviewed reported using formative and interim assessment data to establish flexible small groups within classes in order to target specific skills and re-teach topics based on need. For instance, they noted the use of Do Now tasks and Exit Passes to identify students struggling to master specific skills and form groups to address these deficits in subsequent lessons. In one observed English class the lesson began with a quick review of the use of “their, they’re, and there” based on the teacher’s observation of confusion in student work.
- Documents provided evidence of data analysis, including disaggregation of interim assessment results by grade and class, trends over time, and “power standards.” Dress rehearsal results are shared with the board.
- According to an NYC DOE ATS data pull in April 2012, St. Hope Leadership Academy serves a comparable percentage of at-risk students to its CSD of location.
 - The percentage of students at St. Hope who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch is 84.8% compared to the district’s 78.4%.
 - The percentage of students with IEPs or an ELL designation is close to district averages; the school student population is 15.5% special education students and 8.3% ELLs compared to the district’s 16.7% special education students and 10.9% ELLs.²⁵

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue to raise the consistency, quality and rigor of instruction in all of its classrooms. Its academic results on the NYS assessment were below CSD 5 at all four grade levels in ELA and two of four grades in Math.
 - A focus for professional development has been “100%” on encouraging teachers to hold all students accountable for learning. In some classes students were uniformly engaged in the learning activity, a large percentage volunteered to answer questions, and connections were made across the subjects, as exemplified by a student who addressed a question in a social studies class with a quote studied in an English class. Teachers in these classrooms effectively used a range of techniques to engage students, including cold calling, eliciting deeper answers, turn and talk, and students helping other students to answer questions. However, in other classes some students had their heads down, were not paying attention or appeared bored or disengaged. In one class students were asked to “turn and talk” with a partner, but some students had no partners and did not participate in the activity. In a number of classes students finished

²⁵ NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012; the school’s self-reported numbers (3/2/12) are similar to those from the ATS system pull with regard to students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (84%; 234 out of 278 and English Language Learners (8%; 21 out of 278), but vary with regard to special education students (19%; 53 out of 278), although this number includes both students with IEPs and students with 504 plans.

- assignments and then sat at their desks doing nothing while the teacher worked with other students. The school should continue to focus professional development and coaching on reaching its goal of 100% accountability for learning with continued attention to classroom management lesson, planning, and effective instructional strategies.
- Some teachers challenged students with higher order questioning techniques, such as asking them to explain their answers and make connections across texts or to personal experience. Some lesson objectives also focused on “pushing big ideas,” such as thematic comparison across texts. However, in a number of classes the questioning was low level and focused on basic recall or procedural steps. Students in some classes also spent a great deal of time copying from the board, which minimized their opportunities to grapple with actual text and concepts in a meaningful way. The school should continue to focus on developing the rigor of questions, assignments and assessments to ensure students master grade-level content and skills and ensure learning time is maximized in each classroom.
 - Though noted as a priority by school leaders, differentiated materials, pacing and instruction were observed in only a few classrooms. In one observed math class, a group of students worked independently on a packet, a learning specialist worked with three students, while the rest of the class participated in a discussion with the general education teacher about a math problem on the board. However, most observed classes were primarily whole-class instruction. The school should continue to develop teachers’ skills at differentiating instruction and make sure adequate materials are available that meet all students’ needs.
- The school reported that it has made substantive changes to its academic programs and will continue refining them based on the needs of students.
 - The school has worked to improve its literacy program, hiring a new literacy coach and working with a Teacher’s College consultant. Professional development has focused on literacy instruction and the school has added to its leveled libraries and increased student access to non-fiction texts. While these changes appear to be based on student needs, some friction was reported among interviewed faculty and instructional leaders as they balance expectations and implementation. School leaders should continue to monitor and evaluate program implementation to ensure a cohesive program emerges and ensure it has a positive impact on student learning.
 - The school has devoted substantial resources to teacher support and development, and should develop a more systematic approach to observation and feedback.
 - While teachers reported clear lines of accountability, not all reported receiving consistent observation and feedback. Teachers were not all clear about the protocols for observation, indicated feedback was not always structured, and noted a lack of follow-up. One teacher noted systematic use of the school’s teaching rubric to set goals, which informed support throughout the year, while another felt observation was sporadic and disjointed. Based on interview, more coordinated support appears to be targeted to novice teachers, such as ongoing assistance with lesson planning and modeling of instruction. School leadership should continue to work with the teacher evaluation rubric as a tool that can support all teachers in improving their craft and support the school in meeting its academic goals.

- While the school has explicit priorities and strategies guiding its work, it should also focus on clear and measurable goals.
 - Both school leaders and teachers are aware of the need to raise student performance and the importance of state test results in school accountability. Nevertheless, there was little mention of quantifiable benchmarks or targets that would allow the staff and board to measure progress and evaluate the efficacy of its programs. For example, while reading levels are assessed and tracked, there was no mention of targets for students or subgroups. The school should articulate clear goals and regularly measure progress to drive improvement efforts.
 - Staff described using item analysis and disaggregation to identify students and skills in need of re-teaching and interventions, but did not mention protocols to follow up and measure progress. They appreciated data tools such as Edusoft, but it is not clear these tools are being maximized. The school should continue professional development for teachers in the use of data, including school-wide accountability metrics as well as student and class results.



Part 3: 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 team (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

5. Is the school an academic success?
6. Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?
7. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
8. 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 established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with 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:

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- 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)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- 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 laws and conflict of interest regulations, 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 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide 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, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- 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
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- 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

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- 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
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as 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
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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 leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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, 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
- 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location²⁶ 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 with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline 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:

- 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 CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

²⁶ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

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:

- 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 (replication) Application
- 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:

- 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
- 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:

- 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
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011

ST. HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

APRIL 2011

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

St. Hope Academy Charter School is a middle school serving approximately 275 students from grade 5 through grade 8 in the 2010-2011 school year.²⁷ The school opened in 2008 with grades 5 through 7. Initially the school was affiliated with a California-based CMO that developed the model upon which the school is designed. During the first year of operation, the school separated from its CMO and now operates independently. It is currently functioning at scale with grades 5 through 8.²⁸ It is currently housed in DOE space in District 5.²⁹

The school population comprises 75.4% Black, 22.7% Hispanic, 1.9% White, and 0% Asian students. 77.7% of students receive free/reduced price lunch, compared to 79.7% in the district.³⁰ The student body includes 7.6% English language learners, compared to 12.3% in the district and 19.3% special education students, compared to 17.1% in the district³¹.

The school earned a B on its progress report in 2009-2010. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009-2010 was 95.7%³². The school is in good standing per state and federal accountability measures.³³

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office (CSO) conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on April 26, 2011:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO
- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSO

²⁷ NYC DOE ATS system

²⁸ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

²⁹ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

³⁰ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System

³¹ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled June 30, 2011.

³² NYC DOE School Progress Report

³³ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

- The school has a stable, mission-driven leadership team and school support staff.
 - During interviews on the day of the site visit leadership and support staff were open, reflective and direct in sharing school's strengths and areas of improvement.
 - Principal and Director of Curriculum and Instruction have started receiving leadership development support from Cambridge Associates this year. Leadership stated that the Cambridge consultants also visit classrooms and provide feedback with the intention of trying to norm a common vision of high-quality instruction.
 - School took ownership of low 2009-10 Math and ELA results, describing a process of data review, goal-setting, and instructional changes as "reality therapy."

- In self-evaluation, interviews, and professional development planning school evidenced a strong commitment to data use and a data-driven instructional focus.
 - School began year in August with diagnostic assessments and followed them up with interim assessments (IAs) administered every 6-7 weeks. Each administration of the IAs is followed by a full-day Data Day when teachers analyze results and create re-teaching plans.
 - Diagnostic and interim assessments are based on released state assessment items. The school uses Edusoft to scan and input responses and analyze test results, and plans to contract with Achievement Network, a non-profit that helps schools organize, analyze and respond to data, for the 2011-12 year.
 - School administered a "dress rehearsal" assessment in February for ELA and Math with somewhat reassuring results in ELA (less so in Math), which helped with spring test prep work.
 - Teachers discuss grades and academic performance with students during the Advisory period on Accountability Tuesdays. After each testing cycle, students complete individual reflection sheets that include detailed test results and standards for each question so that students can identify areas of strength and areas of growth.
 - The school's focus on data is reflected in its hallways, where students are publicly celebrated for their academic performance and growth on assessments. Names are listed for "high flyers" (81%+ in Math, 73%+ in ELA), "rising stars" (100%+ growth between IAs), honor roll, high honor roll, and honorable mentions.

- In response to low 2009-10 ELA results, school identified a number of actions to improve literacy instruction at the school.
 - The school joined Columbia University's Teachers College Readers and Writers Project (TCRWP), receiving curriculum resources, professional development, and support in implementing the TCRWP model, including 20 site support visits from a TC literacy coach.
 - The school's emphasis on literacy was evident—in lesson aims, questioning, class activities, and the rich print environment observed on the day of the visit. The school's cross-curricular focus on reading, writing and math across the curriculum was also noted by reviewers on the day of the visit.

- On the day of the visit, the school learning environment appeared safe, orderly, and supportive of learning.

- In the majority of classrooms observed on the day of the visit students were on task and focused in completing assignments.
 - School values (HARLEM in Action; created by the school's culture committee) were posted in rooms and hallways and are part of a citizenship rubric in its first year of launch.
 - Student Advisory occurs daily to help students and adults form relationships, develop positive expectations, good habits of learning, and address issues such as bullying as appropriate or necessary.
 - School administration and student support staff share a flexible approach to academic and behavioral interventions that is consistent with the school's mission and values.
- School is well supported by parents and families, and families are engaged in the life of the school.
 - Parent participation in 2009-2010 NYC DOE School Survey was well above city average (95% compared to about 50% in 2009-10), with above-average satisfaction scores by parents (91% satisfied or very satisfied with the education their child is receiving).
 - School has active parent association called the Parent Council with five officers and two co-chairs.
 - Parent Council meets monthly with school principal and publishes a monthly newsletter for parents.

Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to refine its outreach strategies for recruitment of ELL students and document its efforts for ongoing monitoring of effectiveness in reaching comparable ELL percentages with its CSD, as well as continue to monitor SPED student recruitment to ensure the school sustains its comparable enrollment average for SPED.
 - The school's student population currently includes 7.5% ELL students, which is lower than the district average of 12.3%. Its current population of SPED students (19.3%) is higher than the district average of 17.1%.³⁴
- The school should continue to work on improving its culture and learning environment, particularly as it relates to its approach to student behavior.
 - School survey results and teacher interviews during the day of the annual site visit indicated a disconnect between teachers and the school's leadership and support staff's approach to student discipline. Teachers see inconsistency where leadership sees flexibility. Interviewed teachers cited teacher turnover, a "lack of consistency in responsiveness," failure of suspensions to be a deterrent, a lack of administrator follow-through, and adding new students after the start of the school year as reasons why the problem hasn't been solved yet.
 - In addition to seeking to continue to improve Student Advisory and the use of St. Hope's citizenship rubric and HARLEM in Action values, the school may consider engaging staff in re-committing to the school's mission and vision and reviewing its approach to student behavioral expectations and discipline policy to ensure administrators and all staff are working effectively together for a safe and productive learning environment.
- The school should continue to develop its data-driven culture to improve effectiveness of using data to inform instruction and to improve school achievement results.

³⁴ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

- Observed instruction on the day of the visit was responsive to school-wide data findings linked to the school's IAs and "dress rehearsal" assessments but there was little observed differentiation of instruction within classes (sub-groups, individuals).
 - Structures are in place to facilitate more sophisticated and efficient use of data to target instruction and school instructional leadership should consider strategies and activities to increase teacher and student ownership of academic data.
- The school should continue to work on improving consistency and quality in instructional practices.
 - Pacing and rigor in observed classrooms on the day of the visit was inconsistent, as was the use of instructional strategies that engaged students more actively in their learning. In several classes observed, expectations for what students should be doing were not made clear and/or the goal/outcome of the lesson was not clearly articulated. The school is encouraged to focus efforts on raising and clarifying expectations for students and on refining its definition of rigorous instruction so that all students are challenged at appropriate levels.
 - Discussion strategies also varied in effectiveness and engagement, with some teachers using higher level questions and others only using fact recall questions; some teachers consistently performed checks for understanding after a concept was taught or before an activity was begun, while others did not.
 - School has advanced its efforts to arrive at a common instructional structure and language and should align professional development, teacher collaboration, and teacher evaluation expectations around a common understanding of what effective instruction is.
- To better advance the school's improvement efforts, school leadership should consider ways to add structure, focus, and consistency in the school's professional development program and teacher evaluation process.
 - In interviews during the school visit, teachers described the school's approach to professional development as "sporadic," "self-driven," and "inconsistent," and said "newer teachers don't know what to request".
 - Teachers also reported inconsistency of frequency and duration in informal and evaluative classroom observations and some said the latter lacked structured expectations and objectivity.
 - While school leadership has intentionally sought to encourage teachers to plan for their own professional growth and identify workshops to meet their individual needs, survey results, interviews, and academic performance and school improvement efforts suggest a more structured approach to professional development and teacher evaluation would be beneficial. The school's instructional leadership should consider ways to work with teachers to identify and prioritize professional development needs linked to school and teacher performance and organize those priorities into a cohesive professional development plan linked to measurable outcomes.
- The school should continue its efforts to strengthen parent engagement and further leverage parental satisfaction.
 - Staff reported that parent attendance at school events varies and could be better.
 - The board is considering adding a parent representative to the Board of Trustees in 2011-12.
 - According to leadership team, school staff help to coordinate efforts and effectiveness of Parent Council. School leadership should consider working with Parent Council co-chairs to identify strategies for improving independence of PC and for using the PC to mobilize parents to more effectively support the school and its mission.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific

- Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards
 - Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

St. Hope Leadership Academy

**Charter School 388
222 West 134th Street
New York
NY 10030**

Board Chair: Mr. Morty Ballen

Dates of review: May 8th 2009

**Lead Reviewer(s): Aamir Raza, Chris Hawkins, Fred Lisker
&
Bruce Berry (Cambridge Education)**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

St. Hope Leadership Academy ("SHLA") is a middle school with 138 students from grade 5 through grade 7. The school population comprises 72% Black, 27% Hispanic and 1% Asian and other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 21.8% special education students. Males account for 49% and females for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008-2009 was 96.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 82% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

SHLA is in its first year and is beginning to build structures and systems. It has made an effective start in establishing whole-school culture through its citizenship program and has been very successful in ensuring a high level of attendance. While the administration has worked hard to establish a whole-school culture, there are a number of areas that have not yet been embedded and are underdeveloped.

The school has made a good start in collecting data from exams and assessments, particularly in English language arts (ELA) and math. Although this is useful at individual student level, there is no analysis of the performance of different groups that would provide comparative information, for example, in relation to city averages. There are no clear, measurable goals for student achievement across the school and the information from regular assessments is not used effectively to monitor students' progress. However, there is good involvement of students in setting some targets for themselves. 'Accountability Tuesday' enables students and teachers to reflect on the past week's achievements and to set personal targets for the coming week which go home to parents. However, these do not focus enough on sharp academic outcomes.

Strengths and weaknesses in instruction are evaluated and teachers receive brief feedback. This often focuses on classroom management rather than pedagogy and learning. However, in spite of this there remains inconsistency in students' behavior, attitudes and responses in class. In classes where differentiation is effective, students respond well to the teacher and the instruction. However, where there is weak management or insufficient attention to individual students' needs, teachers find it difficult to gain the respect of students and behavior is poor. For teachers new to the school, there are effective systems for induction, support and training.

The school has a brief strategic plan but this lacks sufficient detail, clear goals and regular checks on the progress towards these. This makes it difficult for the administration to evaluate progress or ensure accountability. There is not enough focus or rigor in target setting across all

subjects and, while a start has been made towards this in ELA and math, it is inconsistent. The arrangements for special education students are, at present, inadequate and need to be urgently addressed. Many of the reviews are out of compliance and the current arrangements are not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of students' individual education plans.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects a useful range of information and data from tests and assessments, particularly in ELA and math.
- There is good involvement of students in monitoring their own work and setting targets for themselves.
- Parents receive regular information about their child's progress.
- Student attendance is high.
- Teachers have many opportunities to improve their instructional skills through observing each other and taking part in regular professional development.
- There are effective systems for the induction and support of new teachers.
- The school has made an effective start towards establishing a whole-school culture through its citizenship program.

Areas of improvement

- Develop a strategic plan that clearly prioritizes goals, including timeframes for achieving these, and regular checks to evaluate the progress made.
- Set clear, measurable goals for student achievement and use the information from regular assessments to monitor their progress towards these.
- Extend the analysis of data to monitor and evaluate the progress of different sub-groups in the school.
- Ensure that all teachers plan for differentiated instruction to challenge students at all levels and identify the best instructional strategy to deliver this.
- Ensure consistency across the school in managing students' behavior.
- Ensure that the school meets all of the compliance regulations for special education students.
- Establish sound internal controls and streamline delivery of services that were initially provided by St. Hope.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets Charter School Office's (CSO) evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student’s progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped.

The school gathers a good range of data on individual student performance, regularly updated through test and assessment results. This gives school leaders a clear picture of the progress of individual students. Additionally the use of a web-based program enables the administration to gather data on other aspects of student development, for example, behavior incidents and attendance. However, as this is a new school, there is little data other than what the students arrived with. While the school is gathering its own assessment data, it lacks any detailed analysis for different groups of students such as English language learners or ethnic groups. This prevents information being used to measure comparative progress against the school’s own performance over time, or the city averages.

The administration and class teachers do not make effective use of the available data to predict outcomes, set goals for the end of the year or to plan instruction. This data is not being used sufficiently well to guide or influence target setting. For example, the gap between the percentage of students achieving proficiency and the 75% level is high, other than in math at grade 6. There has been some helpful analysis of exam questions to evaluate the areas of strength and weakness to plan for specific interventions but this is used mostly at advisory level, rather than in subject lesson planning. This conferencing does include next steps but is not sufficiently developed towards sharp long-term target setting.

The arrangements for special education students are inadequate. Since the departure of the special education coordinator in December, this role has been carried out by a part-time consultant. However, many of the reviews are out of compliance and related services are not always provided for two periods in grade 5 and 6 ELA and math. This does not fulfill the requirements of students’ individual education plans. The school has made some progress more recently, but needs to move forward into full compliance.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped.

The school has developed broad goals within two overarching objectives. The goals relate to effective instruction focusing on student outcomes and overall school outcomes, operations and culture. The short-term student outcomes are suitably challenging, including the expectations for

value added performance. However, while there are long-term targets for both ELA and math by 2012 - 13, the lack of a long-term structured plan means that there are no intermediate goals that the administration can use to evaluate their progress. There are also weaknesses in identifying targets for different groups of students, for example, by gender or ethnicity. As a result, the administration has no way of knowing how well these students are progressing in relation to similar groups in other schools across the city. There is work to do to develop a more focused and rigorous approach to target setting across all subjects with clearly differentiated plans and timescales. A start has been made towards this in ELA and math but this is presently inconsistent across the school.

A relative strength of the school's assessment procedures is the way in which students are involved. The school's 'Accountability Tuesday' is an effective way of getting students and teachers to reflect on the past week's achievements and to set short-term targets for the coming week. However, many of these relate to personal reflection on procedures rather than sharp academic outcomes. Nevertheless, the information from these sessions goes home to parents so that they are informed about their child's progress and responses, enabling them to be involved in the education process.

The use of data for planning differentiated instruction is patchy. The most competent teachers provide appropriately for their students' varying needs. However, there are examples of classes where management and behavior are good but differentiation is weak. In these instances the teachers fail to build on students' prior knowledge and understanding and waste opportunities to move progress forward at a greater rate. Students who fail exams are recorded on reflection sheets, which form the basis of conferences with teachers. However, the piece that is missing from this process is the clear articulation of targets and next steps for students so that they know precisely what their strengths are and what they need to do next to succeed.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school follows the mandated curriculum and includes art as an additional subject, however there is little beyond this. Common frameworks for ELA and math are helpful in ensuring consistency in planning but do not provide clear goals for students' achievement by the end of the year. The splitting of grade 5 into three classes each morning for ELA and math reduces group size and has assisted with improving classroom management but, so far, there is little evidence that this has led to improvement in achievement. Some subject planning, for example, science in grades 5 and 7, provides a strong investigative and practical approach but this is not consistent across all of the school. There is no effective evaluation of students' learning styles in an attempt to match the instructional approach more closely to their needs. There is little in the way of accountability for teachers because of the lack of sharp targets or sufficiently high expectations. Observation of instruction focuses much more on class management than the learning outcomes. Generally there is a positive climate but this is variable and weaker teachers find it more difficult to engage with or manage students' behaviour.

The school does well in ensuring regular attendance and the most recent figures of 96% are well above the city average. The development of strategies to encourage good attendance is a strong, successful feature of the school.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal and the dean carry out formal and informal observations, which evaluate strengths and weaknesses in instruction. In addition, the principal conducts regular walkthroughs in classrooms. Brief feedback is given from these visits – usually in the form of email commentary or a 'wows and wondering' sheets. However, these lack a sharp focus on the outcomes of instruction and students' achievement in class and often focus on the management rather than the pedagogy. Nevertheless, areas for improvement, particularly in subjects such as art, science and physical education have been identified by the administration.

Teachers are generally experienced, most having taught for more than three years. There has been only one new entrant this year. There are sound structures to ensure effective induction and training for new teachers. For example, they receive two weeks of orientation and are partnered with a teacher who has recognized skills. Additionally, adjustments to their teaching schedule enable them to take part in common preparation time and development planning with more experienced teachers. Class teachers have the opportunity to make three visits to other classrooms during the year to observe peer instruction. This has proved helpful for teachers, particularly where there has been some guidance as to where good examples of ELA or math teaching can be seen. However, the outcomes do not yet indicate that these have been fully effective in raising the quality of teaching for some targeted teachers.

Professional development has some basis in data analysis but there is much more focus on classroom management and institutional systems than on instructional approaches. The lack of guidance for teachers on moderation of work showed up clearly at the first grading session, where there was a wide range of grades awarded for similar quality work. Behavior is inconsistent across the school. In classes where the planning is effective and takes into account students' needs, students respond well to the teacher and the instruction. However, in some classes, teachers have weak management or instructional skills and find it difficult to gain the respect of students. This lack of consistency shows in the variance in approaches to managing behavior. The school follows the tenets of 'Teaching with Love and logic' but because there is often a range of approaches being used, this leads to inconsistency. In some instances, not enough time is taken to allow for the strategies being tried to embed and establish. This is exemplified by the marked differences in the rates of behavior referrals between teachers. Guidance for students is facilitated through a range of consultants. This has been mostly in three key areas, for example, leaders for new schools, which gives access to practitioners to support aspects of their work. In addition, senior staff from local universities provide access to further training. This is a helpful and valuable addition for students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

There is currently no extended strategic plan and the two page document of goals for 2008 – 2009 is insufficiently detailed. Outcomes are agreed between the principal and the board but there are no built-in checks on progress towards these and there are no explicit links to features such as success criteria or remediation. Most of the targets are aspirational, for example, achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) but others lack sharpness. There is no reference to timeframes, checks, milestones or responsible persons and there is a lack of clarity in some of the outcomes. However, it does have challenging numerical targets set for each grade in ELA and math. All of these are higher than would be expected from the matched data in students' previous results.

School leaders make use of data from exams and tests but without a whole-school strategic plan, this information cannot be used effectively to modify the overall direction for the school and can only be effective at the level of some individual subjects. Periodic assessment is variable. There is regular use of assessments and evaluations to record outcomes but these do not link to targets at school or subject faculty level. While data is used to set students' own targets for the next marking period, it is inconsistent. There are some good examples in ELA and math but this is down to individuals' capabilities rather than whole-school or subject department arrangements.

Quality Statement 6 - Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.

The Board is responsible for the overall direction and fiscal well-being of the school. As such, the Board has the authority and duty to adopt policies and by-laws that are necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and produce optimal academic results. Those administrative and daily operational responsibilities need to be delegated to principals, senior management/administrators, and board appointed officers to manage the school within the established policies. The principal /senior administrators, and board appointed officers should then be held accountable for performance.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

During the school's inception stage, SHLA board entered into a partnership agreement with the non-profit organization, St. Hope based out of Sacramento, California. The partner organization provided the necessary start-up assistance and worked closely with the school until St. Hope (the non-profit) was reported to be under investigation for some funding related issue.

This was a testing time for a newly constituted board and a newly opened charter school. The board of trustees moved swiftly to address all the concerns and communicated promptly with the CSO. Some board members resigned due to their close affiliation with St. Hope organization and steps were taken towards severing the relationship between the school and St. Hope organization. For the time being, the school principal is managing several (if not all) aspects of the school that includes some operational, managerial, financial and educational areas since the school lost its Director of Instruction early in the school year. At the time of the visit, the school board had some candidates for the Director of Instruction position. In the meantime, the school's board chair (who is also an accomplished charter leader) is providing ongoing coaching to the principal.

After overcoming the earlier operational difficulties, the SHLA board has put some systems in place to move the school forward. The board has provided adequate oversight to the school and plans to evaluate the school leader at the end of the school year. The board keeps itself informed by the principal's report and by requesting financial (YTD Expenses, Cash Flow, Budget, Variance Analysis) and other data driven (dashboard, scores, summaries, internal assessments) information as it relates to the education model of the school. The school's board has members with legal (a founding board member of another charter school in NYC), two community members, two educators, and financial expertise. The board of trustees identified the search for an academic dean/instructional leader, school growth plan, need for facilities and establishing school culture as its highest priority.

Quality Statement 7 - Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The SHLA board has contracted an audit firm to produce school's financial statements. The school maintains necessary financial documents to facilitate decision making at all levels. The unaudited balance sheet as of March '09 casts a good financial position with liquid assets totaling \$712,971 and the school has current liabilities of \$265,232. The school is in good position to meet its short-term financial obligations. The statement of activities as of March '09 does not pose any particular concerns. The school provided cash flow analysis to the annual site visit team projected a positive balance of \$72,145 for June '09.

During the visit, school's officials were interviewed on the procurement process, check signing, randomly selected paid invoices were inspected, and fingerprinting documents were inspected. As stated earlier in the report, the school is still coping with the trickle down effects of breaking its relationship with St. Hope organization. Initially, fiscal and operational support was to be

provided by St. Hope organization but due to the untimely break, those services were interrupted. The school is working with another financial consultant to acquire all records, files and develop systems and in house capacity to run efficient fiscal operation. Although the school is following many of its financial policies, the school clearly needs to do more in order to responsibly track and record its expenses and be a pioneer in this area. At the visit, one purchase order was found without signatures, some late fees had been charged to the school for being over 45 days overdue, and in some instances, and receipts were not attached to the reimbursement documents. In addition, some reimbursements for the school leader were not approved by someone at the board level. An appropriate balance of segregation of duties must be part of the schools plans as they add an operations position to the organizational chart. Paid invoices demonstrate that the school lacks consistent application of standards while processing purchase order approvals, presence of packing slips and invoices along with proof of payment.

Office of Charter Schools Quality Criteria 2008-2009

St. Hope Leadership Academy				
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty have...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?	X			
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?	X			
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?	X			
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?	X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school’s own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?	X			
1.6 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?	X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 1	X			
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?	X			
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?	X			
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?	X			
2.4 involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/carers?		X		

2.6 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2	X			

DEFINITIONS

“Analyze” or “analysis” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- 2 the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- 3 the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- 4 the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“Assessment results” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“Data-informed processes” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“Organizational decisions or strategies” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“Sub-groups of students” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data and hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge?		X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum to enhance learning both within and outside the school day and hold teachers for making instruction interesting and compelling?		X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for creating a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment?	X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, classroom and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X		
3.5 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?		X		
3.6 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor			X	

student attendance and tardiness and report actual attendance data?				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X		
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?		X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising, other student support services and partnerships with outside entities around stated academic and personal development goals?		X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective learning and effectively address discipline-related incidents?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X		
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.				
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X			
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X			
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X		
5.4 teachers and school leaders use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures to revise plans immediately and make strategic decisions to modify practices in order to reach stated goals?	X			

5.5 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?	X			
5.6 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X			

Quality Statement 6 – Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.

<i>To what extent does the Board.....</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
6.1 ensure effective, broad outreach to create a student body that is representative of the school's Community School District which includes comparable percentages of IEPs & ELLs			X	
6.2 manage any conflict of interest within the governing body and throughout the school?			X	
6.3 hold EMOs, CMOs and school leadership accountable in their positions?			X	
6.4 ensure that teachers are provided with high quality professional development opportunities to further build on their professional expertise?			X	
6.5 respond to parent, staff and student concerns/complaints?			X	
6.6 provide ongoing training for board members so that they are able to fulfill the duties of their positions?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 6			X	

Quality Statement 7 – Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.

<i>To what extent do the school and its Board.....</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
7.1 ensure that an independent auditor is appointed to undertake an annual financial audit, which is submitted to the OCS along with any other relevant documentation?			X	

7.2	comply with the adoption of an annual budget for the upcoming school year, which is submitted to the OCS for review?			X	
7.3	maintain an accurate balance sheet, statement of activities, year-to-date expense report and statement of cash flow?			X	
7.4	implement procedures that provide adequate internal control measures to detect and prevent financial fraud, such as bank reconciliation, revenue recognition and travel reimbursement?	X			
7.5	align financial decision making to analysis and evaluation of student achievement data?			X	
7.6	focus budget decisions on the priorities for school development and improvement?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 7			X		



Quality Review Scoring Key

△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
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Charter School Compliance Checklist

Does the Board and the school . . .	YES	NO	In process
1. have a documented policy for suspensions and expulsions?	X		
2. maintain up to date and compliant with IDEA Regulations for IEPs?	X		
3. send newsletters and other parent communications home in the predominant languages of the school community?	X		
4. implement a comprehensive special education program that complies with applicable governing laws?	X		
5. implement a comprehensive program for English Language Learners that complies with federal law?	X		
6. publish a schedule of regular board meetings that is easily accessible to the general public?	X		
7. ensure that accurate minutes from Board meetings are maintained and published?	X		
8. ensure that proposed contracts with EMOs and CMOs are submitted punctually to the OCS for review?	X		
9. maintain a functioning parent organization?	X		

10. ensure that parents are informed of the time and location of Board meetings that are open to the public?	X		