



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

2013-14 School Evaluation Report

New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science

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INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation visit on April 30, 2014. While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. This subset, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. They provide a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), as well as leadership, organizational capacity and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

The appendix to the report contains a School Overview with descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. It also provides background information on the conduct of the visit, including information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school’s current charter cycle. Finally, the appendix displays the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

The report below provides benchmark evidence to support these conclusions in order to highlight areas of concern. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report. As such, limited detail and evidence about positive elements of the educational program are not an indication that the Institute does not fully recognize evidence of program effectiveness. This report does not contain an overall rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal; however, it does summarize the various strengths of the school and notes areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	December 14, 2010
School Opening Date	September 2011

Location and 2013-14 Enrollment

Address	District	Enrollment	Grades
99 Terrace View Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463	NYC CSD 10	343	9-11

Partner Organization

Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
New Visions for Public Schools	Not-for-Profit Organization	2011-12 to Present

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Instructional Leadership. New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math & Science (“AMS”) had notably strong and coordinated instructional leadership in place at the time of the school evaluation visit.

- The school’s leadership inculcated in teachers the expectation that all AMS students will complete college. Teachers identified college entry as a key milestone but were clear about college graduation being the actual desired outcome.
- AMS’ principal, two assistant principals and the director of operations delineated coaching and supervision responsibilities based on teachers’ subject area assignments. The instructional leadership team provided sustained and systemic supports linked to school-wide instructional priorities to build teachers’ pedagogical competencies. Both formal and informal observations consisted of three phases: a planning conversation between the leader and teacher, the observation and a debriefing session. Instructional leaders’ practice at the time of the visit was to increase supports for teachers not meeting performance expectations.
- With weekly department and grade level meetings and daily subject area common planning time, AMS provided multiple opportunities for teachers to coordinate and plan instruction. Four teacher leaders assisted their content area peers in lesson planning and provided feedback on instructional effectiveness based on classroom observations.
- At the time of the visit, AMS implemented a comprehensive professional development program with differentiated foci for teachers new to the school. Professional development activities interrelated with classroom practice and teachers reported the activities were key to improving instructional effectiveness.

Curriculum & Assessment. At the time of the school visit, AMS’s curriculum supported teachers in their instructional planning and its assessment system improved instructional effectiveness and student learning.

- The school had a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provided a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades. In addition to the framework, AMS had supporting tools (i.e. learning plans) that provided a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans. Teachers knew what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents.
- AMS administered a variety of assessments aligned to its curriculum. AMS’ not-for-profit partner, New Visions for Public Schools (“New Visions” or the “network”), issued end of trimester assessments that included Regents and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (“PARCC”) assessment questions across all six New Visions high schools. AMS teachers created additional baseline and formative assessments.

- At the time of the school visit, AMS used clear processes for scoring and analyzing assessment results. After training to norm scoring with a common rubric, teachers from across the New Visions network scored network-developed exams in mixed-school groupings. At the end of every trimester, all students completed one Literacy Design Collaborative paper in each English, social studies and science class. AMS content departments normed the grading of these papers.
- Teachers regularly used assessment results to meet students' needs by adjusting classroom instruction. For example, based on results from first trimester finals and January Regents data, teachers determined students needed to improve their use of evidence when making claims and adjusted their lessons to include greater focus on using proper evidence.
- AMS regularly communicated students' achievement and growth with progress reports each trimester.

Pedagogy. High quality instruction was evident throughout AMS. Observers noted math and science lessons were particularly rigorous, consistent with the school's aims. As shown in the chart below, during the visit, Institute team members conducted 9 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school evaluation visits.

Number of Observations

		Grade			
		9	10	11	Total
Content Area	ELA	1	1	1	3
	Math	1	1	1	3
	Science		1	1	2
	Social Studies		1		1
	Total	2	4	3	9

- AMS teachers delivered purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum (8 out of 9 classrooms observed). Teachers also built on students' previous skills and knowledge as in an Advanced Placement class wherein the teacher bridged conclusions from previous text-based projects with specific learning objectives for the day's lesson.
- Using a variety of techniques, teachers effectively checked for student understanding during the course of the lesson (7 out of 9 classrooms observed). In addition to monitoring written work and peer-to-peer discussions, teachers gauged students' knowledge and understanding with whole group questioning and individual conferencing.
- AMS teachers included rich opportunities for students to develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking skills in most lessons (7 out of 9 classrooms observed). Students in a science class applied presented concepts to hands-on activities while creating electromagnetic motors using batteries, coils, magnets and paper clips then explained the motors' operation with academic language. Throughout the school, teachers challenged

students to elaborate on and defend their answers and to interact with peers while engaging in learning activities. For example, a teacher facilitating a classroom discussion about the role of arranged marriages in societies over time required students to support their inferences about a character's feelings with text citations and other students provided contradictory evidence.

- AMS teachers established and maintained classroom environments consistently focused on academic achievement (6 out of 9 classrooms observed).

At-Risk Students. AMS equipped teachers to meet the educational needs of at-risk students at the time of the evaluation visit.

General Education Students Receiving Targeted Interventions

Program	General education students receiving extra interventions attended daily support classes in addition to their grade-level ELA and math classes. The school also offered Regents classes for students who did not meet required performance levels on Regents exams.
Staff	An assistant principal, math and reading specialists, special education teachers and general education teachers provided services to struggling students.
Identification Process	The school used students' previous state test results and diagnostic exams administered at the start of the school year to identify students for academic intervention.
Coordination	Reading and math specialists reviewed classroom instruction and student progress in weekly meetings with general education content teachers and school leaders.
Progress Monitoring	Teachers used in class assessments and final trimester exams to gauge student mastery. Teachers also created portfolios of unit work during the trimester to maintain records of student progress.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	AMS held weekly professional development sessions to increase teachers' ability to meet the needs of all students. The school also provided opportunities for teachers to attend external professional development activities that teachers identified as helpful in developing their instructional skills.

Students with Disabilities

Program	AMS served the 40 students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) enrolled at the time of the evaluation visit with special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) and integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classrooms.
Staff	The special education coordinator, two instructional specialists and seven certified special education teachers provided services to students with disabilities.
Identification Process	AMS used state and classroom assessment scores, as well as observation data from general education and intervention teachers, to identify students for academic intervention. The school referred students who did not make adequate progress with intervention supports for evaluation for special education services.
Coordination	Special education teachers met weekly with content area departments to discuss student progress, content specific classroom activities and general performance trends across subjects.
Progress Monitoring	The special education coordinator assigned each specialist a caseload of students to track progress toward meeting IEP goals. Specialists and classroom teachers regularly used assessment results and classroom work products to monitor student progress.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	In weekly professional development meetings, AMS provided both specialists and classroom teachers with sufficient resources to deliver high quality instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

English Language Learners (“ELLs”)

Program	At the time of the school visit, AMS served 25 identified ELLs with daily pull-out reading lab sessions and push-in supports during ELA classes.
Staff	Two ELL specialists provided push-in and pull-out supports.
Identification Process	The school screened all new enrollees for potential English language acquisition support with the Home Language Survey and administered the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners when indicated.
Progress Monitoring	Teachers monitored student progress in ELL reading labs and ELA classes with ongoing assessment data. At the end of each school year, AMS administered the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test to measure students’ English proficiency and determine further instructional support needs.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	The New Visions network developed professional development sessions to further teachers’ abilities to support ELLs across classrooms.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science endeavors to extend equally to all students, regardless of their previous academic history, the highest quality education in an atmosphere of respect, responsibility and safety.

School Characteristics

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2011-2012	125	115	9	9
2012-2013	249	230	9-10	9-10
2013-2014	397	343	9-11	9-11

Student Demographics¹

	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 10 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 10 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 10 Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0	1	0	1	0
Black or African American	44	19	42	18	44	18
Hispanic	53	67	52	68	48	68
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	2	8	2	8	2	8
White	0	6	1	6	1	6
Multiracial	1	0	3	0	3	1
Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities	-- ²	17	14	17	16	20
English Language Learners	9	22	8	22	8	21
Free/ Reduced Lunch						
Eligible for Free Lunch	57	76	65	71	68	80
Eligible for Reduced – Price Lunch	10	5	3	5	5	4
Economically Disadvantaged	--	87	82	89	75	83

¹ Source: 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

² 2011-12 students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged data for the school were not available.

Board of Trustees³

Board Member Name	Position
John Sanchez	Chair
Ronald Chaluian	Secretary
Gary Ginsberg	Trustee
Ariel Zurofsky	Trustee
BJ Casey	Trustee

School Leader(s)

School Year(s)	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2011-12 to Present	Julia Chun, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2011-12	First-Year Visit	Institute	April 18, 2012
2013-14	Evaluation Visit	Institute	April 30, 2014

³ Source: Institute data.

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
April 30, 2014	Natasha Howard, PhD	Director of School Evaluation
	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst
	Adam Aberman	External Consultant

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 rd Year of 1 st Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁴	3 rd Year of 4 Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2015

⁴ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a charter term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of that charter term. For schools in initial charter terms, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the charter term. For schools in subsequent charter terms, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.