



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships  
2013-2014

**VOICE CHARTER SCHOOL OF NEW YORK  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview

### School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	VOICE Charter School of New York
Board Chair(s)	Richard Bayles
School Leader(s)	Frank Headley
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 30
Physical Address(es)	37-15 13 <sup>th</sup> Street, Queens 11101 (K-1) 36-24 12 <sup>th</sup> Street, Queens 11106 (2-6)
Facility Owner(s)	DOE (K-1) and private (2-6)

### School Profile

- VOICE Charter School of New York (VOICE) is an elementary and middle school, which served 549 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K-6 during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in 2008-2009, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's anticipated full grade span is K-8 which it expects to reach in the 2015-2016 school year. The school is located in both public and privately-operated facilities in Queens within Community School District (CSD) 30.<sup>2</sup>
- VOICE Charter School of New York enrolls new students in kindergarten and backfills vacant spots in all grades where space permits. There were 818 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.<sup>3</sup> The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 94.8%.<sup>4</sup>
- VOICE Charter School of New York was renewed during the 2012-2013 school year for a full term (five years), and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership includes Frank Headley, Principal; Hakeem Mir, Assistant Principal; and Zoe Rind, Assistant Principal. The Principal has been with the school since opening.
- VOICE Charter School had a student to teacher ratio of 23:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served 21 sections across all grades, with an average class size of 26.<sup>5</sup>
- The lottery preferences for the VOICE Charter School's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school, as well as students who are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program / Free Lunch or Reduced Price Lunch.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

<sup>3</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

<sup>4</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

<sup>5</sup> Self-reported information given on 9/12/14 based on ATS data from 10/31/13.

<sup>6</sup> VOICE Charter School's 2013-2014 application.

## Part 2: Summary of Findings

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

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

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

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
VOICE Charter School of New York	-	57.4%	56.5%	29.5%
CSD 30	-	49.7%	54.2%	31.2%
Difference from CSD 30	-	7.7	2.3	-1.7
NYC	-	48.1%	50.6%	28.0%
Difference from NYC	-	9.3	5.9	1.5
New York State	-	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-	4.6	1.4	-1.6

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
VOICE Charter School of New York	-	64.8%	65.7%	45.0%
CSD 30	-	55.9%	67.4%	35.7%
Difference from CSD 30	-	8.9	-1.7	9.3
NYC	-	54.8%	61.3%	32.7%
Difference from NYC	-	10.0	4.4	12.3
New York State	-	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-	1.5	0.9	13.9

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

#### Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	B	B	A
Student Progress	-	B	C	B
Student Performance	-	B	B	A
School Environment	-	A	A	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	4.0	1.8	2.4

#### Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), VOICE Charter School fully met three, and did not meet three of its 11 academic performance goals identified in its charter. Five of these academic goals could not be reported on at the time this report was written or were not applicable.

## Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment<sup>7</sup>

- VOICE redesigned the instructional schedule to better meet the needs of their students. Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year. Instead of attending music classes three times a day, students attended music class approximately nine times a week. Test taking skills, extended science and math, art, and social skills classes replaced the former music class periods.
- In Summer 2013, VOICE teachers spent time rewriting curriculum maps to fit with assessment questions for the New York State Standards (NYSS) and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and refining the curriculum maps to integrate the CCLS, the New York State Standards, and their core curriculum. Every summer VOICE teachers spend three weeks engaging in a team-based workshop process to map the curriculum for the coming school year.
- VOICE refined the mapping of their workshop model to increase alignment with the argumentative strand of the CCLS.
- In math, VOICE increased the classroom use of manipulatives (e.g., blocks) to enhance math instruction and is working to balance the math approach more toward teaching algebraic fundamentals rather than math strategies geared toward testing. Problem solving protocols were piloted in several grade levels and additional fact fluency practice was incorporated into the curriculum.
- At VOICE, interim assessments help guide teachers in re-teaching concepts that are not mastered by 80% of students in the class. As teachers map the curriculum for the next year, they review the interim assessments to see where remapping is needed to enable all students to master the desired content. These assessments help inform which students will receive support in their areas of weakness. Those students who demonstrate mastery or an accelerated rate of achievement will be given more challenging work to support their growth.
- Within the music program, students are assessed individually in the areas of rhythm, pitch accuracy, and beat four times a year. This practice has trained VOICE students to always be aware of what they are learning in music class and it has ensured that no students are neglected. Music teachers track student progress through multiple data points, and provide intervention accordingly.
- An Intervention Department was introduced in the 2013-2014 school year with the intent of using detailed analysis of the NYS test scores to target students in severe need of support.
- The school hired a third social worker, and this team of three is now able to provide continuous service throughout the school day and respond quickly to the needs of students as they arise.
- Teachers at VOICE are provided with ongoing professional development in *Love and Logic*, a non-confrontational behavioral management system that removes focus on praise and punishment and instead emphasizes a calm, caring approach.
- Several tools help facilitate the frequent observation, feedback, collaborative planning, and self-reflection that VOICE teachers undertake. The use of the program Dropbox eases the sharing of documents across the school. Each VOICE teacher has Dropbox on his or her computer and mobile phone. All lesson plans and important documents are uploaded to Dropbox.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, VOICE continued to develop the staff by instituting more formal systems of staff development to foster promotions from within the VOICE faculty. Three assistants were promoted to faculty.
- VOICE is developing the middle school music teachers to get formal Kodály method certification.
- VOICE has created an evaluation rubric for both teachers and teacher assistants to further provide professional development in the form of detailed feedback.

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<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted ACR self-evaluation form on 2/11/14.

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

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

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

- The Board has 15 board members, including one non-voting member. The Board is in compliance with its bylaws which state the minimum number of members shall be seven and the maximum shall be 15. The Board Chair, Richard Bayles, has been on the Board since the school's inception.
- As evidenced from a review of the Board roster, the Board is stable, with just one member leaving at the end of the term, with his replacement joining the board during the 2013-2014 school year.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a reporting structure with school leadership providing periodic updates on academic performance to the Board.

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

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

- School leadership remains stable, experiencing no leadership turnover.
- Instructional staff turnover from the 2012-13 school year totaled 21%, with four out of 33 instructional staff members choosing not to return and three out of 33 being asked to not return for the 2013-14 school year. As of February 2014, during that school year, only one teacher had left the school.<sup>8</sup>
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 95% which meet its charter goal.
- Student turnover was 10% of students from the 2012-2013 school year who did not return at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, and 7% of students who left the school between the start of the 2013-2014 school year and February 2014.<sup>9</sup>
- The school reports having an active parent association, VOICE Parent Association, as evidenced in the school's ACR self-evaluation.

### **2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results<sup>10</sup>**

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Average		Parents	71%	54%
Communication	Average		Teachers	90%	83%
Engagement	Average		Students	N/A	83%
Safety & Respect	Above Average				

<sup>8</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

<sup>9</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

<sup>10</sup> Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

## Financial Health

### Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for at least two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of the end of the school year revealed that the school met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school met its debt obligations.

### Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years, and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13 and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

### Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed for FY13 showed no material findings.

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

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

#### **Board Compliance**

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws which outlines a minimum of seven and a maximum of 15 members.
- Currently, officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- The Board has not held the number of Board meetings outlined by applicable regulations, 2010 Charter Law and the Board's bylaws. Based on submitted Board minutes, the Board held 11 out of 12 required meetings for the 2012-2013 school year.

#### **School Compliance**

The school is in compliance with:

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

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school has not posted its 2012-2013 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

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

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

- VOICE will continue to expand as outlined in its charter until it reaches its full grade span of K-8. VOICE currently has no plans for expansion beyond phase-in growth and no plans for replication.
- The Admissions Task Force, in order to ensure that enrollment targets are met for middle school, plans to conduct a direct mail marketing program. The Board's Admissions Task Force will oversee this marketing plan.
- In addition to Board input, VOICE has engaged its parent community in the planning of the new middle school. The VOICE Parent Association ("PA") has been active in the planning of the middle school program. The Principal meets with the co-chairs of the PA every month. The PA initiated VOICE's creation of the Instrument Task Force because they wanted their children to have the option to learn to play a musical instrument in middle school.

### **Enrollment and Retention Targets**

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, "to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets" for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate "Repeated failure to comply with the requirement" as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
  - o The law directs schools to demonstrate "that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students" in the event it has not yet met its targets.
  - o The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school's performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
- For the 2013-2014 school year (and the prior four years), VOICE Charter School served a higher percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch compared to CSD 30 and citywide averages. VOICE Charter School also served a higher percentage of English Language Learners than the citywide average, but served a smaller percentage than the CSD 30 average. VOICE Charter School served a comparable percentage of students with disabilities to CSD 30, and a smaller percentage than the citywide average.

### **Special Populations**

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>School</b>	66.4%	69.6%	73.7%	77.2%	79.7%	12.8%	12.6%	14.8%	14.2%	14.1%	12.8%	14.0%	16.0%	21.4%	17.0%
CSD 30	53.1%	53.1%	60.5%	64.5%	70.9%	13.4%	13.4%	13.2%	13.7%	14.4%	24.5%	23.7%	22.0%	21.0%	20.2%
NYC	62.1%	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	73.5%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	17.1%	16.1%	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.7%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-2	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6
CSD(s)	30	30	30	30	30

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