



Henry Johnson Charter School

School Evaluation Report **2012-13**

Visit Date: March 20-21, 2013

Report Issued: September 6, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report includes four components. The first section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. The second section provides background information on the conduct of the evaluation visit, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team and puts the visit in the context of the school's current charter cycle. The third section provides the school's 2011-12 Performance Review and Summaries, which gives an analysis of the attainment of the key academic goals in the school's Accountability Plan. Finally, a fourth section entitled School Evaluation Visit presents an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit. Following these sections, an appendix provides the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the "Renewal Benchmarks").

While the Institute conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all Renewal Benchmarks near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. These Qualitative Education Benchmarks address 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 organizational capacity, board oversight and governance. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the "Institute") uses the established criteria on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

The report below provides benchmark conclusions and evidence to support these conclusions in order to highlight areas of concern and provide additional feedback. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report, which deliberately emphasizes areas of concern. 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.

Because of the inherent complexity of a school organization, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school's prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and note areas in need of improvement based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	May 24, 2005
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	October, 2005
School Opening Date	September, 2007

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2007-08 to Present	30 Watervliet Ave., Albany, New York	K-4	City School District of Albany

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Partner	Brighter Choice Foundation	Non-profit	2007 to Present

Mission Statement

The mission of the Henry Johnson Charter School is to ensure that all students reach the highest levels of scholastic achievement in an environment that instills character, virtue, and “habits of mind” that ensure success both within and outside of the classroom: diligence, courage, respect, self-reliance, duty, and responsibility.

Key Design Elements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rigorous academic program; • A longer school day and school year allowing for three hours of English language arts instruction and 90 minutes of mathematics instruction daily; • Comprehensive assessment program, the results of which drive curricular and instructional decision making; • A school culture based on the “habits of mind;” • A focus on learning, with at least two adults providing instruction in each classroom and extensive professional development available to teachers; and • A program enriched by visual and performing arts, computer class and by physical education.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2007-08	200	125	116	K-2	K-1
2008-09	275	200	202	K-3	K-2
2009-10	350	275	276	K-4	K-3
2010-11	361	N/A	350	K-4	K-4

¹ Source: SUNY Charter Schools Institute’s Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

2011-12	387	N/A	374	K-4	K-4
2012-13	375	N/A	383 ²	K-4	K-4

Student Demographics³

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Albany CSD Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Albany CSD Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Albany CSD Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	1	0	0	0
Black or African American	81	61	81	59	86	55
Hispanic	9	12	10	12	11	14
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	6	0	7	0	7
White	3	21	4	21	2	21
Multiracial	6	0	4	1	1	2
Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities ⁴	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4 ⁵	12 ⁶
English Language Learners	1	6	2	6	2	7
Free/Reduced Lunch						
Eligible for Free Lunch	71	50	61	52	81	60
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	13	8	7	8	10	7

² Annual School Visit Data Collection Form, February 2013

³ Source: 2010-11 School Report Cards, State Education Department ("SED").

⁴ New York State Education Department did not report special education data in these years.

⁵ Based on the state's Empirical Analysis of Enrollment Targets.

⁶ Ibid.

Board of Trustees⁷

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
Peter Murphy	Chair
Saleem Cheeks	Vice chair, Treasurer, Finance Committee
Joanne McElroy-Moore	Trustee
Sharon Victoria DeSilva	Trustee
Retha Doiley-Miller	Parent Representative
Brian Backstrom	None
Sarah Galimore	None

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2007-08 to 2010-11	Lillian Turner, Principal
2011-12	Robert Warmack, Principal
2012-13	Kathleen A. O'Brien, Ph.D., Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2007-08	First-Year Visit	Institute	February 7, 2008
2008-09	Annual Visit	External	May 13-14, 2009
2009-10	Annual Visit	Institute	March 30, 2010
2011-12	Renewal Visit	Institute	October 18, 2011
2012-13	Annual Visit	Institute	March 20-21, 2013

⁷ Source: Institute board information at time of visit.

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
March 20-21, 2013	Jeff Wasbes	Director of Performance and Systems
	Sean Fitzsimons	Director of School Applications
	Elizabeth Genco	Director of Charter School Information

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	1 st Year of Three-Year Charter Term
Accountability Period ⁸	2 nd Year of Three-Year Accountability Period
Anticipated Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

⁸ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a Charter Term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of 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.

2011-12 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Performance Summary

In 2011-12, the first year of Henry Johnson Charter School's ("Henry Johnson's") three-year Accountability Period, the school is not meeting its English language arts ("ELA") goal. Including the last year of its previous Accountability Period, it has not met the ELA measure for two years. The school is meeting its math goal after having failed to meet it the previous year. It is meeting its NCLB goal and based on limited data, the school is also meeting its science goal.

ELA

Based on results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, Henry Johnson has not met its ELA goal, meeting only one of the five measures in 2011-12. Since the school began its testing program in 2009-10, it has failed to meet the absolute measure every year. In 2011-12, 73 percent of students scored proficient, a slight improvement from 2010-11. The school did not meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set by the state for the first time this year and it narrowly underperformed the Albany City School District. In comparison to demographically similar schools, Henry Johnson performed worse than expected. The school met its cohort growth goal with the 4th grade cohort showing year-to-year improvement.

Math

Based on the results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, Henry Johnson has met its Accountability Plan goal in math. In 2011-12, the school met its target with 98 percent of students achieving proficiency. The school performed better than the state's AMO and outperformed the Albany City School District by a margin of 16 percentage points. In comparison to demographically similar schools, Henry Johnson met its target in the most recent year, performing better than expected to a medium degree, a substantial improvement from 2010-11 when the school performed worse than expected. The school met the overall growth target in 2011-12 with the 4th grade showing substantial year-to-year cohort growth.

Science

Henry Johnson met its science goal. In 2010-11, the first time the school administered the state science exam, 84 percent of students scored proficient. The school outperformed the Albany City School District. In 2011-12, the school improved its performance with 97% of tested students scoring proficient. The school outperformed the school district by 13 percentage points.

No Child Left Behind

Henry Johnson has consistently met its NCLB goal.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts

Henry Johnson Charter School



ABSOLUTE MEASURES

1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.

2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.

COMPARATIVE MEASURES

3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.

4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at or above Level 3 on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.

GROWTH MEASURE

5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.

2009-10 Grades Served: K-3				MET	2010-11 Grades Served: 3-4				MET	2011-12 Grades Served: K-4				MET			
Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)			Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)			Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)					
3	60.0 (50)	60.0 (40)			3	58.4 (77)	63.8 (58)			3	60.5 (76)	61.5 (65)					
4	(0)	(0)			4	60.8 (51)	65.8 (38)			4	83.8 (74)	85.7 (63)					
5	(0)	(0)			5	(0)	(0)			5	(0)	(0)					
6	(0)	(0)			6	(0)	(0)			6	(0)	(0)					
7	(0)	(0)			7	(0)	(0)			7	(0)	(0)					
8	(0)	(0)			8	(0)	(0)			8	(0)	(0)					
All	60.0 (50)	60.0 (40)		NO	All	59.4 (128)	64.6 (96)		NO	All	72.0 (150)	73.4 (128)	NO				
Grades	PI	AMO		YES	Grades	PI	AMO		YES	Grades	PI	AMO					
3	160	155			3-4	127	122			3-4	133	135					
Comparison: Albany City Schools					Comparison: Albany City Schools					Comparison: Albany City Schools							
Grades	School	District		YES	Grades	School	District		YES	Grades	School	District					
3	50.0	40.0			3-4	42.7	39.6			3-4	39.1	39.5					
% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO			
71.2	48.0	42.7	0.36		60.9	47.7	48.5	-0.10		80.9	38.0	40.9	-0.18				
Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	--	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NO	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	YES
3						3						3	7	0.0		14.3	
4					4	40	45.0	50.0	37.5	4	64	40.6	46.4	46.9	*		
5					5					5							
6					6					6							
7					7					7							
8					8					8							
All					All	42	42.9	48.3	35.7	All	71	36.6	43.0	43.7			

TACSThe Institute uses SED's "time adjusted cut scores", or "TACS", for evaluating the designated measures in the respective years. Although a lower standard than that used before 2009-10, TACS provide continuity with the standard used in previous years. Data Sources: SED data; school data workbooks; the Institute's student test database.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

Henry Johnson Charter School



	2009-10			MET	2010-11			MET	2011-12			MET						
	Grades Served: K-3				Grades Served: 3-4				Grades Served: K-4									
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)							
ABSOLUTE MEASURES 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.	3	100.0 (50)	100.0 (40)	YES	3	92.9 (77)	98.3 (58)	YES	3	98.7 (77)	100.0 (65)	YES						
	4	(0)	(0)		4	67.1 (51)	76.3 (38)		4	97.3 (74)	96.8 (63)							
	5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)							
	6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)							
	7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)							
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)							
	All	100.0 (50)	100.0 (40)		All	82.0 (128)	89.6 (96)		All	98.0 (151)	98.4 (128)							
	2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI		AMO	YES	Grades		PI	AMO	NO		Grades	PI	AMO	YES		
3		200	135	3-4	131		137	3-4	162	148								
COMPARATIVE MEASURES 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Albany City Schools			YES	Comparison: Albany City School			NO	Comparison: Albany City Schools			YES						
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District							
	3	57.5	37.5		3-4	40.6	42.3		3-4	66.4	49.8							
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted level of students at or above Level 3 on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES			
	71.2	52.0	48.0	0.22		60.9	53.3	55.5	-0.10		80.9	63.5	51.1	0.66				
GROWTH MEASURE 5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	--	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NO	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	YES
	3						3						3	7	0.0		42.9	
	4						4	40	55.0	58.3	32.5		4	64	46.9	51.6	79.7 *	
	5						5						5					
	6						6						6					
	7						7						7					
	8						8						8					
	All						All	42	52.4	56.2	33.3		All	71	42.3	47.7	76.1	

TACS The Institute uses SED's "time adjusted cut scores", or "TACS", for evaluating the designated measures in the respective years. Although a lower standard than that used before 2009-10, TACS provide continuity with the standard used in previous years. Data Sources: SED data; school data workbooks; the Institute's student test database.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

1. B Use of Assessment Data

Henry Johnson continues to develop an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.

- Henry Johnson administers a variety of assessments to serve several purposes. The school administers the AIMSWeb as a universal screener; the school also administers the Fountas & Pinnell and STAR reading and math assessments to identify students for special intervention and to provide baseline data for measuring student growth. The school administers each of these exams three times throughout the year to monitor student growth. The school also administers the Terra Nova exam twice during the year to measure student growth against national norms.
- Henry Johnson administers interim assessments three times per year to students in grades two, three, and four. Instructional leaders and teachers analyze data from these assessments to group students for targeted instruction and to identify standards requiring whole group re-teaching. Instructional leaders triangulate these data with student-level standardized assessment data to identify students who require special interventions. The school's instructional leaders report that these interim assessments align to the Common Core and that they use these data to adjust curriculum scope and sequences and curriculum pacing.
- With oversight from the school's instructional leaders, teachers analyze the interim assessment data which include standards and item analyses during benchmark assessment data meetings which occur within one week after the administration of the assessments. Teachers and instructional leaders use the data to identify standards that require whole group re-teaching and to group students who require targeted support to address weaknesses in learning. Teachers complete a data analysis protocol prior to the meeting that links the data analysis results to proposed instruction and includes a section where teachers reflect on the success of the strategies after implementing them.
- The inspection team did not find explicit evidence that the school's instructional leaders use the multitude of assessment data to determine strategies for professional development. Instructional leaders report that they use the data to set outcome-based goals for teacher growth but few teachers could clearly articulate those goals. Instead, teachers report that instructional leaders examine lesson plans to ensure teachers include addressing areas for growth identified through data analysis. Instructional leaders do not follow up with teachers on re-assessing the noted growth areas, thus creating a culture driven by inputs such as the quality of lesson plans rather than outcomes that demonstrate actual student achievement.

- Teachers report using a rigorous protocol for scoring writing. They apply the state's Common Core aligned rubrics and trade papers to ensure inter-rater reliability. Teachers do not report that they trade papers to grade long response math problems, but they establish a common standard through discussion before scoring responses.
- Henry Johnson's instructional leaders monitor student growth and the school's progress toward meeting Accountability Plan goals during regular meetings with the testing coordinator. Although instructional leaders identify areas for growth among teachers based on the data analyses, teachers are not able to articulate specific growth goals. Rather, instructional leaders monitor teachers' methods through lesson plan review and direct observation. The effectiveness of this strategy will not be evident until the state releases its test scores at the end of this year.

1. C Curriculum

Henry Johnson's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.

- The school bases its curriculum on the New York State Standards (including the Common Core State Standards). This year, the school transitioned to using Lucy Calkin's Readers' and Writer's workshop to support the English language arts (ELA) curriculum and to using Singapore Math in Kindergarten and first grade and Go Math in grades 2-4.
- Consultants and instructional leaders create scope and sequence documents that align the state standards to the commercial curricula and that provide pacing. The documents also address gaps between the state framework and the commercial curricula. Teachers use the commercial curricula's unit plans to further organize lesson planning.
- Teachers report that they have yet to receive any professional development training on the school's new math curriculum and the commercial materials that support its implementation. Notwithstanding a deliberate effort to align the school's curriculum materials with the Common Core State Standards, the school does not evidence a deliberate and thoughtful strategy for transitioning to the new math curriculum.
- Teachers use the scope and sequence documents to plan lessons on a weekly basis. They submit lessons to instructional leaders for feedback prior to delivering instruction. Teachers use a common lesson plan template based on the Understanding by Design model.
- Teachers and instructional leaders are collecting data (including benchmark assessment data) to inform future changes to the curriculum scope and sequence.

1. D Pedagogy

Adequate instruction is evident in many classes throughout the school. However, the school has yet to implement strong and sustained English language arts instruction sufficient to prepare students for success on state assessments.

- Teacher-directed instruction is purposeful and contains clear objectives that align with the school's curriculum. Teachers use a common lesson plan template to plan and implement instruction. Teachers post lesson objectives in the classroom and lesson activities clearly support them.
- Some teachers effectively use multiple questioning techniques and encourage student-to-student discussion to push students beyond factual recall and procedural learning and engage them in higher order thinking during teacher-led activities. In a second grade math class, the teacher probed students to provide multiple methods for solving a problem that required the students to categorize coins and create various permutations of groups of coins. The teacher further probed students to explain their reasoning about why their selected method was appropriate for solving the problem.
- Teachers regularly check for understanding through questioning and cold calling students, brief written checks for understanding such as exit tickets and do-nows, and student hand signals such as thumbs up/thumbs down.
- Instruction during math centers lacks purpose and meaningful student engagement. During these activities, teachers focus primarily on re-directing student behavior rather than on engaging students in content-rich discussion about their work. In one instance the math-station activity ended without any culminating lesson closure.
- The school is in transition from a lead- and support-teacher model to a co-teaching model. Teachers use different modes of instruction and student-to-student interaction to engage students and allow them to access and process information in different ways. In most cases, transitions between activities are efficient. Pacing is usually appropriate with teachers pausing when necessary to allow wait time for student answers.
- Teachers use school-wide hand signals to manage classroom behavior. They also use a color-coding system to monitor student behavior. Most teachers keep students engaged and on-task; they quickly and easily redirect off-task behavior using the school's behavioral "taxonomy".

1. E Instructional Leadership

While Henry Johnson has experienced significant turnover in leadership, the school's current instructional leadership provides coaching in ELA and data analysis.

- Henry Johnson's board has replaced the school's principal three times since the end of the 2010-11 school year.
- The principal in place at the time of the visit frequently observes teachers providing feedback about instruction and classroom management. The school's literacy coach supports teachers in implementing the school's literacy program. The school's testing coordinator manages the school's assessment program (including creating benchmark assessments and ensuring the program's alignment with the school's curriculum) and supports teachers in their analysis of testing data. Despite their individual efforts, the leadership is stretched thin in supporting the teaching staff with notable deficiencies in providing support for teachers in implementing a new mathematics curriculum this year.
- The Dean of Curriculum and Instruction position has been vacant since early in the 2012-2013 school year. The vacancy places additional responsibility for teacher observation and coaching on the school's principal as the primary evaluator of teachers. The school's literacy coach provides consistent coaching for teachers, but the school does not provide the same close supervision for math instruction.
- Teachers are not able to articulate specific outcome-oriented goals for their growth and instructional leaders do not systematically monitor teacher improvement within an outcome-oriented framework. Instead, instructional leaders regularly follow up on areas of weakness identified during observations during weekly lesson plan reviews.
- The professional development program supports teachers in many aspects of their professional activities. It takes place during a summer session and regular, weekly sessions. Instructional leaders identify topics based on classroom observations and teacher feedback rather than on assessment results or other data.
- The principal in place at the time of the visit conducts formal teacher evaluations using a school-developed rubric with which the teachers are familiar. At the time of the visit, the principal had evaluated almost every teacher two out of the scheduled three times.

1. F At-Risk Students

Henry Johnson has established programs and deploys resources to address the educational needs of students at-risk of academic failure; however, the effectiveness of these efforts is not yet evident.

- The school uses clear procedures for identifying students requiring academic intervention. Classroom teachers monitor student progress on the universal screener, as well as interim exams and teacher created assessments and use this data to determine if they need to provide students with classroom interventions through differentiating instruction and materials. During data meetings, teachers and instructional leaders consider students who do not respond to these interventions for small group instruction through the school's Academic Intervention Services Program. If students do not respond, the Academic Instructional Support staff provides individual support as well as intensive remedial programs, such as Leveled Literacy Intervention. The school's Academic Instructional support staff monitors the progress these students. If students do not show adequate progress, they refer students for special education services.
- Instructional leaders monitor the progress of at-risk students during regular meetings where they discuss teacher-submitted tracking forms for individual students. Nevertheless, teachers report that the existing interventions for students rarely change.
- The school employs a full time certified English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher to serve the school's seven identified English language learners (ELLs). The school administers the Home Language Survey (HLS) to all students who enroll in the school. The school's ESL teacher administers the Language Assessment Battery – Revised (LAB-R) to students identified through the HLS to identify students as ELLs. Teachers know their ELL students' proficiency levels on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). The ESL teacher develops individualized curriculum adjustments for ELL students and provides teachers with strategies to adequately meet the ELL students' needs.
- The school does not provide regular meeting times between special education and general education staff members. However, teachers report that they feel supported in meeting the needs of special education, ELL, and generally at-risk students because they are able to meet frequently but informally with special education and ESL staff members when they push into general education classrooms. Teachers also report that they receive adequate professional development training about supporting the needs of at-risk students in their classrooms. Nevertheless, last year, no special education students scored at or above proficient levels on the state's ELA or math exams.

2. C Organizational Capacity

The school organization has not supported the delivery of the educational program.

- Henry Johnson has established clear operational systems with one point of contact for all questions relating to operational functions. Teachers report that the general organizational structure is clear and that they understand each staff member's role and responsibilities.
- In the 2012-2013 school year, Henry Johnson's new dean of scholars is implementing the discipline system with greater fidelity than in the past. The school is also implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to supplement the discipline program. Despite these efforts, the school's data reveal that the school is suspending students at an increasing rate as the school year progresses with a higher suspension rate than that during the prior school year.
- The dean of curriculum and instruction left in October to fill a position in another school. At the time of the visit, the school had not yet filled the position. As a result, teachers lacked a full complement of instructional support. In contrast, the school has expeditiously filled a few teacher vacancies that arose during the year.
- The school has adequate enrollment and a wait list in some grades.
- At the time of the visit, the school did not have procedures in place to monitor and record its good faith efforts to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets.
- The principal monitors the school's assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the school's program. The principal presents this information monthly to the board of Trustees. Nevertheless, upon stepping into the role during the summer of 2012, the principal made sweeping changes to the school's ELA and math programs with little evidence to suggest that the changes were based on the school's data available at that time.

2. D Board Oversight

The school board is implementing changes to move the school toward achieving its Accountability Plan goals.

- The composition of Henry Johnson's board changed considerably during the 2012-13 school year. In August 2012, parents participating in board meetings advocated for and effectively replaced all but one of the board members. The current board members possess skills and experience relevant to providing effective governance, including education, finance and legal experience. The board also includes at least one parent representative and intends to improve its relationship with the school community at large. This year, the board primarily focuses on improving academic achievement at the school and realizes the weight with

which the SUNY Trustees will consider the school's state test results.

- The board enlisted the services of a consulting group to determine the most pressing needs at the school. The consultants recommended professional development for teachers and executive support for the leadership team..
- As a result of the board's determination that it was not receiving comprehensive and actionable information about the school's academic program, the board made personnel changes in the school's leadership and simultaneously realigned the leadership structure at the school. It has created the role of executive principal to oversee the school's academic program and operations and has selected a candidate who is currently serving in that role on an interim basis. The school is searching for a new principal for the 2013-2014 school year. After the director of curriculum and instruction left the position in October 2012, the board decided to redefine the position by establishing a math instructional coach. The board continues searching for an appropriate candidate for that role and it remains unfilled.
- The school board receives adequate financial information at its meetings and knows its financial position. School board meetings appear to comply with the New York Open Meetings Law and the board keeps adequate minutes thereof. In the current charter period, the school's board of trustees has demonstrated its use of sound fiscal policies and decision-making and has provided good oversight through challenges presented by the transfer of funds to the school for students coming from the Albany City School District. The school board undertakes long range facilities and fiscal planning as well. Based on the foregoing, the school board has generally and substantially implemented, maintained and abided by appropriate policies, systems and processes.
- In June 2013, the board voted on two new members who both have a record of serving on the board of a successful charter school in the Albany area. These additions, along with the addition of the executive principal, fulfill the board's strategic realignment strategy. Because these changes were not in place for the 2012-13 school year, their effects remain to be seen during the 2013-14 school year.



State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, May 2012

Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks⁹ (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.

⁹ 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.

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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 Policies”), 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:

- 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 Education 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 Policies. 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?	
Evidence Category	<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.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C Curriculum	The school's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning. The following elements are generally present: <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	High quality instruction is evident throughout the school. The following elements are generally present. <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	The school has strong instructional leadership. The following elements are generally present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;

	<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; • 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 Mission & Key Design Elements	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school faithfully follows its mission; and • the school has implemented its key design elements.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B Parents & Students	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families; • families are satisfied with the school; and • parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C Organizational Capacity	<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.

<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 expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion; • the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members;

<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>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; • 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
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.
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	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

	<p>are appropriately qualified and adequately trained;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements; a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions; the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy; the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.
<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;

	<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.
	<p style="text-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>
<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</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>

Educational Program	<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.
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.

<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.
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