



Roosevelt Children's Academy Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2012-13

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”) in January 2000, the Roosevelt Children’s Academy Charter School (“Roosevelt”) is in its third charter term and 13th year of operation. Based on an analysis of the evidence from this evaluation visit and previous information gathered during the current charter term, the Institute finds Roosevelt is not on a trajectory toward attaining the SUNY Trustees’ subsequent renewal criteria of meeting or coming close to meeting the key academic goals in its Accountability Plan when it faces its next renewal review during the 2014-15 school year. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute’s (the “Institute’s”) most recent monitoring visit to Roosevelt indicates the school is failing to direct resources in a manner that leads to improving academic achievement for children. The combination of the school’s declining academic performance, leadership changes, staff turnover, and concerns about its governance and fiscal affairs puts Roosevelt’s renewal for an additional charter term in doubt.

Roosevelt has previously produced a strong record of student achievement. In the first two charter terms, the school consistently met its key academic goals of English language arts (“ELA”) and math. However, Roosevelt’s performance has declined in the current charter term. While the school’s performance in 2009-10 and 2010-11, the first two years of the current Accountability Period, continued to exceed that of the local school district by wide margins and it continued to perform much better than expected in comparison to demographically similar schools statewide, its performance in all ten individual ELA and math Accountability Plan measures declined from year to year. In 2011-12, Roosevelt’s scores dropped precipitously: the school met only one of five measures for its ELA goal and only two of five measures in math; overall, the school met neither its ELA nor math Accountability Plan goals.

The school’s long-serving superintendent, who had held the position for nine years, left the school after the 2010-11 school year. The Institute found in its 2011-12 evaluation visit that, given new leadership and high teacher turnover, Roosevelt was undertaking an uneven transition. Specifically, the Institute notes in its 2011-12 Evaluation Report concerns surrounding the decline of strong instruction provided to students, the ineffective and unsystematic use of assessment data, inconsistent curriculum development, limited leadership support and supervision of teachers, and inadequate coordination of the academic program across the school’s multiple facilities. The 2011-12 ELA and math results discussed above corroborate that Roosevelt’s academic program is not serving children well nor enabling them to meet the demands of state performance standards.

Based on its 2012-13 evaluation visit, the Institute concludes that the school’s academic program has not improved since the 2011-12 school year and it is therefore again unlikely to meet its key academic Accountability Plan goals. Notwithstanding the school’s long history of academic success, the school faces a variety of serious structural and organization challenges. The Institute does not attribute the continued absence of fundamental academic systems and procedures in the use of assessment data, curriculum development and instructional leadership simply to the difficulties of a transition year. Critical to Roosevelt’s current academic performance are the recent and historic decisions of the board of trustees.

Roosevelt’s board of trustees, which has had minimal turnover since the school’s founding, currently fails to ensure that the school operates in an educationally, legally and fiscally sound manner. It has focused on creating a high school program and has thus accumulated substantial cash reserves in anticipation of building a high school facility. This focus on a high school program, which the Institute has not approved and is not likely to approve, has misdirected resources away from Roosevelt’s current K-8 program. The education corporation board has twice failed to properly address facilities issues, most recently during the 2011-12 school year, resulting in the Institute placing the school on probation each time.

The board's poor governance and fiscal oversight have been detrimental to the school and jeopardize its future. Fiscal policies, procedures and internal controls lack soundness and, as applied, are ineffective. With the departure of the long-serving school leader under whose leadership Roosevelt sustained strong academic and organizational performance, several concerns surrounding governance and finance emerged. In practice, and in contrast to Roosevelt's written policies, the board chair holds almost complete authority for the financial affairs of the school. The board does not hold the chair accountable for spending decisions; few, if any, checks and balances for reimbursements and other expenditures exist. In addition, the education corporation has spent significant money on travel and other reimbursement and costs related solely to the board while not providing sufficient materials and resources for the educational program. Lastly, the education corporation board has failed to operate itself and the school in compliance with certain requirements of the New York Charter Schools Act including the application of Open Meetings Law to charter school boards.

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The school should broadly share the final version of the Institute’s school evaluation visit report with the entire school community. The Institute will post the final report on its website at: www.newyorkcharters.org.

INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report includes four components. The first section, titled Benchmark Analysis, presents findings from the school evaluation visit within the context of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”).¹ Because this school evaluation visit was not conducted as part of a comprehensive charter renewal review, the Institute did not collect evidence for every benchmark area; rather, the evaluation visit focused on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks;² board oversight, governance and legal compliance; and some aspects of the school’s fiscal soundness. The School Overview section provides descriptive information about the school including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. This section also provides background information on the conduct of the evaluation puts the visit in the context of the school’s current charter cycle. The third section provides the school’s 2011-12 School Performance Review, which gives an analysis of attainment of the key academic goals in the school’s Accountability Plan. Finally, the Appendix provides the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

¹ The *State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks* (Version 5.0, May 2012) are appended and available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/SUNYRenewalBenchmarks5FINAL5-8-12.pdf>.

² The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (p.2).

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

Qualitative Education Benchmarks

Organizational Capacity. Roosevelt is not organized in a fashion that supports the delivery of a coherent, effective educational program. Roosevelt has not invested in maintaining adequate instructional materials, in developing the pedagogical skills of teachers or in recruiting and retaining quality staff. The school does not leverage its significant financial resources toward improving student outcomes.

Roosevelt's instructional and operational priorities are unclear. As such, its organizational structure does not enable the school to work effectively to support the educational program. In contrast to the first ten years of the school's history, Roosevelt operates with a fragmented organizational structure managing the day-to-day operations at Roosevelt's three campuses. The school's enrollment expansion over the last five years, approved by SUNY when the school's academic performance was strong, has presented facilities and operational challenges.

The school has an abundance of resources, both financial and human capital, but has not allocated these resources toward improving student outcomes. Roles and responsibilities of individuals within the administrative structure are unclear, contributing to diffuse lines of accountability. Several administrators' roles overlap significantly, and many staff members are unable to identify the individual with ultimate responsibility for specific functions. Further illustrating how poorly coordinated the program is, both teachers and instructional leaders have difficulty identifying school-wide focus areas.

Roosevelt's use of available financial resources does not fully support the needs of the K-8 program. The absence of a projected yearly budget with appropriate spending authority in the hands of the school leader precludes the ability to plan for school-wide priorities of any kind including those that would link the purchase of curriculum materials to professional development and accountability for improved teaching and learning. For example, Roosevelt has not yet invested in aligning its curriculum to the Common Core standards. School principals and teachers express frustration at not having a strong curriculum framework and supporting documents with which to plan instruction. Most notable was the absence of trade books, published literature that supplements the use of text books and other instructional media, being carried by students and available in classrooms. In the elementary school, there were a limited number of leveled trade books in classrooms; however, the baskets were about one-third to one-half full, offering only a limited selection for students. In the middle school, almost no additional books of any kind were observed other than sets of textbooks on the shelves, which appeared not to be used often, and subject area workbooks the students carried.

According to the superintendent, he is unable to develop a spending plan in support of clear goals due to prior limits placed on the purchase of instructional materials. This is difficult to understand in light of the school's declining student outcomes (above) and fiscal condition (discussed below). Additionally, multiple staff members report being unaware of the school's process for submitting purchasing requests while others suggest the board has approved and denied requests with no apparent rhyme or reason.

In recent years, Roosevelt has struggled with retaining members of its instructional team. Sixteen teachers and two instructional leaders left the school after the 2010-11 school year. Seven teachers and three administrators left Roosevelt following the 2011-12 school year and three left during the current year. Instructional leaders attribute the high turnover rate to the school's relatively low salary structure compared to local school districts and low staff morale. The Institute notes, however, that a union representing the teachers executed a collective bargaining agreement with the education corporation in May of 2012, which included certain back-pay awards. In addition to the impact of year-to-year staffing changes, the school experiences disruptions as teachers leave during the school year. School leaders have not allocated sufficient resources to professional development, particularly in light of the number of new teachers on staff. Documents reviewed and interviews conducted during the 2013 site visit indicated the school planned to create a mentoring program in the 2012-2013 school year. However at the time of the visit, instructional leaders had taken no steps toward implementing the program.

Facility constraints have been a challenge almost since the inception of the school and throughout the current charter term and continue to be a source of multiple concerns. The primary grade principal supervises grades K-2 teachers, but 2nd grade is housed in a different facility, which limits these teachers' access to instructional and peer support. Many physical spaces serve dual functions as administrative offices and sites for pull-out services and other academic interventions. Lack of space at the middle school site forces the school to transport students to the elementary grade facility, resulting in a significant loss of learning time during the school day. None of the school's three sites include cafeteria space so students eat meals and snacks in their classrooms. Observers noted that meals served in class lasted longer than the allotted lunch time, cutting into instructional time by 10-20 minutes. The school has not developed a facilities plan for the upcoming school year though several staff members reported that projected enrollment exceeds current capacity. The school is on probation for the remainder of the charter term due to facility related charter violations.

Instructional Leadership. Instructional leadership at Roosevelt is uncoordinated and insufficient to provide adequate support to teachers.

Roosevelt benefitted from strong instructional leadership for a number of years. The school's former, longtime superintendent, under whose leadership the school posted strong academic successes, left the school in the summer of 2011. Roosevelt has had a new leader in both of the school years subsequent to this departure. The first new superintendent selected by the board served only during the 2011-2012 school year and was replaced by the current superintendent in September 2012.

The school's current instructional leadership team consists of a superintendent new in the 2012-2013 school year; primary, elementary, and middle school principals; and one assistant principal/curriculum coordinator. Many of these roles overlap, with some individuals performing duties school-wide. While there are many identified school leaders, taken as a whole the activities of the school leadership team do not provide focused and coherent supports for all teachers. The middle school principal participates in school-wide observations and has curriculum responsibilities across all grades. Both the primary and elementary principals oversee the 2nd grade teachers.

Second grade classrooms share the elementary school facility, though they are still under the supervision of the primary school principal. Many teachers report receiving contradictory messages from different members of the leadership team, and most report that they are unclear about both instructional and student achievement expectations. Given the lack of clarity, teachers generally seek instructional guidance from either their grade team or a veteran staff member.

Most teachers report receiving no systematic coaching. In some cases, teachers indicate that instructional leaders have not observed them deliver a lesson during the current school year; in other cases, teachers report receiving limited feedback after brief observations. Some new teachers receive coaching, modeling and planning support from veteran Title I teachers, who imbed in their classrooms for extended periods. The leadership team reports having conducted one round of formal observations this year and indicate plans for additional observations. Roosevelt has a standard feedback form for classroom observations. The form focuses mostly on basic instructional inputs, such as whether the teacher notes an “Essential Question” on the board and if the teacher’s desk is tidy, rather than student learning. Interviews with staff indicate instructional leaders do not provide coherent and consistent follow up coaching focused on improving instruction missing significant opportunities to improve the instructional qualities in all classrooms.

Roosevelt provides some opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across grade levels. Teachers in grades K-5 meet weekly with their grade team; 6th - 8th grade teachers hold department meetings. For most grades, despite the scheduled time, opportunities to focus on collaborative planning are inconsistent as instructional leaders often use the meetings for administrative announcements; schedule changes also interfere with planning time. Some grades have no common planning time. Teachers report meeting informally and outside school hours to discuss lesson plans and teaching strategies. Some teachers report being pulled out of classrooms during instructional time for meetings as well. Instructional leaders provide insufficient direction to grade/department teams regarding the content of these meetings.

Roosevelt’s teacher professional development program also lacks coherence and a focus on producing and supporting superior instruction in pursuit of strong academic achievement. In addition to two-weeks of professional development in the summer, the school’s design calls for weekly professional development. Teachers report that as of the February site visit, only six such professional development sessions have occurred. Professional development topics cover a wide variety of issues but topics are not clear, intentional and focused on specifically identified school-wide or individual teacher needs. School leaders encourage teachers to seek out external professional development, and the school generally pays the cost of these activities. Teachers at the elementary school create professional development goals and receive some assistance in identifying related development opportunities. School leaders provided information about a school-wide mentoring program for first- through third-year teachers; however, the program had not been implemented by the time of the evaluation visit. Twenty teachers, almost 40 percent of the teaching team, are in this experience category.

Instructional leaders do not hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. Leaders at the school do not articulate a connection between low test scores and teacher practice. For example, despite the fact that school’s own benchmark assessments show students performing well-below proficient in ELA and math at the middle school, school leaders

describe the middle school teaching staff as “very strong” and have difficulty identifying teachers in need of improvement.

Curriculum. Roosevelt does not have an overarching curriculum framework to provide teachers with effective instructional guidance. The school relies heavily on commercial curriculum products that do not adequately address the Common Core standards.

In previous charter terms, Roosevelt had in place a curriculum framework for each grade level and core subject area that aligned to state learning standards. The school’s curriculum framework clearly indicated what students should know and be able to do at the end of the school year. Teachers utilized a plethora of curricular resources such as textbooks, curriculum maps and scope and sequence documents to support them in lesson plan development, and instructional leaders monitored both instructional planning and implementation to ensure alignment to state standards. At the time of the most recent renewal visit, the Institute noted that the school did not have a clear and consistent procedure for reviewing and revising its curriculum. With multiple leadership transitions and in the absence of a systematic process for reviewing learning standards and the materials teachers use to address such standards, Roosevelt has not adapted to Common Core standards.

The school does not currently have an overarching curriculum framework that articulates specific learning objectives and a clear plan for addressing those objectives throughout the school year. Also, leaders have not provided sufficient instructional guidance to ensure students will meet new, more rigorous performance standards. Teachers report they have no clear idea of what to teach and when to teach it.

Support for curriculum planning is inconsistent and minimal at best, although several instructional leaders report reviewing lesson plans weekly. Teachers continue to rely on the Scott Foresman commercial curriculum in most grades, despite the fact that it is not aligned to Common Core standards. Aside from a crosswalk between the Common Core and Scott Foresman, completed by the elementary school principal, teachers have not received any resources to help them transition to the Common Core. Some grade teams and departments have created a scope and sequence and/or pacing guide at their own initiative, and teachers report relying heavily on their fellow teachers for assistance with planning.

The school still does not have a clear process for reviewing and revising curriculum despite having created a curriculum coordinator position this school year.

Pedagogy. Instruction at Roosevelt is purposeful; however, many lessons lack rigor, urgency and alignment with Common Core standards.

Teachers deliver purposeful lessons, though as noted above, lacking coherent curriculum frameworks, teachers understandably struggle to align instruction with the demands of Common Core standards. In accordance with delivering instruction the “RCA Way,” instructional leaders expect teachers to present content in the form of mini-lessons and gradually release responsibility to students through guided and independent practice. Fidelity to this gradual release method varies widely as does its effectiveness. For example, some teachers present mini-lessons and use

the rest of the period for group work or centers, not allowing students opportunities to practice independently; whereas, in the upper grades, some teachers lecture for most of the period, failing both to provide time for student practice and to ensure student mastery. Particularly in the lower grades, teachers differentiate content through the use of student-centers. Two teachers, a lead and a cooperating teacher, staff most classrooms, though cooperating teachers perform few functions beyond behavior management in many rooms. In others, however, both teachers circulate throughout the lesson, checking student work or explaining challenging concepts to small groups and individual students to good effect.

Aside from circulating around the room and calling on students who have raised their hands, teachers generally do not display knowledge of multiple effective practices to check for understanding. Some teachers effectively challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills while many others struggle to do so. For example, during a lesson on two and three dimensional shapes, the teacher allowed the class to discuss their thoughts on a classmate's question about whether there is a fourth dimension and what that might look like. In another room, the teacher asked students to think about a time in their lives when they could relate to a character in the story and discuss their feelings about that experience. Most teachers appear aware of the need to challenge students but require targeted professional development support from the school to build this and other pedagogical skills. For example, a teacher asked students difficult, reflective questions, but then did not push them to answer these questions, and provided answers herself.

Site visit observations, interviews and document reviews indicate the school lacks a sufficient sense of urgency, as well as the systems and skills necessary to improve student outcomes. Teachers do not use techniques to maximize learning time, and many observed lessons exhibited poor pacing, beginning late or ending early resulting in a loss of critical instructional time. Out of classroom staff frequently interrupt lessons for administrative purposes. Though few teachers use routines or implement a consistent behavior management system, student misbehavior does not interrupt instruction.

Use of Assessment Data. Roosevelt continues to gather a limited amount of assessment data, which is not sufficient to create a clear and comprehensive picture of student achievement. Additionally, there is little indication that the school uses data to improve instructional effectiveness.

The school continues to administer a variety of standardized, teacher-created and informal assessments. At the start of the current school year, Roosevelt first administered the Show What You Know on the Common Core assessments series school-wide to benchmark student achievement; the school has subsequently administered the assessments twice more and plans a fourth administration in April. The results of these assessments do not provide an accurate measure of student progress as the school changed the cut score for proficiency with each administration. Though administrators make this data available to teachers, there is no school-wide system for using it to improve instruction or provide direct intervention services to at-risk students. In the lower grades, Roosevelt regularly administers both the DIBELS and TerraNova assessments to all students. Staff at the elementary school report that roughly 20 percent of students in grades K-2 score proficient on these assessments. The school sends both achievement-focused progress reports and report cards to parents/guardians four times yearly.

At-Risk Students. Though Roosevelt has developed adequate programs to address the needs of students who are struggling academically, these programs have not proven to be effective in improving student achievement.

Roosevelt has a Response to Intervention (“RtI”) program to identify students at-risk of academic failure, though many teachers report that the system is not implemented consistently across the school. In the lower grades, Title I staff use results from the DIBELS to identify students in need of interventions. Due to ineffective assessment systems in the upper grades, identification is largely based on teacher observations. If teachers are concerned that a student is not performing well in a general education classroom, they can fill out the necessary paperwork to refer the student to a pupil personnel committee (“PPC”) that provides suggested instructional modifications and approaches to meet students’ needs within the general education classroom. Students at the middle school level may receive academic intervention services (“AIS”) in one or more subject areas. Throughout the year, the school monitors student progress with teacher-created assessments to determine if students should enter or exit the AIS program. The school does not have a reliable, school-wide system for tracking student progress.

The school employs a Title I coordinator, who adequately supports teachers in meeting the needs of Title I students in grades 3-5 by providing instructional strategies, resources and pull-out services. This year, only one Title I teacher provides ELA and math services to students in K-2 in order to divert more resources toward the testing grades, despite the fact that the DIBELS assessment shows that nearly 80 percent of students in grades K-2 are scoring well-below proficient. The school also has one part-time Kindergarten AIS teacher. Three Title I teachers provide support for grades 3-5. At the middle school, the principal and lead teachers coordinate one ELA AIS teacher and one math intervention specialist, who provide push-in, pull out and structured tutoring opportunities. If students do not respond to interventions, teachers refer them once again to the PPC to begin the process of special education referral. The school has recently added an academic focused after-school program intended to provide additional intervention services for students. The program does not link directly to instruction during regular school hours or address students’ specific needs. During the evaluation visit, observers saw no systematic instruction during the after-school program. Paid high school tutors monitor students in assigned groups as they complete problems in commercial workbooks. Supervision by school staff is sparse and it is unclear if the program improves individual student understanding and ability.

External providers from each student’s school district of residence provide required services for the needs of the school’s 37 students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”), mostly providing push-in and pull-out services. The school employs a full-time special education coordinator who coordinates the services and ensures that required special education accommodations are provided to the students, and that students are working toward meeting their IEP goals. Teachers do not have the opportunity to meet formally with special education providers, and teachers report that their interactions with providers depend on each individual provider, which districts often only temporarily assign to students. Teachers are aware of their students’ IEPs, and this year, they have received a minimal amount of professional development on how to support special education students in an inclusive classroom. Instructional supports for students with IEP’s have proven to be ineffective. In 2011-12, Roosevelt enrolled 23 students with disabilities in grades 3-8; none of these

students scored proficient in either ELA or math on state exams.

The school employs an English as a second language (“ESL”) teacher who addresses the needs of the school’s 28 English language learners (“ELLs”) through pull-out services, though there are few formal opportunities for the ESL and general education teachers to coordinate lesson planning and to develop strategies to serve these students in the general education classroom. As with the services for students with IEPs, the school’s ESL program has proven to be ineffective; none of the school’s ELLs scored proficient in either ELA or math last year.

Board Oversight, Governance and Legal Requirements

Roosevelt’s board of trustees has failed to ensure that the school operates in a legally, fiscally or educationally sound manner. The board’s failure to implement proper policies and procedures, particularly with respect to fiscal oversight, has allowed the board chair to control the school with few, if any, appropriate checks and balances. Where policies do exist, they are often ignored by either the board chair or the board as a whole, creating a culture of noncompliance. The board’s acquiescence and oversight deficiencies have culminated in ineffective governance.

Prior to this school evaluation visit, the Institute received an unsigned “petition,” sometimes referenced as a complaint, alleging that the board and/or board chair had violated the law, charter agreement or school policy. As such, the Institute’s routine visit also served as an opportunity to further investigate allegations contained in the petition. Some of the allegations have their genesis in the last few years of interaction between the education corporation and the teacher’s bargaining unit over the terms of a collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”). At the time of the evaluation visit, unionized staff reported that they had reached an agreement in principal with the school, but that final negotiations were ongoing and that a new CBA had not yet been signed. Subsequent inquiry with the education corporation’s counsel revealed that the final CBA had in fact been executed in May 2012. The Institute notes that a majority of the allegations contained in the petition, if true, would constitute an Improper Employer Practice pursuant to Civil Service Law § 209-a, and as such fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of the New York State Public Employee Relations Board (“PERB”). Additional allegations address conduct that is stale (e.g., previously investigated and reported on by the Institute), or matters within the education corporation board’s discretion pursuant to its Charter Agreement. Such allegations will not be addressed below.

As discussed in greater detail below, staff interviews and a review of the records maintained by Roosevelt reveal numerous violations of law and the terms of operation by which the school agreed to operate. In addition, the education corporation board has failed in its obligation to ensure that the corporation and its school operate in a legally, fiscally or educationally sound manner, a legal requirement to justify renewal. Should the school fail to make significant improvements in board oversight and governance during the remainder of the current charter term, the Institute will not likely be in a position to represent the required findings to the SUNY Trustees.

General Governance

Not-for-Profit Corporation Law § 717(a) states board members “shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith and with that degree of diligence, care and skill which ordinarily

prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions.” Further, Roosevelt’s bylaws require that the not-for-profit education corporation “shall be managed and, controlled under the general direction of [its] Board of Trustees.” Bylaws, Art. 2, Sec. 1. The bylaws vest to the entire board the power to, *inter alia*, (a) “[f]ormulate the general policy to be followed in the management of the affairs, property and business of the Academy,” (b) “be the appointing authority for all staff, teaching and other positions of the Academy,” and (c) to “monitor and review the Academy’s budgeting, regulatory, financial, compliance, and academic performance.” Bylaws, Art. 2, Sec. 2. Records reviewed and staff interviews conducted during the Institute visit revealed that such board functions had been commandeered by the board chair, with information being disseminated to the entire board only after being pre-approved by the chairperson.

The board has also failed to establish necessary officer positions and committees as required in its bylaws. With respect to officer positions the Roosevelt Bylaws state:

The Board of Trustees shall elect by majority vote, from among the Trustees, [a Secretary who] shall keep, or cause to be kept, the minutes of all Board of Trustee meetings. He or she shall be custodian of the records. He or she shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws and as required by law. He or she shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the Board of Trustees. The Secretary may not concurrently serve as the Chairperson.

Bylaws, Art. 3, Sec. 3. The board has contracted with an external vendor, at the considerable expense of \$900 per month,³ to perform services commensurate with that of a board secretary. As required in the bylaws, the board must elect a secretary from among its membership and then evaluate the necessity of having typical secretarial functions performed by an external contractor or education corporation employee. Board minutes reviewed by Institute staff do not indicate election of a secretary, contrary to information provided by the board during the Institute’s 2011-12 school evaluation visit. The board must also:

elect by majority vote, from among the Trustees, [a Treasurer who] shall have the custody of the funds and securities of the Academy and shall cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Academy, and shall deposit or cause to be deposited all monies and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Academy in such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Academy as may be ordered by the Board of Trustees taking proper vouchers for the disbursements, and shall render to the Chairperson, and the Board of Trustees, at meetings and whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Academy, provided

³ As of the time of the evaluation visit. Subsequent to the visit, the board approved a retroactive increase to \$1,500 per month.

that routine transactions may be delegated to the staff of the Academy. The Treasurer will work with the Board of Trustees to accomplish the aforementioned duties. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as the Board of Trustees may from time to time prescribe or require.

Bylaws, Art. 3, Sec. 4. While the board has elected a treasurer, the board as a whole has failed to create adequate fiscal policies and procedures to ensure that the treasurer is capable of carrying out all necessary tasks. Where policies do exist, they are not consistently applied, and school personnel are unable to account for all expenditures of the school, particularly in the area of board travel reimbursement. This constitutes a violation of section 5.1 of the Roosevelt's Charter Agreement, which states, "The School Corporation shall at all times maintain appropriate governance and managerial procedures and financial controls." The board has also failed to establish

[a] Budget and Finance Committee. The Budget and Finance Committee shall review the regular budget and other fiscal reports to be submitted to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis, or at such other times as required by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall be the chairperson of this committee.

Bylaws, Art. 4, Sec. 2. Without establishing a budget and finance committee as required in the bylaws, the board as a whole has limited access to current, accurate financial data. In addition to other budget issues (described below), the board has failed to approve budgets on time, and submitted draft budgets to the Institute as final in violation of section 5.5 of the Charter Agreement.

Each of the above Bylaws violations constitutes a violation of the Charter Agreement as section 2.10(a) thereof requires the education corporation to follow its bylaws.

Finally, while the board has amassed approximately \$20 million in fiscal reserves, the stated purpose for such reserves calls into question whether the board is capable of discharging their fiduciary duties to the school in good faith. School staff reported, and the board minutes confirm, that the reserve fund is for the establishment of a high school. However, the school has applied for a charter revision to expand into high school grades at least twice in the past, and the Institute has denied each such request. When those expansion requests were denied, there appears to have been no effort to reassess the purpose of the reserve fund or to reallocate the money to other identified needs of the school (both academic and facility needs).

Conduct of Board Meetings

The petition and a prior board member complaint raised several concerns about the conduct of board meetings. A review of the school's board minutes over the past two years confirms numerous violations of the school's bylaws and Open Meetings Law, Article 7 of the Public Officers Law.

1. The board does not utilize proper procedures to enter executive session.

The board routinely enters into executive session to discuss matters which are exempt from discussion at an otherwise open meeting. As a matter of course, however, the procedures utilized by the board to enter executive session are inadequate in that the motion merely regurgitates the statutory language without providing any additional detail.

The subjects that may properly be considered in executive session are specified in paragraphs (a) through (h) of § 105(1) of the Public Officers Law. Because those subjects are limited, a public body cannot conduct an executive session to discuss the subject of its choice. In addition, the motion must be specific enough so that the public is informed that the topic or topics for discussion fall under one of the permitted options. Courts have routinely held that a motion that merely regurgitates the statutory reasons for executive session, commonplace for the Roosevelt board, is insufficient (see, e.g., Committee of Open Government Advisory Opinion OML-AO-5259, available at <http://docs.dos.ny.gov/coog/otext/o5259.doc>, for a discussion related to providing sufficient public notice for entry into executive session). Because proper procedures were not utilized, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the board utilized executive sessions appropriately (e.g., whether the subject matter discussed by the board in executive session was proper).

2. The board does not make minutes available to the public as required by law.

The Open Meetings Law requires that minutes be taken at all open meetings, “which shall consist of a record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any other matter formally voted upon and the vote thereon.” Public Officers Law § 106(1). “Minutes of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the freedom of information law [FOIL] within two weeks from the date of such meeting except that [executive session minutes] shall be available to the public within one week from the date of the executive session.” Public Officers Law § 106(3).

School staff produced numerous requests for board minutes that were not properly addressed by the board, the consultant secretary or the school’s FOIL records access officer. Those seeking minutes were often told that they could not be released until approved at a subsequent board meeting. There is no requirement that minutes be approved, and whether or not a board elects to approve minutes at each successive meeting, draft minutes must be prepared and otherwise made available within two weeks of the board meeting. In addition, Public Officers Law § 103(e) requires that the minutes “shall be made available, upon request therefor, to the extent practicable . . . , prior to or at the meeting during which the records will be discussed.” The board is also reminded that the time and place of each meeting must be posted on the school website, along with “any proposed resolution, law, rule, regulation, policy or any amendment thereto, that is scheduled to be the subject of discussion” at a meeting. Public Officers Law § 103(e). This means that the board should be posting “draft” minutes on its website before each meeting and making them available at the meetings.

3. Staff reported that board members have voted via teleconference.

A review of Roosevelt’s board minutes does not reveal the participation of any trustee in an open meeting via teleconference nor video conference. Nevertheless, school staff present at board meetings have indicated that such participation has occurred and that trustees have voted via teleconference.

School trustees may participate in board meetings via video conference as long as the public notice for the meeting “inform[s] the public that videoconferencing will be used, identif[ies] the locations for the meeting, and state[s] that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any of the locations.” Public Officers Law § 104(4). Such trustees count towards the establishment of a quorum and may vote on matters that come before the board. School trustees may participate in a board discussion via teleconference as well, but they shall not count towards the establishment of a quorum and may not vote. Accurate minutes should reflect the location of each trustee and the means by which they are participating, and ineligible trustees shall not be permitted to vote. The Institute has encouraged the board to make use of videoconference technology, but to date the board has not done so.

The Roosevelt board generally, and its board chair in particular, retains an atypical amount of control over the day-to-day affairs of the school, yet the board is required to meet only once every two months when school is in session. Numerous school staff and administrators described the means by which many board decisions are made outside the normal board meeting cycle, which typically involves seeking permission/authority from the board chair. However, the authority to manage such day-to-day affairs has never been appropriately delegated to the chair exclusively (as it would violate the bylaws), and telephone “polling,” or consensus building through a series of individual phone calls, has been determined to constitute a meeting in violation of the Open Meetings Law.

Legal Requirements

The petition raised two additional issues related to the school’s code of ethics and trustee Request for Information (“RFI”) forms. With respect to the RFI forms, the petition alleged that the school trustees had not filed RFI forms with the Institute for the past two years. In fact, education corporation trustees do not file RFI forms each year; rather, they file *Disclosure of Financial Interest by a Charter School Trustee* forms each year with the Annual Report. A review of files maintained by the Institute confirmed that each Roosevelt trustee has filed appropriate documentation for the past two years and no trustee disclosed any transaction with the school or any other entity with which they are affiliated. The Institute also sampled expenses and found no such trustee interests during that timeframe.

With respect to code of ethics, charter schools are required to “adopt a code of ethics setting forth for the guidance of its officers and employees the standards of conduct reasonably expected of them,” and to distribute such code “to every officer and employee.” General Municipal Law § 806 (1)(a), (2). While the education corporation had a code of ethics in place at the time of its last renewal, it only recently took steps to ensure that the code was appropriately distributed to staff. Contrary to the allegations in the petition, the board need not adopt a separate code of ethics to cover just the board.

Trustee Reimbursement & Other Payments

Perhaps the most serious allegation contained in the petition relates to improper payments allegedly made to board members. The petition alleged that payments took the form of both excessive travel reimbursement and “kickbacks” made to particular trustees following the award of service contracts by the school. Such allegations have been made in the past, and were not founded. The Institute took such allegations seriously; however, no school employee could produce any documentary evidence even suggestive of kickbacks. The Institute contacted those identified by the complainants as likely to have additional information, but they too were unable to corroborate any such allegation beyond stating that they, too, had heard “rumors” but never had information to confirm them.

With respect to the alleged improper and/or excessive trustee reimbursements, the Roosevelt bylaws provide that:

Trustees shall not receive any salary, fees or other financial compensation for their service to the Academy as Trustees, but *by resolution of the Board of Trustees, reasonable expenses related to attendance of special meetings of the Board of Trustees and other Board activities*, if any, may be reimbursed. Nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any Trustee from serving the Academy in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefor.

Bylaws, Art. 2, Sec. 7 (emphasis added). The Institute’s review of travel reimbursement requests and subsequent payments suggest that the reimbursement system had no control or oversight, potentially leading to significant abuse. As a practical matter, the Roosevelt bylaws provide that trustees may be reimbursed for (i) *reasonable expenses* when they are related to the (ii) *attendance at special meetings or other board activities* (note that regular meetings are not included) following a (iii) *resolution of the school board*.

The board failed to establish any criteria to determine what constituted “reasonable expenses” that warranted reimbursement. Furthermore, it appears from a review of school records that the trustee reimbursement system existed entirely outside the typical accounts payable system, thereby avoiding any potential determination as to reasonableness or other checks and balances. In some instances, reimbursement requests contain insufficient documentation to warrant any reasonableness determination whatsoever; in others, the requests are facially unreasonable given the express terms of the bylaws – yet were paid out from the school’s account (e.g., hotel and airfare expenses to attend regularly scheduled meetings, excessive dining bills, cell phone bills). Although the board generally approved all school expenditures, it generally did not approve the reimbursements at issue as required in the bylaws.

Fiscal Soundness

Although Roosevelt operated with an appropriate long-range financial plan and realistic budgets in the last charter term, the school’s current spending practices do not adequately support the

educational program. Additionally, Roosevelt's fiscal policies, procedures and internal controls are unsound and ineffective, and potentially detrimental to the school's future. The board chair appears to hold full and sole authority in directing and managing the financial affairs of the school. The Institute found little evidence of active engagement by other board members and no indication of substantive dialogue with school leaders when finalizing the recent years' annual budgets. The board does not appear to hold the chair accountable for spending decisions including the chair's decisions specifically with regards to entering into real estate and construction agreements with various entities. The board also does not question the chair's reimbursements for travel and related business expenses. The concentration of power that the board chair holds and the absence of accountability are fertile ground for misuse of the school's financial resources including the choice to not allocate sufficient funds to educational program as described by school leadership.

Use of Financial Resources. Roosevelt's use of available financial resources does not fully support the current needs of the school.

In the last three fiscal years, Roosevelt's total revenues exceeded total expenses by an average margin of approximately 37 percent. Stated differently, during fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012, the education corporation's operating expenses have amounted to approximately 60 percent of per pupil revenue; the school has retained roughly 40 percent of its public funds each year allowing it to build a sizeable cash reserve. While many schools spend within the limits of their revenues, Roosevelt's level of surplus is unprecedented in SUNY authorized schools. Among SUNY authorized schools are two K-8 schools with similar student headcounts (Achievement First - Bushwick Charter School and Our World Neighborhood Charter School):⁴ these schools' three year average surplus was about 4.5% of revenues despite one of the schools utilizing cost-free NYCDOE space; hence, having lower cost structures. The handful of SUNY authorized schools that have generated surpluses close to Roosevelt's are mostly new schools that are still benefiting from various start-up grants and/or are located in cost-free school space.

As of fiscal year-end June 30, 2012, Roosevelt had \$18.6 million in cash. As of January 31, 2013, Roosevelt's total cash has increased to approximately \$22.8 million. Interviews with school officials indicate that the board chair has refused multiple requests for additional instructional resources, noting that the school is preserving cash for its plan to open a high school. (As noted above, the Institute rejected Roosevelt's 2011 application to open a high school.) This lack of investment in the current K-8 program likely impedes the school leader's ability to improve student achievement. Roosevelt's 37 percent average operating surplus over the past three years was much higher than the 22 percent average surplus the school projected during the 2010 charter renewal. Given the substantial surplus that Roosevelt generates on a yearly basis, members of the school community question why the board has not or is not investing its financial resources toward the following:

- Competitive teacher pay. The retention of good, experienced instructional leaders, teachers and staff is a key component of maintaining high quality instruction. During school year 2010-2011, one instructional leader, 16 teachers and one instructional staff member voluntarily left Roosevelt during the 2010-11 school year. During the 2011-12 school year, two instructional leaders and seven teachers left the school. According to

⁴ Although Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School, Buffalo United Charter School and South Buffalo Charter School have similar student populations, they were excluded for various reasons including for-profit management.

the human resources director, among the former employees that participated in exit interviews, 16 indicated they were leaving for jobs that offered better opportunities, generally, higher salaries. While agreed to by the teacher's union, the school's lower pay scale deters the human resources director from hiring experienced teachers and has left her recruiting first year teachers. This is supported by a salary survey by the school's director of finance that showed on average, a Roosevelt teacher earns approximately 25 percent less than a teacher of comparable qualifications and experience working in the local district school.

- Single school site. The school currently operates in three sites and has operated in as many as four. One site also includes a number of trailers in the facility parking lot. The school buses students from one site to another to utilize the only gym available, the same space that is also used for math lab. Teachers have complained that the lack of sports or recreation space is aggravating behavioral issues because children need an outlet. Teachers have also stated that because they supervise the transfer of students, they lose time that could otherwise be used for planning.

Budgeting Practices. Roosevelt's budget practices are unsound.

According to the director of finance ("DOF"), the budget development process for the following school year begins with the principals and superintendent identifying their academic goals and instructional needs. The DOF then drafts a budget, which he presents to the board chair, who frequently reduces the proposed budgets without comments or dialogue with school officials. The culture in the school is such that no one can question the chair's decision. The absence of any type of collaborative decision-making, especially with school leaders, is unsound, potentially detrimental to the academic program, and possibly precludes all board members from fulfilling their fiduciary duty to the education corporation. In most schools, sound budgeting practices are characterized by planning and collaboration among the finance staff, school leader, academic heads and board members. The current superintendent, principals and DOF reported that they have not been consulted before and after the budget is finalized. Instructional leaders also expressed frustration about the lack of the adequate resources i.e., common core aligned curriculum, absence of classroom library, to support a successful academic plan.

Roosevelt's budgetary practices are inconsistent with its own written fiscal policies. According to the DOF, the superintendent and principals stay a week later after the end of the school year to put together their recommendations for inclusion in the draft budget plan for the following school year. This procedure is inconsistent with the school's *Accounting and Finance, Policies, Procedures and Controls* manual (section 13 – Developing the Budget) which states that the budget process at the school level should take place between February and March. The considerable effort required to ensure stakeholder input makes spring initiation of the budget development process common practice among SUNY authorized schools.

Roosevelt's policies and procedures require the board budget and finance committee to review and provide feedback on the budget framework in April, prior to consideration by the full board of trustees between May 1 and May 10. In reviewing the 2011 and 2012 board meeting minutes, the Institute did not find any evidence that the board took any action relating to the budget during this period. Meeting minutes for November 16, 2011 and August 28, 2012 show the board approved budgets on those dates for school years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, respectively. In both instances,

the minutes did not mention prior discussion of the proposed budget nor reviews by individual board members outside the meetings. The Institute notes that it is imperative that school board members examine the budget and seek clarification before approving the budget before the beginning of each school year. The Institute believes no board member has engaged in any such action.

Fiscal Governance. The board does not practice sound fiscal governance.

The last two years' board meeting minutes showed that the DOF was not present in any of the board meetings. This is problematic and worrisome in that no one at the school level who understands the school's finances was able to clarify needs or advocate for budget revisions, if needed. In interviews during the evaluation visit, the superintendent stated that all spending requests above \$500 are done by email only to the board chair although lately, the superintendent has been copying other board members on these requests. The superintendent also reported conflicting actions regarding staff incentives and hiring recommendations, alleging that the board chair has occasionally vetoed actions that have been previously approved by the full board. A sole trustee has no such power under New York law unless the board has specifically delegated same. According to the DOF, budget updates are emailed regularly to the board chair but not the superintendent or other board members; the Institute found no indication that the other board members have asked for these types of reports. Differing from past practice, recently, the DOF has been deliberately sending financial reports to all board members and the superintendent in order to shore up support for improved financial backing to program needs. The Institute notes that to fulfill fiduciary duties, the board must oversee the financial affairs of the school by reviewing timely financial reports. An education corporation board is ineffective if its members are not knowledgeable of their fiduciary responsibilities including their review of proper financial information.

Annual budgets provided to the Institute may not have been reviewed and approved by the board. The Institute did not find any evidence that two most recent annual budgets submitted to the Institute were approved by the board prior to the start of the school year. The annual budget is due to the Institute no later than July 1 of each year. Interviews with the DOF suggested that this is around the time that school leaders would provide input for the following year's budget. In addition, the board meeting minutes show that the budgets for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years were approved (sometimes with modifications) in November 16, 2011 and August 28, 2012, respectively. Approval of the school's annual budget well into the fiscal year hampers school leaders' ability to plan appropriately to meet instructional needs. Additionally, this practice of late action raises the question of board members' knowledge of their responsibilities to monitor and review the education corporation's budgeting and regulatory, financial, compliance, and academic performance.

Board Expenses. Board-level expenses and reimbursements have no checks and balances, or accountability at the board level.

All school level employees are subject to the school's written policies regarding travel and reimbursement. For example, expenses related to teachers attending conferences have been preapproved by the superintendent and sometimes, the board chair and total expenses were predetermined. The school's records also show that as required reimbursement requests included the original receipts. On the other hand, board members are not held to these same standards.

Institute staff found a reimbursement for \$809.39 to the board chair paid with no supporting documentation on file. The Institute also found numerous instances where the school reimbursed the board chair for expenses that may not be reasonable. Examples of these include:

- Full reimbursement of the chair's monthly mobile phone bills for the past two years. These amounts were \$1,995 in fiscal year 2011 and \$1,351 in fiscal year 2012 and paid without consideration between school-related calls and personal use.
- Food, transportation (airfare, car and parking) and hotel related to the board chair's travels from his North Carolina residence to New York totaling \$8,281 in fiscal year 2011 and \$10,191 in fiscal year 2012. The Institute notes that in many cases, airline tickets were purchased only days before the flights despite board meeting dates having been scheduled several months in advance; a few hotels bills suggested stays were in excess of the one or two nights stay for school and related meetings.
- Board of trustees' restaurant bills for several hundred dollars with no indication of who attended the dinner.

Based on Roosevelt's accounting records, the board of trustees' total expenses were \$22,215 and \$29,723 in fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2012, respectively. In comparison, other SUNY authorized schools' boards of trustees' total expenses for the same periods were as follows: approximately \$1,200 each year for Achievement First - Bushwick Charter School; \$1,367 and \$1,374, respectively, for Our World Neighborhood Charter School; and, \$1,633 and \$5,135, respectively, for Merrick Academy – Queens Public Charter School.

New York law and the its required Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status for charter schools both require that none of the funds of a charter school inure to the private benefit of any individuals associated with the education corporation. In addition, without justification and without board approval, the Institute views the Roosevelt board expenses as manifestly unreasonable.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	February 1, 2000
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	May 25, 2000
School Opening Date	September 1, 2000

Renewal History

Renewal Type	Date
Charter Extension	March 1, 2005
Initial Full-Term Renewal	March 15, 2005
Subsequent Full-Term Renewal	March 16, 2010

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2000-01	105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt NY	All	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2001-02 to 2004-05	230 Brookside Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY	K-1 2-6	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2005-06 to 2008-09	230 Brookside Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield, Roosevelt, NY	K-1 2-4 5-7	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2006-07 to 2007-08	230 Brookside Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield, Roosevelt, NY	K-1 2-5 6-8	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2008-09	230 Brookside Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield, Roosevelt, NY	K-1 3,6-8 2,4-5	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2009-10	230 Brookside Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield, Roosevelt, NY 196 Centennial Ave, Roosevelt, NY	2-3 7-8 4-6 K-1	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2010-11 to 2011-12	105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield, Roosevelt, NY 196 Centennial Ave, Roosevelt, NY	K-1 1-3 3-8	Roosevelt Union Free School District
2012-13 to Present	196 Centennial Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 105 Pleasant Avenue, Roosevelt, NY 55 Mansfield Avenue, Roosevelt, NY	K-2 3-5 6-8	Roosevelt Union Free School District

Mission Statement

Elementary School: The mission of the Roosevelt Children’s Academy is to become one of the finest public schools in America. The Academy is built on the philosophy that all children can learn and the Academy will ensure that students meet or exceed New York State performance standards. The Focus of the Academy is on the core skills of reading, language, writing and mathematics. The Academy is organized to provide an extended day, a high degree of individualized instruction and an innovative research-based academic curriculum. Staff and students will view themselves as self reflective and continuous learners. Parents will view themselves as partners in their child’s education.

Middle School: We, Roosevelt Children's Academy Educational community, are committed to the education of all children. Through the efforts of a dedicated staff and with the active involvement of parents and community, we seek to create a student centered learning environment which meets the New York State Regents Middle School Goals. In this environment, every student is free to develop at his/her own pace. Every student learns to respect the rights of others and is nurtured, guided, and prepared for an ever changing, technological world.

Key Design Elements

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ⁵	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2000-01	247	150	143	K-2	K-2	180
2001-02	322-347	200	191	K-3	K-3	180
2002-03	397-447	250	245	K-4	K-4	180
2003-04	472-547	300	300	K-5	K-5	180
2004-05	547-647	300	299	1-6	1-6	180
2005-06	459	459	450	K-7	K-7	180
2006-07	540	500	502	K-8	K-8	180
2007-08	594	550	495	K-8	K-8	180
2008-09	621	575	503	K-8	K-8	180
2009-10	621	575	545	K-8	K-8	180
2010-11	634	-	693	K-8	K-8	180
2011-12	659	-	734	K-8	K-8	179

⁵ 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.)

2012-13	659	-	680 ⁶	K-8	K-8	180
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Demographics⁷

	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Roosevelt UFSD Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Roosevelt UFSD Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Roosevelt UFSD Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black or African American	92	64	91	60	89	57
Hispanic	7	36	8	39	10	43
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	0	1	0	1	0
White	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities ⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Limited English Proficient	5	18	4	20	15	20
Free/Reduced Lunch						
Eligible for Free Lunch	58	42	60	65	67	70
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	20	9	15	12	15	14

Board of Trustees⁹

Board Member Name	Position ¹⁰
Robert Francis	Chair ¹¹
Reginald Tuggle	Secretary
King Cheek	Trustee
Denise Washington	Trustee
Steve Budhu	Treasurer

⁶ Source: Institute Annual Visit Data Collection Form Completed by Dr. Ron Boykins, Superintendent, February 15, 2013.

⁷ Source: New York State Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

⁸ Current documents from the New York State Education Department do not contain information on Students with Disabilities in the Roosevelt Union Free School District. In 2011-12, according to Roosevelt's Basic Education Data System ("BEDS") report, Students with Disabilities comprised 4.2% of the school's total enrollment.

⁹ Source: Institute board information.

¹⁰ Positions listed are as reported by the board to Institute staff at the November 2011 board interview conducted in conjunction with the 2011-12 school evaluation visit.

¹¹ The education corporation board informed the Institute that the trustees voted to strip the board chair of his leadership position on or about Tuesday, February 26, 2013. As this vote was not pursuant to the board's usual officer election cycle, it constitutes a removal for cause. As the board did not follow the requirements of Education Law § 226(8), the Institute determined the vote is a nullity and informed members of the board of such. Members of the board indicated they plan to convene to properly conduct removal for cause action.

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2000-01	Terry Tchacones, Principal
2001-02	John Howard Jr., Principal
2002-03 to 2010-11	Roxanne Greco-Ashley, Superintendent
2011-12	Helen A. Livingston, Superintendent
2012-13 to Present	Ron K. Boykins, Superintendent

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2000-01	First Year Visit	Institute	June 4, 2001
2001-02	Second Year Visit	Institute	May 20, 2002
2002-03	Third Year Visit	External (Schoolworks)	January 13-14, 2002
2004-05	Initial Renewal Visit	Institute	September 21-23, 2004
2006-07	Subsequent Visit	Institute	May 23, 2007
2009-10	Subsequent Renewal Visit	External and Institute	November 4, 2009
2011-12	Subsequent Visit	Institute	November 7-8, 2011
2012-13	Subsequent Visit	Institute	February 20-21, 2013

CONDUCT OF THE SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Specifications

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
February 20-21, 2013	Natasha Howard, Ph.D	Director of School Evaluation
	Danielle Keen	Senior Analyst
	Eileen Coppola, Ph.D	External Consultant
	Jenn David-Lang	External Consultant
	Maria Sazon	Director of School Finance
	Thomas Franta	Associate Counsel

Context of the Visit

Charter Cycle	
Charter Term	3 rd Year of the 3 rd Charter Term
Accountability Period ¹²	4 th Year of the 5-Year Accountability Period
Upcoming Renewal Visit	Fall 2014

¹² Because the Institute makes a renewal decision in the last year of a Charter Term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of the Charter Term. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the Charter Term. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous Charter Term through the next to last year of the current Charter Term.

2011-12 School Performance Review

Performance Summary

In 2011-12, the third year of Roosevelt's five-year Accountability Period, the school is meeting neither its key ELA nor its math Accountability Plan goals. The school met the two Accountability Plan goals in the first two years of the Accountability Period. Its results show a persistent decline throughout the Accountability Period, with a particularly steep decline from 2010-11 to 2011-12. The school is not meeting its science goal, though it is meeting its No Child Left Behind ("NCLB") goal.

ELA

Based on results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, Roosevelt did not meet its ELA goal in the most recent year of the Accountability Period after having met it in the two previous years. The school's absolute performance declined by over 16 percentage points from the 2010-11 school year, and it failed to meet the absolute target of 75 percent proficiency. For the first time this charter term, the school did not exceed the Annual Measureable Objective ("AMO") set by the state. Roosevelt outperformed the local school district, but it did so by a much smaller margin than it had in previous years. In comparison to demographically similar schools state-wide, the school performed worse than expected for the first time. The school showed a notable decline in year-to-year cohort growth in each of the last two years.

Math

Based on the results of the five measures in its Accountability Plan, Roosevelt has not met its Accountability Plan goal in mathematics. Roosevelt met the absolute target, with 78 percent of students achieving proficiency; however, this represents a decline from the previous year when 94 percent of students scored proficient. While the school outperformed the local school district by a very narrow margin, it did not meet the state's AMO. In comparison to demographically similar schools state-wide, the school fell well below the 0.30 targets for the Effect Size and performed much worse than expected. The school has shown a decline in year-to-year cohort growth target over the last two years with a particularly steep down turn in the most recent year.

Science

Based on the evidence currently available, Roosevelt has not met its science goal. In 2011-12, 63 percent of students scored proficient on the state science exam. This is a marked decline from earlier in the Accountability period, when 75 percent of students achieved proficiency in 2010-11 and 86 percent did so in 2009-10. While the school outperformed the local school district in 2009-10, it performed 8 percentage points below the local district in which it is located in 2010-11. Comparison data for the most recent year are not yet unavailable.

NCLB

Roosevelt has consistently met its NCLB goal.

Conclusion

Overall, Roosevelt's academic performance has been in decline during the current Accountability Period coinciding with turnover in the school leadership position in each of the last three years. The school's year-to-year performance on all ten measures of its ELA and math goals dropped in both of the first two years of the Accountability Period. In 2011-12, Roosevelt met its NCLB goal while producing poor results in ELA, math and science. If this performance trend continues, the school is unlikely to meet the SUNY Trustees criteria for subsequent charter renewal. As the charter is up for renewal in the 2014-15 school year, the two final data points in the Accountability Period will be the state testing results from the spring of 2013 and the spring of 2014.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts
Roosevelt Children's Academy Charter School



	2009-10 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2010-11 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2011-12 Grades Served: K-8			MET							
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)								
ABSOLUTE MEASURES 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.	3	87.8 (49)	90.5 (42)	YES	3	79.0 (95)	87.0 (46)	YES	3	51.6 (91)	22.2 (9)	NO							
	4	91.7 (48)	88.6 (35)		4	94.3 (53)	93.6 (47)		4	66.3 (92)	65.9 (88)								
	5	90.2 (51)	88.4 (43)		5	82.0 (50)	79.5 (39)		5	77.1 (48)	76.6 (47)								
	6	91.8 (73)	93.0 (57)		6	38.1 (52)	97.7 (44)		6	63.6 (44)	65.0 (40)								
	7	78.5 (65)	77.8 (54)		7	81.8 (77)	82.8 (64)		7	82.2 (45)	80.5 (41)								
	8	80.0 (45)	79.0 (38)		8	44.2 (52)	52.1 (48)		8	55.1 (69)	54.4 (68)								
	All	86.7 (331)	86.3 (269)		All	80.0 (379)	81.9 (288)		All	63.8 (389)	65.5 (293)								
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PI	AMO	NO							
	3-8	187	155		3-8	155	122		3-8	124	148								
COMPARATIVE MEASURES 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Roosevelt Union Free School District			YES	Comparison: Roosevelt Union Free School District			YES	Comparison: Roosevelt Union Free School District			YES							
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District								
	3-8	64.3	32.3		3-8	55.6	26.4		3-8	34.5	29.2								
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at or above Level 3 on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO				
	60.1	64.8	42.7	1.40		66.7	56.7	40.4	1.01		72.3	36.0	41.0	-0.31					
GROWTH MEASURE 5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NO	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NO	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	NO	
	3						3						3						
	4	39	94.9	95.0	89.7		4	49	81.6	81.7	73.5		4	89	69.7	70.6	34.8		
	5	43	97.7	97.8	88.4		5	42	66.7	68.1	45.2		5	48	70.8	71.5	29.2		
	6	57	96.5	96.6	93.0		6	45	60.0	62.5	60.0		6	42	45.2	50.2	45.2		
	7	57	95.0	95.1	78.9		7	67	67.2	68.5	44.8		7	43	62.8	64.8	39.5		
	8	39	95.0	95.1	80.0		8	50	56.0	59.2	34.0		8	69	43.5	48.7	30.4		
	All	235	95.7	95.8	86.0		All	253	66.4	67.8	51.0		All	291	59.1	61.8	35.1		

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

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

Roosevelt Children's Academy Charter School



	2009-10 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2010-11 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2011-12 Grades Served: K-8			MET						
	Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students							
		% (N)	% (N)			% (N)	% (N)			% (N)								
ABSOLUTE MEASURES																		
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Level 3 on the New York State exam.	3	100.0 (49)	100.0 (42)		3	100.0 (95)	100.0 (46)		3	93.4 (91)	88.9 (9)							
	4	97.9 (48)	97.2 (36)		4	92.5 (53)	91.5 (47)		4	72.8 (92)	71.6 (88)							
	5	100.0 (51)	100.0 (42)		5	94.0 (50)	92.3 (39)		5	70.8 (48)	70.2 (47)							
	6	97.3 (73)	98.3 (57)		6	100.0 (52)	100.0 (44)		6	90.9 (44)	90.0 (40)							
	7	90.8 (65)	92.7 (55)		7	94.8 (77)	93.8 (64)		7	82.2 (45)	80.5 (41)							
	8	86.0 (43)	88.9 (36)		8	88.5 (52)	89.6 (48)		8	84.3 (70)	84.1 (69)							
	All	95.4 (329)	96.3 (268)	YES	All	95.5 (379)	94.4 (288)	YES	All	82.6 (390)	78.6 (294)	YES						
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PI	AMO							
	3-8	195	135	YES	3-8	163	137	YES	3-8	130	158	NO						
COMPARATIVE MEASURES																		
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Roosevelt Union Free School District				Comparison: Roosevelt				Comparison: Roosevelt Union Free School District									
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District							
	3-8	66.8	29.1	YES	3-8	65.6	35.2	YES	3-8	38.8	35.6	YES						
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted level of students at or above Level 3 on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its Free Lunch (FL) rate.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size				
	60.1	67.2	52.0	0.81	YES	66.7	64.9	51.8	0.64	YES	72.3	39.0	52.3	-0.69	NO			
GROWTH MEASURE																		
5. The year-to-year school-wide cohort of students will meet the target of reducing by one-sixth the difference between the previous year's baseline and 75 percent performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam. An asterisk indicates grade-level cohort met target.	Gr	N	Base	Target	Result		Gr	N	Base	Target	Result		Gr	N	Base	Target	Result	
	3					NO	3					NO	3					NO
	4	39	97.4	97.5	97.4		4	49	67.3	68.6	55.1		4	89	62.9	64.9	37.1	
	5	42	92.9	93.0	100.0 *		5	42	71.4	72.0	64.3		5	48	56.3	59.4	31.3	
	6	58	98.3	98.4	98.3		6	46	78.3	78.4	82.6 *		6	42	64.3	66.1	54.8	
	7	56	98.2	98.3	92.9		7	67	80.6	80.7	68.7		7	43	83.7	83.8	44.2	
	8	37	100.0	100.0	86.5		8	50	60.0	62.5	54.0		8	70	65.7	67.3	35.7	
	All	232	97.4	97.5	95.3		All	254	72.0	72.5	65.0		All	292	65.8	67.3	39.4	

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

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

Version 5.0, April 2012

Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks¹³ (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

- They provide a framework for the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) to gather and evaluate evidence to determine whether a school has made an adequate case for renewal. In turn, this evidence assists the Institute in deciding if it can make the required legal and other findings in order to reach a positive recommendation for renewal. For example, the various benchmarks that the Institute uses to determine whether the school has had fiscally responsible practices in place during the last charter period allow the Institute to determine with greater precision whether the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter period, a finding that the New York Charter Schools Act requires the SUNY Trustees to make.
- At the same time that the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks provide a framework for the Institute to collect and review evidence, they also provide the school with a guide to understanding the Institute’s evaluative criteria. As the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (or some sub-set of them) as the framework for conducting its ongoing school evaluation visits, school leaders should be fully aware of the content of the Benchmarks at the time of renewal.

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect the interwoven nature of schools from an academic, organizational, fiscal and/or legal perspective. For example, the Institute could reasonably place many of the academic benchmarks under the heading of organizational effectiveness. More generally, some redundancy exists because the Institute looks at the same issue from different perspectives.

Precisely how the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, during both the renewal process and throughout the charter period, is explained in greater detail in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”), available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm. Responses to frequently asked questions about the Institute’s use of

¹³ Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share. These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the *Correlates of Effective Schools*. The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks appear below:

- The Institute does not have a point system for recommending renewal. A school cannot simply tally up the number of positive benchmark statements in order to determine the Institute’s recommendation.
 - Some benchmarks are weighed more heavily than others. In particular, the Institute gives the greatest weight to how well the school has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - Despite the fact that the Accountability Plan comprises only a single benchmark, a school’s performance on that benchmark is critical. In fact, it is so important that while the Institute may recommend non-renewal for fiscal and organizational failures (if sufficiently serious), excellence in these areas will not excuse poor academic performance.
- The Institute does not use every benchmark during every kind of renewal review, and how the benchmarks are used differs depending on a school’s circumstances. For example, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (Benchmarks 1B-1F, 2C and 2D) are given far less weight in making a renewal decision on schools that the Institute has previously renewed. Similarly, less weight is accorded to these benchmarks during an initial renewal review where a school has consistently met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - The Institute also may not consider every indicator subsumed under a benchmark when determining if a school has met that benchmark, given the school’s stage of development or its previous track record.
- Aside from Benchmark 1A on academic Accountability Plan goals (which is singular in its importance), no school should fear that a failure to meet every element of every benchmark means that it is not in a position to make a case for renewal. To the contrary, the Institute has yet to see a school that performs perfectly in every respect. The Institute appreciates that the benchmarks set a very high standard collectively. While the Institute certainly hopes and expects that schools aim high, it is understood that a school’s reach will necessarily exceed its grasp in at least some aspects.

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated. Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

It is important that the entire school community understand the renewal process. All members of a school’s leadership team and board should carefully review both the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

and the SUNY Renewal Practices. Note that a renewal overview document for parents, teachers and community members is also available on the Institute's website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm. Please do not hesitate to contact the Institute with any questions.

State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Academic Accountability Plan Goals</p>	<p>Over the Accountability Period, the school has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>The Institute determines the extent to which the school has met the Accountability Plan goals in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language arts; • mathematics; • science; • social studies (high school only); • NCLB; • high school graduation and college preparation (if applicable); and • optional academic goals included by the school.
<p style="text-align: center;">SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Use of Assessment Data</p>	<p>The school has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state performance standards; • the school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments; • the school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders and board members; • teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention; • school leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and • the school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students’ progress and growth.

Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum</p>	<p>The school’s curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades; • in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans; • teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents; • the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and • teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident throughout the school.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum; • teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding; • teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills; • teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and • teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students

Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>can succeed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff; • instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers’ instructional effectiveness; • instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels; • instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers; • professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice; • instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses; and • instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<p>The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically; • the school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students; • general education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program; • the school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students; • teachers are aware of their students’ progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students; • the school provides adequate training and professional

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including the school nurse, if applicable.
	Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A Mission & Key Design Elements	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school faithfully follows its mission; and the school has implemented its key design elements.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B Parents & Students	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families; families are satisfied with the school; and parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.
SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C Organizational Capacity	<p>The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program; the organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; the school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied; the school retains quality staff;

	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals; • the school maintains adequate student enrollment; • the school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and • the school regularly monitors and evaluates the school’s programs and makes changes if necessary. <p>The school board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school’s future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization; • the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school’s program and finances; • it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision; • the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively; • the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and • the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E</p>	<p>The board implements, maintains and abides by appropriate policies, systems and processes.</p>

Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
Governance	<p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships; • the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion; • the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members; • the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; • the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter; • the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner; • the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion; • the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and • the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>The school substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law; • the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations; • the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan; • the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements; • the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and • the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.

Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A</p> <p>Budgeting and Long Range Planning</p>	<p>The school operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures; • board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate; • the school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions; • the school routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and • actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B</p> <p>Internal Controls</p>	<p>The school maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures.</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures; • the school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management’s direction, laws, regulations, grants and contracts; • the school safeguards its assets; • the school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions; • the school has controls in place to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy; • the school’s trustees and employees adhere to a code of ethics; • the school ensures duties are appropriately segregated, or institutes compensating controls; • the school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained; • the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements; • a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and

Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy; the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C Financial Reporting</p>	<p>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.</p> <p>The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable; annual budgets and cash flow statements; un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment; bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and grant expenditure reports.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D Financial Condition</p>	<p>The school maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</p> <p>The following elements are generally present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly; the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months); the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections; If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors

Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
	<p>progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and • the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.

Renewal Question 4 If the School's Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4A</p> <p>Plans for the School's Structure</p>	<p>Key structural elements of the school, as defined in the exhibits of the Application for Charter Renewal, are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period; • the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program; • the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget; • key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing; • a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and • plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program.
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4B</p> <p>Plans for the Educational Program</p>	<p>The school's plans for implementing the educational program allow it to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for those grades served during the last charter period, the school

	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 4 If the School’s Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4C</p> <p>Plans for Board Oversight and Governance</p>	<p>has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school’s educational program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and • where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation standards set by the Board of Regents. <p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable plan for board oversight and governance.</p> <p>Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school; • plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board’s ability to carry out its responsibilities; • if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and • if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization.

	<p align="center">Renewal Question 4 If the School’s Charter is Renewed, What are its Plans for the Term of the Next Charter Period, and are they Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable?</p>
<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>SUNY Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
<p>SUNY Renewal Benchmark 4D Fiscal & Facility Plans</p>	<p>The school provides a reasonable, feasible and achievable fiscal plan including plans for an adequate facility.</p> <p>Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school’s budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections; • fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs; • fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions; • information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and • facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.