



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Achievement First Apollo Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2010-11

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Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207
518/433-8277, 518/427-6510 (fax)
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org>

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Background

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

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

This is an analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Some benchmarks are covered in greater detail than others in an effort to highlight areas of concern at the school and provide additional feedback in these areas. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to Achievement First Apollo Charter School (“A.F. Apollo”) on June 7, 2011. While AF Apollo is in its first year of operation, the Institute holds all schools accountable for the Renewal Benchmarks with consideration given to its point in the charter period. A school in its first year is expected to have begun to build systems and procedures that would provide a platform for delivering effective instruction to improve student learning and achievement.

Based on an analysis of evidence from this evaluation visit, AF Apollo has made progress toward establishing the systems and procedures in its educational program. They are sufficient to put the school on a trajectory toward meeting the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks (a component of the Renewal Benchmarks) when the school is scheduled for renewal. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators discussed more fully later in the report. Some of the more salient indicators include the following.

Academic Success

Areas of Strength

- The school regularly administers and analyzes assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state standards. Teachers and school leaders effectively use results to improve instruction and meet students’ needs.
- The school has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework.
- Teachers exhibit quality instruction and hold students accountable for quality verbal interaction by asking challenging questions.

Areas for Growth

- Teachers inconsistently apply behavior management strategies.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength

- The school’s organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability and school leadership competently manages the school.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	January 15, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Board of Regents	May 20, 2008
School Opening Date	August 2010

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-11	350 Linwood Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208	All	NYC CSD 19

Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	Achievement First, Inc.	Charter Management Organization	2010-Present

Current Mission Statement

The mission of the Achievement First Apollo Charter School will be to provide students with the academic and character skills they need to gain admission to top colleges, to succeed in a competitive world, and to serve as the next generation of leaders in their communities.

Current Key Design Elements

• More time on task;
• Character education;
• College focus;
• Rigorous standards-based curriculum;
• Powerful use of on-going assessments;
• Excellent teaching; and
• Parents as partners.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	168	175	K-1	K-1	190

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

Current Board of Trustees²

Board Member Name	Position/Committees
Wanda Felton	Board Chair
Matthew Klein	Trustee
Nathaniel Schwartz	Trustee
Ambrose Wooden, Jr.	Acting Treasurer
Mirian Rodriguez	Parent Representative
Lesley Esters Redwine	Achievement First Representative
Andy Hubbard (Proposed)	Trustee (Proposed)

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2010-11	Jabari Sims, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2010-11	First Year	Institute	June 7, 2011

² Source: School renewal application and Institute board information.

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.A)

Achievement First Apollo regularly administers and analyzes assessments aligned to its curriculum and state standards. Teachers and school leaders effectively use assessment results to improve instruction and meet student needs.

Achievement First Apollo (A.F. Apollo) regularly administers the STEP and Fountas and Pinnell literacy assessments. The literacy assessments align with the school's reading curriculum which the principal reports aligns with state standards. Additionally, the school administers interim math and English language arts assessments five times a year. Four of the five administered interim assessments align with state standards; the fifth assessment aligns with Terra Nova, a national, norm-referenced test. The principal reports that the school's charter management organization (CMO)* uses the Terra Nova aligned interim assessment to compare school results across the organization. He reports that some of the organization's schools are located outside of New York; therefore, the CMO uses a nationally administered assessment to compare schools.

Teachers and school leadership use data to inform instruction and planning. Teachers report using assessment data from interim assessments to help plan, modify and improve math and English language arts instruction. The school's academic interventionist reports that she collects all the literacy assessment data for a performance tracking system to monitor student reading progress. In addition to literacy data, the academic interventionist collects interim assessment results after each administration and identifies students who may need academic remediation services. The academic interventionist, along with the classroom teacher, plans student academic intervention strategies and monitors student progress.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.B)

A.F. Apollo has a comprehensive and organized curriculum framework and has begun developing a process for reviewing and revising its curriculum framework in order to generate a second grade curriculum.

Each content area has a curriculum with a year-long scope and sequence. The CMO provides the school with science, math and social studies curricula. A.F. Apollo uses a purchased, commercially-produced English language arts curriculum. Teachers report they use purchased curriculum pacing guidelines and the CMO's scope and sequence for reading and writing, science, social studies and math.

The school has content area and team leaders for each grade level to ensure that the curriculum aligns with state standards. The content area leaders meet with specialists from the CMO to review curriculum pacing and potential modifications to the curriculum. The CMO content area specialists

* A.F. Apollo's CMO is Achievement First, Inc.

support instructional leaders through professional development and mentoring sessions. They also provide teacher performance feedback and recommendations to the principal.

Teachers report that they know when to teach content area concepts based on pacing guidelines from the CMO and the purchased curriculum. The school has one lead teacher for each subject area who works with a CMO content specialist to create pacing guides and lesson plans for their subject. Teachers find the lesson pacing and lesson plan content easy to understand. The principal reports that the CMO provides teachers with a curriculum framework, pacing guide and lesson planning guidance so they can concentrate on lesson implementation. As a result, teachers report feeling well supported and having adequate instructional materials aligned with the school's curricular framework. The school plans to add a second grade during the next academic year and additional grades thereafter. Grade level content specialists meet regularly to vertically align the school's curriculum and prepare a curriculum framework and pacing guide for the second grade.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

Teachers implement quality instruction throughout the school and challenge students with higher-order questions.

Teachers maximize learning time by providing rigorous, well organized and effectively paced classroom instruction. They challenge students with higher-order questions and request that students provide evidence to support their answers. Teachers encourage discussions within small groups by having students "turn and talk" to consult with their peers during group activities. They also engage students in conversation and praise students for providing answers in complete sentences. In addition to whole-class instruction, teachers separate students into small instructional groups. Within these groups, teachers ask students in-depth questions about lesson content or ask students to explain their thought process in generating answers to questions. Teachers consistently challenge students to think, reflect and provide detailed answers.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

The school leader sets high expectations for student academic achievement and holds teachers accountable for student performance. The school's academic coaches provide sustained and systematic support for teachers. School leaders conduct regular evaluations that accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses.

The principal reports that he sets high student achievement expectations with teachers prior to the school year. He maintains these expectations by setting high student achievement goals at the beginning of the school year and monitoring student progress on interim assessments and regularly administered math and ELA literacy assessments. The principal reports holding commitment meetings with parents and students to outline expectations for student behavior and academic performance.

The principal and members of the school's administration monitor and coach teachers throughout the academic year. He reports that the school's teacher-coaches provide systematic support for teachers through lesson planning guidance, assessment data interpretation and lesson implementation guidance. Teachers report that they find the coaching sessions beneficial and the data interpretation sessions particularly relevant.

The principal reviews lesson plans one week prior to implementation. He reports that he offers lesson improvement suggestions and overall lesson plan feedback. The principal also regularly evaluates teachers and identifies their strengths and weaknesses. Every teacher in the school has a professional growth plan with clearly defined goals. The principal observes teachers regularly and documents their classroom performance. Using teachers' professional growth plans, the principal documents their progress toward personal goals, which hold them accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

A.F. Apollo helps academically struggling students. The school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students and adequately monitors their progress.

A.F. Apollo has a three-tier response to intervention process to support academically struggling students. Teachers report they initially recommend academically struggling students to the school's child study team (CST) which consists of the school's special services coordinator, interventionist counselor and classroom teacher. The team discusses intervention plans and plans academic remediation strategies. The special services coordinator monitors student progress and may recommend that a student receive additional academic interventions. The special services coordinator also provides direct academic support services to students with disabilities.

The school's academic interventionist offers teachers a significant number of academic strategies. She monitors the literacy progress of all students and designs academic intervention strategies to teachers of at-risk students. Using a self-made student literacy tracking program, the interventionist gathers weekly student literacy assessment scores from each teacher and logs the scores on an Excel spreadsheet. She monitors literacy assessment results and collaborates with classroom teachers to review student and classroom data trends. If she notices students are not progressing, she works with classroom teachers to develop intervention strategies. In addition to recommending classroom reading strategies, the interventionist conducts observations of classroom teachers to monitor whether they faithfully implement reading intervention strategies and to validate the effectiveness of the recommended academic remediation strategies to improve student learning.

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

Teachers inconsistently apply the school's discipline policy.

A.F. Apollo has a comprehensive, school-wide behavior management system, entitled the CLIP system. However, implementation of the program is inconsistent across classrooms. The principal acknowledges that teachers inconsistently apply system procedures and is working to improve classroom consistency. He reports working with teachers to identify and norm examples of misbehavior and structure consistent responses to such misbehavior.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

A.F. Apollo's comprehensive professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs.

Through consistent, focused professional development sessions, the school supports teachers' efforts to meet students' needs and holds teachers accountable for their own professional learning. The

CMO provides summer and year-long professional development for school staff. Additionally, the school holds weekly, school-wide professional development sessions as well as weekly teacher coaching sessions where school administrators coach teachers. The school principal reports that literacy and school culture are a focus in multiple and ongoing professional development sessions.

Teachers report that the school's professional development sessions and coaches effectively address their needs. Teachers consistently provide examples of how their instruction improved as a result of these sessions. They also report that their coaches assist with improving lesson creation and delivery. The principal reports that every professional development session includes an assessment. Teachers receive feedback from the session leader on how well they learned the session's material and guidance on how they can develop further understanding of session content.

Mission (Benchmark 5. A)

The school faithfully follows its mission and key design elements.

A.F. Apollo's primary mission states that all students will graduate from college and be productive citizens. Although the school currently only educates kindergarten and first grade students, teachers introduce the concept of college during lessons and speak to their students about the importance of earning a college degree. The school decorates classrooms and hallways with college memorabilia and teachers refer to students as members of college themed classrooms. The school has a secondary mission to close the achievement gap. As part of its key design elements, the school has an extended learning day.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

A.F. Apollo's organizational structure supports distinct lines of accountability and school leadership competently manages the school.

A.F. Apollo's principal clearly communicates high student achievement expectations to staff and supports clear lines of communication. The school also receives strong support from the school's CMO which provides assistance and support to the school's content area specialists and student achievement coordinator. Teachers view the principal as the school's instructional leader and report that clear reporting structures exist with distinct lines of accountability, clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

A.F. Apollo's board provides effective oversight for the school's educational program.

Board members have a strong combination of education, business, law and finance experience. The board chair reports that the board closely monitors the school's financial activity and that they have a strong commitment to supporting the needs of the teachers and providing them with the supplies and materials necessary to deliver an effective education program.

The board holds the school's leader and the CMO accountable for student achievement. The principal regularly emails the board chair and provides an update to the board during scheduled board meetings. The board chair reports that the board, in conjunction with the CMO, has begun the

process of completing the cumulative end-of-year principal evaluation. The principal reports that he knows and understands this evaluation process.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Achievement First Apollo on June 7, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Institute Team Leader: Paul Wright, Ed.D. was recently appointed Director of School Evaluation at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. Dr. Wright will be responsible for the Institute's extensive school evaluation program, overseeing and in many cases leading school evaluation visits by Institute staff as well as coordinating the independent evaluations done on the Institute's behalf. Dr. Wright will lead ongoing efforts to refine the Institute's nationally regarded evaluation protocols and reporting tools; including oversight of the production of the Institute's school evaluation reports which provide valuable information to schools and the public about school progress. He will also coordinate internal staff training on school evaluation. Prior to joining the Institute, Dr. Wright directed Quality Education Partnership, Inc., a national consulting network that conducted evaluations of traditional and charter schools and created strategic management plans for school improvement. The former Development Director for School Design and Strategic Planning of Mesa Public Schools in Arizona, Dr. Wright developed unique schools of choice serving a wide spectrum of learners in coordination with Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright also served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group, an Educational Management Organization providing educational services to students throughout Arizona. Dr. Wright received his Ed.D. and his M.Ed. from Arizona State University and his B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany.

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

External Team Member: Jenn David-Lang has worked in the field of education for 20 years. She has had a wide range of experiences in both teaching and administration. She founded and directed Providence Summerbridge, a nonprofit to raise the academic achievement of urban middle school students. She has taught math, English, and Humanities at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. For several years she worked at the New York Charter School Resource Center providing assistance to charter school start-up groups. After receiving her administrative license and Ed.M.

from the Bank Street College of Education, she served in a variety of administrative and consulting positions training new teachers, serving as a math coach, supporting principals, and helping to start a number of New York City schools. Four years ago she founded The Main Idea, a service to provide professional development to over 2000 school leaders across the country.

APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT

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

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

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

	<p>materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; • teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans; • teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum; • the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and • the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; • instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson; • lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; • instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school’s student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments; • all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; • learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and • teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; • the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); • the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; • the school’s instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms; • the school’s leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas; • the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual

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

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

	<p>its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</p> <p>Board Oversight</p>	<p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight; • the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance; • where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;• the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter;• the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner;• the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints;• the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies;• the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and• the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.
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