



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Initial Renewal Report

Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York

March 9, 2010

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The final version of Institute renewal reports should be broadly shared by the school with the entire school community. This report will be posted on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/pubsReportsRenewals.htm.

REPORT INTRODUCTION

This report is the primary means by which the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s Application for Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of a school’s case for renewal. This report has been created and issued pursuant to the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees* (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”).¹

Information about the SUNY renewal process, including the Institute’s comprehensive Charter Renewal Handbook and an overview of the requirements for renewal under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), are available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm.

RECOMMENDATION AND SUMMARY DISCUSSION

Recommendation

Full-Term Renewal

The Charter Schools Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Renewal of the Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York and renew its charter for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in kindergarten through 8th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Renewal, with a maximum projected enrollment of 525 students.

The Institute also recommends that the school’s waiver of the SUNY Trustees’ restriction on more than 40 percent of the school trustees being affiliated with another organization (other than another charter school) be continued during the renewal charter term to the extent and for the limited purpose of allowing more than 40 percent or all of the school trustees to be affiliated with Friends of Girls Preparatory Charter School, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation.

Background and Required Findings

In initial renewal reviews, the SUNY Trustees evaluate the strength and effectiveness of a school’s academic program by the degree to which the school has succeeded in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals during the Accountability Period² and by the quality of the instructional program in place at the school during the charter period, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (a subset of the Renewal Benchmarks). In giving weight to both student achievement and the emergent program, this approach provides a balance between an outcomes-based system of accountability in which a school is held accountable for meeting measurable student achievement

¹ The *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees* (revised September 15, 2009) are available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalPractices.doc>.

² For the purpose of reporting student achievement results, the Accountability Period is defined in the SUNY Renewal Practices as the time the Accountability Plan was in effect. In the case of an Initial Renewal, the plan covers the first four years that the school was in operation during the charter period.

results and a determination of the likelihood that the educational program will improve student learning and achievement going forward.

The Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York (“Girls Prep”) has applied for an Initial, Full-Term renewal of five years. The SUNY Renewal Practices provide three possible renewal outcomes for Girls Prep: Full-Term Renewal; Short-Term Renewal; or Non-Renewal. In order to earn a Full-Term Renewal, Girls Prep must demonstrate that it has met the criteria for such a renewal as described in the SUNY Renewal Practices. Specifically, the school must either: (a) have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or coming close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, and have in place at the time of the renewal review an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is generally effective; or (b) have made progress towards meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals and have in place at the time of the renewal review an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is particularly strong and effective.

Based on the Institute’s review of the evidence it gathered and that Girls Prep provided, including, but not limited to, the school’s Application for Renewal, evaluation visits conducted during the charter period, a renewal evaluation visit conducted by the Institute in the last year of the charter period, and the school’s record of academic performance as determined by the extent to which it has met the academic goals in its Accountability Plan, the Institute finds that the school has compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals and has in place an educational program that is generally effective.

Based on all the evidence, the Institute makes the following findings required by the Act. The Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York as described in the Application for Renewal meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations. The school has demonstrated the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter period. Finally, given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in Education Law subdivision 2850(2).

Therefore, in accordance with the standard for Initial Renewal found in the SUNY Renewal Practices, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve Girls Prep’s Application for Charter Renewal and renew the charter for a full-term of five years.

Consideration of School District Comments

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the school district in which the charter school is located regarding the school’s application for renewal. As of the date of this report, no comments were received in response.

Summary Discussion

Academic Success

Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York has consistently met its key Accountability Plan goals in English language arts and mathematics. Having administered the state exams for the first time in 2007-08, the school met its goals that year and again in the 2008-09 school year. In the most recent year, virtually all of the school’s students were proficient on the state English language arts exam.

The school has posted extraordinary results on the state mathematics exam, having met its mathematics goal each year with every tested student scoring at or above the proficient level. Based on limited data, the school has also met its science goal during the Accountability Period. As the school did not enroll students in the grades in which social studies is tested during the Accountability Period, the social studies goal does not yet apply. According to the state's NCLB accountability system, the school is deemed to be in good standing.

Over the last two years of its Accountability Period, Girls Prep has demonstrated consistently strong achievement on the state's English language arts exam. The school has exceeded its targets for absolute proficiency and year-to-year growth, as well as the target set by the state for all public schools under its NCLB accountability system in each year. Girls Prep has also far-outperformed its local community school district and demographically similar schools state-wide.

During the last two years, from the time Girls Preparatory Charter School first began administering the state's mathematics exam, it has posted superlative results. The school surpassed its absolute targets with 100 percent of students scoring at-or-above the proficient level in both years and exceeded the performance target set by the state for all public schools under its NCLB accountability system as well. Each year, Girls Prep has far-outperformed its local community school district and demographically similar schools state-wide.

Girls Prep has strong instructional leadership which sets high expectations for student achievement and teacher performance. The leaders provide teachers with ongoing and systematic support, including regular classroom observations, followed by useful feedback and targeted support. The school has a process for conducting regular teacher evaluations which is being revised to be more performance oriented. The instructional leaders are deliberate and strategic in conducting ongoing review of the delivery of the overall academic program.

To their credit, Girls Prep teachers have high expectations for students that extend beyond strong performance on state assessments to ensuring that students focus on higher-order thinking. Teachers indicated that they are well-supported by the leaders and the school's organizational structure, consisting of a web of pairings with colleagues, which enable them to get frequent advice and guidance and to grow professionally. The integrated support system is made up of a series of dyadic relationships, including mentor-mentee teachers and lead-associate teachers, which establish the building blocks of a career ladder centering on professional development and promotion from within.

Girls Prep has a cohesive assessment system with a well-defined relationship between student work, informal and formal assessments, and planning; all used to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. Throughout the charter period, the school has systematically collected and analyzed assessment results and has made these results available to school leaders, teachers, and members of the school board. Teachers use rubrics effectively to grade writing assignments and project-based assessments. They use the results to improve student performance by adjusting classroom instruction and identifying students for remediation or enrichment. Girls Prep regularly communicates student and school performance results to parents and the community.

Throughout the charter period, Girls Prep has had a clearly defined curriculum in all subjects, including social studies and science, and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards. The curriculum, which is aligned to state standards, includes a writing curriculum that is in the process of becoming well integrated into the literacy program across the respective grades. Teachers are well-supported in what and when to teach in all the core subject areas. They have access to adequate

curricular documents, such as scope and sequence and pacing charts, for guiding their lesson development. In English language arts and mathematics interim assessments provide a tight link to their scope and sequences. Girls Prep has an effective process for reviewing and revising curriculum in the elementary school. Evaluators noted that the process for developing curriculum in the middle school is largely independent of the successful model in place at the elementary school and at the time of the renewal visit was being implemented for the first time. Its effectiveness is yet to be determined.

High quality instruction is evident in most classes throughout Girls Prep; the effectiveness of instruction is maximized as a result of the responsibility and accountability invested in associate and fellow teachers. Teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach. Learning time has generally been maximized and transitions have been efficient. Teachers plan and implement purposeful lessons with objectives aligned to standards and the curriculum. Students are cognitively engaged by rigorous instruction, and instruction often promotes the development of higher-order-thinking and problem-solving skills. Instruction is differentiated through the use of small group instruction across classes within a grade and the effective use of multiple teachers in single classrooms.

Girls Prep is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically. The school has deployed sufficient resources to provide academic and other interventions in order to address the range of students' needs; it has clear and effective procedures for identifying students with disabilities, English language learners, and other struggling students. The Child Study Team provides an effective structure and process for identifying students and developing, implementing and monitoring interventions. The school also maintains a 504 team that is separate from the Child Study Team. Teachers receive sufficient training and support to help them meet the needs of such students. There is effective collaboration between general education and special education teachers to ensure that all students' needs are being met.

Girls Prep promotes a culture of learning and scholarship and has established a safe and orderly environment throughout the school. The school has created a culture where learning is clearly valued and evident; low-level misbehavior is not tolerated in most classrooms. It has a discipline system in place, but due to the consistent use of classroom management techniques, it is rarely needed.

The school has a sustained and cohesive professional development program that relates directly to classroom practice and assists teachers in meeting the needs of students. Weekly school-wide professional development activities are strategically connected to follow-up support for teachers. The school provides adequate training to assist teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and those generally at risk of academic failure. Professional development is differentiated to meet individual teachers' needs at the elementary level.

Girls Prep treats their teachers as developing professionals, providing a clear career path from teaching fellow to teaching associate to lead teacher to specialist or instructional coach to assistant principal to school principal. Each staff member gets a stipend for graduate classes or outside workshops. In response to teacher interest, inquiry groups have been formed and meet regularly. Topics discussed at school-wide professional development meetings are reinforced by coaches who determine if the content of the topic is being effectively implemented in the classroom. Teachers consistently report benefiting from the one-to-one mentor-mentee relationships afforded along the career path.

Organizational Effectiveness and Viability

Girls Prep is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter. Stakeholders are aware of the mission and the school has implemented its key design elements to achieve it. The school engages in a variety of activities and rituals to instill a sense of college preparation in its students. The Application for Renewal indicates that the goal of the approach to introducing the idea of college to its students beginning at the elementary school level is to embed higher education as a natural next step in their development beyond high school. Girls Prep's core values—scholarship, merit, sisterhood, and responsibility—are manifest in displays throughout the school and internalized by the students.

The school has made changes with respect to an optional academic measure contained in its Accountability Plan. Since electing to include an optional measure tracking student performance on a nationally norm referenced (English language arts/mathematics) test in its first year of operation, Girls Prep has modified its assessment program and no longer administers the assessment(s) listed in its optional accountability plan measure. Thus, data are unavailable to evaluate the school's success in achieving the measures. The school discontinued use of the norm-referenced assessment indicated in a student growth measure, instead adopting another norm-referenced test. As a result, the school was unable to determine the extent to which it had met this measure and was therefore unable to report its performance against the measure.

Parents/guardians are satisfied with the school's educational program, culture, teaching staff, and achievement results. Based on the annual parent survey, which remains constant from year-to-year to track changes in responses, the vast majority of parents approve of the quality of the educational program and the level of communication they have with their child's teacher. Parents report feeling welcome at the school. Parents express appreciation for the passionate teaching staff, their high expectations for their daughters, and the accommodations made for working parents. They uniformly report being satisfied with their daughters' academic progress and with their ability to approach teachers or administrators with concerns about their children.

During a parent focus group held at the time of the renewal visit, parents expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the school's educational program, the challenging nature of the school's curriculum, and the school's sense of community and family. They lauded the confidence that the single-sex program infused in the girls.

Each year, the number of families seeking to enroll their daughters at Girls Prep has far exceeded the number of available seats. At the end of the last school year, Girls Prep had received 390 applications for 50 open kindergarten seats and a handful of other seats in the higher grades. As of June 2009, there were 342 students on the school's waitlist. In 2008-09, six percent of the students did not return to the school the following September. (This is the last year for which such data are available.) The school reported that almost all of the non-returning students moved out of state, enrolled in parochial schools or changed schools because of commuting distance.

Girls Prep has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. Day-to-day operations are effectively managed with the leadership team functioning as a cohesive unit. The organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability; each staff member is well aware of the full range of roles and responsibilities. The school has hired and retained quality personnel, putting a career ladder in place to help retain

teachers and develop a leadership cadre. The school has maintained full enrollment with an extensive waitlist.

The Girls Prep board of trustees has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight to the total educational program. The school board has more than adequate skills and expertise including charter school, education, and financial expertise. The school board has had adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school even with a reduction of board meetings to six per year. Reasons cited for the foregoing included the fact that it is easier to obtain a quorum with fewer meetings, there is more time for staff to compile adequate information in response to board inquiries, and more time at meetings for deeper board discussion. The board receives regular written reports from school leadership on academic and operational performance and has its own student performance dashboard. The school board reported good parent participation at board meetings.

The school board understands the core business of the school – student achievement – in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight. The school board has conducted regular written evaluations of the school's leaders and has developed strategic plans over the course of the charter period for growth and replication of the school's instructional model.

The Girls Prep board understands the need for and has engaged in board strategic planning in the form of a board retreat. After the first principal left the school, the school board realized it needed greater communication with teachers and parents as well as planning, and actively addressed those areas. The school board successfully used a consultant to assist in quickly finding a replacement principal, and employed a board search committee to find a middle school principal.

School board membership was fairly steady until a recent revision to the school's charter to engage the services of a newly formed, not-for-profit management company, Public Preparatory Network, Inc. ("public Prep"), that was formed from the school board and staff. As the SUNY Trustees' charter agreements only allow two charter school board members to be affiliated with a not-for-profit management company, several school trustees that would be affiliated with the network needed to resign.

At the time of the renewal visit, the school board was still adjusting to the changes but was cognizant of the potential for conflicts of interest to arise between the board and Public Prep. The board has managed its conflicts with Friends of Girls Preparatory Charter School, Inc. ("Friends of Girls Prep"), a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation that supports the school (including the after-school program offered) and raises substantial funds for the school, which at one time had an overlapping board with the school. After being cited by the Institute for a violation of its charter for the school boards affiliation with the Friends of Girls Prep, the school sought and received a waiver of the SUNY Trustees' 40 percent school board affiliation restriction through a charter revision. The school has also sought and received two facilities-related enrollment reductions and the addition of middle school grades. Facilities are still a key issue for the school board with the school now housed in New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) space.

The school has had a very good compliance record with few complaints. At the time of the renewal inspection visit some minor deficiencies in the school's by-laws, code of ethics, policies and Open Meeting Law compliance were noted and will be addressed through amendment of the renewal application or separately by the Institute. The school board has updated its by-laws and there was evidence that the by-laws were being followed with respect to school trustee terms. There was

adequate evidence of the school's compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in its handling of special education students. While the school had few English language learners (ELLs) in a neighborhood where Spanish is still spoken by many residents, there was evidence that the school has used good faith efforts to attract ELLs.³ Many students admitted to the school tested out of ELL status on the LAB-R exam despite one or both parents speaking Spanish. The board stated that it was in the process of trying to attract more ELLs. Based on the evidence gathered during the charter term (including the period of the school's short-term planning year renewal) and at the time of the renewal inspection, the school appeared to be in general and substantial compliance with all applicable laws rules and regulations.

The Girls Prep board has made adequate use of outside and pro-bono counsel. It had one tort-related lawsuit that was handled appropriately and ultimately settled by the school's insurance carrier with no adverse economic impact on the school. The school board is generally aware of its legal obligations and seeks to consult counsel proactively.

Fiscal Soundness

Girls Prep has operated pursuant to a long-range financial plan over the course of the charter period and has created realistic budgets that are monitored and adjusted appropriately. Annual budgets are developed by the school's director of finance and operations with appropriate input from the head of school, principals, key staff, and school board. Budget variances are routinely analyzed and material variances are appropriately discussed with the head of school and the board of trustees.

The school has maintained appropriate fiscal policies, procedures and controls related to external and internal compliance for cash disbursements, cash receipts, bank reconciliations, payroll, fixed assets, grants/contributions, and the preparation of financial statements. The director of finance works with the head of school and management team, along with the school board to ensure that the policies and procedures are documented and followed by school staff. The school's fiscal year (FY) 2008-09 audit report of internal controls—related to financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations and grants—disclosed no material weaknesses, or instances of non-compliance. The lack of other deficiencies in the reports provides some, but not absolute, assurance that the school has maintained adequate internal controls and procedures.

The school has complied with financial reporting requirements during the charter period. Budget, quarterly and annual financial statement audit reports were filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner. Each of the school's annual financial statement audit reports followed generally accepted accounting principles as required and received an unqualified opinion, indicating that, in the auditor's opinion, the school's financial statements and notes fairly represent, in all material respects, the school's financial position, changes in net assets, and cash flows. The school board reviews and approves the annual financial statement audit report.

³ As outreach to potential English language learners, the school reports: since its first year of operation, it has placed ads in Spanish language newspapers, visited neighborhood Head Start Centers, and distributed fliers in Spanish; since its second year, it has employed a bi-lingual staff member dedicated to recruitment, visited neighborhood Laundromats, and conducted neighborhood mailings in Spanish; since its third year, it has used a recruitment voicemail message in English and Spanish, provided a Spanish prompt in its school phone message, and conducted separate information sessions and tours for Mandarin-speaking and Spanish-speaking families; since the fourth year, additional bilingual staff was hired to answer phones and help at information sessions and a Spanish webpage was added to its website.

The school has maintained adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations and has monitored and successfully managed cash flow. The school completed the FY 2009 school year in stable financial condition and continues to maintain a healthy cash balance. It should be noted that the school has increased cash reserves four out of the five years of the charter term with the one outlying year being FY 2008-09. Actual expenses slightly exceeded actual revenue in FY 2006-07 and 2008-09, contributing to a decrease in cash reserves for 2008-09; a trend the school does not believe will continue. The school has a positive working capital ratio, indicating the school has enough short-term assets to cover immediate liabilities/short-term debt. The school has no major investments and all cash is left in savings and money market accounts to ensure the school has sufficient cash available to pay current bills and other payables that are shortly due. The school has little short- or long-term debt.

Plans for the Next Charter Period

The school has provided all of the key structural elements for a renewal charter and plans are deemed to be reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The school's mission statement has changed slightly during the current charter period. The original mission of the school was:

The mission of Girls Preparatory Charter School is to provide a nurturing single-sex environment and a rigorous education that will enable the girls of Girls Prep to learn to read, write, think critically, and perform mathematically at levels that exceed city-wide averages.

This statement was revised to reflect the school's commitment to their students after they leave the school. The revised mission also reflects the school's pledge to develop students as both scholars and socially responsible individuals. The mission statement of the school during the next charter would be the following:

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

Girls Prep proposes significant educational and organizational changes for the next charter term, namely the addition of a middle school program. Citing a strong record of academic achievement results and the need for an "excellent single-sex education for New York's girls" the school proposes to add one grade each year, reaching a full kindergarten through 8th grade program in 2012-13 with a maximum enrollment of 525 students. The school would continue providing a longer school day and year than the local district, comprised of between 185 -187 instructional days.

In adding a middle school program, the school's proposes to focus on the same key design elements in the next charter period that have enabled it to be successful to date. The proposed key design elements for the next charter period include the following: single-sex education; research-based curriculum and data-driven instruction; low student-teacher ratio; building strong teachers and leaders; family involvement; and, strong school culture.

Members of the Girls Prep board of trustees expressed the intent to continue their service to the school without substantive changes to the school's governance structure for the next charter period.

The school board would coordinate with the sister school, Girls Preparatory Charter School of East Harlem, located in the Bronx, when needed through subcommittees, such as development and fundraising. The current subcommittees of the board, the means of providing oversight and governance, would be unchanged and include the following: assessment; development; finance and audit; and nominating. The board has the requisite skill sets and understanding of its roles and responsibilities to adequately govern the school during the term of the next charter.

Members of the school's founding group and board of trustees have recently created PublicPrep, a non-profit charter management organization whose sole purpose is to manage the two existing Girls Prep schools as well as additional schools that may be created. The school board formally entered into a management agreement with PublicPrep during the 2009-10 school year and the revision was approved by the SUNY Trustees in November of 2009, however, PublicPrep cannot charge the school for services rendered until the revision is finally approved (by the Board of Regents or operation of law) pursuant to the Act. This school board plans to continue this relationship during the next charter period. Public Prep will handle back-office functions, provide support to the educational program including special education and allow the leadership of each school to focus on teaching and learning.

The school will continue to provide instruction in kindergarten through 5th grade at its current location, a New York City Department of Education facility. It is likely that the middle school program will be housed in the same facility. The school does not intend to buy or build their own facility.

Girls Prep has presented a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the term of the next charter that is likely achievable, including adequate budgets that will need to be closely monitored to ensure fiscal stability. The school's plans show an operating deficit each year before accounting for fundraising assumptions, which the school has historically demonstrated the ability to meet. In addition, the school board has recently hired a director of development/fundraising, which should help the school meet its goals in this area. The school has taken a strong strategic approach in budgeting and planning for the next charter period. Due to state deficit problems, and the uncertainty of per-pupil funding, the school has developed a working budget that shows per-pupil funding increasing one to three percent over the next charter term with the higher percentage occurring in the latter years. The director of finance also acknowledged that the school will also work on developing a working budget that will show per-pupil funding flat at the 2009-10 per pupil allocation. Long-range fiscal projections are more susceptible to error than those for a single year. Such projections are subject to revision due to changes in local conditions, objectives, laws and state funding. The school will be required to continually develop and adopt annual budgets based on known per pupil amounts for the districts from which it draws enrollment.

Critical financial needs of the school will also be contingent on student enrollment levels. The school's leaders believe enrollment targets presented within the proposed middle school expansion are achievable based on the school exceeding its enrollment target in 2009-10, along with the need and demand for these three additional grade levels.

To the extent that Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York has achieved its key academic goals, continues to implement an educational program that supports achieving those goals, operates an effective and viable organization, and is fiscally sound, the Institute deems that its plans to continue to implement the educational program as proposed, as well as the addition of a middle school component, during the next charter period are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	January 27, 2004
Date Initial Charter Approved by Board of Regents	March 24, 2004
School Opening Date	August 24, 2005

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2005-06 - 2007-08	333 East 4 th Street New York, NY	All	New York City CSD 1
2008-09 - present	442 East Houston St New York, NY	All	New York City CSD 1

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	PublicPREP	Non-profit Charter Management Organization	Fall 2009-present

Current Mission Statement

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

Current Key Design Elements

• high academic standards in a college preparatory environment;
• a longer school day and year;
• a maximum of 25 students per classroom;
• a rigorous educational approach stressing basic skills, literacy, reading comprehension, critical thinking, math, science, and social studies;
• a balanced education including music, art, yoga, physical education and character development as well as academic rigor
• extensive professional development for teachers, academic specialists provide support, leadership pipeline from teaching fellow to principal;
• school uniforms for students and a dress code for teachers;
• clearly articulated and consistently upheld behavior standards;
• accountability for academic performance as well as attendance and adherence to the uniform policy;
• not labeling students, but rather allowing their individual learning styles to be understood though not used as an excuse;
• strong school values – scholarship, merit, sisterhood and responsibility;
• holding students accountable for their behavior and progress and celebrating their individual accomplishments;
• students are taught good habits regarding nutrition and physical exercise;

- a focus on ethics and personal responsibility; and
- the school is committed to encouraging parental involvement, including classroom volunteers and board representation.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ⁴	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2005-06	80	90	85	K-1	K-1	186
2006-07	140	155	127	K-2	K-2	186
2007-08	200	177	173	K-3	K-3	186
2008-09	260	214	215	K-4	K-4	186
2009-10	248	N/A	261	K-5	K-5	186

Student Demographics

	2006-07 ⁵		2007-08 ⁶		2008-09	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 1 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 1 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment ⁷	Percent of NYC CSD 1 Enrollment ⁸
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	N/A
Black or African American	51%	19%	50%	19%	48%	N/A
Hispanic	42%	51%	46%	48%	37%	N/A
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1%	16%	1%	19%	2%	N/A
White	4%	13%	3%	13%	4%	N/A
Multiracial	1%	0%	0%	0%	8%	N/A
Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities ⁹	4%	N/A	4%	N/A	7%	N/A
Limited English Proficient	0%	10%	1%	12%	2%	N/A
Free/Reduced Lunch						
Eligible for Free Lunch	43%	55%	53%	58%	N/A	N/A
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	29%	7%	20%	8%	N/A	N/A

⁴ 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.)

⁵ Source: 2006-07 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

⁶ Source: 2007-08 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

⁷ Source: 2008-09 Demographics and Limited English Proficient Percentages calculated from BEDS reports submitted at the beginning of the school year. This information is unverified by the schools. It also does not include Free/Reduced Lunch status, but rather categorizes students as "economically disadvantaged." Girls Prep NY has 67% of students that fall into this category.

⁸ Aggregated district data not yet available for 2008-09.

⁹ New York State Education Department does not report special education data. School data is school-reported from charter renewal applications. District data not available for NYC CSD 1.

Current Board of Trustees¹⁰

Board Member Name	Term	Position/Committees
Sarah Robertson	Class 3: 6 years	Chair
Mary Mitchell	Class 2: 5 years	Vice-Chair
Nicole Pullen Ross	Class 3: 6 years	Treasurer
Bryan Lawrence	Class 2: 5 years	Trustee
Paul Vermynen	Class 3: 6 years	Trustee
Laura Weil	Class 2: 5 years	Trustee
Kay Miller	Class 3: 6 years	Trustee
Kim Richardson	Class 1: 4 years	Trustee
Mary Claire Ryan	Class 1: 4 years	Trustee
Lauren Frank	Class 1: 4 years	Trustee

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2004-05 - 2005-06	Nakia Haskins, Principal
2006-07	Nakia Haskins, Principal/Miriam Raccah, Acting Principal
2007-08 - 2009-10 (present)	Anne Lackritz, Principal
2009-10 - present	Kimberly A. Morcate, Middle School Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2005-06	First-Year Visit	Institute	March 14, 2006
2006-07	Second-Year Visit	Institute	March 15, 2007
2007-08	Third-Year Visit	External (RMC Research)	March 24-25, 2008
2008-09	None	N/A	N/A
2009-10	Initial Renewal Visit	Institute	December 15-17, 2009

¹⁰ Source: School renewal application.

ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Background

At the beginning of the charter period the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of English language arts and mathematics, as well as science and social studies. The plan also included an NCLB goal. For each goal in the Accountability Plan specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. Furthermore, the Institute has established a set of required outcome measures that include the following three types: 1) the absolute level of student performance on state examinations; 2) the comparative level of student performance on state examinations; and 3) the growth in student learning according to year-to-year comparisons of grade level cohorts. The following table shows the outcome measures currently required by the Institute in each subject area goal, as well as for the NCLB goal. Schools may have also elected to include additional optional goals and measures in their Accountability Plan.

Summary of Required Goals and Outcome Measures in Elementary/Middle School (K-8) Accountability Plans					
GOAL	Required Outcome Measures				
	Absolute		Comparative		Growth
	75 percent proficient on state exam	Performance Index (PI) meets Annual Measurable Objective (AMO)	Percent proficient greater than that of local school district	School exceeds predicted level of performance compared to similar public schools by small Effect Size	Grade-level cohorts reduce by half the gap between prior year's percent proficient and 75 percent
English Language Arts	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Mathematics	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
Science	✦		✦		
Social Studies	✦		✦		
NCLB	School is deemed in "Good Standing" under state's NCLB accountability system				

The most important criterion for renewal is academic success, which is demonstrated in large part by meeting or coming close to meeting the goals in a school's Accountability Plan. The Institute determines the outcome of a goal by evaluating the multiple measures associated with that goal.

The following presentation indicates the outcome of each of the school's goals, as well as an analysis of the respective measures for each goal during the Accountability Period.¹¹ Italicized text indicates goals or measures as written in the school's Accountability Plan; bold numbers appearing in the tables are the critical values for determining if a measure was achieved in a given year. Aside from required Accountability Plan measures, the following also presents the results of optional measures that the school may have included in its plan.

¹¹ Because the renewal decision is made in the last year of a Charter Period, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of the Charter Period. For initial renewals, the Accountability Period is the first four years of the Charter Period. For subsequent renewals, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous Charter Period through the next to last year of the current Charter Period.

English Language Arts

Accountability Plan Goal: Students will become proficient readers of the English language.

Outcome: Girls Preparatory Charter School has met its English language arts goal.

Analysis of Accountability Plan Measures:

Absolute Measure: <i>For the 2007-08 through 2008-09 school years, 75 percent of third through fifth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year at GPCS will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) examination.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Grade	School Year			
	2005-06¹²	2006-07	2007-08 (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Tested: 69)
3	-	-	80.0	97.7
4	-	-	-	92.0
5	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	80.0	95.7

Girls Prep did not have state testing grades until 2007-08, the third year of its Accountability Period. In 2007-08, when only 3rd graders were tested, 80 percent of students were proficient and the school exceeded its target. In 2008-09, when both 3rd and 4th graders were tested, the school improved its performance substantially, and 96 percent of students were proficient.

Absolute Measure: <i>Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Index	School Year			
	2005-06¹³	2006-07	2007-08 (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Tested: 69)
PI	-	-	180	196
AMO	122	122	133	144

Girls Prep has surpassed the English language arts Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) established by the state's NCLB accountability system during each year of its Accountability Period in which the school has state testing grades. In the most recent year, the schools Performance Index exceeded the AMO by over 50 points.

¹² In 2005-06 New York State implemented English language arts and mathematics exams in grades 3-8. Prior to that, the exams in these subjects were administered only in grades 4 and 8.

¹³ In 2005-06 English language arts and mathematics testing began in grades 3-8, and the Performance Index was henceforth calculated based on the aggregate of all tested students.

Comparative Measure: <i>Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year at GPCS and performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will be greater than that of Community School District 1.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Comparison	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Grade 3)	2008-09 (Grades 3-4)
School	-	-	80.0	95.7
District	-	-	61.3	70.0

Girls Prep has consistently outperformed its local community school district by a wide margin on the state's English language arts exam. In the most recent year, the school's proficiency rate exceeded that of the district by over 25 percentage points.

Comparative Measure: <i>Each year the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State ELA exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Index	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Grade 3) (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Grades 3-4) (Tested: 69)
Predicted	-	-	65.3	73.4
Actual	-	-	80.0	95.7
Effect Size	-	-	1.14	1.81

In comparison to demographically similar schools statewide, Girls Prep has consistently performed better than expected to a large degree and exceeded its Effect Size target each year. In 2007-08, the school exceeded its 0.3 Effect Size target with an Effect Size of 1.14. In 2008-09, the school improved its relative performance and its Effect Size was 1.81.

Growth Measure: <i>For the 2008-09 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least some increase in the current year.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Percent Level 3 & 4	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07¹⁴	2007-08	2008-09 (Grade 4) (N=26)
Baseline	-	-	-	80.8
Target	-	-	-	80.9
Actual	-	-	-	92.3
Cohorts Made Target	-	-	-	(1 of 1)

¹⁴ New York State began administering English language arts and mathematics exams in grades 3-8 in 2005-06, thus year-to-year growth could not be evaluated until 2006-07 when two years' of results were first available.

English language arts growth data first became available for Girls Prep in 2008-09, as only the 3rd grade had been tested in the prior year and no baseline data were available for comparison. In 2008-09, the school's 4th grade cohort achieved its English language arts growth target by posting a proficiency rate of 92 percent and far exceeding its 81 percent target.

Mathematics

Accountability Plan Goal: Girls Prep Charter School students will demonstrate steady progress in the understanding and application of mathematical skills and concepts.

Outcome: Girls Preparatory Charter School has met its mathematics goal.

Analysis of Accountability Plan Measures:

Absolute Measure: <i>For the 2007 – 08 through 2008-09 school year, 75 percent of third through fifth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
	School Year			
Grade	2005-06¹⁵	2006-07	2007-08 (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Tested: 69)
3	-	-	100.0	100.0
4	-	-	-	100.0
5	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	100.0	100.0

Girls Prep has demonstrated extraordinary performance on the state Mathematics exam with every tested student scoring proficient or better in each year the test was administered. Girls Prep did not have state mathematics testing grade in 2005-06 or 2006-07. In 2007-08, when only 3rd grade students were tested, 100 percent of students were proficient. In the most recent year, the school maintained its perfect proficiency rate as 100 percent of students again scored at or above the proficient level.

Absolute Measure: <i>Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State mathematics exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
	School Year			
Index	2005-06¹⁶	2006-07	2007-08 (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Tested: 69)
PI	-	-	200	200
AMO	86	86	102	119

¹⁵ In 2005-06 New York State implemented English language arts and mathematics exams in grades 3-8. Prior to that, the exams in these subjects were administered only in grades 4 and 8.

¹⁶ In 2005-06 English language arts and mathematics testing began in grades 3-8, and the Performance Index was henceforth calculated based on the aggregate of all tested students.

Girls Prep has surpassed the English language arts AMO established by the state's NCLB accountability system during each year of its Accountability Period in which the school has state testing grades. In the most recent year, the schools Performance Index exceeded the AMO by over 80 points.

Comparative Measure: <i>Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year at GPCS, and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Mathematics exam in each tested grade will be greater than that of Community School District 1.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Comparison	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Grade 3)	2008-09 (Grades 3-4)
School	-	-	100.0	100.0
District	-	-	87.1	87.6

Girls Prep has consistently outperformed its local community school district by a wide margin on the state's mathematics arts exam. In the most recent year, the school's proficiency rate exceeded that of the district by nearly 15 percentage points.

Comparative Measure: <i>Each year, the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State Mathematics exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Index	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Grade 3) (Tested: 30)	2008-09 (Grades 3-4) (Tested: 69)
Predicted	-	-	87.8	89.8
Actual	-	-	100.0	100.0
Effect Size	-	-	1.28	1.25

In comparison to demographically similar schools statewide, Girls Prep has consistently performed better than expected to a large degree on the state mathematics exam and exceeded its Effect Size target each year. In 2007-08, the school exceeded its 0.3 Effect Size target with an Effect Size of 1.28. In 2008-09, performance remained nearly level and its Effect Size was 1.25.

Growth Measure: For the 2008-09 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least some increase in the current year				
Results (in percents)				
Percent Level 3 & 4	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07¹⁷	2007-08	2008-09 (Grade 4) (N=26)
Baseline	-	-	-	100
Target	-	-	-	100
Actual	-	-	-	100
Cohorts Made Target	-	-	-	(1 of 1)

Mathematics growth data first became available for Girls Prep in 2008-09, as only the 3rd grade had been tested in the prior year and no baseline data were available for comparison. In 2008-09, the school's 4th grade cohort achieved its mathematics growth target by maintaining the 100 percent proficiency rate achieved in the previous year.

Science

Accountability Plan Goal: Girls Prep Charter School students will demonstrate proficiency relevant to achievement in science.

Outcome: Based on the limited data available, the school met its science goal.

Analysis of Accountability Plan Measures:

Absolute Measure: For the 2008-09 school year, 75 percent of fourth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year at GPCS will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York Science examination.				
Results (in percents)				
Grade	School Year			
	2005-06 (Tested:)	2006-07 (Tested:)	2007-08 (Tested:)	2008-09 (Tested: 25)
4	-	-	-	100.0
8	-	-	-	-

The state's science test is administered annually to 4th and 8th grade students. In 2008-09, when Girls Prep first enrolled students in the 4th grade, 100 percent of students scored proficient or better on the state science exam and the school exceeded its 75 percent target by a wide margin.

¹⁷ New York State began administering English language arts and mathematics exams in grades 3-8 in 2005-06, thus year-to-year growth could not be evaluated until 2006-07 when two years' of results were first available.

Comparative Measure: <i>Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year at GPCS and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Science exam in each tested grade, will be greater than that of Community School District 1.</i>				
Results (in percents)				
Comparison	School Year			
	2005-06 (Grade)	2006-07 (Grade)	2007-08 (Grade)	2008-09 (Grade 4)
School	-	-	-	100.0
District	-	70.0	71.0	NA

While district comparison data for the 2008-09 school year are yet unavailable, Girls Prep's 100 percent proficiency rate exceeds the district's level of performance in each of the two previous years. Assuming district performance remained at a similar level on the 2008-09 exam, the school will have met its target.

Social Studies

As the school did not enroll students in tested grades during the Accountability Period, therefore this goal is not applicable.

NCLB

In addition to meeting its specific subject area goals, the school is expected under No Child Left Behind to make adequate yearly progress towards enabling all students to score at the proficient level on the state English language arts and mathematics exams. In holding charter schools to the same standards as other public schools, the state issues an annual school accountability report that indicates the school's status each year.

Accountability Plan Goal: Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year.

Outcome: The school met the goal. Girls Preparatory Charter School was deemed to be in good standing in each of the four years of the Accountability Period.

Absolute Measure: <i>Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year.</i>				
Status	Results			
	School Year			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Good Standing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Analysis of Additional Evidence

Girls Preparatory Charter School received a letter grade of "A" on its 2008-09 New York City Department of Education (DOE) Progress Report. According to the DOE, overall Progress Report scores are based on school performance in three categories: School Environment, Student Performance and Student Progress, with the greatest emphasis placed on Student Progress. District schools and charter schools authorized by the DOE that receive As and Bs are eligible for rewards while schools that receive a D and F, or C over three years in a row, face possible consequences.

Consistent with the data presented for the Accountability Plan measures listed above, Girls Preparatory Charter School received the highest possible grade in both Student Performance and Student Growth on their Progress Report. These high marks reflect the school's perfect proficiency rate on the state mathematics exam, its near perfect rate on the English language arts exam and strong year to year growth in student proficiency from 2007-08 to 2008-09 on the English language arts exam.