



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Renewal Report:

Community Partnership Charter School

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INTRODUCTION

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”) authorizes the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “Board of Trustees”) to grant charters for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools. Charter schools provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independent of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- improve student learning and achievement;
- increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; and
- provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹

In order to assist them in their responsibilities under the Act, the Board of Trustees authorized the establishment of the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York (the “Institute”). Among its duties, the Institute is charged with evaluating charter schools’ applications for renewal and providing its resulting findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

This report is the primary vehicle by which the Institute transmits to the Board of Trustees its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s renewal application, and more broadly, 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 “State University Renewal Practices”).² More information regarding this report is contained in the “Reader’s Guide” that follows.

Statutory and Regulatory Considerations

Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years. There is no limitation upon the number of times that a charter may be renewed. The Act prescribes the following requirements for a charter school renewal application, whether such application be for an initial renewal or any subsequent renewals:

¹ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

² The *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees* (revised December 13, 2005) are available at www.newyorkcharters.org.

- a report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- a detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements; and
- indications of parent and student satisfaction.³

The Institute's processes and procedures mirror these requirements and meet the objectives of the Act.⁴

As a charter authorizing entity, the Board of Trustees can renew a charter so long as the Trustees can make each of the following findings ("Required Findings"):

- the charter school described in the application meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; and
- granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁵

Where the Board of Trustees approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review.⁶ The Regents may approve the proposed charter or return the proposed charter to the Board of Trustees with the Regents' comments and recommendation(s). In the former case, the charter will then issue and become operational on the day the current charter expires. In the latter case (return to the Board of Trustees), the Board of Trustees must review the returned proposed charter in light of the Regents' comments and respond by resubmitting the charter (with or without modification) to the Regents, or by abandoning the proposed charter. Should the Board of Trustees resubmit the charter, the Regents have thirty days to act to approve it. If they do not approve the proposed charter, it will be deemed approved and will issue by operation of law; as above, it will become operational upon expiration of the current charter.⁷

Process for Subsequent Renewals

While that renewal process formally commences with the submission of a renewal application, a school must work to make the case for renewal from the time it was last renewed. From that point, the school, just as it built its case for renewal during its initial charter, must build its case for

³ § 2851(4) of the Act.

⁴ Further explication of these policies and procedures is available on the Charter Schools Institute's website. See www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsRenewOverview.htm.

⁵ See § 2852(2) of the Act.

⁶ See § 2852(5) of the Act.

⁷ See §§ 2852(5-a) and (5-b) of the Act.

renewal anew by setting educational goals and thereafter implementing a program that will allow them to meet those goals.

Under the State University's accountability cycle, a school that has previously been renewed one or more times, will have in place during the present charter period a plan setting forth the goals for the school's educational program (and other measures if the school desires) (the "Accountability Plan").⁸ Progress toward each goal is determined by specific measures. Both goals and measures, while tailored in part to each school's program, must be consistent with the Institute's written guidelines. The Board of Trustees approves each Accountability Plan when it approves the school's renewal application, though the Institute may require changes to that plan before entering into a proposed charter with the school.

The charter school is required to provide an annual update on its progress in meeting its Accountability Plan goals and measures (the "Accountability Plan Progress Report").⁹ The progress report not only allows the school to provide all stakeholders with a clear sense of the school's progress, but forces the school to focus on specific academic outcomes. In the same vein, both the Institute and the State Education Department conduct visits to the school on a periodic basis. The main purpose of the Institute's visits is to determine the progress the school is making in implementing successfully a rigorous academic program that will permit the school to meet its Accountability Plan goals and measures and to provide feedback to the school on the Institute's findings. Reports and de-briefings for the school's board or leadership team are designed to communicate the school's progress, its strengths and its weaknesses. Where possible, and where it is consistent with its oversight role, the Institute identifies potential avenues for improvement. To further assist the school in this regard, the Institute may contract with third-party, school inspection experts to conduct a school visit to look specifically at the strength of the school's case for renewal. The number, breadth and scope of visits that the Institute conducts depend on the length of the charter period that the school was granted as well as the school's performance on standardized assessments.

By the start of the last year of a school's charter (as set forth above), the school must submit an application for charter renewal, setting forth the evidence required by law and the Board of Trustees. Applicant charter schools are asked to formulate and report evidence of success in answer to four renewal questions:

- Is the school an academic success?
- Is the school an effective, viable organization?
- Is the school fiscally sound?
- What are the school's plans for the term of the next charter and are they reasonable, feasible and achievable?

The application is reviewed by Institute staff. The staff also conducts a desk audit to both gather additional evidence as well as verify the evidence the school has submitted. This audit includes examination of the school's charter, including amendments, Accountability Plan, Accountability

⁸ See <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsAccountability.htm> for detailed information on Accountability Plan guidelines.

⁹ See <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/schoolsAccountability.htm> for a model Accountability Plan Progress Report.

Plan Progress Reports, Annual Reports and internal documents (such as school handbooks, policies, memos, newsletters, and school board meeting minutes). Institute staff also examines audit reports, budget materials, and reports generated over the term of the school's charter both by the Institute and the State Education Department.

Thereafter, the Institute conducts a site visit to the school. Based on a review of each school's application for charter renewal, the leader of the Institute's renewal visit team works with the school's leadership to design a visit schedule and request any additional documentation the team may require to ensure that analysis of the school's progress is complete. A subsequent renewal visit generally is focused on discussions and interviews with senior administrative staff and the school's board of trustees. In contrast with renewal visits during the initial renewal review, the renewal team does not conduct a comprehensive review of the educational program using the Institute's educational renewal benchmarks. However, though less comprehensive in this regard than an initial renewal review, renewal visit team members do visit classes, observe lessons, examine student work and interview staff members to get a sense of the educational program and determine if there are material deficiencies.

In subsequent renewal reviews, and in contrast with initial renewal reviews, the State University evaluates the strength and effectiveness of a school's academic program almost exclusively by the degree to which the school has succeeded in meeting its academic program Accountability Plan goals. In other words, educational soundness and the likelihood that the school will improve student learning and achievement is determined almost wholly by the track record of student achievement that the school has amassed over the life of the charter (which includes where appropriate prior charter periods). This approach is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and a concomitant increase in the quantity and quality of the data set of student assessment outcomes that the school has generated, as well as the fact that the school has successfully navigated the start-up phase of its operational life. It is also consistent with the Act's purpose of moving from a rules-based to an outcome-based system of accountability in which schools are held accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

In such cases where a school has generated a set of student assessment outcomes that would lead the Charter Schools Institute to be able to make the Required Findings that are related to academic success, but the Institute's renewal site visit generates overwhelming and incontrovertible evidence that the academic program is in disarray and that the structures, personnel and practices that led to such positive assessment outcomes are, in material respect, no longer in place (through an assessment of the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks), the Institute's recommendations and the Board of Trustees' decisions may take account of such countervailing evidence, and such countervailing evidence if of sufficient strength and weight may affect the Institute's recommendations and the Board of Trustees' decisions.

As with initial renewal reviews, the evidence that the Institute gathers is structured by a set of benchmarks that are grouped under the four renewal application questions listed above. These benchmarks are linked to the Accountability Plan structure and the charter renewal requirements in the Act; many are also based on the correlates of effective schools.¹⁰ However, as indicated above, in subsequent renewal reviews the Institute does not generally utilize the qualitative indicators that relate directly to the quality of the educational program to inform its recommendation on renewal

¹⁰ See <http://www.effectiveschools.com>.

(except in exceptional circumstances). The Institute believes that the inspectors' observations and conclusions about the school provide the school board and leadership with valuable information that only an external inspection team is able to present to the school. As such, the Institute offers observations and insights regarding qualitative aspects of the school's academic program (specifically under Benchmarks 1B – 1F) to the school under separate cover. These are developed using an array of evidence collected during the school's renewal visit, including interviews with the school's leaders, teachers, parents and students; documentary evidence; and classroom observations. Although the information provided in that letter is not intended as a prescription, the Institute expects the school to review thoroughly the issues highlighted and use them, as they deem appropriate, to assist in guiding the school's leadership team to further develop its academic program or other aspects of the school.

Following the visit, the Institute's renewal team finalizes the analysis of all evidence generated regarding the school's performance. The Institute's renewal benchmarks are discussed and the lead writer uses the team's evidence and analysis to generate comments under each renewal benchmark. The team members' completed benchmark comments present a focus for discussion and a summary of the findings. The benchmarks are not used as a scorecard, do not have equal weight, and support—but do not individually or in limited combination provide—the aggregate analysis required for the final renewal recommendation. The Institute then prepares a draft report and provides a copy to the school for its review and comment. The draft contains the findings, discussion and the evidence base for those findings, as well as a preliminary recommendation.

The following outcomes are available to schools that are applying for subsequent renewal. Each outcome contains specific criteria that a school must meet in order to be eligible for that outcome. These criteria are keyed to one or more of the Required Findings. In addition to any specific criteria set forth in a particular outcome, a school, to be eligible for any type of renewal, must be able to provide evidence that permits the State University to make *each* of the Required Findings:

- *Early Renewal*: available to any school that, over the life of the school, has consistently met or come close to meeting its academic program Accountability Plan goals. A school that is able to make that showing is eligible to apply for Early Renewal four years from the time it applied for its prior renewal.
- *Full-Term Renewal*: available to any school that has been previously renewed and that has consistently met or come close to meeting its academic program Accountability Plan goals during the present charter period.
- *Renewal with Conditions*: available to a school (a) that otherwise meets the standards for Full-Term Renewal as regards its educational program, but that has material educational, legal, fiscal or organizational deficiencies that cannot be fully corrected by the time of renewal – so long as such deficiencies are not fatal to the State University making each of the Required Findings, or that (b) meets the standards for Full-Term Renewal as regards some portion of its educational program, but requires conditions to improve the academic program. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades served. Conditions may also be imposed that are consonant with the requirements of NCLB as to schools requiring corrective action. Where appropriate, conditions may be imposed which, if not met by

the school, shall be deemed a substantial and material violation of the school's charter and therefore expose the school to probation or revocation.

- *Restructuring Renewal*: available to a school that does not meet the standards for any type of renewal but which submits plans to the Board of Trustees for a restructuring of the school that legally commits the school to implementing a wholesale restructuring of the education corporation, including, but not necessarily limited to, a new board of trustees, administrative team, academic program, organizational structure, and such plans, if implemented, would lead to the school likely meeting its standardized assessment measures set forth in its Accountability Plan during the next charter period. Whether to permit a school to submit an application for a Restructuring Renewal is at the discretion of the State University.
- *Non-Renewal*: where a school does not present a case for any kind of renewal, the charter will not be renewed and the charter will be terminated upon its expiration.

Note that *Short-Term Renewal* is not available as an option to schools that have been previously renewed.

Upon receiving a school's comments on the draft report, the Institute reviews its draft, makes any changes it determines are necessary and appropriate and renders its findings and recommendations in their final form. The report is then transmitted to the Committee on Charter Schools of the Board of Trustees, the other members of the Board of Trustees and the school itself. This report is the product of that process.

READER'S GUIDE

This renewal report contains the following sections: Introduction, Reader's Guide, School Description, Recommendations and Executive Summary, and Renewal Benchmarks. As this guide, the Introduction, and School Description speak for themselves, no guidance is provided for these sections. Guidance as to the remaining sections is set forth below.

Recommendations and Executive Summary

The Institute's Recommendations are the end result of its review process. In this section, the Institute provides not only its recommendation as to whether the charter should be renewed, but the recommended terms of any renewal, *i.e.*, grades and number of students it is recommended the school be authorized to serve, conditions under which the charter is renewed, *etc.* Following the recommendations themselves is a short executive summary that lays out in abbreviated form reasons for the recommendation as well as the findings that support the recommendation.

In addition to discussing the recommendations themselves (and any conditions made part of those recommendations), the executive summary also discusses the findings required by subdivision 2852(2) of the Education Law, including whether the school, if renewed, is likely to improve student learning and achievement.

Renewal Benchmarks

The Renewal Benchmark section contains the renewal benchmarks that the Institute uses in subsequent renewals, together with a review of the pertinent evidence gathered during the renewal cycle (both at the school and through Institute staff's desk audit of the school's file). In a subsequent renewal report, depending on whether the preliminary recommendation is for renewal or non-renewal of the school's charter, the evidence in response to the first renewal question ("Is the school an academic success?") will be provided somewhat differently. If the preliminary recommendation is for renewal, with or without conditions, the report will contain a full discussion of the school's academic performance, per Benchmark 1A. However, if the renewal visit team has any additional observations and insights regarding the school's attainment of the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, 1B – 1F, that information will be provided in a separate letter to the school's board of trustees. If the preliminary recommendation is for non-renewal, the report will contain not only the full discussion of the school's academic performance, but also a discussion of the evidence related to the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, 1B – 1F. In all cases, the subsequent renewal report will address the evidence gathered and analyzed regarding the school's organizational (governance and legal) and fiscal performance as viewed through the benchmarks under Questions 2 and 3. Also, in all cases, the initial and subsequent renewal reports will include discussion of the benchmarks contained under Question 4 ("What are the school's plans for the term of the next charter and are they reasonable, feasible and achievable?").

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

The Community Partnership Charter School (CPCS) was approved by the State University Board of Trustees in January 2000 and by the Board of Regents in April of that year. The school opened in the fall of 2000 serving an initial enrollment of 100 students in Kindergarten and first grade. At that time, the school was located in the carriage house of a refurbished state armory at 171 Clermont in the Clinton Hill / Fort Greene section of Brooklyn (CSD13). In September 2003, the school outgrew that space and split between two locations, with grades 2 and 3 housed in PS 9, located at 80 Underhill Avenue, and kindergarten, and grades 1 and 4 remaining at 171 Clermont. In August 2004, the entire school moved, relocating to the PS 270 school building, a New York City Department of Education (DOE) facility next to a public playground. The school added one additional grade in each of the 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 school years. In 2004-2005, the CPCS enrolled 300 students in grades K-5.

In February of 2005, the Board of Trustees granted CPCS a short-term renewal for a period of two years, through and including July 31, 2007, with authority limited to providing instruction in grades K-5 with a maximum enrollment of 500 students. The school enrolled 300 students in grades K-5 in the 2005-06 school year and anticipates the same number of students in 2006-07.

Community Partnership Charter School is one of two charter schools supported by the Beginning with Children Foundation (the second school, also located in Brooklyn, is the Beginning with Children Charter School, authorized by the New York City Schools' Chancellor). CPCS maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the Foundation for services in the following areas: research and assessment; business support services, accountability/compliance; development; technology; public relations/media; and outreach/advocacy. The Beginning with Children Foundation was established in 1989 by Joe and Carol Reich to: "...effect positive change in the public school system through the staunch belief that 'all children can learn.'"

The school's mission statement is as follows:

At the Community Partnership Charter School, families, educators, and community members join together in creating a strong academic base in which students learn to read, write, and perform mathematically at levels that exceed citywide averages. Students will be expected to achieve these high levels in an environment that values kindness and respect.

It should be noted that in its most recent Application for Subsequent Renewal, the school proposes a modification to the mission statement so that it more appropriately aligns with the goals in its Accountability Plan and overall high expectations for student success:

At the Community Partnership Charter School, families, educators and community members join together to create a learning environment that fosters high academic achievement which exceeds the New York State performance standards. An enriched curriculum and dynamic partnerships between the school, families, and community enable all students to become life long learners and active citizens who value kindness and respect.

The academic program at CPCS has evolved over time with several substantial changes implemented in the 2005-06 school year. The school developed interim internal assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts aligned to the New York State Standards to support assessment-driven

instruction in the classroom. While the school continued to use the McGraw-Hill mathematics program, it began implementing the Houghton Mifflin Reading 2005 program. CPCS students receive 45 minutes per week of instruction in the technology lab beginning in kindergarten, with instructional time increasing to 60 minutes per week for grades 3-5.

School Year (2006-07)

Per the Application for Subsequent Renewal, the daily schedule results in an extra 100 minutes per day of instructional time for CPCS students compared to the 5 hours per day mandated by State law. The school delivers 174.5 days of instruction.

School Day (2006-07)

8:20 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 6 hours and 40 minutes of instruction per day plus one hour for lunch.

Enrollment

	Original Chartered Enrollment	Approved Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment¹¹	Original Chartered Grades	Approved Grades Served	Actual Grades Served	Complying
2000-01	100	100	100	K-1	K-1	K-1	Yes
2001-02	150	150	150	K-2	K-2	K-2	Yes
2002-03	200	200	200	K-3	K-3	K-3	Yes
2003-04	250	250	250	K-4	K-4	K-4	Yes
2004-05	300	300	300	K-5	K-5	K-5	Yes
2005-06	300	300	300	K-5	K-5	K-5	Yes
2006-07	300	300	288	K-5	K-5	K-5	Yes

¹¹ Actual enrollment per the Institute's Official Enrollment Table. Note that the SED 2004-05 Report card, upon which the Free and Reduced lunch figures (below) are calculated cites a slightly different enrollment number for 2004-05 of 293.

	2002–03		2003–04		2004–05	
Race / Ethnicity	No. of Students	% of Enroll.	No. of Students	% of Enroll.	No. of Students	% of Enroll.
American Indian, Alaskan, Asian, or Pacific Islander	1	0.5%	1	0.4%	1	0.3%
Black (Not Hispanic)	174	87.0%	233	93.2%	266	90.8%
Hispanic	20	10.0%	14	5.6%	23	7.8%
White (Not Hispanic)	5	2.5%	2	0.8%	3	1.0%

Source: NYSED 2004-05 Report Card

	2002–03		2003–04		2004–05	
Free / Reduced Lunch	No. of Students	% of Enroll.	No. of Students	% of Enroll.	No. of Students	% of Enroll.
Eligible for Free Lunch	134	67.0%	159	63.6%	158	53.9%
Eligible for Reduced Lunch	29	14.5%	44	17.6%	60	20.5%

Source: NYSED 2004-05 Report Card

School Charter History

Charter Year	School Year	Year of Operation	Evaluation Visit	Feedback to School	Other Actions Taken
1 st Charter – 1 st Year	2000-01	1 st	Yes	Evaluation Report	None
1 st Charter – 2 nd Year	2001-02	2 nd	Yes	Evaluation Report	None
1 st Charter – 3 rd Year	2002-03	3 rd	Yes	Evaluation Report	None
1 st Charter – 4 th Year	2003-04	4 th	No		
1 st Charter – 5 th Year	2004-05	5 th	Yes	Initial Renewal Visit, Summary of Findings	Granted Short-Term Renewal to run through 2007
2 nd Charter – 1 st Year	2005-06	6 th	No		
2 nd Charter – 2 nd Year	2006-07	7 th	Yes	Subsequent Renewal Report	Renewal Visit Conducted in Oct 2006 Recommended for Full-Term, Five Year Renewal

RECOMMENDATION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendation: Full-Term Five-Year Renewal

The Charter Schools Institute recommends that the State University Board of Trustees approve the application for renewal of the Community Partnership Charter School and renew the charter of Community Partnership Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through fifth grades in such configuration as set forth in its application, with a maximum enrollment of 300 students.

Required Findings

In sum, Community Partnership Charter School is an educationally sound entity that the Institute finds will increase student learning and achievement during the next charter period. It is organizationally effective and viable, as well as fiscally sound. Based on all the evidence submitted in its past record and as described in the application for subsequent renewal, the school will be operated in a manner consistent with the Charter Schools Act and other applicable laws, rules, regulations and its proposed charter. Finally, given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years will materially further each and every purpose of the Charter Schools Act. Accordingly, the Institute recommends the charter be renewed for a full term of five years.

Summary Discussion

Academic Success

In order for a charter school that has been previously renewed to be eligible for a full-term, five year renewal, that school must provide evidence that it has consistently met or come close to meeting its academic program Accountability Plan goals during the present charter period. It must also demonstrate that it is, at the time of renewal, a fiscally and organizationally sound entity and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law. Further it must demonstrate that its plans for the next charter period are reasonable, feasible and achievable, and that approving the renewal application will materially further the purposes of the Charter Schools Act.

During the charter period,¹² Community Partnership Charter School (CPCS) has met or come close to meeting the academic goals set in its Accountability Plan and has demonstrated steady

¹² For the purpose of reporting student achievement results, charter period is defined as the time the Accountability Plan was in effect. In the case of a two year subsequent renewal, the plan covers two annual data reporting cycles: the one subsequent to the initial renewal decision and the one prior to the subsequent renewal decision. This period represents the last year of a school's first charter and the first year of its second charter.

progress in academic attainment. CPCS has shown consistent improvement in ELA. In 2004-05, the first year of the charter period, approximately half of fourth grade students were proficient on the state ELA exam, an increase of 20 percentage points from the previous year.¹³ In 2005-06, CPCS came close to meeting its absolute measure for the first time. The school did not perform as well as the district in 2004-05 but outperformed the district by a good margin in 2005-06. In comparison to similar schools statewide, while CPCS performed significantly worse than predicted in 2004-05, it performed better than predicted in 2005-06, coming close to meeting the measure.

CPCS met its mathematics goal in both years of the charter period. The school met its absolute measure of student proficiency on the state mathematics exam in both years, and outperformed the local district by at least 12 percentage points. It also performed better than predicted in comparison to similar schools statewide, although to a smaller degree in 2005-06 than in the previous year.

In addition, by the final year of the charter period, the school achieved its goals in science and social studies.

CPCS recognizes the value of assessment and appears to have a broad sense of the ways in which assessment should influence instruction. Teachers and school leaders have access to a large amount of testing data from the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) as well as baseline assessments. In addition, school leaders have developed a system of interim assessments that has been piloted, reflected upon with teacher input and refined to better match state assessments. While teachers appear to understand the mechanics of the assessment system and indicated that they understand the potential value of using assessment data to drive instruction, they are not yet able to do so effectively.

The school has created a series of guiding curricular documents including year-long pacing calendars, curriculum crosswalks, scope and sequences aligned to the New York State performance standards, subject-specific overviews, and tools to support teachers in using the curricular materials. These tools are readily accessible to teachers and at the time of the renewal visit there was evidence that teachers used these materials in lesson planning.

The school's leader has delineated the school's goals and expectations through the *Culture of Excellence*. Several teachers indicated that the *Culture of Excellence* is both necessary and unifying. Additionally, the teachers described the *Culture* as providing a structure that uses a common language and approach for various aspects of school function designed to improve student achievement. These teachers reported receiving support in adopting the initiatives of the school leader and the administrative team

The school has invested significant resources in an in-house professional development program, which includes individualized goals, weekly grade level meetings and whole school staff development supported by two full-time staff developers. While teachers do appear to be knowledgeable about the curriculum, the effect of this professional development system on

¹³ Only fourth grade was tested in 2004-05. The results for 2005-06 are for grades 3-5.

teachers' instructional skills is unclear after the one-day renewal visit. Classroom observations reveal that the teaching staff, many of whom have little experience, have substantial needs in the areas of classroom management and pedagogy. These fundamental day-to-day needs of the novice teachers have not yet been met.

Organizational Effectiveness and Viability

The school has fulfilled its mission in regard to an academic program that prepares students to outperform district averages. In addition, the school continues to place great emphasis on kindness and respect.

The school's board of trustees clearly understands that the core work of the school is student achievement and has committed to creating a "sense of urgency" since the initial renewal two years ago. The board receives regular reports in writing from the school leadership on key indicators of the school's academic progress. Furthermore, the board has an established procedure for evaluating the school director.

The Institute found evidence that CPCS is an effective and viable organization in terms of its corporate governance and in meeting legal requirements. With largely minor exceptions the school appears to be in general and substantial compliance with applicable law, rules and regulations as well as its by-laws and charter. Since the time of the school's last renewal, it has put in place effective systems, policies and controls for ensuring that both the terms of its charter and applicable laws and regulations are met with only a few policy exceptions. Review of school board minutes and other evidence demonstrated that the school's governance structures are sound and sustainable. The potential conflict of interest inherent in its relationship with the Beginning with Children Foundation has not interfered with the school's operations and has been properly managed by the school's board of trustees, although it could improve transparency in this regard.

Fiscal Soundness

The school completed the 2005-06 school year in stable and improved financial condition and has been generally stable throughout its existence. The school's overall fiscal strength has been enhanced by its shared use agreement with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), whereby the school receives space for \$1 per year. The school has no long-term debt and throughout its renewal charter period has generated adequate cash flow to support operations. While the school has demonstrated a capacity for fundraising, for the past two years it has not needed to provide additional support to meet operating expenses. The school has never been cited for any material financial or internal control weaknesses as part of its annual audits. The school has been timely in meeting its financial reporting requirements and such reporting has been complete and accurate with minor exceptions.

The school has successfully operated in a fiscally sound manner in its current grade configuration and is highly likely to continue to do so assuming continued access to a New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) facility. The school has presented a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the proposed new charter period. In addition, based on its most recent application round and waiting list, the school has demonstrated a sufficient level of enrollment demand to meet the projected enrollment for the next charter period.

RENEWAL BENCHMARKS

Evidence Category	Benchmarks
	Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?
Benchmark 1A Academic Attainment & Improvement	<p>1A.1 English Language Arts: The school meets or has come close to meeting the English Language Arts goal in its Accountability Plan over the term of its charter.</p> <p>1A.2 Mathematics: The school meets or has come close to meeting the mathematics goal contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of its charter.</p> <p>1A.3 Science: The school meets or has come close to meeting the science goal contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of its charter.</p> <p>1A.4 Social Studies: The school meets or has come close to meeting the social studies goal contained in its Accountability Plan over the term of its charter.</p> <p>1A.5 NCLB: The school has made adequate yearly progress as required by NCLB.</p>

Academic Attainment & Improvement

During the charter period,¹⁴ Community Partnership Charter School (CPCS) has demonstrated steady progress in academic attainment and has met or come close to meeting the academic goals set in its Accountability Plan. It met its mathematics goal during both years, and showed improvement in English language arts (ELA), as well as in science and social studies, such that it achieved its goals in these subjects by the final year of the charter period.

Accountability Plan Academic Goals

In its Accountability Plan, the school established academic goals in the key subjects of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, as well as science and social studies. For each goal there are specific outcome measures to demonstrate academic success. These outcome measures include the following three required types: 1) the absolute level of student performance on state examinations; 2) the comparative level of student performance on state examinations; and 3) the value-added to

¹⁴ For the purpose of reporting student achievement results, 'charter period' is defined as the time the Accountability Plan was in effect. In the case of a two year subsequent renewal, the plan covers two annual data reporting cycles: the one subsequent to the initial renewal decision and the one prior to the subsequent renewal decision. This period represents the last year of a school's first charter and the first year of its second charter.

student learning according to year-to-year comparisons of student cohort performance on a school-selected standardized test (in reading and math only). The following table shows the required outcome measures for each subject area goal.

Type of Measure	Required Accountability Plan Outcome Measure	Goal			
		ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
Absolute	75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State exam.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.	✓	✓		
Comparative	Each year the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year and are performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than the local school district.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Each year, the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State 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.	✓	✓		
Value Added	Grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on a nationally normed test and an NCE of 50 in the current spring. If a grade level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	✓	✓		

Besides the required outcome measures under each subject area goal and a required NCLB outcome measure, the school may also have included additional self-selected academic outcome measures as part of its Accountability Plan. As the basis for determining if a school has met its goals, the various required and optional outcome measures provide the framework for evaluating the school's performance and addressing the sub-sections of this benchmark. The following tables indicate the specific outcomes under each of the goals and measures contained in the school's Accountability Plan for the charter period.¹⁵

English Language Arts Goal: *CPCS students will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.*

CPCS has shown steady improvement in ELA. In 2004-05, the first year of the charter period, approximately half of fourth grade students were proficient on the state ELA exam, an increase of 20 percentage points from the previous year.¹⁶ In 2005-06, CPCS came close to meeting its absolute measure for the first time. Similarly, the school did not perform as well as the district in 2004-05 but outperformed the district by a good margin in 2005-06. In comparison to similar schools statewide, CPCS performed significantly worse than predicted in 2004-05, but performed better than predicted in 2005-06, coming close to meeting the measure. In both years of the charter period the school not only met the criterion for aggregate ELA performance under the state's NCLB accountability system but also showed improvement each year. In terms of the value-added measure,¹⁷ while data is unavailable for the first year of the charter period, in the second year all five cohorts met their targeted gains and the school overall achieved grade level proficiency.

¹⁵ Bold numbers appearing in the tables are the critical values for determining if a measure was met in a given year.

¹⁶ Only fourth grade was tested in 2004-05. The results for 2005-06 are for grades 3-5.

¹⁷ Notwithstanding the steady overall progress, the evidence does not show that students who are enrolled for two or more years achieved at higher levels on the state exam than those who were enrolled for less time.

Absolute Measures		Results (in percents)		
Each year, 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. ¹⁸	Grade	School Year		
		2004-05 (N=38)	2005-06 (N=111)	
	3	-	67.4	
	4	47.4	53.1	
	5	-	63.9	
	All	-	62.1	
Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State ELA exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system. ¹⁹	Index	School Year		
		2004-05 (Grade 4 only) (N=45)	2005-06 (Grades 3-5) (N=139)	
	PI	138	154	
	AMO	131	122	
Comparative Measures		Results (in percents)		
A higher proportion of students who have been enrolled for at least two years will score on or above level 3 on the New York State English Language Arts Examination than students in the local school district. ²⁰	Comparison	School Year		
		2004-05 (Grade 4)	2005-06 (Grades 3-5)	
	School	48.7	62.1	
	District	53.1	52.6	
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 a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. ²¹	Analysis	School Year		
		2004-05 (Grade 4) (N=44)	2005-06 (Grades 3-5) (N=139)	
	Predicted	59.5	61.3	
	Actual	52.3	63.3	
	Effect Size	-0.41	0.11	

¹⁸ New York State administered ELA exams to students only in grades 4 and 8 until the 2005-06 school year when it began testing students in grades 3-8.

¹⁹ PI is calculated by adding the percent of students in all tested grades who are performing at Levels 2, 3 & 4 to the percent at Levels 3 & 4. Beginning in 2005-06 the aggregate PI for all tested grades is compared to a single AMO rather than comparing the PI of each tested to grade to an AMO specific to that grade.

¹⁹ The percentages compare the aggregate of all students performing at Levels 3 & 4 in tested grades who have been enrolled for two or more years in the charter school to the aggregate of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

¹⁹ Starting in 2004-05, the Institute conducts this Comparative Performance Analysis of the school's actual performance in relation to its predicted performance based on the performance and free-lunch statistics of all New York State schools with the same grades. This complex and fair statistical analysis provides an opportunity to see where an individual school stands compared to demographically similar schools across the state. A small Effect Size is 0.3 or greater. Please note: this analysis is based on free-lunch statistics from 2004-05, the most current ones available.

²⁰ The percentages compare the aggregate of all students performing at Levels 3 & 4 in tested grades who have been enrolled for two or more years in the charter school to the aggregate of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

²¹ Starting in 2004-05, the Institute conducts this Comparative Performance Analysis of the school's actual performance in relation to its predicted performance based on the performance and free-lunch statistics of all New York State schools with the same grades. This complex and fair statistical analysis provides an opportunity to see where an individual school stands compared to demographically similar schools across the state. A small Effect

Value-Added Measures	Results	
Each year grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	School Year	
	MEAN NCE	2004-05 ²² 2005-06 (Grades 1-5) (N=179)
	Baseline	- 48.1
	Target	- 49.1
	Actual	- 50.5
	Cohorts Made Target	- (5 of 5)

Mathematics Goal: *CPCS students will become proficient in the understanding and application of mathematical skills and concepts.*

CPCS met its mathematics goal in both years of the charter period; however, its performance declined slightly in the second year. The school met its absolute measure of student proficiency on the state mathematics exam in both years; likewise, it met the criterion for aggregate mathematics performance under the state's NCLB accountability system. In both years the school outperformed the local district by at least 12 percentage points. It also performed better than predicted in comparison to similar schools statewide, although to a smaller degree in 2005-06 than in the previous year. In terms of its value-added measure, CPCS achieved its targeted gain in 2005-06, although its average performance remained below grade level.

Absolute Measures	Results (in percents)	
Each year, 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Math examination. ²³	School Year	
	Grade	2004-05 (N=38) 2005-06 (N=110)
	3	- 88.1
	4	81.6 75.0
	5	- 61.1
	All	- 75.5
Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State Math exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system. ²⁴	School Year	
	Index	2004-05 (Grade 4) (N=45) 2005-06 (Grades 3-5) (N=140)
	PI	180 166
	AMO	142 86

Size is 0.3 or greater. Please note: this analysis is based on free-lunch statistics from 2004-05, the most current ones available.

²² CPCS introduced a new norm-referenced exam in 2004-05 so comparison to the previous year is not possible.

²³ New York State administered Math exams to students only in grades 4 and 8 until the 2005-06 school year when it began testing students in grades 3-8.

²⁴ PI is calculated by adding the percent of students in all tested grades who are performing at Levels 2, 3 & 4 to the percent at Levels 3 & 4. Beginning in 2005-06 the aggregate PI for all tested grades is compared to a single AMO rather than comparing the PI of each tested to grade to an AMO specific to that grade.

Comparative Measures	Results (in percents)		
A higher proportion of students who have been enrolled for at least two years will score on or above level 3 on the New York State Math Exam than students in the local school district . ²⁵	Comparison	School Year	
		2004-05 (Grade 4)	2005-06 (Grades 3-5)
	School	81.6	75.5
	District	68.0	63.5
Each year, the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State Math 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. ²⁶	Analysis	School Year	
		2004-05 (Grade 4) (N=45)	2005-06 (Grades 3-5) (N=140)
	Predicted	79.1	69.8
	Actual	84.5	73.6
	Effect Size	0.41	0.22

Value-Added Measure	Results		
Each year, grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on a nationally-normed math test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	MEAN NCE	School Year	
		2004-05 ²⁷	2005-06 (Grades 1-5) (N=179)
	Baseline	-	37.8
	Target	-	43.9
	Actual	-	44.3
	Cohorts Made Target	-	(2 of 5)

Science Goal: *CPCS students will become proficient in Science.*

CPCS achieved its science goal. In 2004-05 the school came close to meeting its absolute measure, and did outperform the district in science. It showed marked improvement in 2005-06 with more than 80 percent of students scoring proficient on the fourth grade state science exam and again exceeded the proportion of district students who scored proficient.

Absolute Measures	Results (in percents)		
Each year, 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.	Grade	School Year	
		2004-05 (Grade 4) (N=38)	2005-06 (Grade 4) (N=32)
	4	65.8	81.3

²⁵ The percentages compare the aggregate of all students performing at Levels 3 & 4 in tested grades who have been enrolled for two or more years in the charter school to the aggregate of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

²⁶ Starting in 2004-05, the Institute conducts this Comparative Performance Analysis of the school's actual performance in relation to its predicted performance based on the performance and free-lunch statistics of all New York State schools with the same grades. This complex and fair statistical analysis provides an opportunity to see where an individual school stands compared to demographically similar schools across the state. A small Effect Size is 0.3 or greater. Please note: this analysis is based on free-lunch statistics from 2004-05, the most current data available.

²⁷ CPCS introduced a new norm-referenced exam in 2004-05 so comparison to the previous year is not possible.

Comparative Measures	Results (in percents)		
A higher proportion of students who have been enrolled for at least two years will score on or above level 3 on the New York State Science Examination than students in the local school district .	Comparison	School Year	
		2004-05 (Grade 4)	2005-06 (Grade 4)
	School	65.8	81.3
	District	56.3	66.0

Social Studies Goal: *CPCS students will become proficient in Social Studies.*

CPCS again demonstrated improved performance in social studies over the course of the charter period and ultimately achieved its goal in this subject. In 2004-05 56 percent of students were proficient on the fifth grade state social studies exam; a year later the school's proficiency rate had increased to nearly 80 percent. In both years CPCS outperformed the local district.

Absolute Measures	Results (in percents)		
Each year, 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies exam.	Grade	School Year	
		2004-05 (N=32)	2005-06 (N=34)
	5	56.3	79.4

Comparative Measures	Results (in percents)		
A higher proportion of students who have been enrolled for at least two years will score on or above level 3 on the New York State Social Studies exam than students in the local school district .	Comparison	School Year	
		2004-05 (Grade 5)	2005-06 (Grade 5)
	School	56.3	79.4
	District	54.1	57.4

NCLB Goal

CPCS is expected under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to make adequate yearly progress toward enabling all students to score at the proficient level on the state ELA and mathematics exams. In holding charter schools to the same standards as other public schools, the state issues a school accountability report indicating the school's accountability status each year. CPCS is deemed to have been in good standing under the state's NCLB accountability system.

Absolute Measures	Results (in percents)		
Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year. ²⁸	Status	School Year	
		2004-05	2005-06
	Good Standing	Yes	Yes

²⁸ The New York State Education Department issues report cards for each school which indicate whether a school has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Schools that have not failed to make AYP for two successive years are considered to be in "Good Standing."

Evidence Category	Benchmarks	
	Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
Benchmark 2A School Specific Non-Academic Goals	2A	The school meets or has come close to meeting the Unique Measures of non-academic student outcomes that are contained in its Accountability Plan over the life of the charter (if any).

Besides the required outcome measures under each subject area goal and a required NCLB outcome measure, the school also included additional self-selected outcome measures as part of its Accountability Plan. These goals and their various optional outcome measures provide the framework for evaluating the school's performance and addressing the sub-sections of this benchmark. The following table indicates the specific outcomes under each of the goals that CPCS set for itself during the two years of the charter period

Art, Music and Physical Education Goal: *CPCS students will become proficient in Art, Music, and Physical Education*

CPCS met this goal both years in all three subject areas. The percent of students deemed proficient in these subjects ranged from 77 to 100 percent.

Absolute Measures	Results (in percents)						
	Grade	Art		Music		Physical Education	
		School Year					
		2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06
At least 75% of students will receive an average of at least a stage 3 ranking on their spring report cards.	K	86	88	78	86	100	100
	1	89	100	89	86	88	100
	2	100	100	91	77	98	100
	3	83	92	83	96	92	94
	4	93	93	88	87	94	91
	5	81	78	79	93	84	83

Climate Goal: *CPCS will maintain a culture that values kindness and respect.*

In its Accountability Plan CPCS included three measures under this goal which are summarized in the following table. According to its renewal application, CPCS only measured progress toward meeting this goal at the conclusion of the 2005-06 school year. While the results indicate that the school met the measures, they are based on a low response rate: 64 percent for staff and 70 percent for parents and students. As such, the attitudes may not be representative of the entire population.

Measure	Percent of Population Responding	Results (in percent)	Goal Met²⁹?
Annual Staff Survey will reflect that at least 75% of CPCS staff feel respected.	64%	85%	Yes
Annual Parent Survey will reflect that at least 75% of parents' responses reflect that the school environment values kindness and respect.	70%	92%	Yes
The Annual Student Survey, administered to students in grade 3 and above, will reflect that at least 75% of students feel they are treated with kindness and respect.	70%	90%	Yes

²⁹ Determined without regard to the percent of the target population responding.

<p>Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Mission & Design Elements</p>	<p>2B</p> <p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p>
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The school's mission statement, as stated in its current charter, is as follows:

At the Community Partnership Charter School, families, educators, and community members join together in creating a strong academic base in which students learn to read, write and perform mathematically at levels that exceed citywide averages. Students will be expected to achieve these high levels in an environment that values kindness and respect.

The school has fulfilled its mission in regards to an academic program that prepares students to outperform city averages. As described fully under Benchmark 1A, the school outperformed its comparison district on the ELA state assessment in 2005-06, and in both years of the charter period in the content areas of mathematics, science, and social studies. The school continues to place great emphasis on kindness and respect. However, the creation of such an environment across the school has yet to be realized, due in large part to classroom management difficulties.

Interviews conducted with administrators, teachers and board members demonstrated that these stakeholders are aware of the key elements of the mission. Furthermore, the goals of achieving high academic results and creating a respectful and kind culture appear to guide their work.

Community Partnership's key design elements include:

- high academic standards through a rigorous well-rounded curriculum;
- a balanced approach to teaching literacy;
- a full inclusion model for teaching special education students (as appropriate);
- ongoing professional development for faculty that is linked to the school's curriculum and professional development;
- community partnerships;
- strong parental involvement;
- organizational and fiscal accountability; and
- a culture of high expectations that teaches students to be critically aware of their community and environment.

The limited nature of a one-day site visit did not allow the inspectors to collect data regarding all of these design elements. Based on the data collected, it appears that Community Partnership has implemented the majority of its design elements. Notably, children in K-2 classrooms receive the additional individual attention made possible by two teachers in each class. This year, the school has two full-time staff developers who focus on the core areas of literacy and mathematics.

<p>Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>2C.1</p> <p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school's mission and specific goals.</p>
	<p>2C.2</p> <p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes and has abided by them.</p>

The Board of Trustees clearly understands that the core work of the school is student achievement and has committed to creating a “sense of urgency” since the initial renewal two years ago. They referred to the document *Creating a Culture of Excellence* as an attempt to define the steps to achieve academic excellence.

The board receives regular reports in writing from the school leadership on key indicators of the school's academic progress. The director produces a regular report designed to provide accountability and transparency for the board. This dashboard report presents data regarding student assessment, discipline, attendance and enrollment. It includes historical data as well as both absolute and relative information to assist board members in identifying trends.

The board has an established procedure for evaluating the director. Twice a year, the four members of the Evaluation Committee assess her performance according to guidelines they created based on best practices from charter schools as well as from non-profit organizations.

Since the time of the initial renewal visit, the school board made it a priority to update and, if necessary, create school policies, procedures, and materials for the school board that reflect the school's operations. The result is a set of external policies and internal policies and procedures that well document how matters should be handled at the school. Publications utilized by the school include a *Student/Parent Manual 2006-2007*, *Operations Compliance Manual 2006-2007*, *Policies and Procedures Manual for Faculty and Staff* in addition to a board member book, and two books of special education forms and procedures. While some of the publications contained redundancies, they generally were very useful and well written, and, where appropriate, included New York City Department of Education forms and policies. The board book is one of the most comprehensive seen by the Institute and includes the school's renewal charter agreement in addition to the by-laws, articles on governance, copies of regulations and those policies typically referred to by the school board.

Among much good work on policies and procedures, the Institute noted some deficiencies. For example, the school acknowledged that parts of its fingerprinting policies and procedures were not fully developed because it did not develop procedures for emergency conditional appointments until August 2006. This however was offset by the school's practice of trying to have all employees fully cleared by the State Education Department prior to commencement of employment, and the school board having delegated to its chair the ability to conditionally appoint employees on an emergency basis. While the *Student / Parent Manual 2006-07* lacked any meaningful policy or discussion of discipline of special education students (suspension limitations, manifestation determinations, changes in placement, etc.) and does not contain a reference to the full special discipline policy being on file, the school's *Operations Manual* for employees contained the information. The parent publication also did not contain an Open Meetings Law policy, and until October of 2006 did not

include the school's compliant policy, which per paragraph 2.12 of the school's second renewal charter agreement, should have been distributed to parents.

The school has a Code of Ethics, which it plans to update prior to the next charter period. This document serves as a conflict of interest policy, and requires disclosure of interests school trustees have in entities doing business with the school board. Under the school's by-laws, three members of the school's board are affiliated with the Beginning with Children Foundation (BwCF), the school's partner organization which provides several services to the school annually (valued at approximately \$268,000). During the term of the renewal charter, these services were approved as part of the general budget process by the board. Although the minutes did not reflect any BwCF-affiliated trustee disclosures, the board asserted that such disclosure had been made orally in each instance. As part of the application for subsequent renewal the school included a memorandum of understanding with BwCF, which better outlines and values the services to be provided on an ongoing basis. The school board chair indicated that going forward the BwCF memorandum of understanding would allow the school board to better account for such conflict by allowing it to first approve the BwCF contract (with proper disclosures) and then approve the budget as a whole.

With the exception noted above, the school board has instituted policies and processes for handling complaints. The school has both an informal process and a formal process where a board grievance committee will hear complaints. Taking advantage of the former properly does not exclude use of the latter. No complaints noted gave rise to appeals to the Institute during the renewal term.

Benchmark 2D	2D	Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.
Parents & Students		

Overall, parents appear to be satisfied with the Community Partnership Charter School and its programs, as indicated by student retention, attendance rate, and survey data. In the previous year, only 6.8 percent of students withdrew from the school. At 93 percent average daily attendance, Community Partnership did not meet its goal of 95 percent. In the application for subsequent renewal, they suggest that, given the New York City transit strike and inclement weather, 93 percent represents “strong support of the program.”

The results of the most recent School Climate Survey (based on a 70 percent response rate) are presented in the school’s renewal application. In terms of “Overall satisfaction with CPCS” 74 percent of responding parents indicated satisfaction. However, 11 of the 12 other indicators of satisfaction earned approval ratings among respondents of above 80 percent and four of those received positive responses at rates above 90 percent. At 61 percent, the lowest positive response was to the statement regarding “responsiveness to input from parents,” suggesting that this concern contributed to the lower overall satisfaction score. Notably, the statement regarding safety and respect (which the school clearly stresses) earned satisfaction ratings of above 90 percent.

<p>Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Legal Requirements</p>	<p>2E</p> <p>The school has substantially complied with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.</p>
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As part of the Institute’s legal review, compliance deficiencies noted during the school’s initial renewal visit and by the State Education Department were re-examined. In almost all cases, the school had come into compliance, and had created policies and procedures to help prevent such lapses in the future. The improvement in policies and procedures was dramatic enough for the Institute to easily conclude that the school board had in place effective systems and controls for ensuring the terms of its charter and applicable laws and regulations were met.

In the past, the school had been faulted for not providing alternative instruction to suspended students. Currently, the school has policies and procedures to provide alternative instruction to students suspended in school and out of school, and employees stated that such instruction was provided to both regular and special education students.

With respect to the school’s compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the school provides parents with the required annual notice regarding rights to access and to request changes to student files. A few minor deficiencies noted were that hearing procedures for appeals from denial of access were not documented (but were referenced); parents were not made aware that student records requested in connection with special education meetings must be made available sooner than 45 days if possible; the school’s annual notice did not state whether the school will provide copies of records and if so what fee if any the school will charge; and the school did not specifically maintain a list of names and positions of persons within the school who may have access to personally identifiable information of students as required by federal regulations (34 C.F.R. § 300.572(d)). Much of the information not provided to parents was contained in the school’s *Operations Manual*.

With respect to the school’s compliance with the New York Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), the school has put forth a serious effort to comply and only had two technical violations. The school lacked fully developed FOIL regulations as required by regulations of the Department of State’s Committee on Open Government, 21 N.Y.C.R.R. § 1401.1(e), and did not have available the list of employee names, salaries and work locations required by Public Officers Law subdivision 87(3)(b), although the school had FOIL notices properly posted in its building. Also, neither the school’s *Student/Parent Manual 2006-2007*, nor any other parent communication contained the FOIL policy or notice thereof. Thus, parents may still not know of the range of documents available to them under the New York Charter Schools Act, which subjects charter schools to FOIL.

The school’s New York Open Meetings Law compliance was also improved. The school appeared to be properly posting notices of meetings of its board of trustees in the school and providing notice to a local radio station to satisfy Public Officers Law subdivision 104(1). The school’s by-laws were amended during the renewal term to clarify that trustees participating by conference telephone or similar communication equipment could not vote or be counted toward a quorum for purposes of conducting business. While the board commented that it acted as a committee of the whole and therefore took no committee meeting minutes (as required by the Open Meetings Law), its organizational chart did not have all trustees serving on all committees.

Prior to the school's initial renewal visit, the State Education Department cited the school for not having an adequate Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (SAVE) school safety plan. At that time there was some confusion regarding whether or not the school could tack its plan on to the plan of the district school with which it shares space. Since the school's move to PS 270, the school stated that its safety plans have been approved by the State Education Department.

The school's employee files were reviewed for compliance with the teacher certification and background check requirements of the Charter Schools Act, and the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) related to highly qualified teachers. We note that the school was effectively informing parents of their right under the NCLB to know whether or not their children's teachers are highly qualified. Further, by review of source documentation (as opposed to electronic information supplied by the State Education Department) the school appeared to be within the Charter Schools Act's 30% or five (whichever is less) limit of teachers not certified by the Board of Regents, and to be in general and substantial compliance with the highly qualified teacher requirements of the NCLB for teachers in core subjects.

A review of the school's special education program and files revealed substantial compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and applicable regulations. One minor exception, of which the district Committee on Special Education (CSE) was aware, concerned a student whose referral to the CSE last year by the school resulted in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that called for an instructional setting not provided by the school. However, the school demonstrated that it understood its obligations regarding this situation and the matter was apparently resolved after the renewal visit by placement of the child in an education setting compliant with the student's IEP.

At the time of the initial renewal visit the school had not implemented the after school program contemplated in its original charter agreement. However, in 2005-06 the school implemented an after school program which served 70 students; at the time of the subsequent renewal visit, the after school program was serving up to 150 students. The Institute confirmed that The After-School Corporation, and not the school, was administering the program.

The school board currently has one lawyer serving as a trustee, and maintains a relationship with outside counsel for various matters. The Institute concludes that the school has demonstrated an active and on-going relationship with inside and outside counsel as needed.

With the exceptions noted above and under Benchmark 2C.2, the school appears to be in general and substantial compliance with applicable law, rules and regulations. Moreover, since the time of the school's initial renewal, it appears to have compiled a record of general and substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Evidence Category	Benchmarks
	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 3 Is the School Fiscally Sound?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Benchmark 3A</p> <p>Budgeting and Long Range Planning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3A</p> <p>The school has operated pursuant to a long-range financial plan. The school has created realistic budgets that are monitored and adjusted when appropriate. Actual expenses have been equal to or less than actual revenue with no material exceptions.</p>

For the term of its renewal charter, the school has operated pursuant to long range plans. The school's annual budgets have provided a realistic framework for the school's spending activities and monitoring procedures are in place. Budget to actual reports are prepared and reviewed semi-monthly. For the past two years, the school's actual and budgeted revenues have exceeded actual expenses and the school has maintained adequate cash flow to support operations.

The school has in place a process to closely monitor its financial performance versus its budget. Reports are generated monthly for the school's director to review and compare actual revenues and expenses to budgeted amounts. Also, up-to-date budget reports are presented at board meetings and are discussed as part of the financial report that is given at most board meetings. Board approval is required to exceed the approved budget. Budgets conservatively include a contingency line of \$100,000 to cover unanticipated expenditures and emergencies.

<p>Benchmark 3B</p> <p>Internal Controls</p>	<p>3B</p> <p>The school has maintained appropriate internal controls and procedures. Transactions have been accurately recorded and appropriately documented in accordance with management's direction and laws, regulations, grants and contracts. Assets have been and are safeguarded. Any deficiencies or audit findings have been corrected in a timely manner.</p>
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Based on interviews with staff and review of documentation, the school has established processes and controls related to payroll, procurement, safeguarding of assets and other financial matters. The school has written fiscal policies and procedures covering receipts, purchasing, disbursements (including payroll), bank reconciliations, accounts receivable, fixed assets, the general ledger, budgeting and board reporting, maintenance of accounting records, record retention and regulatory reporting. Although the school has a system to record fixed assets, it is just now establishing and completing procedures for performing periodic physical inventories of fixed assets.

For each year, the school's annual audit reports on internal controls over financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations and grants did not disclose any reportable conditions, material weaknesses, or instances of non-compliance. The lack of deficiencies in these independent reports provides some, but certainly not absolute, assurance that the school has maintained adequate internal controls and procedures. The purposes of the reports are not to provide assurance on internal control over financial reporting or an opinion on compliance. Also, the school's independent certified public accountant (CPA) has not issued written management letters in conjunction with the annual financial statement audit of the school.

The school's back office operations have been set-up and run by the Beginning with Children Foundation. Under this arrangement, the school benefits by receiving the services of staff that are more highly trained and qualified than the school could otherwise afford. Fiscal operations of the school have generally operated seamlessly under this arrangement.

The school has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BwCF that covers the services provided and fees charged to the school. Some services are provided without charge. Ideally, the school's board members not affiliated with BwCF should review and vote on whether to approve the MOU on an annual basis. The most logical time to do that would be as part of the budget process.

<p>Benchmark 3C</p> <p>Financial Reporting</p>	<p>3C</p> <p>The school has complied with financial reporting requirements. The school has provided the State University Board of Trustees and the State Education Department with required financial reports on time, and such reports have been complete and have followed generally accepted accounting principles.</p>
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The school has met its financial reporting requirements. The annual financial statements, budget, and quarterly financial reports were each filed on time. Each financial statement audit report received an unqualified opinion. An unqualified opinion on the financial statements indicates that, in the auditor's opinion, the school's financial statements and notes fairly represent, in all material respects, the financial position, changes in net assets and its cash flows in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. All statements required by generally accepted accounting principles were included in the school's financial statements.

The independent auditor has not issued management letters and, as a result, the school has not needed to follow up on any such comments. Also, the school's annual audit reports on internal controls over financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations and grants did not disclose any reportable conditions, material weaknesses, or instances of non-compliance. The lack of deficiencies in these independent reports provides some, but certainly not absolute, assurance that the school has maintained adequate internal controls and procedures. The purposes of the reports are not to provide assurance on internal control over financial reporting or an opinion on compliance. The Board reviews and approves acceptance of its annual financial statement audit report. As part of that process, the board meets with the independent auditors, which is considered a best practice.

<p>Benchmark 3D</p> <p>Financial Condition</p>	<p>3D</p> <p>The school has maintained adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations and has monitored and successfully managed cash flow. Critical financial needs of the school are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising).</p>
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The school completed the 2005-06 school year in stable and improved financial condition. The school's total net assets increased by \$250,199 and it finished with total net assets of \$771,168. The school increased its cash position by \$308,694. The school has property and equipment (net of accumulated depreciation and amortization) totaling \$86,621 that consists of furniture fixtures and computer equipment.

The school has no long-term debt and leases space from the NYCDOE for \$1 per year. This shared use agreement has allowed the school to strengthen its financial condition over the past year. As a result, at the June 20, 2006 board meeting, the board voted to designate \$400,000 of its unrestricted net assets for a reserve for personnel and facilities.

The school has generated adequate cash flow to support operations and maintained a \$100,000 line of credit with a financial institution. At June 30, 2006, there was no balance owed by the school on the line. Spending per student (total expenses, including grant related, divided by the revised approved enrollment) in each year was as follows: 2005, \$9,327; 2006, \$9,042.

The decline in per pupil spending can be attributed primarily to a decrease in rent expense from \$204,000 to \$1.

Evidence Category	Benchmarks
	<p style="text-align: center;">Renewal Question 4 Should the School's Charter Be Renewed, What Are Its Plans for the Term of a Future Charter?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Benchmark 4A</p> <p>Plans for the School Structure (mission, enrollment, schedule)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4A</p> <p>Key structural elements of the school's plans for the next charter period are reasonable, feasible and achievable.</p>

In its application for subsequent renewal, Community Partnership Charter School has revised its mission statement for the next charter term:

At the Community Partnership Charter School, families, educators, and community members join to create a learning environment that fosters high academic achievement which exceeds the New York State performance standards. An enriched curriculum and dynamic partnerships between the school, families and community enable all students to become lifelong learners and active citizens who value kindness and respect.

Given the school's improved performance in relation to its Accountability Plan goals, and the qualitative indicators regarding implementation of the school's program at the time of the renewal visit, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the school will be able to fulfill its revised mission statement. Furthermore, the school proposes an annual calendar and daily instructional schedules that exceed time on task offered by New York City Department of Education schools.

The school does not plan to vary its enrollment structure from its previous charter term, maintaining enrollment at 300 students and projects that its maximum annual enrollment will not exceed 325 students. The school's staffing plan is essentially consistent with the previous charter term. As such, the structural elements of the school's plans for the future charter term are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

<p>Benchmark 4B</p> <p>Plans for the Educational Program</p>	<p>4B</p> <p>The school has clearly laid out its plans for its educational program, shown that it can implement that program and such program will allow the school to meet its Accountability Plan goals.</p>
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According to the application for subsequent renewal, for the next charter period, the Community Partnership Charter School seeks to continue its Kindergarten through fifth grade education program, targeting students in the communities surrounding Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. The school is not seeking to add additional grades or increase enrollment during this charter period.

Community Partnership's proposed key design elements include:

- an intensive, longer school day and school year that results in no less than 20% more time on task than NYC Department of Education (DOE) schools;
- at least two teachers in the classroom for grades K-2 and a mentor teacher for grades 3-5;
- literacy and math staff developers to support professional development of teachers;
- an emphasis on the development of writing, literacy and mathematical skills;
- social studies, science, music, art, technology and physical education included as core subjects taught by specialists daily;
- senior academies for fourth and fifth graders supporting specialization in subject areas such as digital animation and literacy magazine writing;
- assessment to drive instruction and staff development which is responsive to individual student's needs;
- hosting an after-school program (run by The After-School Corporation) which provides academic enrichment programs utilizes best practices and is aligned with the regular school day;
- dynamic community partnerships which support enrichment programs that teach students to become life long learners and active citizens; and,
- parent/guardian involvement at all levels of the school community.

These proposed key design elements represent a further articulation and refinement of the school's key design elements from the previous charter term. Based on the data collected at the time of the one-day renewal visit, it appears that Community Partnership has already begun to implement the majority of these key design elements. Notably, children in K-2 classrooms receive the additional individual attention made possible by two teachers in each class. This year, the school has two full-time staff developers who focus on the core subjects of literacy and mathematics.

According to the application for subsequent renewal, in the next charter period, the school would rely on Houghton Mifflin *Reading 2005* and the McGraw Hill math series as the backbones for its literacy and mathematics programs, respectively. The school's science program, specially developed for the school, includes hands-on experiences in the areas of physical, social, earth and life sciences. The social studies curriculum is based on an inquiry model, and will continue to be centered around projects to help students connect the state standards to real life. The school states that its curriculum as implemented remains fully aligned with the New York State performance standards.

The application for subsequent renewal states that disciplinary practices would continue to be consistent throughout the school and that the CPCS would continue to emphasize the importance of kindness and respect. Special education students enrolled at the school will continue to be served in an inclusion setting, as appropriate. Parents would continue to be involved at the school through the Parent Teacher Community Cooperative, and through service on the school's board of trustees.

Community Partnership Charter School continues to grow its partnerships with organizations within the community. Should the school's charter be renewed, the school plans to continue to enrich its educational program through student participation in programs associated with these groups.

The school has submitted an Accountability Plan that generally follows the guidelines set by the Institute. The plan will require some revision, as well as additional outcome measures, should the school's charter be renewed. As with all charters coming to renewal, the Institute will work with Community Partnership Charter School staff to finalize the Accountability Plan for inclusion in a new charter.

The Community Partnership Charter School has clearly laid out its plans for its educational program, shown that it can implement that program and that such program will allow the school to meet its Accountability Plan goals. Therefore, the Institute concludes that the proposed educational program is reasonable, feasible and achievable.

<p>Benchmark 4C</p> <p>Plans for the Governance Structure</p>	<p>4C</p> <p>The school has provided a reasonable, feasible and achievable governance structure for the term of the next charter.</p>
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In general, the school has provided a reasonable, feasible and achievable governance structure for the term of the next charter. In the application for subsequent renewal, the school provided a set of legally sufficient by-laws and clarified ambiguous language therein. The school provided an updated and clearer Code of Ethics, which details the expected conduct of school stakeholders. While the Code of Ethics contains adequate protections against conflict of interest, as set forth under Benchmark 2E, there was evidence that those provisions could have been adhered to more strictly. The School Board Organization Chart submitted with the renewal application is consistent with the school's by-laws. Responses to interview questions and other evidence, including substantial information on governance being provided to the school board, demonstrate that the school's governance model is sustainable for a potential five-year renewal term.

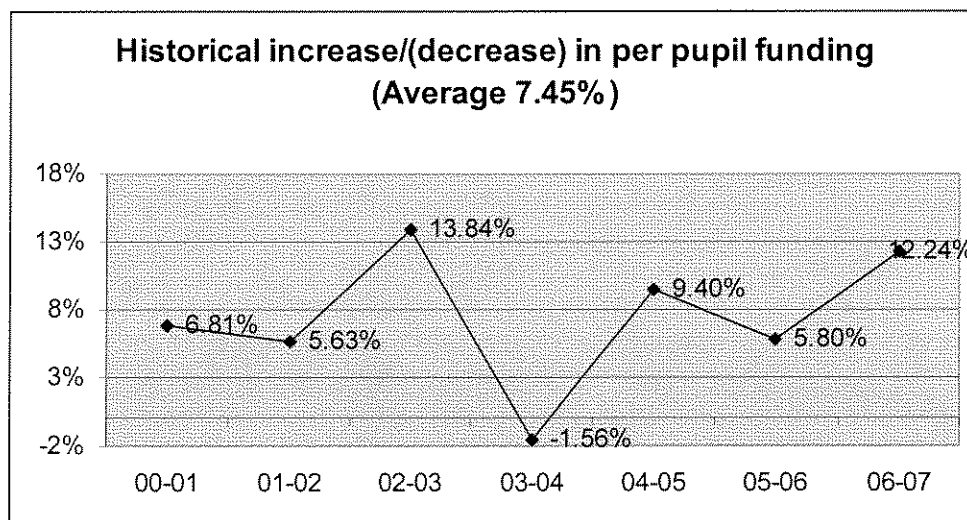
<p>Benchmark 4D</p> <p>Fiscal & Facility Plans</p>	<p>4 D</p> <p>The school has provided a reasonable, feasible and achievable appropriate five-year fiscal plan for the term of next charter, including plans for an adequate facility.</p>
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The school has presented a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the proposed new charter period. The plan relies on continued high demand for enrollment in the school. Extending the current facility arrangements with the NYCDOE would also be necessary. 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, and laws. The school will be required to develop and adopt annual budgets based on known per pupil amounts.

The school's fiscal plan projects a modest increase in its financial position over the proposed renewal charter period and virtually no reliance on fundraising, although the school has the capacity to raise private funds. A relatively high percentage of the school's five year budgets are devoted to personnel costs (76% to 77 % of total revenues).

The school's fiscal plan estimates five percent annual increases in per pupil revenue. While the projected increases are not assured, they are less than the historical average increase over the life of the school (7.45 percent). The school's plan balances this optimistic assumption by assuming student attrition of 3 percent per year and including a contingency budget line of \$100,000 per year. Also, the school makes other conservative assumptions, including assuming that employees will fully participate in the school's retirement plan to receive the full amount (4%) of possible matching funds from the school, while historically few employees fully participate in the plan.

The school has established a track record of meeting its financial obligations including a period during which its per pupil revenue had declined from the previous year (2003-2004). Presented below is the per-pupil funding increases and decreases over the life of the school.



Generally, the school's plan makes reasonable assumptions with a few exceptions. For example, an assumed increase in federal Title funding is at odds with the national trend of less money going to New York State for federal programs. This example and other exceptions are not considered material to the overall soundness of the plan.