



Charter Schools Institute  
*The State University of New York*

## **Bronx Success Academy Charter School 2**

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### **School Evaluation Report 2010-11**

Visit Date: May 7, 2011

Report Issued: October 6, 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”), jointly with the New York State Board of Regents, are required by law to provide oversight sufficient to ensure that each charter school that the SUNY Trustees have authorized is in compliance with applicable law and the terms of its charter. The SUNY Trustees, however, consistent with the goals of the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998, view their oversight responsibility more broadly and positively than purely monitoring compliance. Accordingly, they have adopted policies that require the Charter Schools Institute (“the Institute”) to provide ongoing evaluation of charter schools authorized by them. By providing this oversight and feedback, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **Document Performance.** The Institute collects information to build a database of a school’s performance over time. By evaluating the school periodically, the Institute can more clearly ascertain trends, determine areas of strength and weakness, and assess the school’s likelihood for continued success or failure. Having information based on past patterns, the Institute is in a better position to make recommendations regarding the renewal of each school’s charter, and the State University Trustees are better informed in making a decision on whether a school’s charter should be renewed. In addition, a school will have a far better sense of where they stand in the eyes of its authorizer.
- **Facilitate Improvement.** By providing substantive information about the school’s academic, fiscal and organizational strengths and weaknesses to the school’s board of trustees, administration, faculty and other staff, the Institute can play a role in helping the school identify areas for improvement.
- **Disseminate Information.** The Institute disseminates information about the school’s performance not only to its board of trustees, administration and faculty, but to all stakeholders, including parents and the larger community in which the school is located.

This annual School Evaluation Report includes three primary components. The first section, titled Executive Summary of School Evaluation Visit provides an overview of the primary conclusions of the evaluation team regarding the current visit to the school, summarizing areas of strength and areas for growth. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided, as background and context for the current evaluation. The second section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as summary historical information regarding the life of the school. Finally, in a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit, this report presents the analysis of evidence collected during an evaluation visit conducted in the current school year, with an italicized paragraph that introduces each specific benchmark and provides a summarizing conclusion.

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and note areas in need of improvement with respect to the school’s performance as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

## **Background**

Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized by a set of benchmarks that address the academic success of the school, including teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school as an organization, including such items as governance and management. Entitled the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, these established criteria are used on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

While the primary focus of the visit is an evaluation of the school's academic program and organizational capacity, issues regarding compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations may be noted (and subsequently addressed); where the Institute finds serious deficiencies in particular relating to student health and safety, it may take additional and immediate action. However, monitoring for compliance is not the principal purpose of the visit.

This is an analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Some benchmarks are covered in greater detail than others in an effort to highlight areas of concern at the school and provide additional feedback in these areas. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to Bronx Success Academy Charter School 2 (BSA 2) on May 7, 2011. While BSA 2 is in its first year of operation, the Institute holds all schools accountable for the renewal benchmarks with consideration given to its point in the charter period. A school in its first year is expected to have begun to build systems and procedures that would provide a platform for delivering effective instruction to improve student learning and achievement. Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit, BSA 2 is on a trajectory toward meeting its Renewal Benchmarks by establishing systems and procedures in its educational program. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in the report; some of the more salient indicators include the following.

### *Academic Success*

#### Areas of Strength

- Bronx Success Academy 2 has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning
- The school has a clearly-defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.
- High-quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school. Instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students and instructional time is maximized.

### *Organizational Capacity*

#### Areas of Strength

- BSA 2 and the school's charter management organization (CMO)\* have established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

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\* BSA 2's CMO is the Success Charter Network.

## **SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

### **Opening Information**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees     | October 23, 2009  |
| Date Initial Charter Approved by: Board of Regents | February, 17 2010 |
| School Opening Date:                               | August 2010       |

### **Location**

| <b>School Year(s)</b> | <b>Location(s)</b>                    | <b>Grades</b> | <b>District</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 2010-Present          | 968 Cauldwell Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456 | K-2           | NYC CSD 8       |

### **Partner Organizations**

|                 | <b>Partner Name</b>     | <b>Partner Type</b> | <b>Dates of Service</b> |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Current Partner | Success Charter Network | CMO                 | 2010 - Present          |

### **Current Mission Statement**

The mission of Bronx Success Academy Charter School 2 is to provide New York City elementary students with the knowledge, skills, character, and disposition to meet and exceed New York State standards and give them the resources to lead and succeed in school, college and life.

### **Current Key Design Elements**

|   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• focus on student achievement;</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research based and results driven curriculum;</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100 minutes of daily reading instruction, 30 minutes of daily writing instruction, 80 minutes of daily mathematics, and daily exploratory-based science instruction totaling 4 and a half hours each week for each student;</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the effective use of student performance data to improve student learning;</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a longer school day and year;</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intensive intervention programs for struggling students and enrichment programs for high-performing students;</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• highly qualified, highly trained staff;</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strong school culture; and</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strong support for students with disabilities and English language learners.</li></ul>  |

### School Characteristics

| School Year | Original<br>Chartered<br>Enrollment | Actual<br>Enrollment <sup>1</sup> | Original<br>Chartered<br>Grades | Actual Grades | Days of<br>Instruction |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 2010-11     | 180                                 | 192                               | K-1                             | K-1           | 180                    |

### Current Board Members<sup>2</sup>

| Board Member Name       | Term<br>Expires | Position/Committees |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Randy Collins           | 2011            | Member              |
| Steven Galbraith        | 2011            | Chair               |
| John Gargiulo           | 2011            | Member              |
| Sidney Hawkins-Gargiulo | 2011            | Treasurer           |
| Graham Officer          | 2011            | Member              |
| Elizabeth Ling          | 2011            | Vice Chair          |
| Vinit Sethi             | 2011            | Member              |
| Michael Weinraub        | 2011            | Member              |
| Megan Officer           | 2011            | Secretary           |

### School Leader(s)

| School Year | School Leader(s) Name and Title |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 2010-2011   | Vanessa Bangser                 |

### School Visit History

| School Year | Visit Type | Evaluator<br>(Institute/External) | Date        |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 2010-2011   | First Year | Institute                         | May 7, 2011 |

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<sup>1</sup> Source: SUNY Charter School Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.) According to its charter, BSA2 may exceed its chartered enrollment by up to 20%.

<sup>2</sup> Source: School renewal application and Institute board information.

## **SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

### **Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence**

#### **Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.*

Bronx Success Academy 2 (BSA 2) staff regularly administers assessments which are aligned to the school's English language arts curriculum and also purportedly aligned to state standards. Teachers report they administer Interim Assessments (IAs) throughout the academic year. Members of the school's teaching and leadership teams as well as staff from the school's charter management organization (CMO)\* collaborate and develop IA items and norm writing rubrics. Teachers also report they administer end-of-unit assessments, which are derived from the school's mathematics curriculum, as well as daily writing prompts and daily reading fluency "exit tickets" (short, informal end-of-lesson assessment tools).

Teachers analyze IA results and use them to improve their instructional effectiveness. Students who score below the school's prescribed reading expectations are individually monitored for possible academic remediation services. Teachers report they also examine IA result at the classroom level for re-teaching content, reorganizing small instructional groups, identifying individual student academic interventions and for creating Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. Grade-level data sessions are conducted to discuss instructional intervention strategies within classrooms and across grade levels. The school's assessment coordinator meets with grade-level teacher teams to assist with instructional strategy design, to disaggregate grade and class assessment data and to develop plans for re-teaching content.

Teachers report parents receive student achievement progress results three times per year. The reports detail how well students progress against benchmarks created by the CMO. These benchmarks are purported to be aligned with state performance standards and define grade level skills. Students are rated on these benchmarks as below, approaching, meeting or exceeding expectations.

#### **Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.*

Both BSA 2's leadership team and its teachers report that the school's English language arts (ELA) and math curricula are "balanced curriculum programs." The balanced ELA curriculum is a combination of the CMO's *THINK* program and purchased curriculum programs that ensure students receive a range of literacy instruction in both fluency and phonics. The leadership reports that *THINK* is a literacy "framework" that teaches students to become avid readers, writers and critical thinkers. Teachers model effective reading and writing for their students so that they may later

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\* BSA 2's CMO is the Success Charter Network.



independently practice appropriate skills. The *THINK* curriculum has multiple components: non-fiction study, interactive writing, independent reading and writers' workshops. Teachers report that within the writers' workshop unit students write for 25-45 minutes per day. The school's *THINK* curriculum is continually refined through a collaborative process between the CMO's literacy team and BSA 2 teachers.

In kindergarten, students begin reading with the Stepping-Stones reading series and continue through first grade with the Reading-Roots series. Each reading program has materials and books at designated reading levels. As reading progresses, students move through higher levels. The math curriculum is based on the purchased TERC math program and is augmented with Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). Teachers use CGI school-wide to develop student problem solving ability.

The CMO, in collaboration with school personnel, has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum framework. Teachers report that a CMO curriculum committee reviews the TERC curriculum and determines if the material aligns with state standards. The school also has abundant instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework.

### **Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)**

*High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school. Instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students, and instructional time is maximized.*

Teachers implement purposeful lessons with a sense of urgency. They encourage significant student-to-student dialogue and ask students higher-order, inquiry-based questions. Teachers continually ask students questions as they transition between activities; for example, when students distribute books and paper, the teacher has students count each item that is handed out. No instructional time is wasted. All teachers use rapid questioning techniques to both check for understanding and maintain student engagement in instruction.

Teachers develop well-designed, purposeful lesson plans aligned with the school's curriculum that include objectives aligned to the school's curriculum. Incorporated within their lesson plans are descriptions for differentiated teaching strategies, such as small reading groups, and they engage students with rigorous instruction aimed at different learning modalities. The highly interactive, small-group activities encourage students to be verbal and explain their answers as they respond to in-depth questions. Teachers assist readers by combining direct instruction with higher-order questions and monitor their performance throughout activities. Teachers also use technology to augment these lesson strategies.

### **Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 has strong instructional leadership. The school principal instills high expectations in teachers with regard to student performance. In addition, she has high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement.*

Teachers report that the principal is a very effective instructional leader and coach. She continually communicates high student achievement expectations to teachers as well as setting high expectations for their performance. The principal effectively schedules time for her staff enabling grade-level teams to meet daily.

The principal uses interim assessment results as the main indicator for determining which teachers need additional support, though she also conducts regular teacher evaluations. The principal completed mid-year evaluations and plans to conduct end-of-year summative evaluations, providing both formal and informal observation feedback as well as instructional improvement strategies. The school, with assistance from the CMO, has a comprehensive teacher evaluation form. Over the course of the academic year, three planned meetings between the principal and individual teachers focus on areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Teachers report that the CMO observation and evaluation protocol is useful for personal growth, and that the entire evaluation process is a holistic and organic in contrast to typical isolated “one-shot” case study, formal observations conducted at other schools.

### **At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 helps students who are struggling academically. It has procedures for identifying academically struggling students, students in need of special education services and English language learners.*

Teachers report that the school has a three-tiered response to intervention process (RTI) for students who struggle academically. Initially the classroom teacher provides data to the school’s child study team indicating that a student needs extra academic assistance. If the initial or tier-one interventions do not succeed, the students are referred for intensive interventions which may consist of assistance from the special education teacher (tier-two) or a special education referral (tier-three). The school has a special education (SETSS) teacher who receives data from classroom teachers regarding students who are struggling academically. The classroom teacher and the SETSS teacher decide on a course of action, either to continue with the classroom intervention process or proceed with specific out-of-classroom interventions. Teachers also report using teaching assistants to provide small group instruction with academically struggling students.

In addition to developing academic support strategies for classroom teachers, the school’s special education staff provides sufficient resources and support to meet the needs of special education students and English language learners. The school has developed its own methods to serve English language learners, with school site and CMO personnel monitoring their progress. Teachers report that English language learners remain in the classroom and receive guided reading instruction. The effectiveness of the system is yet to be determined.

### **Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 promotes a culture of learning and scholarship and has a clear discipline system in place that is consistently applied.*

The school’s college preparatory mission pervades the school environment and manifests itself in high expectations for student behavior. Teachers implement the school’s comprehensive behavior management system with fidelity, although teachers have the ability to deviate and create unique cueing techniques for their classrooms. They use various tactics to elicit class attention or compliance, such as clapping hands or repeating “track” and other key phrases. Occasionally teachers demand 100 percent compliance with directions, requiring multiple admonitions that interfere with the flow of the lesson and learning time.

Staff provides students with comprehensive behavior instruction during the first two days of school. During these instructional days, students learn school rules and procedures. Classrooms are quiet and orderly; students are respectful and attentive. Teachers continually provide students with directions and praise for quiet student activity and quick transitions. Teachers time the transitions between classroom activities; for example, when handing in textbooks the teacher clocks how long it takes to collect the books; the time is written on the board and compared to other transition times.

### **Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 has a comprehensive professional development program. It assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge.*

The school provides three weeks of professional development in the summer prior to the academic year, as well as monthly professional development sessions. The principal is instrumental in planning common meeting times for grade-level teachers each day. Every grade has two common planning periods per-day to encourage collaboration, and the principal uses two of these planning periods per week to discuss ELA and math progress with the respective grade-level teams. Teachers report that the common planning time is beneficial, as it enables them to collaborate on curriculum pacing and develop consistent instructional strategies. The ongoing, shared professional development also assists teachers to develop strategies for differentiated instruction.

With comprehensive professional development offerings, the school and the CMO successfully develop teachers' competencies and skills. The CMO provides teachers with opportunities to visit other schools within the organization and observe their colleagues teaching. Teachers report that the summer professional development institute includes instructional components of the *THINK* curriculum as well as the purchased curriculum products. Teachers report a high-level of satisfaction with the school and the CMO's commitment to professional development and indicate that the sessions are meaningful and helpful. As a result, they believe their instruction has improved.

### **Mission & Key Design Elements (Benchmark 2.A)**

*The school has an unwavering commitment to its mission.*

The school's staff and leadership are devoted to creating students who are college bound. All classrooms, including kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, have college names. Hallway bulletin boards contain information and images about where school staff attended college. In addition to the collegiate memorabilia, teachers speak with their students about professions and the amount of college training certain careers require. These conversations are extensions of stories read in classrooms and are not contrived or incongruent with observed lessons; teachers link the college experience to their everyday work.

Consistent with the school's theme of developing college bound students, one teacher reports that the principal stresses the importance of listening to students, rather than providing students with answers; she encourages students to be expressive and reflective in their responses. Teachers report they "imbed in students" the idea that they can attend and succeed in college. During an observed

classroom visit, students recited a chant while transitioning between activities: “When you have the knowledge, you go to college.”

### **Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)**

*Bronx Success Academy 2 has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, system and procedures, that allows the school to carry out its academic program.*

BSA 2’s administration supports classroom teachers’ needs. In addition to the principal, the school has a community relations specialist, an on-site operations manager and a student assessment coordinator. The school is also well supported by the CMO, which provides assistance and support to the school’s on-site operations manager and student achievement coordinator.

Teachers view the principal as the school’s instructional leader and state that there are clear reporting structures with distinct lines of accountability, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and clear lines of leadership. As mentioned above, the school’s schedule supports a comprehensive set of professional development opportunities as well as daily and weekly times for school staff to meet.

### **Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)**

*Bronx Success Academy’s school board works effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provides oversight to the total educational program.*

The school’s board contains members who have a strong combination of education, business, law and finance experience. The board chair reports that the board closely monitors the school’s financial activity and that they have a strong commitment to support the needs of the teachers, providing them with the supplies and materials necessary to deliver an effective education program.

The board holds the school’s leader, charter management organization and itself accountable for student achievement. The board chair reports that there are consistent and ongoing processes for the principal to update the board. The principal regularly and consistently emails the board chair and provides an update to the board during their scheduled meetings. The board chair reports that the board, in conjunction with the CMO, is in the process of completing the cumulative end-of-year principal evaluation. The principal reports that she is aware of and understands this evaluation process.

### **Conduct of the Visit**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Bronx Success Academy Charter School 2 on May 7, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

**Team Leader: Ron Miller, Ph.D.** is the Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute. After teaching for seven years in New York City public schools, Dr. Miller joined the central offices of the New York City Department of Education, where he conducted evaluative research and organizational studies. As Director of the Office of School Planning and Accountability, he served as the educational accountability officer for the Department. In that capacity, he developed school accountability reports for the city schools and coordinated staff development on their use for district administrators in all the high school and community school

districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their competence to use data for school improvement. In this role he developed PASS, a school performance review system which was adopted in 600 city schools. Dr. Miller has regularly presented papers at annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds a BA degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University.

**Institute Team Member: Paul Wright, Ed.D.** was recently appointed Director of School Evaluation at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Dr. Wright will be responsible for the Institute's extensive school evaluation program, overseeing and in many cases leading school evaluation visits by Institute staff as well as coordinating the independent evaluations done on the Institute's behalf. Dr. Wright will lead ongoing efforts to refine the Institute's nationally regarded evaluation protocols and reporting tools; including oversight of the production of the Institute's school evaluation reports which provide valuable information to schools and the public about school progress. He will also coordinate internal staff training on school evaluation. Prior to joining the Institute, Dr. Wright directed Quality Education Partnership, Inc., a national consulting network that conducted evaluations of traditional and charter schools and created strategic management plans for school improvement. The former Development Director for School Design and Strategic Planning of Mesa Public Schools in Arizona, Dr. Wright developed unique schools of choice serving a wide spectrum of learners in coordination with Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright also served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group, an Educational Management Organization providing educational services to students throughout Arizona. Dr. Wright received his Ed.D. and his M.Ed. from Arizona State University and his B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany.

**External Team Member: Adam Aberman** is a principal and founder of The Learning Collective, through which he has evaluated over 30 charter schools. He also serves as the executive director of the El Segundo Education Foundation. Previously, Mr. Aberman was the director of Global Digital Strategy for Ashoka's Youth Venture, which helps young people in 20 countries launch socially responsible businesses and organizations. In addition, Mr. Aberman was the executive director and founder (and currently board member) of icouldbe.org, the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 25,000 teens and e-mentors nationwide and in Tanzania. Before establishing icouldbe.org, Mr. Aberman was a regional coordinator for the New York City Department of Education. He began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. He received a B.A. from Vassar College and a Master's degree in Public Policy, with an emphasis on education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A frequent speaker at conferences, Mr. Aberman has also won numerous awards including Cause Marketing Silver Halo Award for Best Use of Social Media (2009) and International Computerworld Magazine Honors Finalist Award (2002).

## **APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT**

*An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.*

*Visit the Institute's website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.*

Benchmarks 1B – 1H, and Benchmarks 2A – 2E were using in conducting this evaluation visit.

|  | <b>Renewal Question 1<br/>Is the School an Academic Success?</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b><u>Evidence Category</u></b>  | <b><u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u></b>  |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1B<br/><br/>Use of<br/>Assessment Data</b> | <p><b>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and state performance standards;</li><li>• the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board;</li><li>• the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy;</li><li>• the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school's Accountability Plan goals are being achieved;</li><li>• the school's leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school's academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services;</li><li>• the school's teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students;</li><li>• a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade;</li><li>• the school regularly communicates each student's progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and</li><li>• the school regularly communicates to the school community overall academic performance as well as the school's progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.</li></ul> |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1C<br/><br/>Curriculum</b>                 | <p><b>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the school has a well-defined curriculum framework for each grade and core academic subject, which includes the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve as specified by New York State standards and performance indicators;</li><li>• the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial materials) currently in use in relation to the school's curriculum framework,</li></ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade;</li> <li>teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans;</li> <li>teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school's curriculum;</li> <li>the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and</li> <li>the curriculum supports the school's stated mission.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1D</b></p> <p><b>Pedagogy</b></p>                     | <p><b>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach;</li> <li>instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson;</li> <li>lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators;</li> <li>instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school's student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments;</li> <li>all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time;</li> <li>learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and</li> <li>teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1E</b></p> <p><b>Instructional<br/>Leadership</b></p> | <p><b>The school has strong instructional leadership.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement;</li> <li>the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement);</li> <li>the school's instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness;</li> <li>the school's instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms;</li> <li>the school's leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas;</li> <li>the school's instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual teachers;</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school’s leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and</li> <li>the school’s leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school’s academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1F</b><br><br><b>At-Risk Students</b>                    | <p><b>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students’ needs;</li> <li>all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program;</li> <li>the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students;</li> <li>the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures;</li> <li>all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students’ Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals;</li> <li>the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and</li> <li>the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.</li> </ul> |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1G</b><br><br><b>Student Order &amp;<br/>Discipline</b>  | <p><b>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied;</li> <li>classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident;</li> <li>low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and</li> <li>throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.</li> </ul>  |
| <b><u>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 1H</u></b><br><br><b>Professional<br/>Development</b> | <p><b>The school’s professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers’ pedagogical skills and content knowledge.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program;</li> <li>the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</li> <li>annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment</li> </ul>   |



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|  | <p>and staff interests;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals;</li> <li>• teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities;</li> <li>• the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities;</li> <li>• the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and</li> <li>• the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <b>Renewal Question 2</b><br><b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b>  |
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| <b><u>Evidence Category</u></b>  | <b><u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u></b>   |
| <b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</b><br><br><b>Mission &amp; Key Design Elements</b> | <p><b>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stakeholders are aware of the mission;</li> <li>• the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and</li> <li>• the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</b><br><br><b>Parents &amp; Students</b>            | <p><b>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school;</li> <li>• the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it;</li> <li>• few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school;</li> <li>• a large number of parents seek entrance to the school;</li> <li>• parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and</li> <li>• the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.</li> </ul> |
| <b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</b><br><br><b>Organizational Capacity</b>           | <p><b>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations;</li> <li>• staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission;</li> <li>• the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals;</li> <li>the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined;</li> <li>the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability;</li> <li>the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted;</li> <li>the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and</li> <li>the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 2D</b><br><br><b>Board Oversight</b> | <p><b>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school;</li> <li>the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight;</li> <li>the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders;</li> <li>the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity;</li> <li>the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance;</li> <li>where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion;</li> <li>the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and</li> <li>the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.</li> </ul> |
| <b>State University<br/>Renewal<br/>Benchmark 2E</b><br><br><b>Governance</b>      | <p><b>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;</li> <li>the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p>structural continuity;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter;</li> <li>• the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner;</li> <li>• the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints;</li> <li>• the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies;</li> <li>• the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and</li> <li>• the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.</li> </ul> |
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