Icahn Charter School 4

School Evaluation Report
2009-2010

Visit Date: March 9th, 2010

Report Issued: March 23rd, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

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

- **Facilitate Improvement** - By providing substantive information about the school's academic, fiscal and organizational strengths and weaknesses to the school's board of trustees, administration, faculty and other staff, the Institute can play a role in helping the school identify areas for improvement.

- **Disseminate Information** - The Institute disseminates information about the school's performance not only to its board of trustees, administration and faculty, but to all stakeholders, including parents and the larger community in which the school is located.

- **Document Performance** - The Institute collects information to build a database of a school's performance over time. By evaluating the school periodically, the Institute can more clearly ascertain trends, determine areas of strength and weakness, and assess the school's likelihood for continued success or failure. Having information based on past patterns, the Institute is in a better position to make recommendations regarding the renewal of each school's charter, and the SUNY Trustees are better informed in making a decision on whether a school's charter should be renewed. In addition, a school will have a far better sense of where they stand in the eyes of its authorizer.

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

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

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate at a glance the school's prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and note areas in need of improvement as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Icahn Charter School 4 ("Icahn 4") is one of three SUNY authorized charter schools modeled after Icahn Charter School 1 (a fifth Icahn school has been approved to open in the fall of 2011). Icahn 4 is in its first year of operation.

Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit to the Icahn Charter School 4, the school appears to be making adequate progress towards achieving its mission and meeting the SUNY Charter Renewal Benchmarks considered during this evaluation. Although this conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in this report, some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Academic Success

Areas of Strength:

Icahn 4 has a system to gather assessment data and is beginning to use the data to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school regularly collects and analyzes assessment data in reading and math and it follows clear procedures and policies for the use of student performance data.

The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework based on a variety of commercial programs and teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Moreover, the school has adequate instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework.

The school's Targeted Assistance Program provides opportunities for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Instructional leaders have high expectations for student performance and conduct regular evaluations of teachers. The school provides significant resources for professional development.

The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students and provides sufficient resources and support to meet their needs. The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students.

The school is safe and orderly.

Areas for Growth:

Student performance data is primarily focused on reading and mathematics; the collection of assessment data in writing is limited. While the school relies on the Icahn network to select, develop and review its curriculum framework and resources, teachers have little input into the process.

High quality instruction is evident in only a few classes throughout the school. Many lessons lacked explicit learning objectives and students are not consistently cognitively engaged by rigorous instruction. Limited differentiation was evident within regular classrooms. Instructional leaders have not clearly articulated expectations for teacher performance. The effectiveness of teacher supervision, support and evaluation is limited, though this had already been identified by the school as an area for improvement.

Teachers have not been provided with sufficient support to help them meet the needs of at-risk students.

The effectiveness of classroom management and routines differ widely and the discipline systems and their implementation vary by teacher.

Despite the abundance of professional development resources, they have not coalesced into a cohesive program. Professional development is not sufficiently targeted to meet the needs of all teachers.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength:

The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

Based on limited evidence parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.
The organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school is competently managed and has maintained sufficient enrollment.

The school's board of trustees has adequate skills, structures and procedures with which to govern the school and holds school leaders accountable for student achievement.

Areas for Growth:

The school's hiring process did not appear to reviewers to be consistent or.rigorous.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Name

	Name	**Date**
Chartered Name	Carl C. Icahn Charter School 9	September, 2008
Revised Name	Icahn Charter School 4	December 5, 2008

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 19, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by the Board of Regents	December 16, 2008
School Opening Date	September, 2009

Location

School Year(s)	**Location(s)**	**Grades at this Location**	**District**
2009-10 through present	1551 East 172nd Street Bronx, NY	All	New York City CSD 12

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	**Partner Type**	**Dates of Service**
Current Partner	Foundation for a Greater Opportunity	Non-profit	2009 through present

Current Mission Statement

Icahn Charter School 4, using the Core Knowledge curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch, will provide students with a rigorous academic program offered in an extended day/year setting. Students will graduate armed with the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the most rigorous academic environments, and will have a sense of personal and community responsibility.

Current Key Design Elements

- Core Knowledge curriculum;
- Small class size (18 students per class);
- Extended school day and year to have more time for instruction and reduce the loss of mastery over school vacations;
- Employment of real life applications and hands-on learning opportunities to make curriculum "immediate" for students;
- High standards for instruction through ongoing professional development;
- Encouraging strong parental involvement; and
- Offering numerous after school academic, recreational and sports programs as well as Saturday Academy classes in English language arts and mathematics.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment[1]	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2008-09	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year
2009-10	108	N/A	110	K-2	K-2	190

Student Demographics

	2009-10[2]	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 12 Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	
Black or African American	64.55%	
Hispanic	35.45%	
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	
White	0	
Multiracial	0	
Special Populations		
Students with Disabilities	0	
Limited English Proficient	20%	
Free/Reduced Lunch		
Eligible for Free Lunch	76.36%	
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	10.91%	

Current Board of Trustees[3]

Board Member Name	Term	Position/Committees
Carl C. Icahn	1 year	Chair
Gail Golden	1 year	Vice-Chair
Seymour Fliegel	1 year	Trustee
Karen Mandelbaum	1 year	Trustee
Robert Sancho	1 year	Trustee
Edward Shanahan	1 year	Trustee
Julie Goodyear	1year	Secretary

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[1] Source: SUNY Charter School Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)
[2] As this data is not yet publicly available, all statistics shown are provided by the school.
[3] Source: Institute Board Records.

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10	Betzaida Franco, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	First Year Evaluation	Institute	3/9/10

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE

Background

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

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

This section of the School Evaluation Report begins with a summary of the observations made and the conclusions drawn during previous visits to the school. This information is used by evaluation teams in preparation for the visit and assists the observers in understanding the accomplishments and challenges the school has faced. Similarly, this information provides the reader with insight into the Institute's inspection of the school's academic program and conclusions from prior visits, including those conducted by external experts on behalf of the Institute. Following this summary is a detailed analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

Evaluation Visit Benchmark Analysis and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Icahn Charter School 4 has a system to gather assessment data and is beginning to use the data to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school regularly administers a variety of assessments aligned to the school's curriculum including standardized diagnostic reading and math assessments, as well as formative and summative end-of-unit assessments aligned to the school's commercial curricular programs.

With regard to diagnostic assessments, the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* (ITBS) was administered once in the fall (the reading portion was administered to students in kindergarten - 2nd grade and the math section was administered to 2nd grade students) and will be administered again in the spring. In the coming year, the school expects to administer the assessment to new students in the fall and will use spring data as the baseline for other students. In addition, the Fox in the Box English language arts assessment was administered to all students early in the fall and is used as a diagnostic tool for placing students into guided reading groups. The school expects to administer the Fox in the Box again in the spring to measure student growth. Skill card assessments from the *100 Book Challenge* program are used to measure students' decoding skills and the Independent Reading Level Assessment is used to measure comprehension.

In addition to standardized diagnostic assessments, teachers administer a number of assessments aligned to the school's commercial curricular programs throughout the year. Assessments from the Triumphs reading program are used in the Targeted Assistance classroom while assessments from the Treasures program are used in regular classroom instruction. In mathematics, end of chapter assessments from the MacMillan McGraw Hill Math Connects textbook series are used. In science and social studies, the school administers teacher-developed end of unit and thematic assessments.

At the classroom level, observers noted that the use of formative assessments and ongoing checks for understanding were limited in many classrooms and teachers did not employ strategies that would allow them to systematically determine which students had mastered the day's learning objective and instead relied on their general perceptions. When asked about checking for understanding, one teacher said, "Overall, I can tell if they got it or not. I've been in classes where they didn't get it. I feel like I have that ability."

The *Pearson SuccessMaker* computer instructional program is used to supplement and assess learning in English language arts and mathematics. After mini-lessons, the program tracks students' success in answering questions aligned to specific objectives and then provides teachers with detailed reports regarding student performance and growth over time. Teachers and administrators reported using these results to measure student progress over time and identify students in need of additional support. These results were broken down by teacher as well as intervention services provided.

The school collects valid and reliable assessment data in reading and mathematics and analyzes the results. To the extent that teachers rely on reading and math assessments from the commercial curriculum, these assessments are aligned to the school's curriculum and the material taught in class. Teachers are responsible for analyzing end-of-unit assessment results using a spreadsheet template provided by the school. The template is color coded to identify students in need of remediation as well as commonly missed questions. Teachers reported that they shared these spreadsheets with school leadership as well as intervention teachers to guide their remediation efforts.

At the time of the evaluation visit, the school has not yet implemented a system for evaluating writing. Across the school, the limited use of rubrics in grading student writing, in combination with a lack of detailed feedback on observed student work suggest that student writing is not systemically evaluated at the school. Observed graded student work often included only general comments on the overall quality of the work and the use of rubrics was not evident. Teachers reported that school or grade-wide rubrics did not exist and that they had not normed their expectations for quality student work within or across grades.

Teachers mainly use assessment results to identify students for targeted assistance and to identify skills in need of re-teaching. Based on initial ITBS results, the lowest performing students in English language arts and mathematics were identified at the beginning of the year to participate in the school's Targeted Assistance Program (TAP). To supplement the data provided by the ITBS, the Math Predictor assessment was used to identify more specific knowledge and skill deficits shared by these students to inform grouping and scheduling. The TAP teacher along with the classroom teacher monitor student performance throughout the year and make decisions about admitting and exiting students based on changes in performance.

Within the regular classroom, teachers reported that ITBS, Fox in the Box and other ongoing assessment results are used to group students for centers and small group instruction, create independent reading assignments, and re-teach. For example, one teacher indicated that she spent

less time teaching initial sounds to her class because assessments indicated most students had already mastered this topic. In addition, in some classrooms, teachers reported that instructional aides work with the lowest level students throughout the day, which was corroborated by observations during the visit.

The school follows clear procedures and policies for the use of student performance data and maintains close contact with parents, sharing student performance information through both formal and informal communication. Progress reports are sent home every six weeks and provide detailed information on students' current level of academic performance as well as social development. In addition, the principal scheduled a face-to-face meeting with the parents of each child whose grades suggested that their promotion was in doubt. During these meetings, more detailed information on student knowledge and skill deficits was shared along with strategies and resources parents could use at home with their children. Teachers reported that parents were required to sign homework and graded assignments each night. The school has also set clear criteria for making promotion decisions. These decisions are based on students' final report card grades as well as reading levels. Students must read at or above grade level and earn a final report card grade of at least 3 out of 4 in each of the core academic subjects.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework based on a variety of commercial curricular materials for English language arts and mathematics. In science and social studies, the Core Knowledge program serves as the underlying basis for the curriculum and a thematic approach is used to organize the content.

Curriculum documents used by all four existing Icahn schools indicate alignment with New York State standards. School leaders and teachers reported that the curriculum framework was developed at Icahn 1, the network's first school, and that these documents are distributed to the other schools for their use. In English language arts and mathematics, the curriculum relies heavily on commercial curricular programs. In reading, the Treasures Literacy program is used at all grades. The *100 Books Challenge* program provides additional instructional materials in reading. In mathematics, the MacMillan McGraw Hill Math Connects Program is used. For the most part, teachers follow the sequence provided by the commercial literacy programs. Teachers reported that they implement many of the lessons from these programs with fidelity, but they are also free to supplement their lessons with additional resources as needed. Some chose to do so while others did not. In science and social studies, the Icahn network's weekly syllabi indicate the topics to be covered and teachers are responsible for identifying resources to be used for lesson planning. The Core Knowledge guidebooks and website were referenced as particularly useful sources.

The school has adequate instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework. The schools' commercial curricular materials provide teachers with an abundance of resources from which to pull activities and lessons. Additionally, teachers reported having access to a number of additional leveled reading books, both from the *100 Book Challenge* as well as the school's library. The SuccessMaker program provided students with additional reinforcement and review activities as well. The school's targeted assistance program teacher reported that she used the Triumphs reading program when working with students. The text is designed to directly align with the Treasures program and provide students with scaffolded instruction and approximately leveled reading. For science and social studies, teachers do not have specific commercial materials from which to draw

lessons and activities, but reported that they were able to find sufficient materials from other sources, most notably on instructional websites.

Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. In English language arts and mathematics, teachers base their knowledge of what to teach and when to teach it on the commercial curriculum programs they have been given. As these programs are generally scripted in nature, they provide teachers with defined lesson activities aligned to standards. Observed reading and math lessons indicated that teachers closely followed the commercial curricular materials. In science and social studies, teachers follow the weekly syllabi distributed by the Icahn network to identify topics to be covered, but have freedom in developing lesson activities.

The school relies on the Icahn network to select, develop and review its curriculum framework and resources. According to the school leader, Icahn 1 assumes responsibility for revising and modifying the curricular framework and documents. As a newly formed replication school, Icahn 4 staff have had limited input into the modification of existing curriculum documents. The principal did indicate that the curricular documents are reviewed by the Icahn 1 and network staff but she has not yet been involved in the process as the leader of Icahn 4. In interviews, the teachers reported that they were unaware of a process by which the schools curriculum is reviewed or revised. With regard to developing curriculum for new grades in the coming year, the school expects to adopt the curriculum used in the 3rd grade at other Icahn schools.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

High quality instruction is evident in only a few classrooms throughout the school. In most classrooms lessons lacked explicit learning objectives, which limited their purposefulness. In many classrooms, lessons and the accompanying plans did not articulate clear learning objectives with defined student learning outcomes but instead were often written as agenda items. For example, in one class, the objectives listed were, "continue to reinforce routines and procedures; Treasures Unit Six Week One Day Three; introduce spring for science and art." As such, the purposefulness of implemented lessons was limited.

In some classrooms, lessons and their plans lacked objectives altogether. In the absence of objectives, teachers' efforts appeared aligned more to the activities taken from the commercial curricular materials than to the outcomes expected of students by the end of lessons. In other classes, while objectives were not overtly stated, observers were able to ascertain the objective and in these classrooms, the selected learning activities were purposeful. When objectives were listed, they often did not align with the observed lesson or were too general to be useful to teachers or students. For example, in one lesson with the goal of composing sentences and using contractions, the teacher focused on explaining the parts of a story (i.e., the beginning, middle and end) and the lesson did not address its stated objective. In another, a journal entry was supposed to focus on phonics, but when the teacher went over the assignment there was very little focus on phonics and much more focus on creativity.

Notwithstanding the deficiencies in lesson purposefulness noted above, observed instruction generally aligned to the school's curriculum framework and commercial curricular materials. To the extent that these materials have been aligned to State standards, so too were observed lessons. In English language arts and mathematics, teachers generally utilized scripted curricular materials from the Treasures program and Math Connects programs. In other subjects, observed lessons relied on teacher-created materials that were aligned to the syllabi provided by the Icahn network.

Observed students were generally not cognitively engaged by rigorous instruction. With few exceptions, the rigor of classroom instruction was low and teachers did not ask questions to promote higher order thinking or hold students accountable for their participation. While instruction was generally grade appropriate, in only a few instances did teachers ask questions beyond the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers often asked students to identify and recall information but only rarely asked students to justify their answers or make inferences.

Furthermore, in many instances, teachers' limited classroom management skills exacerbated their inability to engage students in the learning process. In many classrooms, teachers did not use effective strategies to hold each student accountable for active engagement and participation in the learning activity. Often, teachers would ask questions of the class and then accept only a minimal level of engagement before moving on to another question. In these classes, the students who did participate were called on repeatedly while others were not required to engage at all.

At times and in many classes, poor student behavior and ineffective classroom management hampered the teacher's ability to engage students in instruction. For example, in one observed lesson, the teacher spent the vast majority of her time moving between desks corralling students back to their assigned seats and reminding several students to climb down from sitting on the backs of their chairs. During this lesson, the teacher continually interrupted her instruction to correct misbehavior and the lesson's objective was not met. Those students who remained seated focused more on the misbehavior of their classmates than on providing answers to the teacher's questions.

Observed instruction was not differentiated within most regular classes. In most observed lessons, each student in the class worked on the same assignment with the same materials and whole group instruction was the predominant method of instruction. When asked about differentiated instruction, teachers referred to the Targeted Assistance Program as a differentiated support available for students. Through the program, students are pulled on a rotating schedule from the regular classroom in small groups of students who share similar deficiencies. During these sessions students use differentiated materials to master the learning objectives from the regular classroom.

Notably, in some classes elements of differentiated instruction were observed. In these classes, paraprofessionals worked with the lowest performing students to break down the concept taught while the classroom teacher worked with the rest of the class. Additionally, at times, teachers reported and observers noted that centers were used to address the needs of more advanced students while providing remediation for those who struggled. For example, in one class the advanced group worked on advanced grade level spelling puzzles while another group worked on identifying the beginning sounds of words. In addition, during independent reading time, students read from leveled texts from the 100 Book Challenge Program as well as the school's library. In addition, some teachers were observed to implement lessons geared to engage varying learning modalities. Teachers included images to reach visual learners and manipulatives to meet the needs of tactile and kinesthetic learners.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

School leaders have set high expectations for student achievement. School leaders consistently reported that they held high expectations for both student and teacher performance. The principal fully expects each student to exceed state performance standards each year. Furthermore, the school

leader expressed a deep commitment to ensuring that students are well supported in their social and emotional development throughout their schooling.

With few notable exceptions, teachers held high expectations for student performance. Teachers typically expressed these high expectations in terms of the State testing program and indicated that, when students are in the 3rd grade, each of them should score proficient or higher on the reading and mathematics tests. In addition, teachers and the principal reported that the school's curriculum challenged students, pushing them to do more than expected by state standards alone. Teachers felt that the material covered in the Core Knowledge program was important in developing well rounded students.

While the school leaders clearly articulated high expectations for student achievement and teachers had internalized them, the same was not true with respect to teacher performance. While both teachers and administrators reported that they were largely satisfied with the quality and level of teaching occurring in classroom, inspectors noted significant deficits in this area. Furthermore, teachers who struggled seemed unaware of the deficits as they reported that they felt they were meeting or exceeding the school's expectations.

At the time of the evaluation visit, the school provided teachers with limited instructional support. The majority of instructional support provided to teachers at Icahn 4 is provided by external consultants and individuals affiliated with the curricular programs utilized by the school. While these supports are often effective, they are not coordinated nor are they sufficient to meet the needs of the school's novice teaching staff.

The school leader acknowledged the level of instructional support she provides to teachers is currently limited; she lamented, "if I only had a full time staff developer…" She reported that as a first year school, the budget does not allow for her to hire a full-time staff developer but that with the addition of another grade level this will be possible in the coming year. In interviews, teachers confirmed that the instructional supervision provided by the principal was limited. Most reported infrequent observation and feedback from the school leader. For example, when asked about observations, one teacher responded that the principal has come into the classrooms, "a couple of times." Following these observations, teachers reported receiving feedback via e-mail and in person. Teacher reports and review of observation notes indicated that the feedback centered mainly on classroom management and developing routines. While the principal requires teachers to submit lesson plans on a weekly basis, teachers reported that the feedback they received at the beginning of the year has tapered off and, in some cases, they do not receive feedback on lesson plans anymore. In general, teachers felt that the school leader was a great resource and often sought out her input but knew that the time she had available was limited by her other responsibilities.

While the level of instructional support provided by in house staff is limited, the school dedicates substantial resources to contracting with external service providers for additional instructional support. Consultants from Lehman College, the 100 Book Challenge, and the MacMillan McGraw Hill Company provide teachers with coaching and support related to curricular programs and many teachers have a mentor provided by their teacher training program. (A more detailed discussion of these supports is provided below in the section on professional development.) While teachers report that these supports are effective, they operate in isolation and there is little coordination. Moreover, these supports are not directed to target teacher's individual needs but instead offer blanket support to all teachers.

Instructional leaders conduct regular evaluations that identify some teachers' strengths and weaknesses. The principal administers the school's teacher evaluation process whereby teachers are evaluated twice per year, once mid-year and once at the end of the year. At the time of the visit, mid-year evaluations had been conducted for all teachers. The evaluation process consisted of a full-period classroom observation followed by a one-on-one debrief meeting during which written feedback was shared and discussed. The written feedback was provided in a two column format where the first contained a narrative description of the lesson observed and the second noted "Commendable Features/Areas that Need Improvement." The form also included a summary statement on whether the lesson was satisfactory.

While the evaluation process provided teachers with a number of lesson-specific strengths and areas for improvement and indicated whether the overall lesson was satisfactory, it did not identify overarching areas of strength or weakness for each teacher or identify clear criteria against which teacher performance was to be evaluated. Additionally, in interviews, teachers were unable to identify what the school considered "good teaching" and were unsure of the criteria used in the evaluation. Furthermore, in some cases, the feedback provided in the evaluation did not align with the quality of instruction observed during the visit. For example, while one teacher struggled to maintain order in the classroom and few students were engaged in the lesson, the feedback provided in the evaluation document was largely positive and did not highlight a need for improved classroom management.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

The school follows clear procedures to identify English language learners, students with disabilities and other at-risk students. Students are identified through ITBS and Fox in the Box assessment results and teacher recommendations for participation in the schools Targeted Assistance Program, which provides additional support in English language arts and mathematics. For students who continue to struggle in spite of the interventions provided, the school works with the local Committee on Special Education (CSE) to determine if students qualify and would benefit from additional services or supports. The school's principal coordinates this process and serves as the contact for parents and the CSE. At the time of the visit, seven students had active Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and seven students received related services support as part of their 504 plans. Additionally, the school follows clear policies and procedures for identifying English language learners. At the beginning of the school year, the school administers a home language survey to all parents. When a language other than English is spoken in the child's home, the LAB-R assessment is administered. At the time of the visit, 22 students had been identified as English Language Learners.

The school helps students who are struggling academically. The school has deployed resources to meet the needs of struggling students through its Targeted Assistance Program during the school day and during after-school sessions for students identified as English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Students selected to participate in the TAP program are pulled from regular classroom instruction in non-core subjects for small group or one-on-one instruction by a teacher with special education certification. The Macmillan McGraw Hill Triumphs program is used to supplement classroom English language arts and mathematics instruction. These are aligned to the Treasures and Math Connects programs but designed to provide additional guided practice for students who struggle with the regular materials.

Students who have been identified as having disabilities receive the services directed by their IEPs from a certified Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teacher, a Board of Education

speech teacher and/or a counselor. These services and supports are provided after-school by part time staff. As the school continues to grow, the school leader expected that full-time personnel would be hired to match the increased caseload. Similarly, students who qualify as English language learners are provided with instruction after the school day by an experienced and appropriately certified teacher.

In addition, the school's kindergarten classes each have a full-time aide, who works with struggling students. In observations, these aides worked with students in small groups to ensure students were grasping the content of the lesson. At all grade levels, teachers utilize the SuccessMaker computer program to support students at the appropriate instructional level. The program leads students through mini-lessons and then assesses their knowledge of the objective and then selects appropriate re-teaching methods if necessary.

The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students. Students participating in the TAP are assessed regularly to determine when they should return to regular instruction, and some students are assigned to targeted assistance for short periods to focus on specific skills. As such, the groupings are flexible, and throughout the year students are moved into or out of the program. The school's SETTS provider shares regular updates regarding student performance with the principal during scheduled check ins and this information is shared with classroom teachers informally. According to the principal, the instruction provided is extremely effective and has allowed many students to score high enough on the NYSESLAT assessment to exit from the ELL program.

General education teachers have not been provided with sufficient support to help them meet the needs of at-risk students. Within the regular classroom, teachers reported using a variety of strategies to meet the needs of struggling students but reported that they have not received specific training from the school on how to do so effectively. Moreover, given the structure of the school's schedule, there is limited time for teachers to meet with service providers to discuss strategies for use in the regular classroom. Some teachers sought out support from the SETTS teacher and the schools TAP teacher, but this was on their own initiative.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

Icahn 4 Charter School is safe and orderly. On the day of the visit, throughout the school, students were well-behaved in common areas and transitions between classrooms were quick and orderly. The school is co-located in a Department of Education facility with other middle and high school programs; this has not posed any issues to date and students from the different schools rarely interact.

At the time of the evaluation visit, the effectiveness of management and routines within classrooms varied widely. In some classes teachers set and enforced clear behavioral expectations while in others poor student behavior and ineffective classroom management detracted from the teacher's ability to implement instruction. According to the principal, teachers are expected to be the "first line of defense" in maintaining order in the school. She expects that teachers will employ strategies and techniques to control low level misbehavior and reduce its impact on learning. In some classes, teachers were successful in managing student behavior through the use of structured routines and procedures in combination with positive praise. In one classroom, students quickly transitioned from independent reading to another activity with only minimal reminders from the teacher. In well managed classrooms, teachers referred to additional systems they had set up to reinforce behavioral expectations, including individual behavior plans, daily behavioral logs and sticker charts. However,

in other classes, teachers were less successful in implementing routines and student misbehavior was prevalent despite teachers' attempts at redirection. For example, in one class when students did not follow classroom rules, the teacher tapped the students on their heads, but as soon as she walked away, the rule breaking continued.

While teachers are not expected to implement any particular disciplinary system to manage student behavior, many teachers chose to use a tiered color code system to enforce consequences for misbehavior and reward appropriate behavior. Despite having implemented similar consequence systems, the consistency with which they were used and the enforcement of consequences varied widely. In some classes, student misbehavior was quickly acknowledged and students' colors were changed while in others teachers gave students repeated reminders and misbehavior continued without consequence. For example, in one class despite the fact that a number of students repeatedly broke the rules, only one student had moved up a level on the color coded discipline ladder during the class.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

While the school provides a sufficient level of resources for professional development, these resources have not yet developed into a comprehensive program. Icahn 4's professional development program includes a pre-service training period as well as ongoing training and coaching conducted by external consultants throughout the school year. Prior to the start of the school year, teachers attended a number of professional development workshops designed to familiarize them with the school's instructional model as well as the curricular programs and assessments they are expected to use. Topics covered in these sessions included the Core Knowledge curriculum, Fox in the Box and ITBS assessments, bullying prevention, and the 100 Book Challenge Program.

During the school year, Icahn 4 contracted with a number of external consultants to provide scheduled visits and consultation for teachers. At times these consultants led whole group workshops for teachers, but more often spent time working with individual teachers in their classrooms. For example, teachers reported that in addition to observing and providing immediate feedback, the school's mathematics professional developer from Lehman College often models lessons or co-teaches lessons. A number of other trainings were conducted by consultants affiliated with the publishers of the school's instructional resources. These included trainings on the 100 Book Challenge program, SuccessMaker system, Treasures literacy program and Math Connects. Workshops geared to familiarize teachers with the use of technology in the classroom (SmartBoards and digital cameras) were also conducted. In addition, teachers from all Icahn schools attended a joint professional development session focused on cooperative learning strategies in the classroom.

Teachers reported that the principal usually gives them a week's notice for upcoming staff meetings and the meetings tend to focus more on administrative issues than on classroom practice. Due to scheduling difficulties, these meetings are held after school. However, as a number of teachers are enrolled in the same teacher certification program and attend classes after school, a regular time for whole staff meetings has not been identified. In addition, the schedule's construction does not allow for teachers to plan within grade levels. Referring to the difficulty, one teacher said of grade level colleagues, "we are Sunday phone buddies."

As a number of teachers on staff are concurrently enrolled in the Manhattanville College teacher certification program, many teachers at the school have an assigned mentor from the program. The mentor teachers follow a rotating visitation schedule and are in the building weekly observing their

assigned teachers. Teachers report that the support provided by these mentors has been invaluable in improving their instruction as they provide specific, actionable feedback and often model lessons for them. For example, teachers reported that one mentor has been instrumental in enabling them to run a guided reading program in their classes as she modeled the lessons for them and served as a thought partner before they implemented the lessons themselves.

At Icahn 4 professional development is not sufficiently targeted to meet the needs of all teachers. As the school is in its first year of operation and the majority of teachers are new to the profession, the need for comprehensive and ongoing professional development of teachers is great. While the school's professional development program familiarizes teachers with the school's instructional approach and its curricular programs, the needs of individual teachers have not been identified nor have resources been targeted to meet them. At the time of the visit, neither teachers nor the school leaders had set individualized goals or developed plans for improvement based on identified weaknesses. Instead, the majority of professional development was offered in a one-size-fits-all approach where teachers receive a set amount of time with a consultant or attend workshops regardless of the breadth or depth of support they require to be successful. Additionally, teachers were unfamiliar with how the topics for professional development were chosen but would have appreciated to have input into the decision making. In particular, teachers expressed interest in additional professional development around literacy instruction. While the publishing companies' sessions familiarized them with the materials available for lesson planning, they did not feel that they received enough support on lesson implementation.

Mission & Key Design Elements (Benchmark 2.A)

The school has faithfully followed its mission and key design elements. Its instructional program is based on the Core Knowledge curriculum, as stated in its original charter. In addition, staff members were well aware of the school's mission to provide students with, "…the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the most rigorous academic environments…" and noted that throughout the school, banners reminded students that, "You are preparing for college now."

Parents & Students (Benchmark 2.B)

Families appear to be highly satisfied with the school, as indicated by attendance and application rates. As of the day of the visit, the school reported an overall attendance rate of over 95 percent. The school had 426 applications for the lottery and had admitted 110 students in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

As Icahn 4 has yet to complete its first school year, neither the internal end-of-year parent satisfaction survey nor the New York City Department of Education survey had been administered. However, teachers and the school leader reported a high level of parent satisfaction and only three students had left school since the beginning of the school year.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

Icahn 4 Charter School has established a well-functioning organizational staff, systems and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program and is supported by staff and resources from the Icahn network. The school's organizational structures support distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Teachers report that they understand the responsibilities of each member of the leadership team and know whom to turn to for their

concerns. The school's principal is a highly experienced administrator, who spent time as the staff developer at Icahn 1 Charter School prior to assuming her current role.

The school's hiring process relies heavily on the Manhattanville College teacher education program to identify and screen potential teachers and did not appear to be evaluators to be consistent or rigorous. Each of the eight teachers employed by the school are in their first year of teaching and nearly all were hired from the Manhattanville program. Teachers reported that the hiring process was "quick." Some were hired immediately after a brief interview with the principal and others reported that the principal was particularly impressed by their high grade point averages. Teachers were not asked to complete sample lessons.

Given the limited experience of the school's teachers, the school leader has identified the need for additional instructional support personnel at the school and plans to hire a full time, in-house staff developer in the coming year to address this issue. As the school grows to full size, additional instructional and administrative support personnel will be added. The school implements the Icahn 1 Charter School model with fidelity and relies heavily on the original school as the basis of its academic program. Finally, the school has maintained adequate enrollment with a waiting list.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

The school's board of trustees has adequate skills, structures and procedures with which to govern the school. Board members have a range of relevant skill sets, including education, business and governance. The board relies on a superintendent to directly supervise school principals, who meets regularly with school leaders and staff and reports to the board about the success of program implementation. The board is familiar with individual schools and their challenges, noting the diversity of incoming students and transportation issues facing Icahn 4 and the space constraints at Icahn 2. Facilities for its schools are a priority for the Icahn board; it has been working with the NYCDOE and Civic Builders to locate adequate sites for its growing schools. The board is cognizant of conflict of interest issues and reported it is careful regarding its facility development plans.

The board holds school leaders accountable for student achievement. The board takes its mission seriously and is focused on preparing students for high school and college. It receives regular updates regarding student performance and other indicators, such as attendance and enrollment. The board has established a competitive culture among the charter schools it oversees, and compares data across the schools. Board members indicated they are focused on outcomes and as long as they are satisfied with the results, e.g., test scores, high school placement, teacher turnover, they do not need to micromanage the professionals running their schools.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Icahn Charter School 4 on March 9th, 2010. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Kevin Flynn (team leader) is an Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans, as well as the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Prior to joining the Institute in November 2008, Mr. Flynn served as the Chair of the Science Department at KIPP 3D Academy Charter School in Houston, TX, where he authored curriculum, instructed 7th and

8th grade students, coached peers, and managed the Saturday School program. Prior to his service at KIPP 3D Academy, Mr. Flynn served as a science teacher via Teach For America at the John Marshall Middle School, also in Houston. A recipient of the school's Excellence in Teaching Award, his responsibilities included curriculum development and instruction for at-risk students as well as English Language Learners. Mr. Flynn received his Master's degree in Education, with a concentration in Policy, Organization and Leadership Studies, from Stanford University and his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Cornell University.

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

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

Jenn David-Lang (External Consultant) has worked in the field of education for almost 20 years. She has had a wide range of experiences in both teaching and administration. She founded and directed Providence Summerbridge, a nonprofit to raise the academic achievement of urban middle school students. She has taught math, English, and Humanities at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. For several years she worked at the New York Charter School Resource Center providing assistance to charter school start-up groups. After receiving her administrative license and Ed.M. from the Bank Street College of Education, she served in a variety of administrative and consulting positions training new teachers, serving as a math coach, supporting principals, and helping to start a number of New York City schools. Three years ago she founded The Main Idea, a service to provide professional development for over 1400 school leaders across the country.

Steven Evangelista (External Team Member) has served as Co-Director for Operations of Harlem Link Charter School since co-founding the school in 2004. Mr. Evangelista began working in public education in 1998, when he became a Teach For America Corps Member. He has taught as a lead teacher in Harlem in the third through fifth grades, and served in several leadership roles, including School Leadership Team service and writing grants to begin and extend community gardens at two school sites. He has also served as a consultant to SchoolStart, a national non-profit that provides organizational and planning support to educators, families and communities interested in launching charter schools. Mr. Evangelista received a BA from Georgetown University and an MS.Ed. from Bank Street College of Education where he completed an independent study on a rationale for an urban charter school. In 2004, he completed Building Excellent Schools, a national fellowship dedicated to training founders of new charter schools.

Note: The Icahn schools have a single board of trustees that was interviewed separately from this evaluation visit. Simeon Stolzberg, Institute Director of School Evaluation, conducted the interview on April 12, 2010. As part of ongoing evaluation of multiple schools, the interview focused on governance of both the Icahn 2 and Icahn 4 charter schools.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.
Visit the Institute's website at: http://www.newyorkcharters.org/
documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.

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

	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
Evidence Category	**State University Renewal Benchmarks**
State University Renewal Benchmark 1B **Use of Assessment Data**	**The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and state performance standards; • the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board; • the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy; • the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school's Accountability Plan goals are being achieved; • the school's leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school's academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services; • the school's teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students; • a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade; • the school regularly communicates each student's progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and • the school regularly communicates to the school community overall academic performance as well as the school's progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1C **Curriculum**	**The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school has a well-defined curriculum framework for each grade and core academic subject, which includes the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve as specified by New York State standards and performance indicators; • the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial materials) currently in use in relation to the school's curriculum framework,

	identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;
	• the curriculum *as implemented* is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade;
	• teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans;
	• teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school's curriculum;
	• the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and
	• the curriculum supports the school's stated mission.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1D **Pedagogy**	**High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.** Elements that are generally present include: • teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; • instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson; • lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; • instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school's student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments; • all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; • learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and • teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1E **Instructional Leadership**	**The school has strong instructional leadership.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; • the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); • the school's instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; • the school's instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms; • the school's leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas; • the school's instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual

	teachers; • the school's leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and • the school's leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school's academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1F **At-Risk Students**	**The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students' needs; • all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program; • the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students; • the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures; • all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students' Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals; • the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and • the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1G **Student Order & Discipline**	**The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied; • classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; • low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and • throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.
State University Renewal Benchmark 1H **Professional Development**	**The school's professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; • the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school's

mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;

- annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests;
- professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school's Accountability Plan goals;
- teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities;
- the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers' varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities;
- the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and
- the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.

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

	its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision; • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school's management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school's management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2D **Board Oversight**	**The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; • the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school's management and leaders; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school's management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; • where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school's academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
State University Renewal Benchmark 2E **Governance**	**The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.** Elements that are generally present include: • the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school's goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;

	- the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity; - the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter; - the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner; - the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints; - the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies; - the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and - the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.