Charter Schools Institute
*The State University of New York*

# Bronx Success Academy Charter School 1

# School Evaluation Report
# 2010-11

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# INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the "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 SUNY Trustees, however, consistent with the goals of the New York State 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 charter schools authorized by them. By providing this oversight and feedback, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **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.

- **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.

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. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided, as background and context for the current evaluation. 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, with an italicized paragraph that introduces each specific benchmark and provides a summarizing conclusion.

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.

**Background**

Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized by a set of benchmarks that address 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 management. Entitled the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, these established criteria are used on a regular and ongoing basis 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.

This is an analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Some benchmarks are covered in greater detail than others in an effort to highlight areas of concern at the school and provide additional feedback in these areas. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to Bronx Success Academy Charter School 1 (BSA 1) on April 5, 2011. While BSA 1 is in its first year of operation, the Institute holds all schools accountable for the renewal benchmarks with consideration given to its point in the charter period. A school in its first year is expected to have begun to build systems and procedures that would provide a platform for delivering effective instruction to improve student learning and achievement. Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit, BSA 1 is on a trajectory toward meeting its Renewal Benchmarks by establishing systems and procedures in its educational program. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in the report, some of the more salient indicators include the following.

*Academic Success*

    Areas of Strength

- The school regularly administers assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and state standards. Teachers and school leaders effectively use results to meet students' needs.

- The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework.

- High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.

- The school principal instills high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement, and holds teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.

    Areas for Growth

- Classroom behavior management is implemented school-wide; however, at times teachers' enforcement of the system interferes with the flow of classroom instruction.

*Organizational Capacity*

    Areas of Strength

- BSA1 and the Success Charter Network have established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

# SCHOOL OVERVIEW

**Opening Information**

| | |
|---|---|
| Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees | September 15, 2009 |
| Date Initial Charter Approved by Board of Regents | March 17, 2010 |
| School Opening Date | September 2010 |

**Location**

| School Year(s) | Location(s) | Grades | District |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 - Present | 510 East 141st Street, Bronx, NY 10454 | All | NYC CSD 7 |

**Partner Organizations**

| | Partner Name | Partner Type | Dates of Service |
|---|---|---|---|
| Current Partner | Success Charter Network | CMO | 2010-Present |

**Current Mission Statement**

The mission of Bronx Success Academy Charter School 1 is to provide New York City elementary students with the knowledge, skills, character, and disposition to meet and exceed New York State standards and give them the resources to lead and succeed in the school, college, and life.

**Current Key Design Elements**

- focus on student achievement;
- research based and results driven curriculum;
- 100 minutes of daily reading instruction, 30 minutes of daily writing instruction, 80 minutes of daily mathematics, and daily exploratory-based science instruction totaling 4 and a half hours each week for each student;
- the effective use of student performance data to improve student learning;
- a longer school day and year;
- intensive intervention programs for struggling students and enrichment programs for high-performing students;
- highly qualified, highly trained staff;
- strong school culture; and
- strong support for students with disabilities and English language learners.

**School Characteristics**

| School Year | Original Chartered Enrollment | Revised Charter Enrollment | Actual Enrollment[1] | Original Chartered Grades | Actual Grades | Days of Instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2010-11 | 180 | | 188 | K-1 | K-1 | |

**Current Board of Trustees[2]**

| Board Member Name | Term Expires | Position/Committees |
|---|---|---|
| Nicole Agnew | 2011 | Vice Chair |
| Kelli Coleman | 2011 | |
| Shaun Gordon | 2011 | Finance Committee |
| Ellen Gustafson | 2011 | |
| Jake Hoffman | 2012 | |
| Alexander Kassan | 2012 | |
| Jonathan Keidan | 2012 | |
| Susan Kreisman | 2012 | |
| Justin Muzinich | 2013 | |
| Michael Naft | 2013 | Secretary |
| John Rowan | 2013 | Chair |
| Amanda Schreiber | 2013 | |
| Russ Valdez | 2013 | |
| Josh Koplewicz | 2013 | |

**School Leader(s)**

| School Year | School Leader(s) Name and Title |
|---|---|
| 2010-2011 | Michele Caracappa |

**School Visit History**

| School Year | Visit Type | Evaluator (Institute/External) | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010-2011 | First Year | Institute | April 5, 2011 |

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[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: Institute board information.

## SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

### Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

### Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

*Bronx Success Academy 1 has a system to regularly administer and gather valid and reliable assessment data that are aligned to the school's curriculum and state standards. The school analyzes and uses the results to improve instructional effectiveness and to meet students' learning needs.*

Bronx Success Academy 1 (BSA 1) staff regularly administers assessments which are aligned to the school's English language arts curriculum and purportedly to state standards. Teachers report they administer Interim Assessments (IAs) throughout the academic year. Members of the school's teaching and leadership teams as well as staff from the Success Charter Network (SCN), the school's charter management organization, collaborate on the development of IA assessment items and the norming of writing rubrics. Teachers also report they administer end-of-unit assessments, which are derived from the school's mathematics curriculum, as well as daily writing prompts and daily reading fluency "exit tickets" (short informal end-of-lesson assessment tools).

The BSA 1 staff has a well defined system to gather, score and analyze IA data. Teachers report gathering reading and writing data and scoring writing results using a four trait writing rubric (ideas, structures, conventions, and grammar). Scored assessment data is submitted to the school's on-site assessment coordinator who enters the data into SCN's comprehensive data management system. The school's assessment coordinator disaggregates school IA results and produces achievement reports for the entire school, by grade-level and class. In addition, the assessment coordinator links student assessment data with student demographic data, creates detailed student achievement reports, and runs sub-population assessment analyses on Title I, special education, race, and gender. Using detailed assessment reports the school's leadership conducts "State of the School" assessment review meetings five times throughout the academic year. Each of these professional development sessions focus on reviews of IA results by classroom, grade level and whole-school performance.

Teachers analyze IA results and use them to improve their instructional effectiveness. Students who score below the school's prescribed reading expectation are individually monitored for possible academic remediation strategies. Teachers report they also examine trends within classroom IA results for re-teaching content, reorganizing small instructional groups, identifying individual student academic interventions and for creating Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. Grade-level data sessions are conducted to discuss instructional intervention strategies within classrooms and across grade levels. The school's assessment coordinator meets with grade-level teacher teams to "brainstorm" instructional strategies. She reports that she meets with grade-level teams to disaggregate grade and class assessment data and assists with developing strategies to re-teach content.

Teachers report parents receive student achievement progress results three times per year. The reports detail how well students progress against a benchmark created by SCN. The benchmark is purported to be aligned with state performance standards and defines grade level skills. Students are rated on these benchmarks as below, approaching, meeting or exceeding "expectations".

**Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)**

*BSA 1 has a comprehensive, organized, clearly defined curriculum framework to prepare students to meet state performance standards. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. The school has abundant instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework. SCN has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum framework and resources.*

BSA 1's leadership team and teachers report that the school's English language arts (ELA) and math curricula are "balanced curriculum programs". The balanced ELA curriculum is a combination of SCN's *THINK* program, and purchased curriculum programs that ensure students receive a range of literacy instruction in both fluency and phonics. The leadership reports that *THINK* is a literacy "framework" that teaches students to become avid readers, writers and critical thinkers. Teachers model effective reading and writing for their students to enable them to independently practice appropriate skills. The *THINK* curriculum has multiple components: non-fiction study, interactive writing, independent reading and writers' workshops. Teachers report that within the writers' workshop unit students write for 25-45 minutes per day. The school's *THINK* curriculum is continually refined through a collaborative process between the network's literacy team and BSA 1 teachers.

In kindergarten, students begin reading with the Stepping-Stones reading series and continue through first grade with the Reading-Roots series. Each reading program has materials and books at designated reading levels. As reading progresses, students move though higher levels. The math curriculum is based on the purchased TERC math program and is augmented with CGI (cognitively guided instruction). Teachers use CGI school-wide to develop student problem solving ability.

SCN in collaboration with school personnel has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum framework. Teachers report that a network curriculum committee reviews the TERC curriculum and determines if the material aligns with state standards. The school has abundant instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework.

**Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)**

*High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school. The school differentiates instruction to meet the individual needs of students and instructional time is maximized. Teachers implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to the school's curriculum and engage students with rigorous lessons using varied learning opportunities.*

Teachers implement purposeful lessons with a sense of urgency. Teachers encourage significant student-to-student dialogue and ask students higher-order, inquiry based questions. Teachers continually ask students questions as they transition between activities; for example, when students distribute books and paper, the teacher has students count each item that is handed out. No instructional time is wasted. All teachers use rapid questioning techniques to both check for understanding and maintain student engagement in instruction.

Teachers engage students with rigorous instruction using different learning modalities. They implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to the school's curriculum. Teachers use technology to augment lessons. For example, SMART-Boards are used to hyperlink sound and pictures with vocabulary words. Students are compliant, respectful, adhere to classroom procedures, and actively participate in the instructional process.

Teachers develop well designed lesson plans aligned with the school's curriculum. Incorporated within their lesson plans are descriptions for differentiated teaching strategies. Teachers use small reading groups to differentiate instruction and to meet the individual needs of students. The small-group activities encourage students to be verbal and explain their answers as they respond to in-depth questions. Teachers assist readers and combine direct instruction with higher-order questions. The small group instruction is highly interactive between teacher and students and teachers monitor student performance.

## Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

*BSA 1 has strong instructional leadership. The principal instills high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement, and holds teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. She provides teachers with sustained and systematic support and conducts regular evaluations that reflect teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers understand and appreciate the evaluation process.*

The principal continually communicates high student achievement expectations with teachers, providing both formal and informal observation feedback as well as instructional improvement strategies. She sets high expectations for teacher performance and consistently emails teachers after classroom observations, indicating in her messages "things you do well" and "next steps". The principal maintains continuity in the observation process by returning within days of an observation to follow through on cited issues. The principal effectively schedules time for her staff enabling grade-level teams to meet daily. The principal uses interim assessment results as a main indicator for determining which teachers need additional support. Teachers report that the principal is a very effective instructional leader and coach.

The principal completed mid-year evaluations and plans to conduct end-of-year summative evaluations. The school, with assistance from SCN, has a comprehensive teacher evaluation form. Over the course of the academic year, three planned meetings between the principal and individual teachers focus on areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Teachers report that the SCN observation and evaluation protocol is useful for personal growth, and that the entire evaluation process is a holistic and organic process in contrast to typical isolated "one-shot" case study, formal observations conducted at other schools.

## At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

*BSA 1 helps students who are struggling academically. The school has procedures in place for identifying academically struggling students, students in need of special education services, and English language learners. School staff provides sufficient resources to meet the needs of at-risk students, and adequately monitors their progress and success. The school has a comprehensive support system for its English language learners and academically struggling students. It has developed its own methods to serve English language learners, the effectiveness of which is to be determined.*

Teachers report that the school has a three-tiered response to intervention process (RTI) for students who struggle academically. Initially the classroom teacher provides data to the school's child study team indicating a student needs extra academic assistance. If the initial or tier one interventions do not succeed, the students are referred for intensive interventions which may consist of assistance

from the special education teacher (tier two) or a special education referral (tier three). The school has a special education teacher (SETTS) who receives data from classroom teachers regarding students who are struggling academically. The classroom teacher and the SETTS teacher decide on a course of action; either to continue with the classroom intervention process or proceed with specific out-of-classroom interventions.  Teachers also report using teaching assistants to provide small group instruction with academically struggling students.

In addition to developing academic support strategies for classroom teachers, the school's special education staff provides sufficient resources and support to meet the needs of special education students and English language learners. Teachers report that English language learners remain in the classroom and receive guided reading instruction. The school has a comprehensive support system for its English language learners and academically struggling students. It has developed its own methods to serve English language learners with school site and network personnel monitoring their progress.  The effectiveness of the system is yet to be determined.


**Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)**

*BSA 1 promotes a culture of learning and scholarship and has a clear discipline system in place that is consistently applied.  The classroom behavior management approach is implemented school-wide; however, at times teachers' enforcement of the system detracts from the flow of classroom instruction.*

Institute team members report the school's college preparatory mission pervades the school environment and manifests itself in student behavioral expectations. Teachers implement the school's comprehensive behavior management system with fidelity.  Staff provides students with comprehensive behavior instruction during the first two days of school. During these instructional days students learn school rules and procedures. Although there is a school-wide behavior management system, teachers have the ability to deviate and create unique cueing techniques for their classrooms. Teachers use various tactics to solicit class attention or compliance, such as clapping hands, repeating "track" or other key phrases.

Classrooms are quiet and orderly; students are respectful and attentive. Teachers continually provide students with directions, praise for quiet student activity and quick transitions.  Teachers time the transitions between classroom activities; for example, when handing in textbooks the teacher clocks how long it takes to collect the books; the time is written on the board and compared to other transition times.

The school's classroom behavior management system is implemented school-wide; however, occasionally teachers demand 100 percent compliance with directions, requiring multiple admonitions that interfere with the flow of the lesson and learning time.

**Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)**

*The school has a comprehensive professional development program. It assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing and developing identified shortcomings in pedagogical skills and content knowledge.*

The school provides two weeks of professional development in the summer prior to the academic year, as well as monthly professional development sessions. The principal is instrumental in planning common meeting times for grade-level teachers each day. Every grade has two common planning periods per-day to encourage collaboration and the principal uses two of these planning periods per week to discuss ELA and math progress with the respective grade-level teams. Teachers report that the common planning time is beneficial as it enables them to collaborate on curriculum pacing and develop consistent instructional strategies. The ongoing, shared professional development also assists teachers to develop strategies for differentiated instruction.

With comprehensive professional development offerings, the school and SCN successfully develop teachers' competencies and skills. SCN provides teachers with opportunities to visit other schools within the network to observe their colleagues teaching. Teachers report they participate in a three-week summer professional development institute, which includes instructional components of the *THINK* curriculum as well as the purchased curriculum products: SFA and TERC. Teachers report a high-level of satisfaction with the school and SCN's commitment to professional development and indicate that the sessions are meaningful and helpful. As a result, they believe their instruction has improved.

**Mission & Key Design Elements (Benchmark 2.A)**

*The school has an unwavering commitment to its mission.*

The school's staff and leadership are devoted to creating students who are college bound. All classrooms, including kindergarten and 1st grade, have college names. Hallway bulletin boards contain information and images about where school staff attended college. In addition to the collegiate memorabilia, teachers speak with their students about professions and the amount of college training certain careers require. These conversations are extensions of stories read in classrooms and are not contrived or incongruent with observed lessons. Teachers introduce students to the concept of college and teachers link the college experience to their everyday work.

Consistent with the school's theme of developing college bound students, one teacher reports that the principal stresses the importance of listening to students, rather than providing students with answers; she encourages students to be expressive and reflective in their responses. Teachers report they "imbed in students" the idea that they can attend and succeed in college. During an observed classroom visit, students recited a chant while transitioning between activities: "When you have the knowledge, you go to college."

**Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)**

*The school and the school's supporting network have a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems and procedures that enable the school to carry out its academic program. This organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school's schedules support a comprehensive set of professional development opportunities.*

BSA 1's administration supports classroom teachers' needs. In addition to the principal, the school has a community relations specialist, an on-site operations manager and a student assessment coordinator. The school is also well supported by SCN, which provides assistance and support to the school's on-site operations manager and student achievement coordinator.

Teachers view the principal as the school's instructional leader and state that there are clear reporting structures with distinct lines of accountability, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and clear lines of leadership. The school's schedule supports a comprehensive set of professional development opportunities as well as daily and weekly times for school staff to meet.

**Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)**

*The school board works effectively to achieve the school's mission and provides oversight to the total educational program. The board has adequate skills, structures and procedures with which to govern the school, and holds school leaders, management company/organization and itself accountable for student achievement.*

The school's board contains 14 board members who have a strong combination of education, business, law and finance experience. The board chair reports that the board closely monitors the school's financial activity and that they have a strong commitment to support the needs of the teachers, providing them with the supplies and materials necessary to deliver an effective education program.

The board holds the school's leader, charter management organization and itself accountable for student achievement.  The board chair reports there are consistent and ongoing processes for the principal to update the board. The principal regularly and consistently emails the board chair and provides an update to the board during scheduled board meetings. The board chair reports that the board, in conjunction with SCN, is in the process of completing the cumulative end-of-year principal evaluation. The principal reports that she knows, understands and is aware of this evaluation process.

<u>**Conduct of the Visit**</u>

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Bronx Success Academy Charter School 1 on April 5, 2011.  Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

**Team Leader: Dr. Paul Wright** was recently appointed Director of School Evaluation at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Dr. Wright will be responsible for the Institute's extensive school evaluation program, overseeing and in many cases leading school evaluation visits by Institute staff as well as coordinating the independent evaluations done on the Institute's behalf. Dr. Wright will lead ongoing efforts to refine the Institute's nationally regarded evaluation protocols and reporting tools; including oversight of the production of the Institute's school evaluation reports which provide valuable information to schools and the public about school progress. He will also coordinate internal staff training on school evaluation. Prior to joining the Institute, Dr. Wright directed Quality Education Partnership, Inc., a national consulting network that conducted evaluations of traditional and charter schools and created strategic management plans for school improvement. The former Development Director for School Design and Strategic Planning of Mesa Public Schools in Arizona, Dr. Wright developed unique schools of choice serving a wide spectrum of learners in coordination with Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright also served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group, an Educational Management Organization providing educational services to students throughout Arizona. Dr. Wright received his Ed.D. and his M. Ed. from Arizona State University and his B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany

**Institute Team Member**: **Dr. Ron Miller** is the Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute. After teaching for seven years in New York City public schools, Dr. Miller 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 the city schools and coordinated staff development on their use for district administrators in all the high school and community school districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their competence 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 annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds a BA degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University

**External Team Member: Adam Aberman** is the principal and founder of The Learning Collective, through which he has evaluated over 30 charter schools. He also serves as the executive director of the El Segundo Education Foundation. Previously, Mr. Aberman was the director of Global Digital Strategy for Ashoka's Youth Venture, which helps young people in 20 countries launch socially responsible businesses and organizations. In addition, Mr. Aberman was the executive director and founder (and currently board member) of icouldbe.org, the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 25,000 teens and e-mentors nationwide and in Tanzania. Before establishing icouldbe.org, Mr. Aberman was a regional coordinator for the New York City Department of Education. He began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. He received a B.A. from Vassar College and a Master's degree in Public Policy, with an emphasis on education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A frequent speaker at conferences, Mr. Aberman has also won numerous awards including Cause Marketing Silver Halo Award for Best Use of Social Media (2009) and International Computerworld Magazine Honors Finalist Award (2002).

# 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**<br>**Is the School an Academic Success?** |
|---|---|
| **Evidence Category** | **State University Renewal Benchmarks** |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1B**<br><br>**Use of Assessment Data** | **The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and state performance standards;<br>• 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;<br>• the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy;<br>• the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school's Accountability Plan goals are being achieved;<br>• 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;<br>• the school's teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students;<br>• 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;<br>• the school regularly communicates each student's progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and<br>• 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**<br><br>**Curriculum** | **The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• 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;<br>• the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial |

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|---|---|
| | materials) currently in use in relation to the school's curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;<br>• the curriculum *as implemented* is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade;<br>• 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;<br>• teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school's curriculum;<br>• the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and<br>• the curriculum supports the school's stated mission. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1D**<br><br>**Pedagogy** | **High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach;<br>• 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;<br>• lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators;<br>• 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;<br>• all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time;<br>• 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<br>• teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1E**<br><br>**Instructional Leadership** | **The school has strong instructional leadership.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement;<br>• the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement);<br>• the school's instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness;<br>• 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;<br>• 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;<br>• the school's instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual |

| | |
|---|---|
| | teachers; |
| | • 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. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1F**<br><br>**At-Risk Students** | **The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students' needs;<br>• all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program;<br>• the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students;<br>• 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;<br>• all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students' Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals;<br>• 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<br>• 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. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1G**<br><br>**Student Order & Discipline** | **The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied;<br>• classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident;<br>• 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<br>• throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 1H**<br><br>**Professional Development** | **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.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program;<br>• the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school's |

| | mission, curriculum, and instructional programs; |
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| | • 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. |

| | **Renewal Question 2**<br>**Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?** |
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| **Evidence Category** | **State University Renewal Benchmarks** |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 2A**<br><br>**Mission & Key Design Elements** | **The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• stakeholders are aware of the mission;<br>• the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and<br>• the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 2B**<br><br>**Parents & Students** | **Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school;<br>• the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it;<br>• few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school;<br>• a large number of parents seek entrance to the school;<br>• parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and<br>• the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 2C**<br><br>**Organizational Capacity** | **The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br><br>• the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations;<br>• staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school's mission;<br>• the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving |

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| | its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;
• 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. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 2D**<br><br>**Board Oversight** | **The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school;<br>• 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;<br>• 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;<br>• the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity;<br>• 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;<br>• 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;<br>• the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and<br>• 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. |
| **State University Renewal Benchmark 2E**<br><br>**Governance** | **The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.**<br><br>Elements that are generally present include:<br>• 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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| | - 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;<br>- 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;<br>- 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;<br>- 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;<br>- the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies;<br>- 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<br>- the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed. |