



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Henry Johnson Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2009-2010

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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. The third section, entitled School Evaluation Visit, presents the analysis of evidence collected during the current evaluation visit. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided as background and context for the current evaluation.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit to the Henry Johnson Charter School

(Henry Johnson), 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:

- The school regularly administers assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and systematically collects valid and reliable assessment data.
- The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework in English language arts and mathematics based largely on commercial curricula. The school has a process for selecting commercial curricular programs with substantial input from teachers.
- Teachers implement purposeful lessons and students are cognitively engaged. Instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students.
- School leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement.
- Instructional leaders provide teachers with a number of supports. They conduct regular evaluations with teachers being held accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.
- The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students and provides extensive resources and supports to meet their needs.
- The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.
- The school has a comprehensive professional development program, which has begun to target the competencies and skills of all teachers.

Areas for Growth:

- The school is developing curriculum frameworks in science, social studies and other subjects, and is refining procedures to review and revise existing curriculum resources. The school is beginning to vertically align curricular documents from grade to grade.
- Learning objectives are not always clear and not all teachers employ strategies designed to develop higher order thinking skills.
- A systematic approach to teacher support and supervision has not been fully developed.
- The school's process for identifying English language learners was not clear.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength:

- The school has faithfully followed its mission and key design elements.

- Families are satisfied with the school.
- The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

Areas for Growth:

- The board is small and is seeking to add educational expertise.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

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

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2007-08 through present	30 Watervliet Ave., Albany, NY	All	City School District of Albany

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	Brighter Choice Foundation	Non-profit	2007 through present

Current Mission Statement

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

Current Key Design Elements

• A rigorous academic program;
• A longer school day and school year allowing for three hours of English language arts instruction and one hour of mathematics instruction daily;
• Comprehensive assessment, the results of which drive curricular and instructional decision making;
• A school culture based on the values of honor, honesty, diligence, and perseverance;
• A focus on learning, with at least two adults providing instruction in each classroom and extensive professional development available to teachers; and
• A program enriched by visual and performing arts and by physical education.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades
2005-06	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year
2006-07	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year	Planning Year
2007-08	200	125	116	K-2	K-1
2008-09	275	200	202	K-3	K-2
2009-10	350	275	276	K-4	K-3

Student Demographics

	2008-09		2009-10	
	Percent of School Enrollment ²	Percent of Albany CSD Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment ³	Percent of Albany CSD Enrollment ⁴
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	N/A
Black or African American	76	62	88	N/A
Hispanic	6	11	7	N/A
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	5	0	N/A
White	2	20	3	N/A
Multiracial	14	1	2	N/A
Special Populations				
Students with Disabilities	4	15	4	N/A
Limited English Proficient	1	5	2	N/A
Free/Reduced Lunch				
Eligible for Free Lunch ⁵	68	59	71	N/A
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	12	10	13	N/A

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

² Source: 2008-09 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

³ Source: 2009-10 Demographics and Limited English Proficient Percentages calculated from BEDS reports submitted at the beginning of the school year. This information is unverified by the school.

⁴ Aggregate district data not yet publicly available for 2009-10.

⁵ 2009-10 free and reduced lunch data from NY State Education Department

Current Board of Trustees⁶

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
Michelle Cleary	Chair
Debra Dickerson	Vice-Chair
Brennan Keating	Treasurer
Karen Chichon	Trustee
Peter Murphy	Treasurer
Claire Hazzard	Trustee
Alea Dupaw	Trustee

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2007-08 to present	Lillian Turner, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2007-08	First-Year Visit	Institute	February 7, 2008
2008-09	Second-Year Visit	External	May 13-14, 2009
2009-10	Third-Year Visit	Institute	March 30, 2010

⁶ Source: Institute Board Records.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE

Background

Regardless of the type of visit, Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized around a set of benchmarks that address the academic success of the school, including teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school as an organization, including such items as governance and management. Entitled the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, these established criteria are used on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

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

This 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.

Summary of Previous Evaluation Visit

An independent evaluation of Henry Johnson was conducted by RMC Research on May 13-14, 2009. The evaluation team observed classrooms; interviewed administrators, board members and teachers; and reviewed student work and other documents. As a result of the evaluation visit, a report was produced outlining the major conclusions from the visit; these conclusions are briefly summarized below:

Henry Johnson regularly administered assessments and was working to systematically collect and analyze data. Teachers used the results to monitor progress and regroup students and identify topics for re-teaching. The school was nearing completion of curriculum maps for English language arts and mathematics and in the initial stages of developing maps for other subjects. The school planned to vertically align the curriculum from grade to grade in the coming year. Instruction was delivered in both whole class and small group models, and additional support staff in English language arts and mathematics classes provided opportunities for more individualized instruction. The principal was reported to provide a great deal of support to staff. While classroom observations were conducted, the inspection team did not find evidence that they were focused on improving the delivery of instruction in the curriculum areas. Teacher evaluation had been instituted based on the Charlotte Danielson framework. Henry Johnson did have a plan for identifying and serving at-risk

students, and evidence suggested the needs of struggling students were being met. A consistent system for managing discipline was being implemented by staff supported by a dean of students. The school had a plan in place for professional development; the first two years had been largely devoted to developing the school culture and initializing the instructional programs. Next steps were to link professional development to student achievement.

The school had faithfully implemented its mission and key design elements and parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. The inspection team found the school to be competently organized with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Student enrollment was at planned levels. Finally, evidence suggested the school's board had implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and provided sufficient oversight. The board, consisting of six members, indicated its desire to recruit additional members with education expertise.

Evaluation Visit Benchmark Analysis and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Henry Johnson Charter School has a system to gather assessment data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.

The school's assessment system is comprehensive and consists of a variety of regularly administered diagnostic, formative and summative assessments aligned to the school's curriculum. The assessments and their administration schedules vary by grade and according to the intended use of data collected. Assessments used to gather baseline data on student performance are administered early in the school year and some only to incoming kindergarten students, while others used to measure student progress over time are typically administered in the fall, winter and spring. The DIAL 3 assessment is used at Henry Johnson to evaluate all kindergarten students' developmental levels in concepts, motor skills, and language. The NWEA MAP Literacy and Numeracy screenings are used for a similar purpose. In addition, teachers administer a number of ongoing formative and summative assessments in their classrooms to measure mastery of objectives covered in each lesson and unit. The school will administer the New York State English language arts and mathematics exams for the first time this year and teachers in the 3rd grade reported using assessments from NYS "Coach" texts to prepare students for the state exams.

The NWEA MAP reading and mathematics assessments for primary grades are administered to 1st grade students in the fall, winter and spring. In the 2nd and 3rd grades the school chose to administer the Scantron Performance Series reading and mathematics assessments in place of the MAP assessment, which was administered to 2nd graders last year. The Scantron Performance Series assessments are given on the same schedule as the NWEA MAP assessment. The school moved to the Scantron Performance series in place of the MAP in the upper grades as they believed that it was more tightly linked to the state performance standards and would thus generate data more useful in informing instruction and remediation for students who would soon take state exams. The national norm-referenced Terra Nova Complete Battery Assessment is administered in the fall to students in 1st through 3rd grade, to kindergarteners in the winter, and again for all students in the spring. Teachers and school leaders' comments highlighted the importance of pre- and post-testing elements of the assessment program in measuring student growth. One teacher noted that when considering student performance she "really wanted to see the difference between the fall and spring."

The STAR Reading and Math assessments developed by Renaissance Learning are administered quarterly to all students in 1st through 3rd grade. The STAR Early Literacy assessment is administered bi-annually to all kindergarten students. The STAR assessments are administered at a minimum according to the schedule noted above; however, teachers often administer these assessments on a more regular basis within their classrooms as progress checks. According to the principal and teachers, this is done about every two weeks for students enrolled in the school's Academic Intervention Service (AIS) program. The school also uses the Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math programs in the 1st through 3rd grade. The reading program tracks student's independent reading and the math progress, providing additional practice for students in need of remediation as well as enrichment for students working beyond grade level. The reading assessments are given as students complete their independent reading books; the schedule for math assessment is determined by classroom teachers.

Within classrooms, teachers administer a number of formative and summative assessments aligned to the school's curriculum. These assessments include weekly quizzes, teacher created pre- and post-unit assessments, running records, unit tests provided by the school's commercial curricula, ongoing observations, homework and class work assignments, exit tickets and do-now activities. In observed lessons, teachers regularly checked for student understanding using a variety of techniques, including raising hands to show agreement, asking students to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate their answer and requiring choral response.

The school systematically collects valid and reliable assessment data and teachers and school leaders analyze the results in an ad hoc process. For assessments administered electronically (Terra Nova, NWEA MAP, STAR and Scantron Performance) results are systematically collected and analyzed. Software allows teachers and administrators the ability to generate a variety of custom reports that track whole group and individual student performance. Student level data are tracked from one administration to the next and growth reports are available. Terra Nova data are returned in electronic format as well and teachers and school leaders are provided with reports specific to students, classes and grade levels.

Data from assessments administered by teachers at the classroom level are collected by teachers on an individual basis. Data from some of these assessments are entered into data spreadsheets showing students' results as well as item analyses of student level performance. While teachers reported regular conversations with the school leader regarding student performance on these assessments during Principal Weekly Meetings, and with intervention specialists and other teachers during Grade Level Meetings, the process was informal and at times teachers reported that the data were not used systematically but instead used more often when students were found to be struggling. When asked about using reports which provided teachers with student level item analysis data, one teacher said, "I don't always do that, but it is available when we know that there are students who are struggling."

Teachers and school leaders placed great weight on the use of assessment in driving instructional planning and reported the regular use of assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet identified class and student deficits. Assessment data are often used by teachers to identify skills in need of re-teaching. For example, one teacher noted, "this week is really a review week and I noticed that a lot of our friends [students] were getting suffix questions wrong...that is why I decided to re-teach it." The Scantron assessments are also linked to the Nettekter program, which provides additional materials that teachers can use to re-teach specific skills for individual students or the whole class.

Data are used to inform the creation of flexible groupings of students with similar needs within regular classrooms. Teachers reported and observers noted the targeted use of Educational Assistants to work with small groups of students with similar instructional needs. While the Educational Assistants worked with one group, the classroom teachers worked with another group or circulated among the remaining students helping them with the assigned task and checking their progress. Teachers reported that these groupings were commonly used throughout the school and were based on recent unit assessments. The school also uses assessment data to inform decisions regarding the referral of students for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) as well as during the school's Response to Intervention (RTI) process.

During Weekly Principal Meetings, the school leader and classroom teachers discuss data from recent assessments and work together to develop plans for remediation, re-teaching and enrichment. Teachers reported that in Grade Level Meetings, assessment results were used to modify and update lesson planning materials including the school's online curriculum maps. Teachers reported that based on data collected from end-of-unit assessments they regularly updated their pacing calendars to include topics which a substantial portion of students had not mastered and to spiral concepts that students had particular difficulty mastering.

The school is in the process of developing a policy to guide teachers and administrators in making student promotion and retention decisions. Earlier on, some teachers reported that they had been uncertain how promotion and retention decisions were going to be made at the end of the year. In response to these concerns, the school convened a committee to discuss the issues at hand, namely the criteria to be used in making the decisions and the standard that must be met for students to be promoted. At the time of the visit, the committee had not yet made its recommendations, but participants felt confident that the policy would take into consideration student performance on assessments, attendance and maturity. The Light Retention Scale was being considered a guiding tool.

The school keeps parents and the school community well informed of individual student and school wide performance through a variety of methods including progress reports, report cards, standardized assessment reports, community newsletters and informal communication in person, over the phone and via email. The school's progress reports consist of narrative descriptions of student performance to date and touch on strengths and weaknesses. The report cards provide parents with overall grades which are accompanied by narratives similar to those included in the progress reports. Additionally, the school sends home reports from a number of the school's assessments, including the Terra Nova and STAR. These reports are designed to give parents a sense of where students are performing in relation to where they are expected to be and also provide information on student growth over time. The school clearly communicates with parents of children whose performance suggests that they are at risk of being held back. Teachers and school leaders reported meeting with parents well before the end of the school year to share their concerns along with supporting examples of student work and assessment data. The school's weekly newsletter provides parents with an additional source of school wide as well as student level performance. The newsletters regularly list students who have been placed on the academic honor roll and highlights students who have been identified as "Stars of Distinction" and "North Star" based on a combination of their academic performance and embodiment of the school's values. Teachers and administrators also reported close contact with parents in face-to-face meetings, over the phone and via email. Teachers reported sharing academic as well as behavioral updates with parents on a regular basis as did the school's principal and dean of students and intervention specialists.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

The school has a curriculum based largely on commercial programs and is using these programs to prepare students to meet state performance standards.

The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework in English language arts and mathematics based largely on commercial curricula. The school is beginning to vertically align the curricular documents from grade to grade. In the coming year, the school expects to utilize these same curricular products as the basis of its 4th grade program.

In English language arts, Henry Johnson utilizes the Macmillan McGraw Hill *Treasures* curriculum program. Teachers are provided with a number of additional resources to supplement the text, including practice workbooks, trade books and novels. Some upper grade teachers reported that they have begun to utilize materials from the Urban Education Exchange to strengthen their reading comprehension instruction.

In mathematics, the school uses the Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley *New York State Mathematics Diamond* textbook series as the primary curriculum resource. The textbook is supplemented with materials including Renaissance Learning's *Accelerated Math* and *STAR Math* programs as well as *Coach New York State Test Prep* and *Progress Coach* workbooks. In previous years, the school used the SRA Math program made by McGraw Hill, but has moved away from that in the current year as teachers felt it was not meeting students' needs.

The *Accelerated Math* program provides students with individually paced instruction and assessment delivered by computer software. Classroom teachers generate a sequential list of concepts for each student and load this into the software program. The computer program selects student practice activities and then assesses performance. Students who have mastered the selected concept are then provided with material from the next concept on the teacher generated list. The program tracks student performance on each objective and reports are available for teachers' analysis. Teachers reported using these reports to identify concepts for which individual students required additional support; they then targeted small group or individualized instruction to meet these needs.

In social studies, Henry Johnson utilizes *Social Studies Alive!*, a commercial product developed by Teachers Curriculum Institute. The curriculum emphasizes cooperative interaction and tapping into students' multiple intelligences. While teachers are provided with materials from the Social Studies Alive program, they reported deviating from the program to better engage students. For example, one teacher said, "I think mapping skills are important and really love maps, so I try to use them as much as possible...I have a textbook, but don't use it too often because I find that the students just aren't engaged when reading it."

At Henry Johnson, The Full Option Science System (FOSS) curriculum is used for science instruction. The program provides students with hands-on, experiential investigations and supplies teachers with the materials and accompanying workbooks used in their implementation. Teachers reported a high level of satisfaction with the content of the program as well as the resources provided for its implementation.

Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. The school uses the Rubicon Atlas online portal as a tool for organizing, aligning and archiving curriculum for each grade level as well as subject area documents. Teachers were familiar with the tool and its purpose. One teacher reported that the

goal of the mapping process was “to pull all the things we are doing together into a comprehensive map.” In addition, teachers reported that the maps were helpful for getting an overall sense of the content to be taught throughout the year and that they referred to the school’s commercial curricular materials for more specific information on what to teach and how to teach it.

At the time of the visit, these maps were more fully developed in English language arts and mathematics than for science, social studies and other classes. While previous Institute reports indicated that the school leader anticipated that the English language arts and mathematics maps would be complete at this point, teachers felt that they needed further work and the timeline for moving on to develop other subjects was pushed back. The principal indicated that the development process in English language arts and mathematics would continue in the summer and would be led by volunteers for each grade level.

Observed curriculum maps stored on the Rubicon Atlas site varied within and across grades and subject areas in terms of completeness and level of detail. While some unit plans included strands and performance indicators, essential questions, vocabulary, assessments and resources, others contained only a list of the standards to be covered.

The school has adequate instructional materials aligned to its curriculum framework. Observed classrooms were rich in materials including textbooks, trade books, student workbooks, manipulatives and games. Materials associated with the school’s adopted commercial curricular programs were in plentiful supply and teachers reported that, “we have whatever we need.” In addition, teachers reported having access to supplementary resources when requested.

The school has a process for selecting commercial curricular programs and is developing procedures to review and revise existing curriculum frameworks and resources. Teachers and the school leader indicated that the school’s curriculum maps are intended to be living documents updated throughout the year as students develop mastery of content. Individual teachers have begun to identify gaps and shortcomings of the chosen commercial programs, indicating that they have adjusted their curriculum maps and provided ancillary materials to ensure alignment and coverage of each state standard.

Teachers have had considerable input into the selection of the commercial programs presently used. For example, the school recently adopted the Scott Foresman mathematics program in place of the SRA mathematics program after teachers found that the latter did not align sufficiently with state standards and teachers were often forced to create supplementary materials. Before selecting the Scott Foresman program, the school leader researched available programs online, invited publishers to present their materials to the staff and asked other nearby schools about their curricular programs. The Scott Foresman program was selected based largely on the input of teachers.

As the school expands to serve 4th grade students in the coming year, teachers and school leaders indicated that they plan to adopt the 4th grade level programs of existing commercial curricular materials.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Quality instruction is evident throughout the school.

Teachers implement purposeful lessons though learning objectives were not always clearly defined. Teachers have discretion in lesson planning and use a variety of formats for their lesson plans. Not all lesson plans included objectives nor were objectives consistently posted in classrooms or discussed with students. Teachers were observed discussing the day's agenda and activities but were not often explicit regarding the purpose or expected outcome of the lesson, even when students asked what they were supposed to be learning. The school relies heavily on commercial programs and interviewed teachers referred more to the activities than to the objectives in discussing their instructional planning. As an exception, the AIS lessons were clearly designed for targeted skill acquisition and the AIS teachers explicitly stated the objectives at the beginning of and throughout the lesson.

Students are cognitively engaged by instruction, though not all teachers employed strategies designed to develop higher order thinking skills. Teachers utilized a variety of instructional techniques, including whole-class, teacher-centered instruction as well as more student-centered and small group activities. Transitions were efficient and the majority of students were on-task. Students responded to questions and actively participated in both whole-class and small group activities. Some classes exhibited rigorous instruction, with students challenged to explain their answers or apply concepts. In some classes questioning was basic and never got beyond basic recall, and instruction did not challenge students to develop critical thinking or problem solving skills. For example, one teacher spent an entire 60 minute class period teaching a single mathematical concept using one example. No opportunities were provided for students to apply the concept, explain their answers or demonstrate their understanding.

Instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of students. Classes are leveled and within classes teachers use grouping to meet students' needs. The presence of multiple adults in the classroom and the use of small group and one-on-one instruction allows teachers to differentiate materials, tasks, pacing and questioning. For example, during one class observation, four adults worked with small groups of students sorted based on mathematic instructional needs. Each group worked on a particular set of focused skills in preparation for the New York state mathematics assessment. One group completed relatively self directed worksheets using the Scantron technology that comes with Accelerated Mathematics while a classroom volunteer questioned each student about calculations and drawing parallels between items. Two other groups, led by the regular classroom teacher and co-teacher, worked on discrete mathematics skills using white boards and markers to draw or record answers to teachers' questions. The fourth group, lead by the AIS mathematics instructor, used test prep materials and place value cubes to review and solidify place value and operational order concepts. According to teachers, student interests and learning styles are also accommodated through the use of centers. Special education and AIS teachers also use supplemental materials during pull-out instruction.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

The school has strong instructional leadership.

School leaders instill high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement. The school is focused on developing an educational program that will prepare students for academic success and support their social and emotional development. The principal, staff and teachers consistently communicated high expectations for student achievement. For example, one teacher said, "part of what we are trying to do is build confidence in the students, as well as their academic

skills, so that they are able and ready to go to college.” Similar statements were made by multiple teachers and staff members.

Instructional leaders provide teachers with a number of supports although a systematic approach has not been fully developed. Teachers consistently reported that school leaders are supportive; they indicated that a familial atmosphere has been developed among staff members and that this atmosphere allowed them to comfortably share and receive open and honest feedback. Teachers noted that the principal visits classrooms multiple times each week and provides feedback both verbally and via email. According to one teacher the feedback is ‘action oriented’.

Teachers who are new to the school are provided with mentors who serve as thought partners for instructional planning and implementation. Interviewed teachers reported that the mentorship was helpful and that they felt better supported as a result of the partnership. While the school hired additional staff this year to focus a portion of their time on coaching teachers, teachers reported that these individuals did not provide systematic support or feedback but spent the majority of their time on the delivery of AIS instruction. While each AIS teacher/instructional coach provides formal and informal professional development to staff throughout the year, no regular or systemic plan for working with specific teachers to improve pedagogy is in place.

Peer observations are encouraged at Henry Johnson and have been used recently to promote the implementation of elements of Uncommon Schools’ Taxonomy of Effective Teaching Practices introduced during professional development sessions. Additional observations forms are used to provide feedback on the use of particular strategies. As teachers are introduced to additional strategies, the forms are updated to reflect these focus areas. Consistent with this, many staff members reported that other teachers are their greatest resource for instructional support and that teachers often share best practices and techniques with each other informally.

The school’s teacher evaluation system is well defined and comprehensive. The teacher evaluation is aligned to a well defined rubric based on Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching which breaks down teachers’ professional practice into four main components: planning and preparation, the classroom environment, professional responsibilities, and instruction. The school has also developed a 5th domain with school specific goals and professional expectations. Teachers are rated in the categories of unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished on a number of indicators as well as in overall domains. The evaluation process consists of a beginning of year self-assessment, ongoing observations and feedback conducted throughout the year, and a summative end-of-year assessment. The school’s principal is in charge of the evaluation process for teachers and completes the observations and summative evaluations while responsibility for the evaluation of Educational Assistants (“EA”) is shared by the classroom teacher and the school leader. The EA’s evaluation process mirrors that of classroom teachers, but is modified to focus on their supporting role in the classroom. At the beginning of the year, teachers completed a professional goals self-assessment in the areas of professional development, academic goals (for students), and personal goals. The professional goals sheets were individualized and listed numerous opportunities to gain expertise both in school related areas and in professional growth in general. Teachers reported that the goals sheets are referred to throughout the year during observation feedback sessions and they are expected to update them as the year progresses. Interviews revealed that teachers find the self-evaluation process helpful and appreciated that their input was considered in the final evaluations. Reviewers noted that the self-assessment and summative assessment ratings were generally aligned. Teachers reported that a number of informal observations conducted throughout the year by the principal feed

into the overall evaluation. Notes on these informal observations were stored with each teacher's final evaluation, shared via email and given verbally in post-observation meetings.

Teachers are held accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. Teachers and the principal indicated that the school's performance reviews were used to identify teachers in need of improvement as well as to reward teachers for high levels of performance. In 2008-09, teachers were awarded bonuses based in part on student achievement results and on their overall performance as measured by the evaluation. The principal indicated that teachers who do not meet Henry Johnson's high standards and do not demonstrate improvement are not asked to return.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

The school provides extensive supports for students who are struggling academically.

The school uses generally clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. As noted, the school makes extensive use of assessments to identify struggling students and monitor their progress. Using performance on STAR assessments, Terra Nova assessments, and assessments administered by the AIS teacher to all incoming Kindergarten students and by classroom teachers in other grade levels, the school determines what students are in need of specific intervention services. Students continue to receive support until such time as they achieve and sustain grade level performance. Regular leadership, instructional support and grade team meetings are used to consider assessment results and discuss students of concern. The school has fully implemented a three tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model that includes review of assessment data for students and formal and informal consultation with the RTI team that includes the AIS and special education teachers. At the time of the evaluation visit, reviewers found that the school's process for identifying English language learners was not clear.

The school provides extensive resources and supports to meet the needs of at-risk students. Each class has an educational assistant, which allows for more individualized instruction. The school also utilizes volunteers in the classroom. Henry Johnson has two full time AIS staff members: one for English language arts and one for mathematics. AIS teachers provide both pull-out and push-in services coordinated with the lessons taking place in general education classrooms. Observed AIS instruction was thoughtfully designed and delivered. The teachers were well prepared and conducted lessons that were coherent, well paced, and very engaging to students.

The school's special education teacher/administrator reported nine students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) during the 2009-10 school year. Of those nine students, five receive instruction in the same classroom with the school's special education teacher assigned as the co-teacher in that classroom. She spends every morning in that classroom supporting IEP students and assisting the classroom teacher in modifying lessons targeted at student needs as identified in their IEPs. To meet the needs of the remaining four students with IEPs, the special education teacher's schedule allows for both pull-out targeted individual and small group instruction as well as push in assistance for individual students struggling with specific skills or requiring specific modifications.

The school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students. A binder of assessment results is created for each student and labeled as their, "literacy binder." The binder is added to throughout the year, and passed on to the next grade level, creating a compilation of qualitative and school developed data on student literacy to accompany the quantitative data gathered through the Terra Novas, state assessments and STAR assessments.

Classroom teachers are provided with support to help them meet the needs of at-risk students. The school's special education and AIS staff provided RTI training to all staff during a pre-opening professional development session. Each teacher is provided a summary of classroom supports for students with IEPs. The summary includes identified IEP disability, medical alerts, services outlined in IEP, classroom management needs, strengths, needs testing modifications if identified by the committee on special education (CSE). The ideas and suggestions for modifications provide teachers with concrete and practical strategies to use to assist in delivering strong instruction to all students, including students with special needs, in the classroom. Teachers also receive results of each student's Woodcock-Johnson III Normative Update Tests of Achievement that breaks down letter word identification, reading fluency, story recall, understanding directions, calculations, and math fluency. The special education teacher modifies instruction for students by pushing into classrooms on a scheduled basis to assist with classroom lessons. In addition, students with special education needs are pulled out for small group and one-on-one targeted lessons as required. Teachers noted the accessibility of support staff who can help them devise strategies to meet the individual needs of students within their classrooms.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.

The school has put the ProActivity program in place, which involves the monthly teaching of a value such as respect for others and respect for learning. Every Friday the theme is presented at the school's morning meeting. All classrooms had a ProActivity quote on the wall. This is also presented on a "Life's Worksheet" that goes home every week. All students participate in the daily recitation of the school's declaration, which expounded on the virtues of hard work, respect, etc. Teachers were also observed reiterating, through song or chant, the cultural expectations. Teachers and students participated willingly and with gusto. The inspection team found the school to be safe and orderly. Transitions between classes were quiet and efficient. Students were consistently respectful of their teachers, classmates, and visitors in classrooms and in common areas.

Teachers employ effective classroom management strategies and routines that promote learning. Students were well aware of the procedures; they remained involved, comfortable, and well behaved with minor exception. When students displayed minor behavioral issues, they were effectively re-directed by an adult with patience and assertiveness, returning the student and the group to the lesson at hand without disturbing the other groups or centers.

The school has a clear discipline system in place that is consistently applied. The discipline code as well as the reasons for expected behavior were prominently posted in classrooms. Teachers use a behavior level system, e.g., charts with colors and clothes pins indicating each student's level. During the evaluation visit teachers had students move their levels as a consequence for misbehavior and the dean of students was observed monitoring the charts in classrooms. The school also benefits from deploying a large number of adults who can monitor student behavior and redirect it without interrupting instruction.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

The school has a comprehensive professional development program. Document review revealed a robust calendar of professional development activities that are supportive of and consistent with school's priorities, culture, curriculum and assessment programs. For example, the school provides training in implementation of its curriculum programs, response to intervention and the Uncommon Schools' taxonomy. School leaders and the special education and AIS staff provide professional development. Teachers also participate in training outside the school and turnkey it for their peers. Observations by leaders and peers are used to follow up and monitor transfer of professional development to actual practice in the classroom.

Interviewed teachers believe that they have numerous opportunities to partake in both in-school activities that pertain directly to their professional skills and activities outside of the school that may be of professional interest to them. Teachers noted that the principal frequently emails or provides copies of professional development activities focused on the professional goals they have established for the year. Several topics that are specific to individual teachers were also listed in the school's professional development documents, suggesting that the school differentiates professional development activities for teacher experience and/or content area assignments. For example, physical education and state mathematics teachers conferences were noted for individual teachers.

Mission & Key Design Elements (Benchmark 2.A)

Henry Johnson has faithfully followed its mission and key design elements. It has a clear focus on learning, with at least two adults in each classroom and a longer school day with three hours daily of English language arts and one hour of mathematics instruction. The use of assessment results to drive instruction and program improvement is evident and the school is working to better align assessments to the state standards. The school's use of the ProActive program is consistent with its mission regarding "instilling character... respect... responsibility." Finally, the school appears to have "a program enriched by visual and performing arts," with art samples on the walls and not only a full music class, but also an elective led by an EA in music.

Parents & Students (Benchmark 2.B)

Families are satisfied with the school. In February of 2010, the school conducted a survey of families with children attending Henry Johnson to gauge their satisfaction. The survey collected information in a number of categories, including overall satisfaction, satisfaction with the quality of the educational program, and satisfaction with the facilities and equipment provided by the school. While the survey response rate was not observed, overall ratings from parents indicated that families completing the survey were satisfied with the school. The school distributes a high quality parent newsletter highlighting monthly activities and events at the school that features student and staff profiles and honors. The school's website provides parents with useful information regarding the school's academic program and upcoming events.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The school's organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Interviewed school staff members reported that they knew who they reported to and who was responsible for their evaluations. Teachers reported that the school leader was the individual ultimately responsible for overseeing the school program and a variety of deans and staff were

assigned to carry out other necessary duties. Interviews with staff members in leadership positions confirmed that the hierarchical organization of the school was clearly defined and efficient in carrying out the necessary functions.

The school is competently managed. Teachers and staff members reported that there was clear and consistent communication from and with the school leader regarding the day-to-day operations of the school. Teachers indicated that they were well resourced and were confident that if they needed additional materials or resources they would be provided. Teachers reported, and evaluation team members observed, that daily operation of the school proceeded in a smooth and calm, but efficient manner.

The school has hired and retained quality staff. Many interviewed staff members reported that they intended to stay at the school long-term and were extremely satisfied with the school and its leadership. They reported that the family-like atmosphere contributed to their desire to continue on at the school. While not all teachers returned from the previous year, the school leader indicated that many of those who left were not asked to return based on their performance in the previous year. Additionally, most of those leaving the school by their own choice either left the teaching profession, moved to another area or went back to school and did not leave the school to teach at another school.

The school has maintained sufficient enrollment.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

Henry Johnson's board of trustees is informed about and active in monitoring the academic progress of the school. The board is currently composed of six members, and is looking to add additional members with educational expertise. Due to its small size, the board operates as a single collective, rather than delegating activities to subcommittees.

The board has devoted significant time and attention to evaluating the effectiveness of the school's academic program. In the previous year, the board brought in external consultants to provide additional feedback to the school leaders and board. They hired a consultant to review all available student achievement data and to provide an independent analysis of the outcomes. As a result of the analysis, they have added additional supports for a particular class and have prioritized the implementation of a more regular interval testing regimen. In addition, external consultants from the school's sister program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin provided a review of the school culture and the implementation of the school's character education program.

The board has developed a school leader evaluation process that takes into consideration absolute student performance as well as growth measures. While the review process is scheduled to be completed on an annual basis, the process is time intensive and it has taken longer than expected to turn around the results from the current year. At the time of the visit, the board was in the process of finalizing the 2008-09 review. Although the board had shared feedback with the principal, she had yet to receive a written copy of the evaluation. The board does not currently evaluate its own effectiveness, although they have considered implementing a review process.

The board has identified clear priorities for the future. As the school expands to full size, the board recognizes that the current facility will not meet its needs and has begun to research potential renovation and expansion options with the support of the Brighter Choice Foundation, but has held off moving forward with any plans until the school comes to renewal in its 5th year of operation.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Henry Johnson Charter School on March 30, 2010. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Institute Staff Members

Kevin Flynn (team leader) was 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.

Sean Fitzsimons is a Program Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He supports SUNY's new charter school application process by addressing questions from applicants, reviewing and analyzing new applications, coordinating the review of applications to establish new charter schools by Institute staff and external educational experts, and drafting application summaries and other related documents. Mr. Fitzsimons most recently served as Chair of the Social Studies Department at Manassas Park Middle School in Manassas Park, Virginia where he guided curriculum sequencing and pacing to align the school's courses with state standards, trained and mentored faculty, and designed and implemented courses in Civics and Economics, American Studies, American History, and World Geography. He also taught remedial reading curriculum to special education students and English language learners. Prior to his service at Manassas Park Middle School, Mr. Fitzsimons was an Administrative and Research Assistant at the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. In addition, Mr. Fitzsimons was a visiting instructor at Shanghai Teachers University in Shanghai, China, where he designed and taught curriculum for English language learners. Mr. Fitzsimons received his Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction and Secondary Education Social Studies from George Mason University and his Bachelor of Arts degrees in International Relations and Political Science from the State University of New York, College at Geneseo.

Jason Sarsfield is a Senior Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York, responsible for reviewing school applications, analyzing data to identify critical issues for renewal visit teams, monitoring the development of all renewal recommendation reports and supporting the development, refinement, and revision of internal policies and practices of the Institute's renewal process. Mr. Sarsfield returns to the Institute from the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning in the Bronx, NY, where he supervised the administration of standardized assessments, conducted analysis of student achievement data for purposes of program evaluation, and oversaw the development and submission of reports to state, federal and local agencies. Prior to his

service at the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning, he served as a Senior Analyst at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, where he provided leadership for annual and informal school evaluation visits. Before moving to New York to work for the Institute, Mr. Sarsfield was a contract analyst for the Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University, where he evaluated the academic performance of authorized charter schools and provided technical assistance for school improvement initiatives and the analysis of student achievement data. Mr. Sarsfield also served as a teacher and coach for Bad Axe Public Schools in Michigan and was a teacher at a residential high school in rural Alaska. Mr. Sarsfield received his Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from Northern Michigan University and is a candidate for a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership from Central Michigan University.

External Consultants

Susan Miller Barker is a Principal with Shanahan Capital Ventures, LLC and a Senior Associate with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. From 2006 through 2009, Susie served as NACSA's Vice President for Research and Evaluation, leading NACSA's research, evaluation and accountability initiatives. Previously, she served as Chief Program Officer at the New York Charter Schools Association. Prior to that, she was Senior Vice President and Senior Fellow at the State University of New York's (SUNY) Charter Schools Institute, where she led the development and implementation of the University's charter school research, evaluation and renewal activities as a statewide charter authorizer. Before joining SUNY, Susie was the Associate Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Susie is a member of Harvard's Urban Superintendents Program, through which she served as Intern Superintendent for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina. Previously, Susie served as the Assistant Director of the Hudson Institute's Modern Red Schoolhouse comprehensive school reform design. In addition, as a teacher and technology director at Indian Creek Science & Technology Discovery School in Indianapolis, she received an Indiana Excellence in Education Award in 1990. Susan has been a visiting lecturer at Columbia University and Butler University, and serves on the founding board of Tru North Rochester Preparatory Charter School in Rochester, New York and the Manhattan Charter School in New York City. Susie holds an Ed.M. from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, where she has completed all doctoral coursework in Administration, Planning and Social Policy and was awarded the 1999 Edward J. Meade, Jr. Fellowship.

Katrina Kelly is currently the Assistant Principal at Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem, a K-5 school located in West Harlem, New York. Formerly, she served as a Principal Resident with the New Leaders for New Schools Program. As a Principal Resident, Katrina collaborated with a mentor principal for a year to assist in learning, as well as, effectively co-leading an urban school. Additionally, through the New Leaders for New Schools Program, she attended courses to further enhance her ability in becoming an educational leader. Additionally, Katrina was a Literacy Coach for three years at a K-6 elementary school located in the Bronx, New York. In this capacity, Katrina held on-going professional development workshops for third through sixth grade teachers, mentored new teachers, developed assessment-based curriculum in all literacy areas and regularly visited classrooms, as well as, conferred with teachers to ensure that all students educational needs were met. Also, in this capacity, Katrina has made efforts to strengthen curriculum practices in the content area of Social Studies. In this role, Katrina created grade teams, designed Social Studies standards-based calendars for grade 4-6, developed Social Studies units for grade 4-6 and continually collaborated in grade meetings to research methods to ensure that this subject was meaningful to all students. Prior to this, Katrina served mainly as a fifth grade teacher (but also taught fourth grade and a fifth/sixth grade bridge class) for six years in the aforementioned facility. Katrina holds a BA from

the State University of New York at Albany and a Masters in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Bank Street College of Education.

Joe Nicolella retired after more than thirty years in the field of education at Shenedehowa Central School. At the time of his retirement, Mr. Nicolella was the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, and as such his responsibilities included developing and maintaining all staff rosters and procedures for a district of over 1700 employees; providing leadership and supervision of the district professional development program; recruiting, selecting and hiring staff; coordinating the development of the district teacher assessment and evaluation approach; and conducting disciplinary and other hearings, as well as contract negotiations. Prior to becoming Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Nicolella served as principal and lead principal at the middle school level , as director of student services , as assistant principal and principal at the junior high level , and as a teacher of science at the middle and high school levels for over ten years. Since retirement from public education, Mr. Nicolella has served in the capacity of a supervisor of administrative interns and student teachers at the College of St. Rose, as an interim coordinator of special education on three occasions, and as acting lead principal for the three Shenedehowa middle schools. For nearly six years, he has served with the Charter Schools Institute and the SUNY Research Foundation as the primary consultant responsible for the review and critique curriculum documents submitted to the Institute as a part of the initial charter school application process, charter renewal, or change in academic program. He has also served in several interim positions related to program and school evaluation and participated as a member of numerous school review and school renewal teams. Mr. Nicolella has earned a Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Education. He also holds a Master of Science in Advanced Classroom Teaching and a Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction. Mr. Nicolella has also completed all coursework for the doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. All of his professional training was completed at the University at Albany.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

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

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

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

**State University
Renewal
Benchmark 1D**

Pedagogy

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.

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;

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

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p>

Governance

- 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.