



2016-17 School Evaluation Report

HARLEM LINK

CHARTER SCHOOL

Visit Date: May 22-23, 2017
Report Date July 11, 2017

State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

(518) 445-4250
www.newyorkcharters.org



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on May 22-23, 2017. 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. It provides a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, assessment and services for at-risk students), 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.

Appendix A 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. Appendix B displays the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

This report does not contain an overall rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. Rather, it summarizes various strengths of the school and notes areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report in order to highlight areas of concern. As such, limited detail about positive elements of the educational program is not an indication that the Institute does not recognize other indicators of program effectiveness.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Opening Information

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees | June 22, 2004 |
| School Opening | September 2005 |

Location and 2016-17 Enrollment

| Address | District | Facility | Chartered Enrollment | Grades |
|--|-----------|----------------|----------------------|--------|
| 20 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10026 | NYC CSD 3 | DOE Co-located | 386 | K-5 |

The SUNY Trustees first voted to establish Harlem Link Charter School (“Harlem Link”) in June 2004 and granted the school an initial short term renewal in 2010. After earning a subsequent full term renewal in February 2013, the school will be up for its next renewal during the 2017-18 school year. The school’s elementary program is characterized by a workshop model for literacy and

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

cognitively guided instruction in mathematics. Harlem Link also purposefully focuses on students' social and emotional growth.

2015-16 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

During 2015-16, the fourth year of the school's five year Accountability Period, Harlem Link did not meet either of its Accountability Plan goals for English language arts ("ELA") or mathematics after not meeting both goals in 2014-15. The school's low performance on these key academic Accountability Plan goals puts its prospects for earning a subsequent renewal in jeopardy. Harlem Link met its science and No Child Left Behind ("NCLB") goals during 2015-16.

ELA

Harlem Link did not meet its ELA goal in 2015-16. The school came close to meeting its ELA goal during 2012-13 but has not met the goal since. In 2015-16, the school's percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year who scored at or above proficiency on the state's ELA exam was four percentage points higher than Manhattan Community School District 5's (the "district's"), the school's district of comparison. Harlem Link has performed equal to or only marginally higher than the district throughout the Accountability Period. As it has throughout the Accountability Period, the school performed lower than expected in comparison to schools throughout the state enrolling similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. The school's mean ELA growth for its 4th graders in 2015-16 was lower than the state's average ELA growth of 50 by 7 points.¹

Mathematics

Harlem Link did not meet its mathematics Accountability Plan goal during 2015-16. After 2013-14, when 52% of students enrolled at the school for at least two years scored at or above proficiency on the state's mathematics exam, Harlem Link's mathematics performance plummeted to only 26% scoring at or above proficiency during 2014-15. In 2015-16, the school's performance improved marginally overall but within each grade level, growth trends are inconsistent. In comparison to schools throughout the state enrolling similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, Harlem Link performed lower than expected in mathematics during 2014-15 and 2015-16 after exceeding the target for this important comparative measure during 2013-14. The school's mean growth in mathematics fell 6 points below its Accountability Plan target of 50.

Science

With 88% of its 4th graders enrolled for at least two years scoring at or above proficiency on the state's science exam, Harlem Link met its science goal. It outperformed the district and performed higher than its absolute measure target of 75%.

¹ Due to an issue in data reporting, the state did not calculate ELA growth scores for all students in 5th grade at the school during 2015-16.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

NCLB

Harlem Link met its NCLB goal during 2015-16 as the school was not identified as a focus charter school or as requiring a local assistance plan.

Academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and English language learners (“ELLs”) appears below, although not tied to separate goals in the school’s formal Accountability Plan.

| | | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services | | (61) | (50) | (56) |
| RESULTS | Tested on State Exams (N) | (32) | (26) | (16) |
| | Percent Proficient on ELA Exam | 3.1 | 7.7 | 12.5 |
| | Percent Proficient Statewide | 5.0 | 5.8 | 7.9 |

| | | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|--------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|
| ELL Enrollment (N) | | (20) | (14) | (14) |
| RESULTS | Tested on NYSESLAT ² Exam (N) | (18) | (9) | (13) |
| | Percent ‘Commanding’ or Making Progress ³ on NYSESLAT | 44.4 | 22.2 | 15.4 |

² New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

³ Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering (formerly Beginning); Emerging (formerly Low Intermediate); Transitioning (formerly Intermediate); Expanding (formerly Advanced); and, Commanding (formerly Proficient).

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

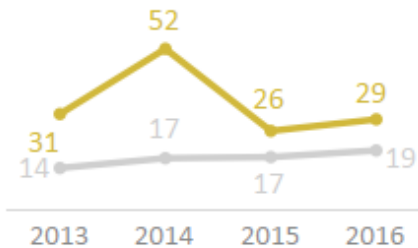
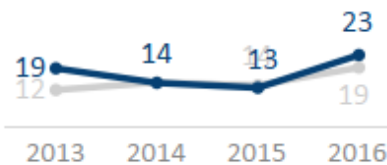
Harlem Link Charter School

REQUIRED MEASURE DESCRIPTION

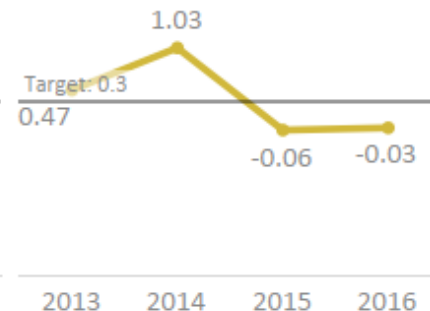
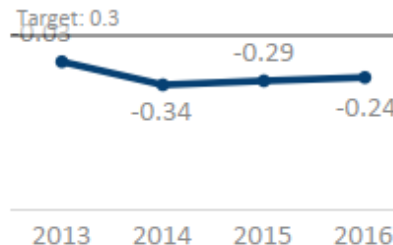
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

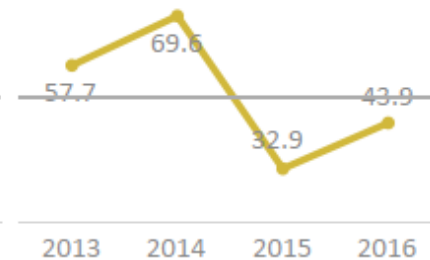
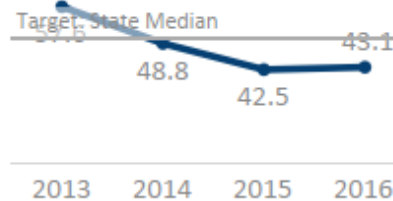
Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **ELA** and **mathematics** will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the district.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** and **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

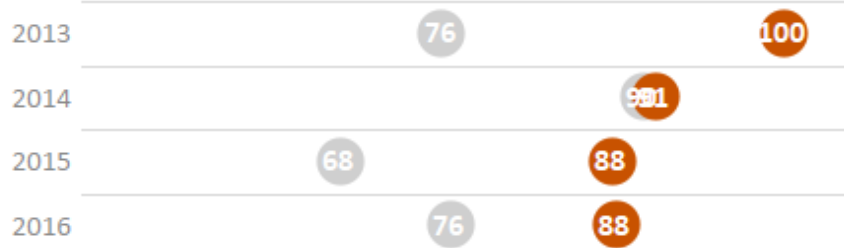


Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **ELA** and **mathematics**.



SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Science: Comparative Measure. Each year, the percentage of students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **science** will exceed that of students in the same tested grades in the district.



BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

QUALITATIVE EDUCATION BENCHMARKS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,⁴ describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks describe the elements an effective school must have in place at the time of renewal.⁵

Use of Assessment Data

Although Harlem Link developed its capacity to analyze academic data and generate actionable strategies to improve student learning, the school did not sustain the efforts to use academic data to improve teaching and learning throughout the school year. The effectiveness of the school's increased capacity is not yet known.

- The school regularly administers assessments. Teachers use the Developmental Reading Assessment ("DRA") to measure students' reading fluency and comprehension several times during the school year (beginning and end of the year; mid-year for Kindergarten through 2nd grade). Teachers administer other assessments that they create or that they pull from commercial curricula packages; for example, the TERC Investigations mathematics curriculum's end of unit assessments. In preparation for the state's ELA and mathematics assessments, Harlem Link began administering weekly quizzes created from a variety of sources, including EngageNY, released state assessment items, and Educational Vistas. The weekly quizzes demonstrate a strategic approach to analyzing and using data; however, the school did not begin the quizzes until January for ELA and March for mathematics, and ended the practices after the administration of the state exams.
- Harlem Link has a valid and reliable process for scoring assessments. For multiple choice items, teachers scan answer sheets for automatic scoring. At least two teachers score written response items and informally discuss scoring procedures and outcomes, addressing any discrepancies during scoring. Teachers complete answer sheets and provide them to the assistant principal and the manager of data and accountability, who then provide an analysis of student performance back to teachers. The scoring and analysis process occurs within three days, enabling teachers to use the data immediately. Based on these analyses, teachers decide which students they need to pull for small groups or extra help during the school's breakfast time. Although the analysis links items

⁴ An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: www.mes.org/correlates.html;

scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf; and, gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf.

⁵ Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, including greater specificity as to what the Institute looks for at each school that may demonstrate attainment of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, is available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/.

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to standards, teachers identify which students scored lowest and re-teach the material covered by the assessment rather than drilling down on specific skills and standards where students performed low.

- The school discontinued the practice of administering weekly quizzes shortly after completion of the state's ELA and mathematics exams. Though teachers and school leadership appreciated the focus on data and analysis that informed instruction, it is unclear why the school did not continue this practice past the pre-testing period. Teachers and leaders assert that assessments generated by teachers and assistant principals align to state performance standards but it is unclear how well they align to the school's curriculum.
- This year, Harlem Link formalized the data manager's position; the role makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders, and board members. The role supports the school's processing and analysis of academic data and has effectively shortened the turnaround time between test administration and teachers' access to the analysis. The effects of the new system remain to be seen, however, because Harlem Link also moved to using new internally developed assessments this year. Instructional leaders now provide teachers in 3rd through 5th grades with results for weekly quizzes within three days of administration. Outside of the brief effort leading up to the administration of the state's exams, the school does not have a clear focus on analyzing these data to improve student learning.
- Teachers use assessment data for small group instruction configuration and for re-teaching; they use assessments and classroom work for identifying students who require special intervention. The school assesses students receiving interventions every six to eight weeks and uses the data to adjust interventions for students struggling academically; however, due to the large caseload of student struggling academically, the school has not consistently implemented this practice.
- Harlem Link regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students' progress and growth. In addition to formal communication such as reports cards, teachers also use text messages, notes home, and emails to communicate with parents about student behaviors and academic performance. For students that may be struggling, the school holds in-person meetings and sends formal written notifications. For example, the school notified parents in November if a student's grade level promotion was in doubt and has since provided progress and status updates.

Curriculum

Harlem Link lacks a systematic process to review and develop the curriculum to ensure that it aligns completely with state standards, despite having a clear curricular framework across subjects. The school provides teachers across all grade levels with documents that support implementation of the curriculum.

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- Harlem Link uses a curriculum framework that guides instruction across all grades and subjects. The Teachers College Readers' and Writers' workshop provides a framework for literacy instruction. The school uses TERC Investigations for mathematics along with cognitively guided instruction ("CGI"), which the school implemented throughout all grades after piloting the program during 2015-16. Harlem Link uses Full Option Science System ("FOSS") as the framework for science instruction.
- Although the school provides documents that link the curriculum frameworks with teachers' planning, instructional leaders provide little oversight to ensure that plans align to and cover all state standards. The school uses scope and sequence documents that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans. Grade teams plan units and lessons during summer training. During the school year, teachers meet weekly as grade level teams to develop lesson plans. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach based on these documents. However, there is no systematic check on grade level teams to ensure content completely aligns to state standards.
- The school does not have a process for selecting, developing, and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum. The assistant principals and the director of curriculum, professional learning, and student support ("DCPLSS") adjust and add to the curriculum; for example, they augmented Readers' and Writers' workshop with nonfiction reading materials. The school does not review the efficacy of the curriculum on a regular basis.
- Grade level teachers meet weekly to develop lesson plans jointly. Teachers upload weekly plans to the school server on Wednesdays. Assistant principals review the lesson plans and provide feedback before teachers implement the lessons during the following week. The visit team reviewed lessons plans during the visit and found that they aligned directly with curricula in place at the school. The team did not find evidence that teachers explicitly planned differentiated lessons to address students' particular learning needs or that leaders systematically provide feedback to teachers before lessons reach the classroom.

Pedagogy

Ineffective instruction is evident in most classrooms at Harlem Link. Most classrooms lack rigor and effective techniques for behavior management. Institute team members conducted 26 classroom observations using a defined protocol used in all school evaluation visits.

BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

| | | Grade | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|--------------|-------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Content Area | Math | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| | Reading | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| | Writing | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 4 | | 7 |
| | Science | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | Total | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 26 |

- A slight majority of classroom teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives and activities that align to the school curriculum (16 out of 26 classrooms observed). In a few instances teachers do not post or state the lesson objective in order to make it completely clear to students. Teachers make attempts at connecting the start of the lesson with students' previous knowledge; however, teachers only make these attempts at the launch of lessons. Only some material is presented in a clear and age-appropriate way. In a few notable classrooms, teachers use manipulatives or other concrete examples to clearly demonstrate lesson concepts. Many lessons do not deliver content clearly. For example, a teacher asked students to turn and talk about a specific question, but multiple groups were unable to restate the question when prompted. In another classroom, students were not able to articulate the learning objective or the directions for the independent practice activity. Co-teachers pre-plan and have clear roles in the co-teaching structure. Classrooms utilize a variety of models, such as one lead/one assist, team teaching, and parallel teaching.
- Some teachers use regular and effective checks for understanding (9 out of 26 classrooms observed). Teachers primarily rely on students with raised hands to check for understanding. As a result, teachers systematically fail to engage most students in the lesson. In a majority of classrooms teachers expect students to complete written work; however, teachers do not monitor the work nor use student responses to adjust classroom instruction. In one notable exception, a teacher used questioning to discover students were not ready to move on to the day's objective. Instead of moving forward, the teacher circled back to material from the previous day to ensure students mastered it before moving on. A few examples notwithstanding, most lessons lack closure or teachers do not pace lessons appropriately to use closure activities. In one instance, the students transitioned to another class and then returned later in the day to complete a quick quiz about the content of the lesson.
- Lessons at Harlem Link rarely include opportunities for students to apply higher order thinking or problem solving skills (1 out of 26 classrooms observed). Teachers provide

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opportunities for students to work in partnerships or small groups; however, collaborative work time is unfocused and students are off task. Teachers ask factual or procedural questions and when students make mistakes, teachers typically give them the correct answer without requiring them to take on the cognitive lift to correct the misconception.

- Few teachers keep students on task and consistently keep their classroom focused on academic achievement (7 out of 26 classrooms observed). Teachers do not establish consistent expectations for student behavior across classrooms, despite a schoolwide commitment to implementing a social emotional learning approach, through Responsive Classroom. Although classrooms have visuals posted with similar hierarchies of consequences, teachers' implementations of these systems vary greatly. For example, in one classroom the teacher asked a student to leave the classroom for calling out, yet in another classroom the teacher provided several redirections without consequence for the same behavior. Most teachers use appropriate pacing and adhere to their classroom schedules; however, students are off schedule in a handful of classrooms: for example, two classrooms extended a block of non-instructional time by more than 30 minutes and therefore did not complete the afternoon writing or math lessons.

Instructional Leadership

Harlem Link continues to implement a top heavy organizational structure. Roles and responsibilities are now clearer to leaders and teachers than in previous years, but the leadership team is ineffective insofar as the school lacks clear systems and expectations, instruction throughout the school lacks rigor, and the school continues to post low academic achievement.

- The school's expansive instructional leadership staff focused this year on establishing the Responsive Classroom approach to setting culture. The approach defines for the school four domains that permeate the school's identity and establishes goals within each area. Academically, and as stated in the school's mission, the goal is to develop world class scholarship. Harlem Link uses report card scores to measure success in this domain. Specifically, instructional leaders expect that the percentage of students scoring at grade level expectations this year will exceed last year's percentage by at least 10 percent in reading, writing, and mathematics. On the ground, teachers are not aware of this expectation for academic performance.
- In response to the school leadership's dissatisfaction with the teacher coaching system, Harlem Link adjusted the staff structure to clarify roles and responsibilities around teacher coaching. Notwithstanding low academic achievement, the structure of Harlem Link's instructional leadership team is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff this year. The primary responsibility of Harlem Link's principal and the DCPLSS is to oversee the development of the school's instructional leadership staff. The DCPLSS makes decisions about teacher supervision (including identifying teachers for professional

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improvement plans), oversees the review and development of the curriculum, and develops the professional learning calendar. The school's three assistant principals, under the supervision of the DCPLSS, interact directly with teachers, providing coaching and sometimes professional development. This year, the school relies less on literacy and mathematics consultants to develop teachers' skills and competencies, although the consultants continue to provide professional development within the content areas.

- The structure of Harlem Link's expansive instructional leadership team is sufficient to oversee instruction and support teachers in achieving academic outcome goals, but the team provides insufficient feedback in order to achieve that objective. The assistant principals divide their responsibilities across grade levels and serve as the primary instructional coaches to teachers. External consultants provide coaching to teachers one or two times per month in literacy, mathematics, and CGI. They also provide some coaching to the school's assistant principals to develop their capacities as instructional coaches. Assistant principals observe classes and provide informal feedback to teachers consistently every two weeks. Late in the year, the assistant principals have differentiated their coaching routines to provide more support to teachers with more significant professional development needs. Although feedback to teachers addresses concerns that arise on a rolling biweekly basis, the instructional leaders do not clarify priority areas for teachers' development in relation to a clear set of expectations for teacher performance.
- This year's formal midyear reviews do not provide actionable information to teachers, assistant principals, or other instructional coaches. Harlem Link uses a narrative format for providing feedback to teachers. This represents a departure from the rubric that leaders provided teachers in prior years. Feedback to teachers in 2nd through 5th grades follows a consistent format although, in several cases, the narrative is the same, word for word, across teachers regardless of grade level or classroom assignments. Although the feedback forms align with the school's mission-aligned goals, the narrative provides no actionable information that teachers can use to improve their practice nor does the feedback clearly identify how a teacher's performance aligns to clear expectations set by the school's leadership.
- All teachers meet twice weekly for an hour at the end of the school day for professional development or common planning sessions. In addition, Tuesday rotations provide additional time specifically designated for grade teams to develop their units and lessons. Although teachers have sufficient time for co-planning, instructional leaders provide irregular feedback about the quality of lesson plans that teachers develop. Sometimes instructional leaders provide feedback to teachers before they implement lessons.

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At-Risk Students

Harlem Link does not meet the educational needs of at-risk students. The school's special education program is out of compliance and not providing mandated services to all students with disabilities. The school does not provide adequate training for teachers to support at-risk students.

- Harlem Link has a clear procedure for identifying at-risk students. The school has a formal child study process team that meets once a month; teachers can refer students for Response to Intervention ("RtI"), a leveled program that increases the intensity of intervention depending on students' response thereto. The school uses a tiered RtI system, with intervention teachers and general education teachers determining tier 2 interventions in the classroom and developing a pull-out schedule and more intensive interventions for students at the tier 3 level. The school allows for students to receive tier 3 interventions for six weeks before making a decision to refer the student to the Committee on Special Education ("CSE"); however, due to the large population of students struggling academically, the school did not consistently meet within this time frame to review student interventions. The school administers the Home Language Identification Survey to incoming students and reviews the citywide student information database to determine ELL students.
- Harlem Link is out of compliance with its special education program. The school offers integrated co-teaching ("ICT") classrooms for students with disabilities in each grade. Harlem Link currently has three students requiring special education teacher support services ("SETSS") as mandated services, but the school does not offer SETSS and has not taken steps to revise the students' Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs"). The school recently removed the special education teacher from the 5th grade team, and so students requiring ICT services have not received these services since April, and leaders do not have a plan to make up the missed services. Additionally, the school has students with a 12:1:1 setting on their IEPs but does not offer this setting as a special education service.
- The school does not have adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students. The school's state assessment results are below the district and state averages for ELLs in ELA and mathematics and for students with disabilities in mathematics. For students struggling academically, the school provides intervention services using programs such as Leveled Literacy Intervention ("LLI") or teacher created materials but does not effectively increase these students' performance. A part-time ELL coordinator and classroom teachers provide English language acquisition instruction for ELLs through the English Now program in tutoring groups during or after the school day. However, teachers do not receive training on the program to make sufficient growth in ELLs' English language acquisition.

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- Harlem Link does not adequately monitor the progress of all at-risk students. Teachers input data for students struggling academically into the school's student information system and check progress during the student update meetings once a month. Although leaders express that the RtI process has improved and 26 students have exited the program, the assessments used to measure student progress are mostly teacher-created and are not vetted for validity and reliability. The part-time ELL coordinator tracks sessions with ELL students to ensure students receive the required amount of English language acquisition instruction; however, classroom teachers are not aware of ELLs' progress toward achieving English language proficiency.
- Harlem Link does not provide adequate training and professional development to help teachers meet at-risk students' needs. While teachers meet once a month with the child study process team to review tier 2 interventions, this amount of time does not provide teachers with sustained support to meet the needs of at-risk students. Intervention teachers attend trainings with the NYC Charter Center Special Education Collaborative; however, intervention teachers do not conduct formal trainings with teachers to develop and improve instructional strategies. Classroom teachers do not receive training on English language acquisition strategies.
- Harlem Link provides some opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff. ICT teachers are members of grade teams and meet regularly with general education teachers to plan lessons. Intervention teachers meet monthly through the child study process and provide support with tier 2 and tier 3 strategies; however, intervention teachers do not coordinate pull-out intervention services with classroom instruction.

Organizational Capacity

In its twelfth year, Harlem Link has not established systems and procedures to support the effective delivery of the educational program. Leaders primarily focus time and energy on discipline and implementing Responsive Classrooms rather than on instructional support. Leaders do not have systematic procedures to evaluate and monitor the school's programs to make urgent changes that improve students' academic performance.

- Harlem Link has an administrative structure that allows the school to carry out its academic program. The principal supervises the operations team and three assistant principals who supervise all teaching staff. The DCPLSS supervises the student support team. The operations team provides adequate support to ensure that the instructional leadership team can focus solely on teaching and learning. Although the school has shifted responsibilities of leaders in the past year, teachers are clear on lines of accountability.
- The school is in its second year of implementing a Responsive Classrooms approach for student discipline, which relies on supporting students' social emotional learning through

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logical consequences and establishing a safe classroom and school environment. While leaders express that teachers have made improvements to the school-wide implementation, observations demonstrate that teachers are inconsistent in the use of Responsive Classroom techniques and do not address behavior consistently. The school has reduced the number of suspensions from previous years, and leaders attribute the reduction in suspensions to the implementation of the Responsive Classrooms model. Despite efforts to develop Responsive Classrooms schoolwide, leaders spend considerable time dealing with student behavior issues that take time away from instructional support.

- Harlem Link does not retain high quality staff. The school reported a 72% staff retention rate from 2015-16 to 2016-17. Leaders are creating efforts to retain staff members by identifying and establishing leadership roles to promote teachers internally who demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom. For example, all three assistant principals are former Harlem Link teachers, and the school is designating leadership positions for current teachers for next school year.
- Harlem Link allocates sufficient resources to support the achievement of academic goals. Teachers are able to request books and materials and receive requested items in a timely fashion. All classrooms have projectors and document cameras. Teachers have iPads to utilize for student workstations.
- The school maintains adequate student enrollment. Harlem Link makes efforts to recruit students with disabilities, ELLs and economically disadvantaged students, including translating materials into French and Spanish and targeting local community groups that serve families that speak languages other than English. The school primarily relies on word of mouth referrals from current and previous families. Leaders are aware of enrollment and retention targets for the school.
- The school does not have formal processes to monitor and evaluate the school's programs consistently and make changes. While the school has made program changes with discipline and the RtI program in recent years, the changes are not urgently or consistently implemented to exhibit a demonstrable change to the educational program to indicate the school is making adequate improvements. For example, while leaders recognized a need to improve the student support team procedures, no one was responsible for overseeing the school's processes for six months during the 2015-16 school year. However, the school commendably has a system for tracking the successes of Harlem Link alumni with data indicating the types of high schools and on-track graduation rates for former students.

Board Oversight

Harlem Link's board struggles to oversee the school's operations in order to ensure the school achieves its Accountability Plan goals. Shifting initiatives at the school have hindered Harlem Link's consistent development and the school has not met its key academic Accountability Plan goals for two years prior to the final year of its Accountability Period.

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- Harlem Link's board possesses adequate skills to oversee the school's day to day operations and ensure future success. The board's four committees (finance, executive, development, and education) work to govern the school's primary functions and monitor Harlem Link's fiscal health and academic achievement according to the school's Accountability Plan goals. Notwithstanding the Institute's analysis that the school has not met its ELA or mathematics goals during the past two years, the board indicates that the education committee has effectively overseen improvements of the school academic program.
- This year, the board prioritized developing Harlem Link's teacher coaching systems and developing its own capacity to monitor the school's academic data. Working closely with members of the education committee, the principal and DCPLSS implemented a new teacher coaching system and developed the school's capacity to analyze and understand data. In particular, the school created a role for a data manager and effectively increased the school's analytic capacity. Concomitantly, the board supported the restructure of the school's teacher coaching system. This year, the board monitors academic data more carefully and interacts with the school's leaders frequently and consistently to monitor the effects of these changes.
- The board has successfully retained personnel in key leadership positions insofar as Harlem Link has had consistent school leadership since its founding. The board awards merit pay to the school's principal based on the school's academic outcomes but has not made an award during the past two years. It also reviews teacher observation data and academic achievement data to identify correlations between the two. An annual teacher survey provides the board with information about levels of teacher satisfaction and the board conducts exit interviews with teachers who choose to leave the organization.
- Harlem Link's board is responsive to the needs and desires of the broader school community. This year, the board provided the school with experiences on the Biobus, a mobile science lab that provides students with enriching science experiences. The board also closely monitors Harlem Link students' placements in high performing middle and high schools. The board also provided Harlem Link alumni with training about effectively using their personal and professional networks to develop academic opportunities.

Appendix A

School Overview

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Harlem Link Charter School, a pre-K to 5 public school, links academics, values and community to graduate articulate scholars who meet or exceed New York State performance standards and active citizens who learn and serve in their communities. Families, staff and community join together to provide a safe, supportive learning environment that empowers students to take an active role in learning and demonstrate good character.

Board of Trustees⁶

| Board Member Name | Position | Board Member Name | Position |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|
| B. Peter Curry | Chair | Kenneth Catandella | Trustee |
| Rachel Field | Vice-Chair | Krista Barron | Trustee |
| David W. Brown | Secretary | Johnathan Barrett | Trustee |
| Brianna Cardinale | Trustee | Naheem Harris | Trustee |
| Brandilyn Dumas | Trustee | | |

School Characteristics

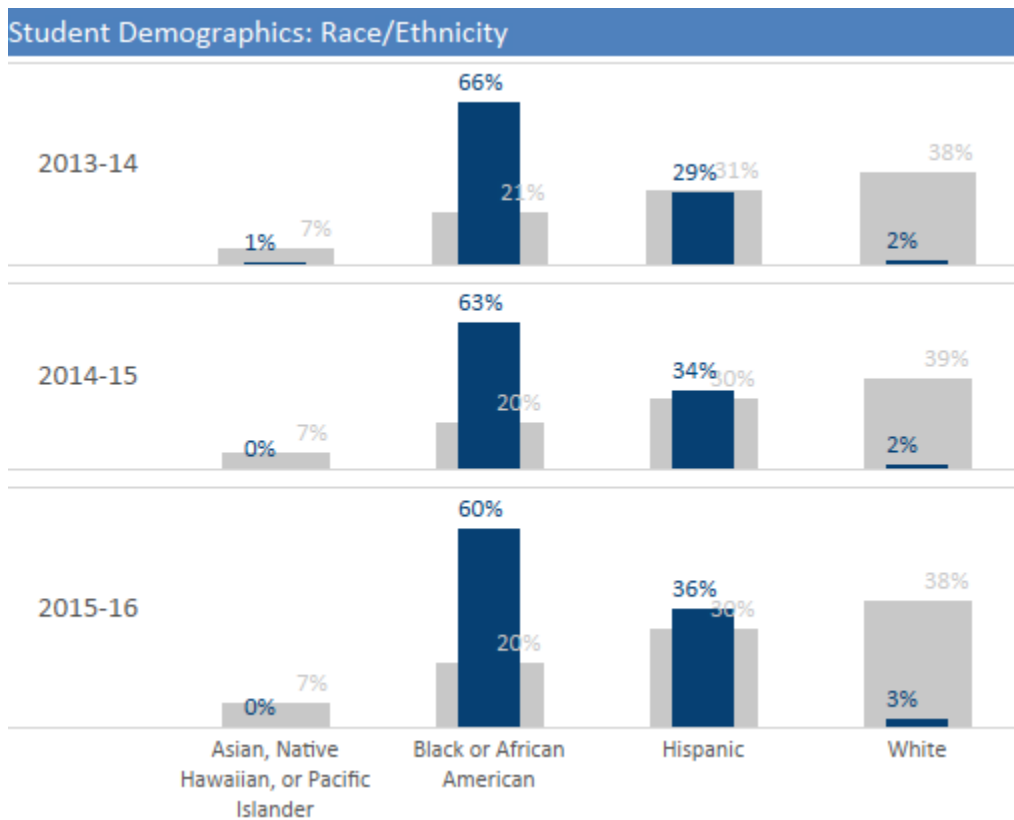
| School Year | Chartered Enrollment | Actual Enrollment ⁷ | Proposed Grades | Actual Grades |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2005-06 | 108 | 101 | K-1 | K-1 |
| 2006-07 | 162 | 162 | K-2 | K-2 |
| 2007-08 | 216 | 195 | K-3 | K-3 |
| 2008-09 | 270 | 262 | K-4 | K-4 |
| 2009-10 | 324 | 300 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2010-11 | 320 | 295 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2011-12 | 320 | 300 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2012-13 | 320 | 300 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2013-14 | 315 | 310 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2014-15 | 315 | 304 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2015-16 | 386 | 329 | K-5 | K-5 |
| 2016-17 | 386 | 369 | K-5 | K-5 |

⁶ Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the visit.

⁷ Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

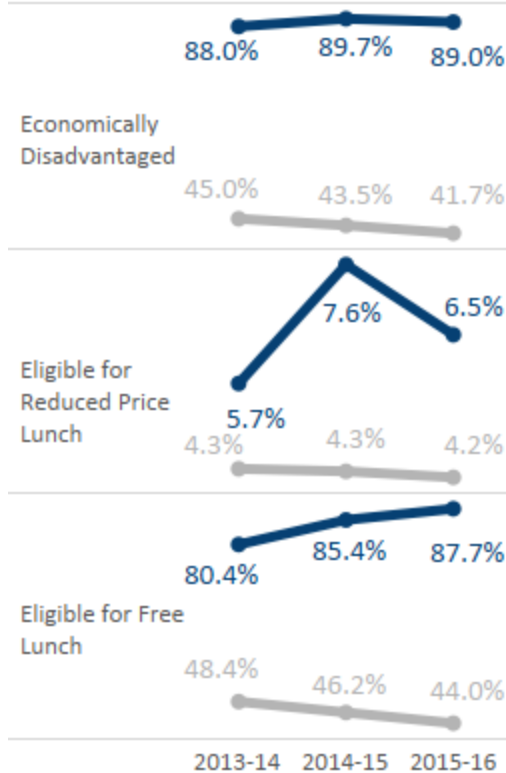
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

| Key Design Elements | Evident? |
|--|----------|
| ▪ Rigorous, high expectations and a belief in students; | - |
| ▪ Data-driven curriculum and pedagogy that support the school's mission; | - |
| ▪ High levels of professional development; | - |
| ▪ Family and community involvement strategies; | + |
| ▪ Supportive school culture. | + |



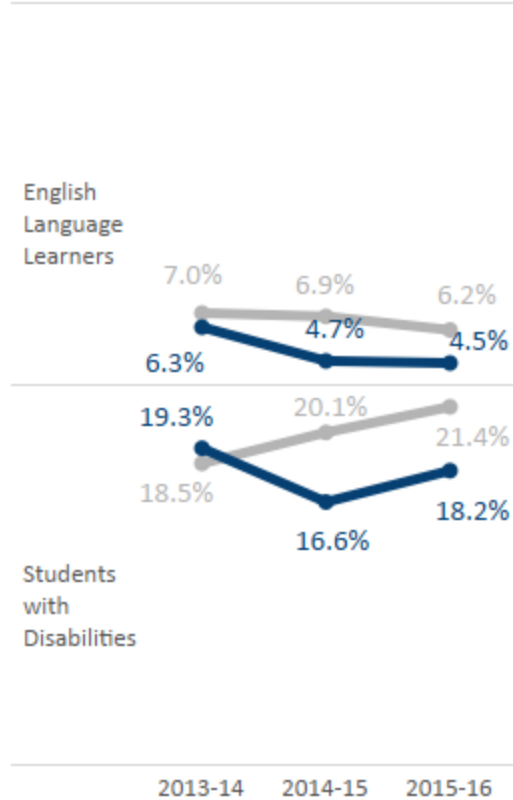
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



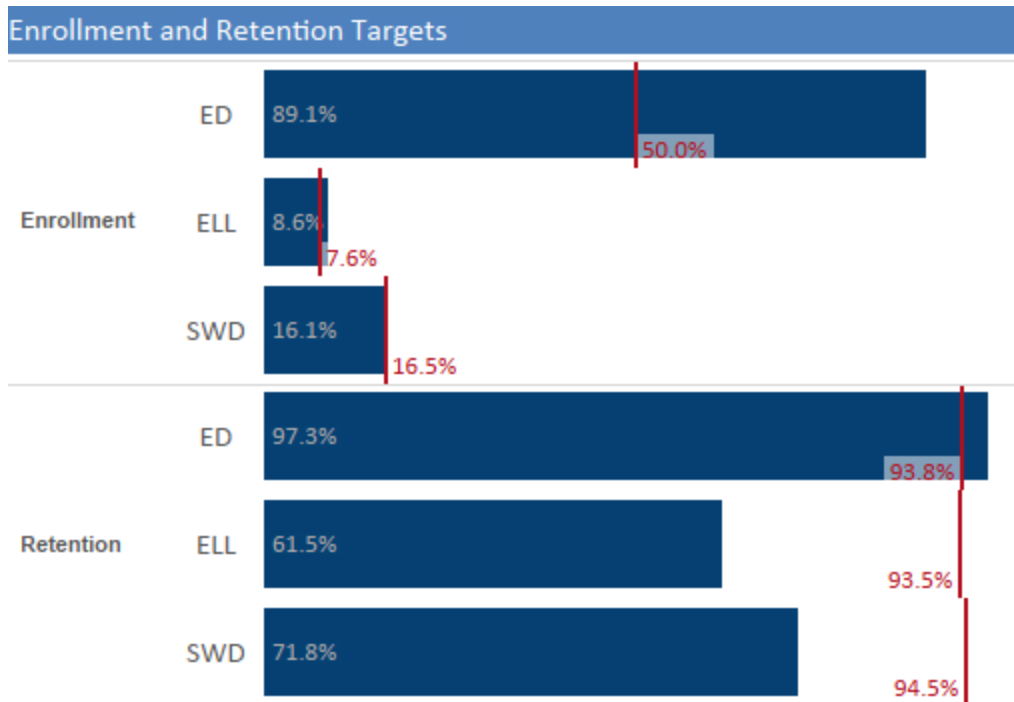
The charts show the trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup. Economically disadvantaged includes those students eligible for Free and Reduced Price lunch among other qualifying income assistance programs.

Student Demographics: Special Populations



The charts show trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup.

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW



The chart illustrates the school's **current enrollment and retention percentages** against the **enrollment and retention targets**. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and FRPL students. This analysis is based on the most recently available data provided by the school.

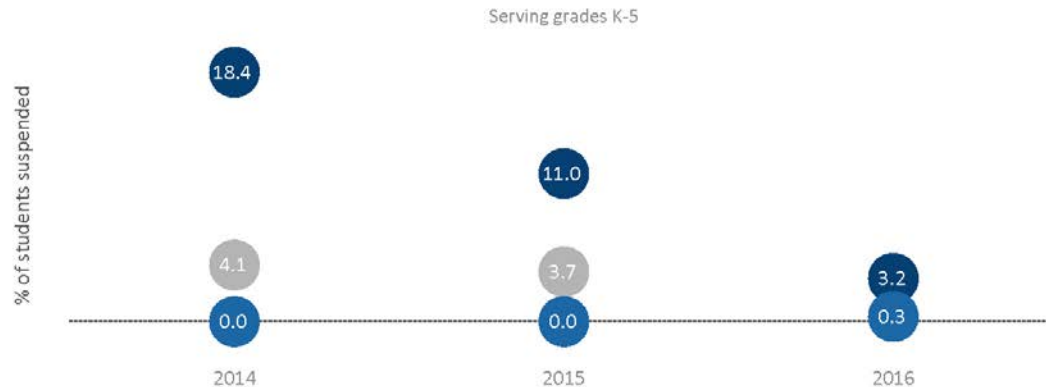


Persistence in enrollment illustrates the percentage of students not scheduled to age out of the schools who re-enroll from the previous year. The Institute derived the statistical information on enrollment persistence from its database. No comparative data from NYCDOE or NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district wide or by CSD context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Discipline

Suspensions: Harlem Link Charter School's **out of school suspension rate**, **in school suspension rate**, and the **district overall suspension rate**.



Although Community School District ("CSD") and school suspension rates are presented on the same graph, a direct comparison between the rates is not possible for three primary reasons. Available CSD data includes Kindergarten through high school grades and school data includes only the grades served by the school. CSD data are not available that show multiple instances of suspension of a single student, the overall number of suspensions, the duration of suspensions, or the time of year when the school administered the suspension. CSD data showing the difference between in school and out of school suspensions are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education: the total the number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

Expulsions: The number of students expelled from the school each year.

| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

School Leaders

| School Year(s) | Name(s) and Title(s) |
|--------------------|--|
| 2005-06 to 2009-10 | Steven Evangelista, Co-Director of Operations Margaret Ryan, Co-Director of Instruction |
| 2009-10 to Present | Steven Evangelista, Principal |

School Visit History

| School Year | Visit Type | Date |
|-------------|------------|----------------|
| 2005-06 | First Year | March 15, 2006 |
| 2006-07 | Evaluation | March 12, 2007 |

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 2007-08 | Evaluation | April 16-17, 2008 |
| 2008-09 | Evaluation | March 24, 2009 |
| 2009-10 | Initial Renewal | October 27-29, 2009 |
| 2010-11 | Evaluation | March 1-2, 2011 |
| 2011-12 | Evaluation | January 17-19, 2012 |
| 2012-13 | Subsequent Renewal | November 7-8, 2012 |
| 2015-16 | Evaluation | June 7, 2016 |
| 2016-17 | Evaluation | May 22-23, 2017 |

Conduct of the Visit

| Date(s) of Visit | Evaluation Team Member | Title |
|------------------|------------------------|--|
| May 22-23, 2017 | Jeff Wasbes | Executive Deputy Director for Accountability |
| | Andrew Kile | Senior Analyst |
| | Hannah Colestock | School Evaluation Analyst |
| | Sonia Park | External Consultant |

Charter Cycle Context

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Charter Term | 4 th Year of Five-Year Charter Term |
| Accountability Period ⁸ | 5 th Year of Five-Year Accountability Period |
| Anticipated Renewal Visit | Fall 2017 |

⁸ 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 that the school provides instruction. 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.

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Appendix B

SUNY Renewal Benchmarks



State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, April 2012

Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks¹ (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

- They provide a framework for the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) to gather and evaluate evidence to determine whether a school has made an adequate case for renewal. In turn, this evidence assists the Institute in deciding if it can make the required legal and other findings in order to reach a positive recommendation for renewal. For example, the various benchmarks that the Institute uses to determine whether the school has had fiscally responsible practices in place during the last charter period allow the Institute to determine with greater precision whether the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter period, a finding that the New York Charter Schools Act requires the SUNY Trustees to make.
- At the same time that the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks provide a framework for the Institute to collect and review evidence, they also provide the school with a guide to understanding the Institute’s evaluative criteria. As the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (or some sub-set of them) as the framework for conducting its ongoing school evaluation visits, school leaders should be fully aware of the content of the Benchmarks at the time of renewal.

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect the interwoven nature of schools from an academic, organizational, fiscal and/or legal perspective. For example, the Institute could reasonably place many of the academic benchmarks under the heading of organizational effectiveness. More generally, some redundancy exists because the Institute looks at the same issue from different perspectives.

Precisely how the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, during both the renewal process and throughout the charter period, is explained in greater detail in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”), available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm. Responses to frequently asked questions about the Institute’s use of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks appear below:

¹ Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share. These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the *Correlates of Effective Schools*. The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

- The Institute does not have a point system for recommending renewal. A school cannot simply tally up the number of positive benchmark statements in order to determine the Institute's recommendation.
 - Some benchmarks are weighed more heavily than others. In particular, the Institute gives the greatest weight to how well the school has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - Despite the fact that the Accountability Plan comprises only a single benchmark, a school's performance on that benchmark is critical. In fact, it is so important that while the Institute may recommend non-renewal for fiscal and organizational failures (if sufficiently serious), excellence in these areas will not excuse poor academic performance.
- The Institute does not use every benchmark during every kind of renewal review, and how the benchmarks are used differs depending on a school's circumstances. For example, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (Benchmarks 1B-1F, 2C and 2D) are given far less weight in making a renewal decision on schools that the Institute has previously renewed. Similarly, less weight is accorded to these benchmarks during an initial renewal review where a school has consistently met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - The Institute also may not consider every indicator subsumed under a benchmark when determining if a school has met that benchmark, given the school's stage of development or its previous track record.
- Aside from Benchmark 1A on academic Accountability Plan goals (which is singular in its importance), no school should fear that a failure to meet every element of every benchmark means that it is not in a position to make a case for renewal. To the contrary, the Institute has yet to see a school that performs perfectly in every respect. The Institute appreciates that the benchmarks set a very high standard collectively. While the Institute certainly hopes and expects that schools aim high, it is understood that a school's reach will necessarily exceed its grasp in at least some aspects.

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated. Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

It is important that the entire school community understand the renewal process. All members of a school's leadership team and board should carefully review both the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks and the SUNY Renewal Practices. Note that a renewal overview document for parents, teachers and community members is also available on the Institute's website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm. Please do not hesitate to contact the Institute with any questions.

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

| | Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success? |
|---|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A Academic Accountability Plan Goals | <p>Over the Accountability Period, the school has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>The Institute determines the extent to which the school has met the Accountability Plan goals in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language arts; • mathematics; • science; • social studies (high school only); • NCLB; • high school graduation and college preparation (if applicable); and • optional academic goals included by the school. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B Use of Assessment Data | <p>The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state performance standards; ▪ the school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments; ▪ the school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders and board members; ▪ teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention; ▪ school leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and • the school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success? |
|---|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C Curriculum | <p>students' progress and growth.</p> <p>The school's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades; in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans; teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents; the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D Pedagogy | <p>High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum; teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding; teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills; teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and, teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E | <p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success? |
|---|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| Instructional Leadership | <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed; the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff; instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers' instructional effectiveness; instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels; instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers; professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice; instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses; and instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F At-Risk Students | <p>The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically; the school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students; general education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program; the school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students; teachers are aware of their students' progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success? |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| | <p>struggling students;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and▪ the school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including the school nurse, if applicable. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization? |
|--|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A Mission & Key Design Elements | <p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school faithfully follows its mission; and ▪ the school has implemented its key design elements. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B Parents & Students | <p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families; ▪ families are satisfied with the school; and ▪ parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization? |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C | The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program. |
| Organizational Capacity | <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program; • the organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied; ▪ the school retains quality staff; ▪ the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals; ▪ the school maintains adequate student enrollment; ▪ the school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and ▪ the school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization? |
|--|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D Board Oversight | <p>The school board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school’s future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization; the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances; it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision; the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively; the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E Governance | <p>The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems and processes.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships; |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization? |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion; the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members; the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter; the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner; the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion; the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F | <p>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization? |
|---------------------------|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| Legal Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law; the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations; the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan; the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements; the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound? |
|--|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A Budgeting and Long Range Planning | <p>The school operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures; • board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate; • the school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions; • the school routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and • actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B Internal Controls | <p>The school maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures; • the school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management's direction, laws, regulations, grants and contracts; • the school safeguards its assets; • the school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions; • the school has controls in place to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy; • the school's trustees and employees adhere to a code of ethics; • the school ensures duties are appropriately segregated, or institutes compensating controls; |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound? |
|--|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained; the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements; a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy; the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C Financial Reporting | <p>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.</p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; annual budgets and cash flow statements; un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment; bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound? |
|---|--|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| <p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D</p> <p>Financial Condition</p> | <p>regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grant expenditure reports. <p>The school maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly; the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months); the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections; If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis; If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 4 If the School's Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable? |
|--|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A Plans for the School's Structure | <p>Key structural elements of the school, as defined in the exhibits of the Application for Charter Renewal, are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period; the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program; the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget; key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing; a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program. |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B Plans for the Educational Program | <p>The school's plans for implementing the educational program allow it to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school's educational program; for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 4 If the School's Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable? |
|---|---|
| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C Plans for Board Oversight and Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation standards set by the Board of Regents. <p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable plan for board oversight and governance.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school; plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board's ability to carry out its responsibilities; if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization. |

APPENDIX B: SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

| | Renewal Question 4 If the School's Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable? |
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| <u>Evidence Category</u> | <u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u> |
| SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D Fiscal & Facility Plans | <p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.</p> <p>Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school's budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections; • fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs; • fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions; • information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and • facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs. |