



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx

School Evaluation Report 2009-2010

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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (“SUNY Trustees”), jointly with the New York State Board of Regents, are required by law to provide oversight sufficient to ensure that each charter school that the SUNY Trustees have authorized is in compliance with applicable law and the terms of its charter. The State University Trustees, however, consistent with the goals of the Charter Schools Act of 1998, view their oversight responsibility more broadly and positively than purely monitoring compliance. Accordingly, they have adopted policies that require the Charter Schools Institute (“the Institute”) to provide ongoing evaluation of SUNY authorized charter schools. By providing this oversight and feedback, the State University Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **Facilitate Improvement** - By providing substantive information about the school’s academic, fiscal and organizational strengths and weaknesses to the school’s board of trustees, administration, faculty and other staff, the Institute can play a role in helping the school identify areas for improvement.
- **Disseminate Information** - The Institute disseminates information about the school’s performance not only to its board of trustees, administration and faculty, but to all stakeholders, including parents and the larger community in which the school is located.
- **Document Performance** - The Institute collects information to build a database of a school’s performance over time. By evaluating the school periodically, the Institute can more clearly ascertain trends, determine areas of strength and weakness, and assess the school’s likelihood for continued success or failure. Having information based on past patterns, the Institute is in a better position to make recommendations regarding the renewal of each school’s charter, and the State University Trustees are better informed in making a decision on whether a school’s charter should be renewed. In addition, a school will have a far better sense of where they stand in the eyes of its authorizer.

The Institute regularly collects a range of data about each school’s performance over the course of its charter period, which ultimately contributes to that school’s renewal decision. These data include student performance results, financial audits, any legal records of issues addressed, board meeting minutes, and reports from regular evaluation visits conducted by the Institute (or external experts contracted by the Institute) and other agencies with oversight responsibilities.

This annual School Evaluation Report includes three primary components. The first section, titled Executive Summary of School Evaluation Visit, provides an overview of the primary conclusions of the evaluation team regarding the current visit to the school, summarizing areas of strength and areas for growth. The second section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as summary historical information regarding the life of the school. Finally, in a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit, this report presents the analysis of evidence collected during an evaluation visit conducted in the current school year. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided as background and context for the current evaluation.

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this School Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate 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 with respect to the school's performance as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Girls Prep Bronx is modeled after the SUNY authorized Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York. Both schools contract with the recently formed charter management organization (CMO), Public Prep, created by the founders of Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York to support a network of schools based on its model. A third school in the network, also authorized by the SUNY Trustees, Boys Preparatory Charter School of New York, will open in the fall of 2011.

Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit to the Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx (Girls Prep Bronx), the school appears to be making substantial progress toward achieving its mission and meeting the SUNY Charter Renewal Benchmarks considered during this evaluation. Although this conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in this report, some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Academic Success

Areas of Strengths:

Girls Prep Bronx has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school generally administers assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and New York State standards in literacy and math.

The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet State performance standards. Girls Prep Bronx has developed a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework based on the network's pre-existing model which allows teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it.

During the time of the Institute's visit to Girls Prep Bronx, high quality instruction was generally evident throughout the school. Teachers implemented purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to state standards and the school's curriculum. Observed lessons were well-paced and grade appropriate.

Strong instructional leadership is emerging at Girls Prep Bronx during its first year of operation. School leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement. Teachers are provided with sustained and systematic support for literacy instruction and are held accountable for quality instruction.

Girls Prep Bronx is effective in helping students who are struggling academically. The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students and provides sufficient resources and supports to meet their needs. The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students, and teachers are provided with sufficient support to help them meet the needs of these students.

The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship. Girls Prep Bronx has established a safe and orderly environment, and teachers have effective classroom management and routines that promote learning. There is a clear discipline system in place which is consistently applied.

The professional development program at Girls Prep Bronx is comprehensive, focused on the development of school culture and delivery of the academic program.

Areas for Growth:

The school has adequate instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework, but teachers reported that these materials were not always appropriate for struggling students.

At the time of the visit, differentiation primarily took place through small groups and targeted interventions, and there was limited differentiation of whole-class instruction.

The support provided to teachers in subjects other than literacy was limited and not systematic. Additionally, while teachers generally had positive comments about the formal staff evaluation system, they indicated that formal feedback earlier in the year would have been more helpful.

As the professional development program at Girls Prep Bronx was focused this year on school-wide priorities, it was not fully differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strengths:

Girls Prep Bronx has faithfully followed its mission and implemented many of its key design elements. The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The school is competently managed and has a facility that meets its needs, sufficient resources, and clear priorities. The school has used a rigorous hiring process to hire quality, experienced teachers.

The board of trustees of Girls Prep Bronx has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program. The board has adequate skills with which to govern the school and holds school leaders, the management company, and itself accountable for student achievement.

Areas for Growth:

The organizational structure is generally well-defined at Girls Prep Bronx. The school's fellows, more inexperienced teachers participating in a two-year apprenticeship program, were generally not clear on their roles and responsibilities.

The school board had a lack of clarity around its structures and procedures, including the relationship with its management company board and the role of its committees.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 9, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	February 23, 2009
School Opening Date	August 31, 2009

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades At This Location	District
2009-10 through present	681 Kelly Street Bronx, NY	All	New York City CSD 7

Current Mission Statement

The mission of Girls Prep is to prepare New York City's girls to graduate from college and succeed in life. Girls Prep girls will embody the core values of scholarship, merit, responsibility, and sisterhood and use these values to guide their choices. Girls Prep will graduate scholars who meet or exceed New York State Performance Standards and are active citizens who learn and serve in their community.

Current Key Design Elements

<i>Rigorous Academics:</i>
• Standards-aligned, challenging curricula or each subject;
• Use of assessment and classroom data to tailor instruction and ensure the success of all students;
• Extended school day and year; and
• Low student/teacher ratios.
<i>Vibrant School Culture:</i>
• Core Values-Scholarship, Merit, Citizenship, and Responsibility;
• Bi-weekly Unity Meetings to celebrate the students, school, and accomplishments; and
• Classrooms named after female role models.
<i>Well-Rounded Development:</i>
• Daily fitness and art classes; and
• Emphasis on leading a balanced, healthy life, with a healthy food policy for students.
<i>Growing Leaders from Within:</i>
• Fellows program apprentices new teachers;
• Leadership pipeline provides a clear path from Fellow to Principal; and
• Two teachers in each K-2 classroom;
<i>Families as Partners:</i>
• Home visits from teachers at the beginning of each school year;
• Requiring parents to sign-off daily on all homework assignments; and
• Engaging families in the life of the school through daily communication, events, and open doors.

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	Public Prep	Charter Management Organization	2009 through present

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2009-10	144	130	132	K-1	K-1	184

Student Demographics

	2009-10 ²	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 7 Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%
Black or African American	38%	29%
Hispanic	47%	60%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0%	1%
White	0%	1%
Multiracial	14%	0%
Special Populations		
Students with Disabilities ³	5%	N/A
Limited English Proficient	6%	17%
Free/Reduced Lunch		
Eligible for Free Lunch	80%	83%
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	10%	6%

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

² Source: This information is not yet publicly available and all statistics given are provided by the school.

³ New York State Education Department does not report special education data; statistics given are provided by the school.

Current Board of Trustees⁴

Board Member Name	Term Expires	Position/Committees
Boykin Curry	2012	Chair; Executive Committee
Kim Richardson	2012	Member
Kay Miller	2012	Member
Laura Weil	2012	Member; Finance and Audit Committees
Mary Mitchell	2012	Member; Assessment Committee
Nicole Pullen Ross	2012	Treasurer; Finance and Audit Committees
Lauren Frank	2012	Vice Chair; Executive Committee
Philip Brandes	2012	Member

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10	Josie Carbone, Principal

⁴ Source: Institute Board Records.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE

Background

All Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are conducted through the lens of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks outline the expectations of the SUNY Trustees for the academic success of the school, including teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school as an organization, including such items as governance and fiscal stability. The SUNY Charter Renewal benchmarks are the foundation of the Institute's oversight process to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

While the primary focus of the visit is an evaluation of the school's academic program and organizational capacity, issues regarding compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations may be noted (and subsequently addressed); where the Institute finds serious deficiencies in particular relating to student health and safety, it may take additional and immediate action. However, monitoring for compliance is not the principal purpose of the visit.

Following is a detailed analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

Evaluation Visit Benchmark Analysis and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx (Girls Prep Bronx) has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data. The school uses these data to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. At the time of the visit, the system was most developed in English language arts and mathematics.

Girls Prep Bronx regularly administers a variety of assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and New York State standards in literacy and mathematics. The Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment is administered four times per year (three had been given at the time of the visit) to measure students' reading levels. Teachers also use running records from Fountas and Pinnell regularly to monitor student progress and assess reading comprehension, fluency, and decoding.

The school also administers Interim Assessments (IAs) in English language arts and mathematics three times per year. These assessments are cumulative and largely taken from those given at the original Girls Preparatory Charter School. The TerraNova was also administered to the 1st grade this fall, and will be administered to all students in the spring to measure their end of year levels relative to national norms. The school also administers the Second Step character program assessment at the beginning of the year and will administer an end-of-the-year assessment.

Beyond these standardized exams, teachers use assessments from commercial curriculums to gauge student learning on an ongoing basis. They include Lit Life checklist assessments to measure unit understanding, phonics assessment from the Recipe for Reading curriculum, and topic assessments

from the Envision mathematics program. Teachers also use more informal assessments, including reading conferences, mathematics centers and individual check-ins.

Girls Prep Bronx systematically collects valid assessment data and analyzes the results. This is a process that in the beginning of the year was largely the responsibility of school leaders who have slowly been training teachers to take over. After each interim assessment, teachers go through an extensive analysis process where the data are tracked at the individual, class, intervention, and item level. Teachers meet with administrators to review the data after each assessment. There is also extensive tracking and analysis of independent reading levels using the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment. Individual student and class-wide growth between test administrations are tracked closely by color-coding them according to grade, class, and Response to Intervention (RTI) category. There is also an online data management system that allows teachers and administrators to track Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. While teachers indicated that the data entry for this system was tedious, they also believed it was useful as it allowed them to look at the data from a variety of perspectives.

Most teachers are tracking informal assessment data with anecdotal records and reading conference notes. Teachers showed notebooks where they keep anecdotal notes on individual students and checklists they used to monitor student performance; the use of these was at the teacher's discretion and varied by teacher. The administration is working with teachers on how to better use conferences as a form of assessment, including keeping more formalized notes during these conferences and individual check-ins in other subjects.

Teachers and school leaders effectively use assessment results to inform instruction, again primarily in English language arts and mathematics. After each benchmark assessment (IAs and Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks) teachers and administrators meet to develop action plans based on the assessment data. In reading, the plans tend to focus on flexible reading groups and tailoring guided reading instruction to students' needs. The principal indicated that they are beginning to think about how to better tailor other components of the literacy block beyond guided reading based on assessment data.

In mathematics, assessment data is used to determine topics for re-teaching to the whole class and to small groups. For example, teachers noticed on a mathematics IA that students were having trouble with vocabulary and number sense. As a result, students who scored low on these assessments were pulled by the co-teacher during the daily warm up activity to review these concepts. After the warm up activity, students rejoined the whole group on the rug for additional guided practice. The co-teacher sat with these students during the guided practice. After this, the co-teacher worked with the low performing students in a small group while the rest of the class worked on independent practice. The teacher reported that this strategy was often used with flexible groups.

Girls Prep Bronx generally follows clear policies and procedures for the use of student performance data. The school issues report cards three times per year, as well as progress reports three times a year between report cards. There are also parent teacher conferences after the first two report cards where teachers share student work with parents as well as discuss student progress. Report cards list grades on a scale of 1-4 for each subject with sub-grades for each of the New York state standards. There are also grades for the school's core values. There are clear tables for transferring assessment scores to report card grades. Independent reading level benchmarks have also been set for each report card period and students' levels are reported relative to these benchmarks. While the school has not yet had to make final promotion decisions, they have established criteria. One teacher

reported that “promotion is determined by a variety of factors including: attendance, homework completion, formal assessments, standardized test scores, student work samples, and social maturity.” This includes an average of two or higher in all subjects, 90 percent attendance, reaching the grade’s independent reading benchmark (A for Kindergarten and F for 1st grade), and social-emotional well-being taken into consideration. If a student was considered promotion in doubt, families were informed no later than February 1st. As the school is just beginning to implement these policies in its first year, their effectiveness is yet to be determined.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

Girls Prep Bronx has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet State performance standards. They have largely adapted the curriculum framework and curricular programs used at the original Girls Prep school, though they have made some modifications, most notably in mathematics. At the time of the visit the school had not yet reviewed the curriculum framework but had developed structures to do so in the coming weeks.

The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework, which is based on the network’s pre-existing model. The school has scope and sequence documents, which are organized by monthly units with framing questions, unit goals, culminating projects, assessments, performance indicators, and literacy competencies. These are based on the scope and sequences used at the other Girls Prep school, as well as the commercial programs in use at the school.

For reading and writing workshop, the school follows the Lit Life commercial program, as well as integrating guided reading and the Recipe for Reading program for phonics instruction. In mathematics, the school has chosen to use Envision mathematics as its primary program, supplemented by Investigations. In social studies the school does not have a set curriculum, and teachers develop lessons based upon the state standards. Fellows are responsible for teaching science, and follow the FOSS science program.

Teachers generally follow these scope and sequences, in conjunction with the commercial program, to determine what to teach and when to teach it. Grade teams meet weekly with the instructional coach to develop unit plans, which break the scope and sequences down into greater detail. The goal is to then use these unit plans in daily lesson planning. While teachers generally followed the literacy and mathematics curriculums closely, there is also room for flexibility based upon student needs. In literacy, this primarily comes in the form of guided reading, which teachers plan based on student reading levels and skill needs.

The school has adequate instructional materials aligned with its curriculum framework. Intervention teachers have materials for the services they provide as well. One teacher reported using additional resources for planning reading lessons, including the Starfall website for phonics and the Reading A to Z website for printable leveled books. However, in general teachers reported being encouraged to follow the commercial programs and use the associated materials. Two teachers reported that fidelity to the program is stressed though sometimes the materials do not meet the needs of all of their students.

The school has identified a formal process for reviewing curriculum but it had not yet been implemented at the time of the visit. The principal outlined future professional development sessions that would be used to identify changes to the curriculum. Additionally, based on observations and teacher feedback, the leadership team will be working with others from the Girls Prep network to

revise scope and sequences. While this process has not yet been implemented this year, the principal and network staff went through this process prior to school opening, which led to the change in mathematics curriculum from the original Girls Prep, among others. Finally, throughout the year there have been conversations about the curriculum, largely through the unit planning process, allowing classroom teachers and specialists to express any opinions on the curriculum during implementation.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

During the Institute's visit to Girls Prep Bronx, high-quality instruction was generally evident throughout the school. Observed lessons were purposeful, well-paced, and grade-appropriate, which led to students being cognitively engaged in most classes. There was also evidence of differentiation, largely through the use of groupings and targeted interventions.

During the team's visit, teachers implemented purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to New York State standards and the school's curriculum. In all observed lessons teachers communicated the objectives to students at the beginning of instruction, and in many classes the objective was also posted throughout for reference. All teachers used the same lesson plan format, which included specific lesson goals and objectives. During small group lessons, intervention teachers also explained objectives to students at the beginning of lessons and were well-prepared to deliver lessons that met these objectives.

Observed lessons were well-paced and grade-appropriate, and in most classes students were cognitively engaged. Teachers had high expectations for student participation, and often asked students to repeat answers when not all were participating. For example, when sounding out new words, the teacher said "Can we break it up one more time? I didn't see all of my friends breaking it up." Lessons involved a variety of components, including lecture, question and answer, read alouds, pair shares, and independent practice with efficient transitions between activities. While students were generally engaged in lessons, in some kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms when both teachers worked with small reading groups the students working independently struggled to remain on task and the teachers did not intervene.

Teachers generally pushed students to think critically and use higher order thinking. Even in lessons designed to develop basic skills, teachers pushed students to develop a deeper understanding of the material, though justifying their answers and explaining the strategies they used to come to an answer. For example, in a lesson where students were asked to identify rhyming words, they had to identify the word that did not belong among strong, long, lung. Students had to justify their answer with why they did not rhyme based on different sounds. In another class, while the objective of "we will notice features of fiction and non-fiction" did not suggest higher-order thinking, students were required to think deeper about the objective and compare and contrast the features of non-fiction and fiction texts after reading examples of each on the same topic.

At Girls Prep Bronx, instruction is primarily differentiated through groupings and targeted interventions. Teachers expressed interest in further differentiation but there was limited structural support for its implementation. Observed instruction was differentiated primarily during guided reading, when students read leveled texts based on the most recent assessment. The most struggling students receive guided reading instruction in smaller groups than other students, provided by the intervention teachers. Students worked in small groups at other times as well, but often the materials and activities were not differentiated between groups, though teachers' level of support did vary.

Teachers also used effective strategies to ensure that instruction met different learning modalities. This includes regular reference to word walls in all subjects and having students use their hands to help understand syllables.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

Overall, strong instructional leadership is emerging at Girls Prep Bronx. The instructional leadership team is led by the school's principal supported by the instructional coach as well as network staff. The team provides sustained support, conducts regular evaluations, and hold teachers accountable for quality instruction.

School leaders have high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement, and these expectations have been instilled in teachers and staff. Expectations for teacher performance were communicated to teachers beginning with the summer training, and include the expectations of common planning, delivery of curriculum and instruction, and provision of social-emotional support for students. The school also has explicit goals for student achievement, which the principal tracks closely and publicly in her office; these include 85 percent of students meeting or exceeding grade level on the TerraNova, interim assessments, and reading level assessments. The school has also set explicit goals for student attendance, staff attendance, character education, and family satisfaction.

Instructional leaders provide teachers with sustained and systematic support in literacy instruction, while in other content areas this support is less systematic. The primary structural means of support is the instructional coach's coaching cycles. During these, each grade team receives intensive coaching on a particular topic based upon observed teacher needs. The cycle includes professional development, observations, feedback, collaborative planning, demonstration lessons, and individual coaching. The amount of support given during a cycle is differentiated for individual teachers depending on their specific needs. The instructional coach carries out most elements of the coaching cycle, but plans them in collaboration with the principal who also focuses on similar topics during the cycle and can give the coach feedback. Topics this year have included guided reading, recipe for reading, and writer's workshop. Because literacy was a priority this year, there have been limited formal structures for coaching in other subjects.

Outside of the coaching cycles, instructional leaders conduct regular observations of teachers. Teachers can also request additional observations on a particular topic. Teachers reported that the feedback received from the principal was useful. For example, one teacher received guidance on improving transitions, including the gradual release of responsibility and being ready with activities prior to students entering the classroom. Now, she has students who are in charge of reviewing vocabulary on the rug with classmates while the teacher takes care of other students' needs during the transition.

The principal has been largely responsible for providing support to the Fellows, especially in science since they have full responsibility for teaching this area. This includes unit planning, observations, and modeling. Fellows also participated in coaching cycles around guided reading and classroom management. Fellows felt that the support they received was sufficiently differentiated to meet their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Instructional leaders conduct regular evaluations of teacher performance. The evaluation process is similar to that of the other network school, developed by the two school principals along with network staff. It includes a self-assessment, a checklist rating on key job responsibilities and rubrics.

Evaluations were conducted in February and March, and will be repeated at the end of the year. Fellows and specialists participated in the same process, with adapted criteria based on their job descriptions. Teachers were introduced to the evaluation process during a professional development session where they could ask questions and become comfortable with the criteria, which formed the basis of both their self-assessment and the principal's rating. Teachers generally felt that it was extremely thorough, and generally reflected their own impressions of their teaching. The principal expressed concern that the process was overly detailed and time-consuming and planned to revise it moving forward.

While teachers appreciated the formal feedback of the evaluations, they wished they had received this more formal feedback earlier in the year. Though teachers received informal feedback after observations on several occasions, many teachers reported not having an overall sense of their performance in the minds of the administration. They also reported regretting not getting more concrete next steps to improve their practice earlier in the year, though they appreciated that suggestions were provided by the formal evaluation.

Teachers have been held accountable for quality instruction, though at this early stage in the school's development they were not yet held accountable for student achievement. The principal stated that she expects teachers to meet particular standards in their performance or they would not be asked back. The principal closely monitors each teacher's impact on student achievement, but this year does not plan to make direct decisions about teacher performance based on this data.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

Girls Prep Bronx is effective in helping students who are struggling academically. The school has clear procedures for identifying students who are at-risk (special education, ELL or struggling academically). Once students are identified as being at-risk, the school provides sufficient resources and support to meet these students' needs. The school monitors the progress and success of these students and provides teachers with support to meet the needs of at-risk students.

Girls Prep Bronx has clear procedures for identifying struggling students, with the child study team being the primary means for identifying students for special education evaluations and academic interventions. The school's child study team meetings provide teachers with significant support in identifying struggling students and determining strategies to support them. Each grade has a team that identifies students, usually those without an Individualized Education Program (IEP), for intervention, both behavioral and academic. Classroom teachers refer students for discussion based on an agenda developed by the special education coordinator. The meeting structure is tight with a timed agenda ensuring that all students and topics are given sufficient time. At follow-up meetings, each implemented intervention is discussed and evaluated to determine if the interventions will continue and what additional interventions are needed. Each proposed intervention is given to someone who is held responsible for reporting at the following meeting. All members of the team, not just the classroom teacher, are involved in administering the interventions. If the decision is that initial interventions are not working, the team works together to refer the student for a special education evaluation, a process once again coordinated by the special education coordinator.

The school also has clear procedures for the identification of ELL students. The process begins with a home visit for each incoming student prior to the opening of school, coordinated by the school's director of student and family affairs. Families fill out the home language survey and students are identified to take the Lab-R. Additionally, students who do not qualify for ELL services based on the

Lab-R, but have characteristics of an ELL student receive non-mandated services as deemed necessary.

The school provides sufficient resources and support to meet the needs of at-risk students. These supports primarily take the form of small group interventions from the school's specialists. The school has devoted a great deal of resources to hiring specialists in reading, special education, and ELL to provide these interventions. This was a strategic decision prior to school's opening due to the anticipated student population as well as the experience of the original Girls Prep Charter School. These specialists are able to provide supports to both mandated and non-mandated students, and use both push-in and pull-out interventions. The pull-out groups are generally targeted to meet specific student needs, with groups being reconstituted based on student progress. Push-in services support students' participation in the general education classroom. For example, in one classroom the special education teacher worked with a student to complete a research idea worksheet that the rest of the class completed independently; the student participated in the group share-out at the end. There are curriculum programs in place for these interventions, including the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Lit Intervention program and the Hampton Brown Avenues program in ELL. However, the special education teacher felt that the intervention curriculum was limited. The ELL teacher also discussed how to make the program more deliberate going forward, including more strategic grouping and more push-in. The school also plans to more formally and fully implement a Response to Intervention program next year to ensure consistency across teachers as the school expands.

Girls Prep Bronx adequately monitors the progress and success of its at-risk student population. Child study team meetings are structured so that time is devoted to following-up on the success of already implemented interventions, with intervention outcome forms completed in detail throughout the year. The documentation of these meetings also referenced interim assessment results. The school also has a student support team (SST) composed of school leadership and specialist teachers. They are working to solidify how they will measure the overall effectiveness of interventions but at the time of the visit were using Fountas and Pinnell results and mathematics interim assessment scores to measure student progress. For students with social-emotional issues, they have individualized trackers in place. The SST has established clear mid-year and end-of-year academic benchmarks. The special education coordinator acknowledged that they do not yet look at the data in sufficient detail to determine the effectiveness of particular service providers or interventions.

Teachers at Girls Prep Bronx have been provided with sufficient support to meet the needs of at-risk students. One major form of support teachers receive is through the child study team, where they receive specific strategies for working with individual students. There had not been a great deal of formal professional development offered on differentiation and working with at-risk students. The reading specialist also provides support in guided reading and interpreting reading assessment results. The director of student and family affairs and the social worker also work with teachers on developing strategies to work with students who struggle behaviorally. The specialists also receive teachers' lesson plans, and have begun to attend grade level planning meetings to support teachers in incorporating differentiation into their planning.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

Girls Prep Bronx has established a school environment that promotes a culture of learning. The school is safe and orderly, and teachers generally have effective classroom management and routines that promote learning. The school has a clear discipline system in place which is applied consistently by teachers and staff.

Girls Prep Bronx was safe and orderly during the inspection visit. The facility is shared with a middle school, but clear boundaries have been established to prevent this from causing any issues. Teachers and school staff supervise all transitions, and students are escorted to the bathrooms to prevent any problems from arising. There are clear and purposeful procedures for efficient transitions between activities.

Teachers at Girls Prep Bronx generally have effective classroom management and routines that promote learning. All teachers had a behavior system posted in their classroom, indicating that students work their way through a ladder of consequences throughout the day. This system is tied to learning rather than punishments: students who are on green are “learning” while those below green are “not learning” or “hurting the learning of others around them.” This system is in all classrooms, though teachers did not always refer to the chart when correcting behavior. When teachers corrected behavior, many of them used language tied back to learning, promoting student engagement in the lesson.

Teachers had a common language for discipline and behavioral expectations, often centered on the school’s core values, allowing students to have consistency with any adult. This included, “That’s not being very sisterly,” and “We need to solve this problem so we can keep learning.” Teachers use the countdown strategy to re-engage students when they are off task and encourage them to make positive choices when they need a reminder. Teachers also have clear expectations around the use of instructional time and regularly use timers to enforce these expectations.

When students do not meet behavioral expectations, teachers often ask one group of students to model the desired behavior for the rest of the class. For example, when working in groups the class volume steadily crept up. The teacher rang a bell to get students’ attention and then informed them of the situation and had a group model “one-inch” voices. Following the demonstration students returned to work and the volume went down. When a student is unable to follow directions, another strategy used by teachers is to separate the student from the group to calm down and to talk to students about how to control their temper.

Girls Prep Bronx has a clear discipline system that is consistently applied. This included the consequence system observed above, where students are moved down on the consequence ladder for misbehaviors. The school support team is working to further clarify the discipline system by outlining the RTI program for social-emotional issues in writing, including the behaviors that would trigger the interventions and the interventions available at each tier.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

Girls Prep Bronx has a professional development program that is focused on the development of school culture and delivery of the academic program. The program is comprehensive; however, it is not yet fully differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers.

Girls Prep Bronx offers a comprehensive professional development program through weekly professional development workshops as well as coaching cycles and other opportunities. During the Summer Institute teachers devoted significant time to the school culture and core values, including the establishment of school-wide routines and expectations. They were also introduced to the variety of curricular programs that the school would be using. Weekly professional development sessions are planned by the principal and instructional coach based on observations of teacher needs. They

are planned in advance, though the calendar is frequently revisited. The administration conducted a mid-year evaluation of what was and was not working in the school and revised the professional development calendar accordingly. For example, after observing teachers' administration of the Fountas and Pinnell assessment, the instructional coach realized that teachers needed additional training on administering the comprehension portion. Thus, professional development sessions on this topic were added to the schedule. Topics covered in these Friday sessions included culture, instruction, and assessments. Sometimes these Friday sessions are devoted to grade team meetings to discuss specific issues or analyze data from a recent benchmark assessment. There is also a literacy consultant who comes in regularly to work with teachers on curriculum implementation. Another component of the school's professional development program is the coaching cycles, discussed above.

The school has chosen to focus the majority of its professional development this year on school-wide priorities, limiting the differentiation of the program. The priorities were the implementation of the academic program, primarily in literacy, and school culture. The principal believed that it was important as a first year school to ensure that all staff understood these school-wide priorities. At the time of the visit, the school was about to shift its professional development focus for the remainder of the year to be more focused on both individual needs as well as planning for the next school year. The instructional coach was moving towards working with individual teachers on topics such as building capacity to be a teacher leader and how to better conduct a guided-reading lesson as the last coaching cycle concluded.

While the majority of the in-house professional development had not been differentiated for individual teachers, all teachers have the opportunity to attend outside training sessions they consider helpful. Classroom teachers have a \$1,000 stipend to spend on outside sessions, in addition to outside sessions to which the principal might send them. Specialist teachers attend a variety of outside sessions in their focus areas, and where possible are members of local consortiums to assist in their professional growth. The social worker also has a clinical supervisor that the school provides to use as a resource.

Mission & Key Design Elements (Benchmark 2.A)

Girls Prep Bronx has been faithful to its mission and has implemented many of the key design elements included in its charter. The mission includes the school's four core values of scholarship, merit, responsibility, and sisterhood. These values are referred to throughout the school day and displayed prominently in the school. The key design elements cover a variety of topics, all of which are being implemented in the school to at least some degree. In terms of rigorous academics, the school has implemented the extended school day and year proposed, as well as the regular use of assessment data to ensure the success of all students. The school has also implemented all of the key design elements under vibrant school culture, including naming classrooms after female role models, several of whom have visited the school. Girls Prep Bronx also offers yoga, gym, and art regularly as part of its mission to develop well-rounded students. The school has implemented the multiple teachers per classroom and the fellows program as an attempt to grow leaders from within. Finally, as part of efforts to involve families as partners, the school conducted home visits to all families prior to the school year.

Parents & Students (Benchmark 2.B)

Based on limited evidence, families are generally satisfied with Girls Prep Bronx. The school conducted a mid-year parent survey, and will continue to regularly survey parents moving forward. The results of this first survey were generally positive and shared with the board of trustees. Other indicators include attendance at family workshops and participation in the Community Council and at school events.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

Girls Prep Bronx has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. This includes a well-defined organization structure, competent management, an effective hiring process, and maintenance of sufficient enrollment.

Girls Prep Bronx has an organizational structure that supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Most staff report directly to the principal who completes their evaluations and makes hiring decisions. The only exception is the special education coordinator, who reports to the network's executive director since she works at both schools. Teachers were generally clear on the roles of the instructional leadership team, and understood the resources available to them. There was some lack of clarity about who was carrying out operational tasks and how these were divided between the network and school due to recent staffing changes.

Participants in the fellows program expressed uncertainty over their roles in the school moving forward. Currently, they serve as co-teachers with a varying level of responsibility for particular subjects based on their experience level, with this level of responsibility increasing throughout the year. Fellows generally reported that their experiences to date mirrored the job description they were given before signing on. As part of a two-year program, the fellows were unclear about how their roles would change in the second year. While the principal claimed to have a clear plan for each fellow in the coming year, at the time of the visit this plan had not been clearly communicated.

Teachers reported having sufficient resources, including specialized intervention curriculum programs to meet the needs of all students. In general, there is clear communication with stakeholders, including regular parent newsletters and daily emails to staff with events, updates, and news. The school is in a shared facility that, while not ideal, has met their needs to date and plans indicate they will remain in it for the duration of the charter period.

The school has hired quality staff, though retention remains to be seen. The school had a rigorous hiring process, including several interviews and a demonstration lesson at its sister school, Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York. The results of this process were a staff composed of experienced teachers, with specialists all certified in their subject areas. At the time of the visit, the principal was only aware of one teacher who did not plan to return and thought most others would remain at the school.

The school was maintaining sufficient enrollment at the time of the visit. The school has had 11 students leave during the school year, many because they moved. It was able to replace the majority of these students due to its large wait list (401 students in kindergarten and 219 in 1st grade after last spring's lottery.) Based on parent satisfaction surveys and conversations with parents, the board and the principal believe there will be a high rate of student retention.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

The board of trustees of Girls Prep Bronx has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program of the school. The board is composed of members with adequate skills with which to govern the school, including education, finance, and legal expertise. During regular meetings, the school board receives written reports from school leadership on academic and operational performance and has its own student performance dashboard. The school's board has taken effective action to improve overall school performance. The school board understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit it to provide effective oversight, and receives sufficient information and has established metrics to do so effectively.

Aside from the quality of the membership, the board lacked clarity about the structures and procedures in place to effectively govern the school. To support the operation of both Girls Prep schools as well as the Public Prep charter management organization, the school's board recently reorganized its membership and redefined its committee structure. As such, board members were in the process of defining clear roles and responsibilities. The board admitted that, while they have several committees in place, they have not met as regularly as they would have liked and they hope to create more structure around these committees moving forward.

The board of Girls Prep Bronx holds school leaders, its management company, and itself accountable for student achievement. As a first year school, there is limited data on student achievement but the board is closely monitoring interim assessment and TerraNova results, and comparing the school's progress to that of the original Girls Prep school at the same point in its development to ensure students are on track. The members of the board are actively involved in Public Prep, the school's management company, with some members serving on both boards. The boards of both schools and the management company generally meet together, unless there are issues specific to a school, in order to maintain continuity across the network.

The management company's executive director has set clear expectations for board members. This includes school visits, meeting attendance, fundraising, and committee involvement. The executive director then grades each board member on these characteristics each year, and presents everyone's scores at the next board meeting. Board members felt that this was an effective tool, both for increasing their involvement and monitoring the board's progress on the whole.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Girls Preparatory Charter School of the Bronx on April 20, 2010. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Ron Miller, Ph. D. (team leader) is Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He has worked for the Institute since September 2002. Dr. Miller began his career teaching for seven years in New York City public schools and then joined the central offices of the New York City Department of Education, where he conducted evaluative research and organizational studies. As Director of the Office of School Planning and Accountability, he served as the educational accountability officer for the Department. In that capacity, he developed school accountability reports for all city schools and coordinated staff development on the use of the reports for district administrators in the high school and community school districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their capacity to use data for school improvement. In this role he developed PASS, a school performance review system which was adopted in 600 city schools. Dr. Miller has regularly presented papers at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds an A.B. degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University.

Kevin Flynn is an Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans, as well as the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Prior to joining the Institute in November 2008, Mr. Flynn served as the Chair of the Science Department at KIPP 3D Academy Charter School in Houston, TX, where he authored curriculum, instructed 7th and 8th grade students, coached peers, and managed the Saturday School program. Prior to his service at KIPP 3D Academy, Mr. Flynn served as a science teacher via Teach For America at the John Marshall Middle School, also in Houston. A recipient of the school's Excellence in Teaching Award, his responsibilities included curriculum development and instruction for at-risk students as well as English Language Learners. Mr. Flynn received his Master's degree in Education, with a concentration in Policy, Organization and Leadership Studies, from Stanford University and his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Cornell University.

Maya Lagana is an Analyst for School Evaluation for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. She is responsible for scheduling ongoing school evaluation visits, communicating with school team members and administrative staff regarding site visit logistics and requirements, developing and disseminating RFP documents, and coordinating the recruitment and work of consultants. Ms. Lagana worked for New Visions for Public Schools, Achievement First and Boston Collegiate Charter School while in graduate school. Previously, Ms. Lagana was an Assessment Specialist at the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence in Washington D.C., where she helped to develop teacher certification exams and analyzed item level statistics and demographics information. In addition to her extensive background as an analyst, Ms. Lagana also has experience as a third grade classroom teacher at P.S. 195 through the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. Ms. Lagana received her Master of Public Administration degree in Policy Analysis from New York University's Wagner School for Public Service, her Masters of Education degree from Mercy College and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carleton College.

Simeon Stolzberg is Director of School Evaluation at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He is responsible for the coordination of school evaluation visits by Institute staff and external consultants, the development of reporting tools/protocols and the production of reports, and he also coordinates internal staff training with regard to school evaluation visits and reporting tools. Prior to joining the Institute, Mr. Stolzberg managed his own consulting practice, advising charter schools across the country in their application and planning phases. He also served as Middle School Director for the Beginning with Children Charter School in Brooklyn, New York. In 2002, as a Building Excellent Schools Fellow, Mr. Stolzberg wrote the prospectus and application for the Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter School (BArT) in Massachusetts; the school was one of only five schools approved by the state that year. Mr. Stolzberg served as the school's founding principal. Mr. Stolzberg received his Master's Degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University and his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, with independent studies in education and political economy, from Williams College.

Nykeisha Jenkins-Rycraw (External Team Member) most recently served as the principal at the Academy Charter School in Hempstead, NY. She has more than a decade of experience in urban education and youth oriented non-profit organizations. She is a native New Yorker; upon graduating from Wellesley College, she returned to her elementary school in the East New York section of Brooklyn to teach. Ms. Jenkins-Rycraw holds a Masters of Arts Degree from Harvard University Graduate School of Education in Administration and Social Policy and a Master of Science Degree in Educational Leadership from Baruch College.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.

Visit the Institute's website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.

Benchmarks 1B – 1H, and Benchmarks 2A – 2E were using in conducting this evaluation visit.

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
State University Renewal Benchmark 1B Use of Assessment Data	<p>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and state performance standards; the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board; the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy; the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school's Accountability Plan goals are being achieved; the school's leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school's academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services; the school's teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students; a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade; the school regularly communicates each student's progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and the school regularly communicates to the school community overall academic performance as well as the school's progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1C Curriculum	<p>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a well-defined curriculum framework for each grade and core academic subject, which includes the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve as specified by New York State standards and performance indicators; the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial materials) currently in use in relation to the school's curriculum framework,

	<p>identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans; teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school's curriculum; the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and the curriculum supports the school's stated mission.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson; lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school's student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments; all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); the school's instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; the school's instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms; the school's leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas; the school's instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual

<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<p>teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and the school's leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school's academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development. <p>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students' needs; all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program; the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students; the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures; all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students' Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals; the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</p> <p>Student Order & Discipline</p>	<p>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied; classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.
<p><u>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</u></p> <p>Professional Development</p>	<p>The school's professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school's

	<p>mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests; • professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school's Accountability Plan goals; • teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities; • the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers' varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities; • the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and • the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.
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	<p>Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</p>
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>State University 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>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school's mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving

	<p>its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter; • the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner; • the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints; • the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies; • the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and • the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed. |
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