



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

2014-15 School Evaluation Report

ROADS Charter School II

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INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on June 11, 2015. 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

Reinventing Options for Adolescents Success' ("ROADS") mission is to ensure that over-age, under-credited students graduate from high school thoroughly prepared to excel academically, professionally and personally. ROADS Schools, Inc. (the "network") operates two SUNY authorized high schools that admit students who are off-track for graduation and have fewer than 11 credits. Students who enroll in ROADS Charter School II ("ROADS II") must be 15 or 16 years old, have completed 7th grade and been retained in a grade at least once. The school gives admissions priority to students who are involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system, are homeless or in transitional housing, or involved in foster care or child protective services.

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	March 22, 2011
Date of School Opening	August 27, 2012

Location and 2014-15 Enrollment

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
1010 Rev James A. Polite Ave, Bronx	NYC CSD 12	Co-located	235	9-12

Partner Organization

Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
ROADS Schools, Inc.	Not-for-profit charter management organization	2012-13 to Present

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Instructional Leadership. ROADS II and the network are establishing a consistent instructional leadership structure that supports the development of the teaching staff and fosters students' social emotional learning as well as academic achievement.

- In contrast to the school's first year, instructional leaders at ROADS II now provide sustained and consistent coaching to the teaching staff. The network provides leaders with a teacher effectiveness rubric that outlines expectations for teacher performance within ten different domains focusing on inputs and activities. Although leaders and teachers engage in weekly observations and coaching conferences, teachers do not routinely engage with the leadership in setting goals that identify specific student learning performance targets.
- The principal and director of curriculum and instruction have primary responsibility for teacher coaching and evaluation. The director of special education also provides input to teachers about specific aspects of their practice. The leadership staff is of sufficient size to support teachers in meeting their objectives.
- Leaders observe teachers and provide feedback in a one on one meeting once each week. Teachers describe the feedback as consistent in its alignment with the school's mission and generally useful. They also report that coaching would be more useful if it addressed specific strategies for improving pedagogical effectiveness within each content area rather than relying exclusively on the rubric to provide general feedback.
- This year, instructional leaders implemented a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of teachers and interrelates with classroom practice. Summer professional development sessions focused on developing the teaching staff's ability to address social and behavioral issues. Weekly sessions during the school year focus on academic issues addressing pedagogical strategies (e.g., using Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs") to inform and differentiate instruction) and data analysis.
- Instructional leaders conduct formal observations using rubrics and templates developed by the network. The rubrics provide clear criteria for meeting and exceeding expectations in each evaluation strand and teachers are aware of these criteria. Although the templates enable leaders to identify teachers' areas of strength and weakness accurately, there is no formal process for identifying goals and progress for growth or improvement linked to student outcome data.

Use of Assessment Data. ROADS II has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. This informal system allows teachers to adapt the timing of the administration and scoring of assessments to meet the needs of students.

- The school administers teacher-created midterm and final assessments during each trimester. Additionally, the school administers the Scantron assessment three times per year to track

student growth in literacy. Instructional leaders audit the teacher-created assessments to ensure alignment to state performance standards, the school's curriculum and to the level of rigor present on Regents examinations. The school has no formal process for valid and reliable scoring of assessments. Teachers grade their own exams collectively within content departments.

- The school makes student assessment data easily accessible to all stakeholders. Teachers and leaders use the JumpRope and GradeCam software to view up to date student progress on outcomes and assessments. During weekly advisory and individual life planning meetings, teachers report using both systems to track progress with their students. Based on these monitoring procedures, teachers and reading specialists ensure that students complete required assessments on a schedule that adapts to student attendance.
- In conjunction with instructional coaches and department leads, teachers use assessment results to adjust classroom instruction, lesson planning, and assessment strategies. For example, teachers report that they incorporate more open-ended questions into assessments and direct instruction based on the low student response rate to these questions on the Regents exam. Additionally, teachers report that item analyses of assessment data help them to identify instructional techniques that work well for certain standards.
- Instructional leaders do not have a formal system to evaluate teachers based on student assessment data. However, leaders do use assessment data to develop instructional goals during weekly coaching sessions with teachers and to aid curricular planning with department leads.
- The school sends parents/guardians biweekly academic progress reports from the JumpRope program and report cards once per trimester. The school empowers students to monitor their progress toward outcomes and credit accumulation independently using the JumpRope software.

Curriculum. ROADS II's curriculum is adequate to support teachers in their instructional planning.

- The school has a curriculum framework and supporting materials that provide a fixed, underlying structure for teachers to plan lessons. Teachers create unit plans, pacing guides, and scope and sequence documents collaboratively in their academic departments. Units and lessons include clear expectations for student performance on outcomes aligned to state standards. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents.
- The school has a formal structure for evaluating and modifying curriculum to ensure alignment to state standards. The director of curriculum and instruction audits unit plans and supporting resources to provide feedback regarding level of rigor, standards alignment and vertical alignment over grades. Academic departments meet with the director of curriculum and instruction biweekly to make formal revisions to unit plans based on student outcome data and classroom observation data. Teachers report effective collaboration within academic

departments regarding curricular design and adjustment. Additionally, leaders and teachers modify the pacing and content of curriculum during individual coaching sessions.

- Teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons. Instructional coaches review lesson plans and provide written feedback on a weekly basis.

Pedagogy. During the evaluation visit, class sizes ranged from a minimum of one to a maximum of seven with an average five students per classroom. At full attendance, between 15 and 20 students occupy each ROADS II classroom. Instruction to the students present during the visit was adequate throughout the school; however, the visit team could not determine the effectiveness of instruction to a full complement of ROADS II students. As shown in the chart below, during the evaluation visit the Institute team members conducted 15 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school evaluation visits.

Classroom Observation Methodology: Number of Observations

Content Area	Math	5
	Science	2
	History	3
	Specials	1
	Total	15

- Teachers deliver lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum (15 out of 15 classrooms observed, 100%). Highly individualized lessons build on students’ previous knowledge and skills. Most teachers clearly communicate learning objectives to students, evidenced by students consistently and accurately reporting which course learning objectives they are working towards on their assignments and exams.
- A small majority of teachers regularly use effective techniques to check for student understanding (9 out of 15 classrooms, 60%). Most checks for understanding are factual or rote in nature; few checks require interpretation or conceptual understanding. Teachers actively monitor students’ responses and written work during the course of the class and adjust instruction as appropriate based on the level of student understanding. Teachers delivering whole-class lessons use questioning techniques to gauge knowledge and understanding, but almost always with individual students and not across an entire class.
- Few teachers assign student work or challenge students with questions that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills (5 out of 15 classrooms, 33%). Across classrooms and grade levels, students work with close ended problems and assignments that do not require interpretation, analysis, or significant application of course content. Most teachers implement lessons in ways that remove opportunities for higher-order thinking. For example, some teachers ask students questions and then provide most of the

answers to those questions themselves instead of supporting students to do so on their own. Similarly, few teachers challenge their students to defend or elaborate on their answers.

- Throughout the school, (13 of 15 classrooms, 87%), teachers communicate a sense of urgency for learning and provide clear directions. In spite of volatile attendance patterns, teachers effectively pace their lessons and establish a classroom focused on academic achievement, and students in most classrooms are engaged in on-task behaviors. For example, in one classroom students were completing a wide variety of assignments to address the specific outcomes they needed to earn their course credits, and teachers provided consistent attention and support across the entire class to maintain student focus.

At-Risk Students. ROADS II meets the educational needs of its students with disabilities and its English language learners (“ELLs”). Due to school enrollment criteria, all ROADS II students are, by definition, at risk of academic failure.

- The school provides integrated co-teaching (“ICT”), Special Education Teacher Support Services (“SETSS”) and 15-to-1 courses to meet students’ IEP requirements. Special education teaching assistants provide push-in services for one-on-one and small group supports. In-house social workers provide counseling services as mandated by students’ IEPs.
- The special education program staff consists of a director of special education, one dedicated SETSS who co-teaches certain subjects and two teaching assistants. Ten of the general education teachers (approximately half) maintain certification in special education. This staffing arrangement provides ample support for the school’s 105 students with disabilities.
- The school identifies students with disabilities primarily using information from the schools where students previously attended. The school also uses Scantron reading and mathematics results to identify entering students who may need additional supports or a formal evaluation. Teachers and social workers refer students to the school intervention team for additional observations, interventions, and possible recommendations for formal evaluations.
- The school does not have formal structures in place for coordination between the director of special education and all general education teachers. The director of special education pushes into department meetings as needed. The special education teachers and assistants coordinate regularly, but informally, with co-teachers. The director of special education and SETSS teacher coordinate twice per week.
- The director of special education reviews student progress for all students with IEPs at least once per trimester. ROADS II measures student progress through the school’s outcomes-based learning model, which directly relates to credit accumulation. The at-risk program staff reviews additional data (e.g., attendance, Individual Life Plans, behavior referrals) and consults directly with students’ teachers as needed.
- The director of special education provides regular and as-needed professional development sessions on a range of topics such as writing effective reports for students’ IEPs to the entire faculty and to individual departments.

- One full time English as-a-Second Language (“ESL”) teacher provides both pull out and push in services to students identified as ELLs. The school’s special education program staff provides services to ELL students in addition to students with disabilities.
- The school identifies ELLs using student records attended and by administering the Home Language Identification Survey and New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners when necessary. Teachers and social workers refer students to the school intervention team for additional observations, interventions and possible recommendations for formal evaluations regarding language issues that students may have.
- There is no formal coordination between the ESL teacher and general education teachers. The ESL teacher communicates with the school’s reading specialist and general education teachers as-needed to support ELL students’ progress. The ESL teacher and director of special education coordinate weekly.
- The ESL teacher reviews student progress on the school’s outcome based learning model for all ELL students under the oversight of the director of special education. The ESL teacher uses New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test and additional assessments to monitor students’ progress toward achieving English proficiency. The ESL teacher reviews additional data (e.g., attendance, Individual Life Plans, behavior referrals) and consults directly with students’ teachers as needed.
- The school does not currently provide teachers with structured professional development activities focused on supporting ELLs. The ESL teacher provides support and training to general education teachers as needed.

Organizational Capacity. The ROADS II organization is beginning to support the delivery of the educational program.

- The school and the network have established an administrative structure that allows the school to carry out its mission. The network supports the school’s operations, fiscal monitoring, talent recruitment, and this year provides coaching to its academic leadership. In its third year, the school continues to develop its systems, policies, and procedures that will enable it to carry out its academic and social emotional learning program. The school maintains distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- ROADS II retains staff members dedicated to its students and special mission but has experienced some turnover. During the summer and 2014-15 school year, nine of 19 previous year teachers left ROADS II; six teachers left voluntarily. The school is anticipating a change in its leadership at the end of 2014-15 and had in place at the time of the visit a succession plan for promoting a new leader from within the school’s staff.
- The school maintains adequate student enrollment and reports a waitlist of nearly 300 students. However, for the past two years, the average daily attendance rates ranged from about 60 percent in September to about 45 percent by June.

- ROADS II has not yet developed procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of its program. Although the school collects and maintains several data points about social emotional counseling and supports available to students, it has not developed processes to analyze these data points to determine their contribution to students' academic achievement. The school reflects upon its perception of the overall effectiveness of its social emotional supports and academic program and makes changes as a result, but the effectiveness of those changes is yet to be determined.
- The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard shows the school's financial condition as fiscally strong for all three years of audited financial statements. The current year shows continued stability thus far.
- The school's charter agreement requires submission of board minutes to the authorizer within 30 days of each meeting. However, as of March 2015, the school had not submitted board minutes in more than a year. After the Institute notified the education corporation of this breach in the charter agreement, ROADS II provided board minutes through October 2014. ROADS II continued to be out of compliance with this reporting requirement until late July 2015.

Board Oversight. The board has been thoughtful in identifying deficiencies in the educational program, but it is not yet clear that the board will take action that will enable ROADS II to meet its Accountability Plan goals.

- ROADS II board members possess an impressive cache of skills, expertise and experience related to education and serving at-risk youth. Despite deep application of these skills to school governance responsibilities, the board has not embedded structures to provide adequate oversight to ensure the school's future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization.
- Although the board has demonstrated its willingness to take corrective action when school staff members do not meet expectations, it has not yet created a formal leader evaluation process linked to student outcomes.
- The board has identified a number of priorities geared toward improving the school's program, but it is unclear that those priorities translate to strategic actions that will result in strong student performance outcomes.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote academic success by ensuring that disconnected youth—overage and under-credited students aged 15-17 in New York City—graduate from high school prepared to excel in their academic, professional and personal lives. Our “second-chance” high schools offer customized and rigorous curricula, socio-emotional support and work-based experiences to foster student engagement and accelerate student progress.

Student Demographics¹

	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15²
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 12 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 12 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity					
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1	1	1	2
Black or African American	42	27	36	27	36
Hispanic	55	69	60	69	59
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	2	1	2	1
White	1	1	2	1	2
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0
Special Populations					
Students with Disabilities	37	19	38	22	37
English Language Learners	11	20	12	19	11
Free/ Reduced Lunch					
Eligible for Free Lunch	82	86	69	87	-- ³
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	2	4	2	3	--
Economically Disadvantaged	83	95	83	91	78

¹ Source: 2012-13 and 2013-14 New York State School Report Cards.

² The Institute derived the 2014-15 Students with Disabilities, ELL and Economically Disadvantaged statistics from the school's October 2014 student enrollment report to NYSED (2014-15 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available. Because NYSED releases data up to a full year after the conclusion of any one school year, the data presented in this table may differ from current information reported by the school and included in this report.

³ School FRPL enrollment data for 2014-15 are not available.

School Characteristics

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ⁴	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2012-2013	150	143	9	9
2013-2014	200	279	9-10	9-10
2014-2015	200	236	9-11	9-11

Board of Trustees⁵

Board Member Name	Position
Jeffrey Li	Chair
Martin Kurzweil	Vice Chair
Ashley Dills	Treasurer
Jane Wilson	Secretary
Mark Gallogly	Trustee
Gwendolyn Baker	Trustee
Carrie Braddock	Trustee
Stacy Gibbons	Trustee

School Leadership History

School Year(s)	School Leader(s) Name and Title(s)
2012-13 to 2014-15	Seth Litt, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2012-13	First Year Visit	Institute	April 22, 2013
2014-15	Evaluation Visit	Institute	June 11, 2015

⁴ Source: The Institute's official enrollment binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State School Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

⁵ Source: Institute records at the time of the visit.

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

School Visit Team

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Member	Title
June 11, 2015	Jeffrey Wasbes	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Program and Systems Analyst
	Jared Boyce	External Consultant

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 rd Year of Five-Year Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁶	3 rd Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2016

⁶ 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 the charter term. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the charter term. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 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.

- 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 students’ progress and growth.

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C Curriculum	<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 Instructional Leadership	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <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

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<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 struggling students;

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<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.

	Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A	The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.
Mission & Key Design Elements	<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/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.
Parents & Students	<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.
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; • 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.

	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; • 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

	Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Legal Requirements	<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> <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;

	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 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.

	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; • 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;

	Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C Financial Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <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 regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and • grant expenditure reports.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D Financial Condition	<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;

	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 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.

	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 • 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.

	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	<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.
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.