



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

2013-14 School Evaluation Report

New World Preparatory Charter School

REPORT DATE: MAY 16, 2014

VISIT DATE: MARCH 24, 2014

Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207
518/433-8277
518/427-6510 (fax)
www.newyorkcharters.org

INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report presents the school's 2012-13 Performance Review and Summaries, which provide an analysis of the attainment of the key academic goals in the school's Accountability Plan. Following these achievement results, the report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on March 24, 2014. While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the "Institute") conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the "SUNY Renewal Benchmarks") near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. This subset, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. They provide a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), as well as leadership, organizational capacity and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

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

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

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 15, 2009
School Opening	September, 2010

Location and Enrollment

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
26 Sharpe Ave., Staten Island, NY 10302	NYC CSD 31	Private	282	6-8

Partner Organization

Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Victory Education Partners, Inc.	Education Management Organization	2010-11 to 2011-12

2012-13 School Performance Review

At the beginning of the charter term, New World Preparatory Charter School ("New World Prep") developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of English Language Arts ("ELA") and math. The Accountability Plan also includes science and No Child Left Behind Act ("NCLB") goals. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal.

Note: In 2012-13, the Institute did not take into account the two absolute ELA and math measures when evaluating schools' goal attainment. Because of the high standards in the new state testing program only a handful of schools statewide met the absolute proficiency target and the state has not yet recalibrated the absolute Annual Measurable Objective.

Performance Evaluation

In 2012-13, the second year that both comparative measures in ELA and math were applicable to New World Prep and the third year of its four-year Accountability Period, the school met neither its ELA nor its math goal. Given the school's failure to meet its key academic Accountability Plan goals, New World Prep's prospects for renewal are in jeopardy.

The school is meeting its No Child Left Behind ("NCLB") goal, but is not meeting its science goal.

ELA

Through the first three years of the Accountability Period, New World Prep met only one of the ELA measures that constitute the goal; the mean growth percentile, in both 2011-12 and 2012-13. It has underperformed the Staten Island School District in each of the last two years. In comparison to demographically similar schools, New World Prep has performed worse than expected each year.

Math

Through the first two years of the Accountability Period, New World Prep did not meet any of the math measures that constitute the goal. In 2012-13, it met only one measure, the mean growth percentile. It has underperformed the Staten Island School District in each of the last two years. In comparison to demographically similar schools, New World Prep performed worse than expected in the first two years, and as expected in 2012-13, though still below the target. The school presents Regents pass rates as an indicator of its progress, as 89 percent of the 27 New World Prep 8th grade students who took the Integrated Algebra Regents exam passed the test with a score of 65 or higher in 2012-13.

NCLB

New World Prep has met its NCLB goal in the first two years of its charter.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts
New World Prep Charter School



ABSOLUTE MEASURES	2010-11				2011-12				2012-13							
	Grades Served: 6		Grades Served: 6-7		Grades Served: 6-7		Grades Served: 6-8		Grades Served: 6-8		Grades Served: 6-8					
	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	(0)	(0)	(0)	3	(0)	(0)	(0)	3	(0)	(0)	(0)	4	(0)	(0)	(0)
	4	(0)	(0)	(0)	4	(0)	(0)	(0)	4	(0)	(0)	(0)	5	(0)	(0)	(0)
	5	(0)	(0)	(0)	5	(0)	(0)	(0)	5	(0)	(0)	(0)	6	(0)	(0)	(0)
	6	29.4 (109)	(0)	(0)	6	43.7 (87)	(0)	(0)	6	12.6 (95)	(0)	(0)	7	11.5 (96)	13.0 (77)	(0)
	7	(0)	(0)	(0)	7	25.3 (99)	26.9 (93)	(0)	7	11.5 (96)	13.0 (77)	(0)	8	14.8 (88)	15.1 (86)	(0)
	8	(0)	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	(0)	8	14.8 (88)	15.1 (86)	(0)	All	12.9 (279)	14.1 (163)	NA
	All	29.4 (109)	(0)	(0)	All	33.9 (186)	26.9 (93)	(0)	All	12.9 (279)	14.1 (163)	NA				

2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	NO	Grades	PI	AMO	NO	Grades	PLI	AMO	NO
	6	113	122	NO	6-7	121	135	NO	6-8	71		

COMPARATIVE MEASURES	2010-11				2011-12				2012-13			
	Grades	School	District	Comparison: Staten Island District 31	Grades	School	District	Comparison: Staten Island District 31	Grades	School	District	Comparison: Staten Island District 31
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	NA			NA	7	26.9	52.6	NO	7-8	14.1	32.5	NO

GROWTH MEASURE	2010-11				2011-12				2012-13						
	Grades	School	State	Effect Size	Grades	School	State	Effect Size	Grades	School	State	Effect Size			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	71.5	29.4	39.2	-0.62	NO	66.8	33.9	39.9	-0.36	NO	82.4	12.9	17.6	-0.41	NO

5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	4				4				4	0.0			
	5				5				5	0.0			
	6				6				6	44.9			
	7				7				7	56.8			
	8				8				8	52.9			
	All	42.0	50.0	NO	All	50.6	50.0	YES	All	51.8	50.0	YES	

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

New World Prep Charter School



	2010-11				2011-12				2012-13								
	All Students		2+ Years Students		All Students		2+ Years Students		All Students		2+ Years Students						
	Grades	% (N)	Grades	% (N)	Grades	% (N)	Grades	% (N)	Grades	% (N)	Grades	% (N)					
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	MET	Grades	PI	AMO	MET	Grades	PLI	AMO	MET					
	6	122	137	NO	6-7	124	148	NO	6-8	76							
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31				Comparison: Staten Island District 31								
	Grades	School	District	NA	Grades	School	District	NO	Grades	School	District	NO					
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL Actual		Effect Size	MET	% FL Actual		Effect Size	MET	% ED Actual		Effect Size	MET					
	71.5	35.8	48.4	-0.60	NO	66.8	35.5	52.5	-0.80	NO	62.4	16.8	16.7	0.00	NO		
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades		School	State	Grades		School	State	Grades		School	State					
	4	5	6	7	8	All	30.0	50.0	NO	4	5	6	7	8	All	62.3	50.0

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Instructional Leadership

New World Prep has strengthened its instructional leadership with a comprehensive professional development program and a systematic approach to coaching. Time constraints continue to limit the leadership's ability to provide sufficient ongoing coaching of teachers to ensure high levels of student achievement.

- The school's leadership has begun to communicate clear expectations for teacher performance, which they apply in teacher evaluation, coaching and professional development activities.
- New World Prep has generally maintained the same leadership structure as was in place during the previous school year, with designated teacher leaders providing peer coaching on a limited basis. The school's academic directors continue to serve on a part-time basis thereby limiting the amount of coaching that they offer teachers and the principal.
- The school-wide instructional priorities focused on ELA and math, a robust writing program and interdisciplinary content now provide a foundation for the school's developing coaching system. The school now has a clear structure for leaders to provide feedback to teachers. The instructional effectiveness of the program has yet to be determined.
- In contrast to previous years, New World Prep has implemented a comprehensive professional development program that addresses the competencies and skills of all teachers by focusing on student achievement rather than behavior management as had been the case earlier in the charter term. This year, the school's pre-service training included differentiated activities for new teachers. New World Prep also now provides targeted ongoing support for teachers still developing effective classroom management techniques.
- New World Prep has been deliberate in structuring professional development activities throughout the current school year that interrelate with classroom practice and align to stated instructional priorities. In a continual process, the instructional leadership team, including teacher leaders, works with content teams to assist teachers in applying the strategies discussed in weekly school-wide professional development sessions to their instructional plans. Teachers report that instructional leaders focus classroom observation feedback on use of the same pedagogical practices.
- Previous teacher evaluations used student achievement data to a very limited extent in assessing teacher effectiveness. The school's current evaluation criteria considers class-level achievement data rather than solely individual student results as was previously the case. Nevertheless, the evaluation continues to focus on growth rather than absolute achievement. While this change presents a new opportunity to measure and improve instructional effectiveness, current outcome data continues to measure teachers' performance against growth targets, thereby potentially rewarding nominal student improvement that does not reach the level of knowledge and skills necessary for students to demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards.

Use of Assessment Data

The school is developing an assessment system likely to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning to the extent that the key assessment aligns with state exams.

- In contrast to previous years when the school relied on teachers' individually created assessments, the school now uses common assessments to diagnose individual skill deficits and to monitor progress toward mastery of these skills. In order to improve the reliability of the assessments used to plan instruction, now only ELA teachers administer Fountas & Pinnell ("F&P") benchmarks assessments to determine ability level groupings for daily guided reading instruction, which all teachers across subject areas conduct. This practice differs from previous years when all teachers administered the F&P.
- New World Prep has introduced a new commercial computer adaptive reading test as a centerpiece of its effort to accelerate student ELA achievement. The school monitors student performance on these tests as a means of gauging the effectiveness of the ELA program. This assessment system supports accountability, sets expectations and provides a focus for data driven instructional decisions. The school reports that the I-Ready Assessment is a state approved assessment as indicated on the NYSED website: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/assessments/approved-list.html>. Based upon a September 2013 study conducted by Educational Research Institute of America, "i-Ready Diagnostic scores and the NYS ELA and Mathematics scores were highly correlated. Regression analyses provided firm evidence that the i-Ready Diagnostic scores were statistically significant predictors of end-of-year NYS ELA and Mathematics scores at grades 3 to 8." The Institute finds the school's work toward tracking student progress a positive development but further notes that analysis of student performance on the school's accountability plan goals will be a core component of any renewal recommendation. Because the school has used multiple diagnostic assessments during the charter term, it is unable to review year-to-year trends in students' beginning skills.
- The school now implements a comprehensive writing program across all disciplines. All teachers are familiar with the developmental process and evaluating student work. However, with the school having conducted limited norming, teacher evaluations of student work products, based on rubric scores and comments, are inconsistent. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the writing samples reviewed by Institute visitors indicate student writing reflects student work product that largely meet the demands of state standards.
- New World Prep uses assessment data to adjust instructional plans and to identify the appropriate interventions for students. In addition to using assessment results to modify pacing guides and to determine areas for reteaching, the New World Prep teachers and leaders use the results of school-wide assessments to identify students' placement into one of five school-wide intervention categories and to create ability level groupings for classroom instruction. To a limited extent, the school also uses assessment data to evaluate teacher effectiveness and as a predictor of student performance on state exams.
- Teachers have a structured process for collecting running record information on students' skill level during small group instruction as general checks for understanding that drive regrouping and re-teaching decisions.

Pedagogy

Elements of high quality instruction are beginning to emerge throughout the school.

- The school provides an intensive literacy class every day with all teachers leading small group instruction. Teachers differentiate instruction within small groups based on results of F&P and ongoing running records.
- Teachers develop detailed, well-paced lessons built around clear learning objectives supported by engaging activities and including interdisciplinary writing assignments. Notably, New World Prep has made changes to its co-teaching model with both teachers now having a clear role in ensuring that students meet learning objectives in small group and other targeted instruction.
- Teachers regularly and effectively use a variety of techniques to check for student understanding by circulating around the room, collecting running records and checking exit tickets. Reflecting the school's focus on using data, teachers have begun to make adjustments to ensure that students meet learning targets.
- Through frequent peer-to-peer interactions and both individual and group assignments, teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding as well as higher-order thinking and problem solving skills.
- Teachers deliver instruction with a sense of urgency for learning. Lesson design fosters classroom environments with a focus on academic achievement. This finding is in contrast to the previous school evaluation visit during which observers noted problems with lesson pacing and teachers' use of learning time as contributing to frequent disruptions during instruction.
- While the school has improved the quality of instruction, the evaluation visit provided a snapshot of a particular point in time. As a result, the visit team cannot infer how enduring these teaching practices have become throughout the current school year and as one data point cannot predict the impact on state test results.

Organizational Capacity

Although school leaders have recently implemented a number of positive changes, significant structural problems continue to impede New World Prep's effective delivery of its educational program.

- The school's organizational structure has established roles with distinct responsibilities; however, the academic directors serve dual, inherently incompatible roles. The academic directors serve as coaches responsible for supporting the principal's priorities in developing teachers' pedagogical practices while also serving as leadership development consultants to the principal. The academic directors serve at the pleasure of and report directly to the school's board, leaving the identified school leader without license to select – and hold accountable – key personnel. While permissible, this bifurcation of influence and authority could weaken the principal's ability to manage teachers effectively.
- New World Prep has established a safe and orderly environment conducive to a culture of learning. The school-wide token economy reinforces expectations for student behavior while a teacher leader serves as a peer mentor in developing teachers' behavior

management skills. Additionally, the web-based data platform provides a means to monitor program implementation.

- The school has begun to assess the skill-level of incoming students to plan for a transitional summer program and to develop a targeted intervention strategy that addresses identified skill deficiencies.
- Despite the changes New World Prep made to its hiring process prior to the 2012-13 school year, New World Prep continues to experience a high level of teacher turnover as has been the case since its opening, at least partially attributable to the location of the school. The school has now engaged an education recruitment firm to conduct teacher searches in hopes of resolving this issue.

Board Oversight

In the school's fourth year of operation, the New World Prep board has begun to establish defined priorities, objectives and long-range goals; however, the school leadership reporting structure and the extent to which the board holds the leaders accountable limit the effectiveness of its oversight.

- The board has expanded the data dashboard it reviews at each meeting to track the school's progress across a variety of metrics. The updated dashboard is a clear example of the board's new focus on student achievement; however, given that the reliability of the school's new assessment system has not been determined, it is not yet clear that the data dashboard provides the most useful information.
- Despite the board making two key instructional leaders school employees rather than external consultants, New World Prep's core leadership remains disjointed. Both academic directors serve dual roles: coaches to teachers in support of the principal's instructional priorities and leadership development coach to the principal. The academic directors report to the board in both capacities. This internally contradictory structure undermines the principal's authority as school leader and blurs lines of accountability.
- As has been the case throughout the charter term, the board has not established clear minimum performance standards against which it evaluates the principal and academic directors. Following the release of 2012-13 state test results and in response to the Institute's continued concerns regarding accountability structures, the board amended the principal's contract to include pay incentives based on student achievement. This change reflects the board's new focus on achievement data; importantly, however, the incentives relate to student growth rather than achievement of performance standards. The board has not yet developed clear criteria or an evaluation process for academic directors despite their significant influence.
- As noted in the Institute's previous report, board members continue to take an active role in the school's day-to-day programming, with multiple board members spending considerable time at the school. This situation, like the leadership reporting structure, muddies accountability and undermines the principal's authority as the school leader.
- In contrast to previous years, the New World Prep board clearly communicates the urgency with which the school must address student achievement deficits. The positive effects of a

number of the board's changes to the educational program are evident in new classroom practices.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

New World Preparatory Charter School (NWP) will provide an exceptional education for students in grades 6-8 by employing research-proven strategies to raise middle school academic achievement including: academic rigor and relevance, personalization, focused professional development, and meaningful engagement of families and the larger community.

Student Demographics¹

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13 ²
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 31 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 31 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	1	0	1
Black or African American	57	15	61	14	55
Hispanic	33	24	35	25	40
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	4	8	2	8	2
White	3	53	2	52	1
Multiracial	2	0	0	0	1
Students with Disabilities ³	25	--	27	22	28
English Language Learners	5	6	13	6	13
Eligible for Free Lunch	72	45	67	45	--
Eligible for Reduced – Price Lunch	7	8	4	9	--
Economically Disadvantaged	--	--	--	--	83

¹ Source: 2010-11 and 2011-12 School Report Cards, SED.

² The Institute derived the 2012-13 statistics from the school's October 2012 student enrollment report to SED (2012-13 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available.

³ District-level students with disabilities enrollment data are not available for 2010-11. SED released these district data for the first time in spring 2012 as the State's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets.

School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	125	127	6	6	182
2011-12	249	194	6-7	6-7	182
2012-13	374	282	6-8	6-8	182
2013-14					

School Leader(s)

School Year(s)	School Leader Name(s) and Title(s)
2010-11 to Present	Jamie Esperon, Principal

Board of Trustees⁴

Name	Position
John P. Tobin	Chair
Rev. Terry Troia	Secretary
Denis P. Kelleher	Treasurer
Angelo Aponte	Trustee
Araceli Arizmendi	Trustee
Carin Guarasci	Trustee
Jack Minogue	Trustee
Emma Vidals	Trustee
Peter Weinman	Trustee
Arnold Obey	Trustee
Linda Mulligan	PTO President
Beverly Peterson	Ex-officio
Father Mark Hallinan	Ex-officio

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	First Year	Institute	April 14, 2011
2011-12	Evaluation	Institute	April 4-5, 2012
2012-13	Informal	Institute	February 5, 2013

⁴ Source: Institute board records.

2012-13	Evaluation	Institute	May 2, 2013
2013-14	Evaluation	Institute	March 24, 2014

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Titles
March 24, 2014	Natasha Howard, PhD	Director of School Evaluation
	Ron Miller, PhD	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	4 th Year of Five-Year Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁵	4 th Year of Four-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

⁵ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a charter term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of that charter term. For schools in initial charter terms, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the charter term. For schools in subsequent charter terms, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.



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.

- Revised May 2012 -

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- 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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A</p> <p>Academic Accountability Plan Goals</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B</p> <p>Use of Assessment Data</p>	<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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C</p> <p>Curriculum</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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<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

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	<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;

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<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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A</p> <p>Mission & Key Design Elements</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.</p> <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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<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

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<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F Legal Requirements</p>	<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;

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<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
	<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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A</p> <p>Budgeting and Long Range Planning</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B</p> <p>Internal Controls</p>	<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>
	<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>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C</p> <p>Financial Reporting</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D</p> <p>Financial Condition</p>	<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>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A</p> <p>Plans for the School's Structure</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B</p> <p>Plans for the Educational Program</p>	<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.

	<p align="center">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?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C</p> <p>Plans for Board Oversight and Governance</p>	<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.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D</p> <p>Fiscal & Facility Plans</p>	<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.