

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*FIRST YEAR SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT
OUR WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD
CHARTER SCHOOL 3*

VISIT DATE: APRIL 18, 2023

REPORT DATE: JUNE 9, 2023

SUNY Charter Schools Institute

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Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the SUNY Charter Schools Institute's (the "Institute's") observations and findings from its April 18, 2023 first year school evaluation visit to the Our World Neighborhood Charter School 3 ("OWN 3").

REPORT FORMAT

Throughout the charter term, the Institute may conduct a number of formal evaluative visits including in the first year of operation. Each formal evaluative visit produces a written report. These reports form the foundation of qualitative data on the charter's effectiveness.

At the conclusion of the charter term, the Institute provides the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the "SUNY Trustees") a renewal recommendation based on its evaluation of the academic, organizational, legal, and fiscal aspects of the charter's program using the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (see attachment), which incorporates the school's attainment of its Accountability Plan goals and evidence of the quality of the charter's educational program gathered in its formal evaluative visits. For first year evaluation visits, the Institute focuses on specific qualitative benchmarks that provide a fixed standard for determining the quality of the academic program as the charter progresses toward renewal.





CHARTER BACKGROUND

OUR WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL 3

55-30 Junction Boulevard, Elmhurst, NY 11373 | Grades: K-1 | NYC Community School District 24

The SUNY Trustees approved the original charter for OWN 3 on October 18, 2018. The charter opened in fall 2022. Our World Neighborhood Charter Schools (“OWN Schools”) is authorized to operate three charter schools including Our World Neighborhood Charter School (“OWN”), Our World Neighborhood Charter School 2 (“OWN 2”), and OWN 3. OWN Schools’ shared services team supports the three schools with academic, operational, fiscal, legal, and other back office support.



MISSION

It is the mission of Our World Neighborhood Charter School to educate students to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners.

CURRENT YEAR

Serves: Kindergarten – 1st
Chartered Enrollment:
156
Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2027

ANTICIPATED 2026-27

Grades Serving:
Kindergarten – 5th
Chartered Enrollment:
480

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| A commitment to diversity; | + |
| Pillars of positive community; | + |
| Emphasis on literacy; | + |
| Interdisciplinary approach to learning; | + |
| Assessments; | + |
| Learning for all learners; | + |
| Investment in human capital; and, | + |
| A longer school day and year. | + |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OWN 3 successfully replicates the OWN Schools' academic program in its first year of operation. OWN Schools made the strategic decision to have OWN's elementary program principal found OWN 3 to ensure strong program alignment. The shared services team provides effective supports to ensure the high quality program found in place at other schools operated by OWN Schools. Specific to that effort, the special education coordinator and instructional coach for English language arts ("ELA") come to OWN 3 at least once a week to support teachers.

OWN 3 faced some startup challenges while the school occupies a temporary space in its first year. Leaders planned to move the school to a permanent space during this school year so did not fully build out the temporary site, complicating access to resources and supplies. OWN 3 plans to move to the new facility before the start of the 2023-24 school year. This delay in moving to the new facility depressed enrollment in the school's first year: the school enrolls 49% of its chartered enrollment. However, leaders had more success with recruitment for the 2023-24 school year and reported a project fall 2023 enrollment of 225, which would be 95% of its chartered enrollment. The school also reported having a waitlist for 2023-24, which it did not have for the 2022-23 school year.

OWN 3 enrollment reflects a very large population of English language learners ("ELLs"), with almost 75% of students identified as ELLs. Anecdotally, leaders recognize that nearly 100% of the student population comes from families that speak languages other than English. At the beginning of the year, teachers struggled to communicate and interact with students. As the year progressed, teachers found more success delivering the curricular program and building students' English language skills. Given the high number of ELLs, the program will reflect on its successes in its first year to understand the strengths and areas of improvement of its academic program to fully support its unique population.

Pursuant to the Institute's inspection of OWN 3 on August 29, 2022 (and documentation provided to or inspected by the Institute at that visit and prior/post thereto), the Institute determined that OWN Schools (the "education corporation") had completed substantially all of the Prior Actions required of it as defined in the Charter Agreement between the education corporation and the SUNY Trustees (the "Charter Agreement") for the operation of the school. Therefore, per Section 3.1 of the Charter Agreement, the Institute permitted the education corporation to provide instruction at the school to students in accordance with the plan provided in the Charter Agreement.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

QUALITATIVE BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,¹ describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge, and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, found in Appendix B, describe the elements an effective school must have in place at the time of renewal.²

For first year visits, the Institute focuses on academic program benchmarks to establish a baseline measure of the quality of the school's systems and procedures, which heavily affect the progress that a school is able to demonstrate in meeting its Accountability Plan goals during the charter term. The Institute expects a school to have moved from the beginning of implementation and the promise of future growth to full and effective implementation of a quality program by the time the school comes to renewal.

ASSESSMENT

OWN 3's assessment system regularly provides teachers and leaders with student achievement data and improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. Three times per year, the school administers the DIBELS assessment to measure each student's progress in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The school also administers the i-Ready assessment three times per year and provides teachers with data on students' performance in reading and mathematics skills per grade level expectations. Teachers use quarterly running records to assess students' reading fluency and comprehension. The school provides effective training to teachers on administering, scoring, and analyzing the results of each assessment.

Teachers and leaders compile and analyze data across the school's various assessments in Performance Matters, a web-based resource for storing and analyzing data on student growth and achievement. OWN 3 uses the platform to generate achievement, comparative, and growth reports across grade levels, content areas, and other key demographics. Teacher data binders house analytical charts and tables that show each student's performance on the school's assessments. Teachers use data to modify classroom instruction, develop instructional groups aligned to student growth goals, and design academic interventions for students. Teachers also discuss results with students individually, explaining goals and developing strategies to move to the next level of achievement.

Instructional leaders use student assessment data to set instructional effectiveness goals with teachers. Leaders coach teachers to match instructional strategies to student outcome data. As a method of norming, OWN 3 leaders compare student class grades to assessment achievement data to ensure grades that parents and students see on report cards are standards-based and reflect how each student is performing toward the mastery of grade level expectations.

1. An extensive body of research, including a [report from Harvard](#) and a [report from the United States General Accounting Office](#), identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades.

2. Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are available on the [Institute's website](#).

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

CURRICULUM

OWN 3's curriculum supports teachers with instructional planning. Teachers effectively implement OWN Schools' curricular programming, which consists of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project ("TCRWP"), GoMath!, and FOSS science kits. OWN 3 supplements these programs with a variety of resources to support English language development and remediation including a phonics program and guided reading. Teachers split up planning so that each teacher plans a content area, and then at daily grade team meetings, teachers share out information about the lessons for the upcoming week. The shared services instructional coach for ELA joins common planning time meetings once a week to support teachers with ELA planning. While the curricular programs have a strong record of success at OWN Schools, OWN 3 plans to reflect on the effectiveness of its programming as the school produces more student achievement data given that the population of English language learners ("ELLs") is substantially higher than the other schools in OWN Schools.

PEDAGOGY

OWN 3 is developing effective teaching and learning across classrooms. Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives. Teachers effectively utilize the workshop model, which gives students clear examples of learning and practice before trying a concept or skill independently. During independent work cycles, teachers circulate the classroom, confer with students, and provide targeted, specific feedback to students. Each classroom has at least two adults, with two classrooms in each grade level as an integrated co-teaching ("ICT") classroom. The school has an opportunity to continue refining the coordination between teaching assistants and teachers to ensure adults make the most efficient use of time during lessons. The Institute observed teachers circulating the classroom and providing feedback to students consistently across classrooms. However, teachers do not record notes to collect data on student needs. In a few cases, teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking activities, but this is not consistently developed across classrooms and lessons. Leaders recognize the need to provide more opportunities for students to speak, especially to support ELLs with English language acquisition.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The instructional leadership team establishes a culture of high expectations where teachers are consistently engaged in professional growth as well as helping students to improve. The principal partners with ELA and mathematics coaches in providing teachers with coaching and support. The instructional leadership team visits classrooms regularly and summarizes each observation or walkthrough in written feedback. To ensure cohesion and continuity in teacher coaching, instructional leaders share with each other and the teachers a running online document that memorializes all feedback given to a teacher and the next steps in development.

Content leads at each grade level serve as additional support for teachers and an effective model of distributed leadership. Network-level content directors work with OWN 3 teacher content leads to unpack the curriculum, plan lessons, and consider the alignment of the curriculum with how OWN 3 students are performing.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

Content leads play a key role in turnkeying unit plans and lesson plans to teachers on each grade level. These collaborative meetings serve as opportunities to plan for differentiation based on students' needs. Teachers' data binders house the latest assessment data for students, which teachers use to plan lesson activities that respond to each student's unique areas of growth. As teachers make modifications to lessons, content leads keep notes to revisit when planning these units in future years.

Instructional leaders provide teachers with professional learning activities that develop skills as teachers. Six times throughout the year, network-wide professional development sessions target instructional priorities common to all OWN schools. Teachers also have the opportunity to attend external professional development sessions, internal sessions facilitated by external providers, and professional development sessions at or with other OWN schools. Teachers reported weekly professional development sessions at OWN 3 often focus on school updates but sometimes address instructional priorities. OWN 3 leaders leverage schools within the OWN network to provide opportunities for teachers to visit and view best practices to use in OWN 3 classrooms. The same leaders provide teachers with targeted coaching based on individual, pedagogical growth goals. Instructional leaders also hold teachers accountable for classroom instructional practices and student learning by ensuring that student achievement data is at the center of the conversations about teacher effectiveness.

AT-RISK PROGRAM

OWN 3 benefits from OWN Schools' successful and effective systems and programs to meet the educational needs of at-risk students, and leaders evaluate the ELL program to ensure it is building a strong program to support OWN 3's high population of ELLs. OWN 3 utilizes clear systems and procedures to identify students struggling academically and students with disabilities through its Response to Intervention ("RTI") program, and identifies ELLs by administering a home language survey to all incoming families, followed by an interview, and then administering the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL"). OWN 3 currently shares the special education coordinator with OWN 2, which supports the school with building an RTI and special education program aligned with OWN Schools' programs. The school utilizes a wide range of supplemental programs to support interventions in its tiered RTI program. For students with disabilities, the school has an integrated co-teaching ("ICT") classroom on each grade, and teachers effectively implement ICT models to meet the needs of students.

OWN 3 enrolls a high number of ELLs compared to the other two OWN Schools charters. The school currently employs one English to speakers of other languages ("ESOL") certified teacher, who receives support from the longstanding OWN ELL teacher. Leaders plan to hire an additional ESOL teacher for the next school year. In addition, all teaching assistants are bilingual, and they are able to support classroom teachers, who predominantly speak English only, with meeting the needs of ELLs. Another strategy classroom teachers cited is using students with more English proficiency to translate for students who primarily speak Spanish. OWN Schools traditionally has strong results and a strong program for its ELLs. However, OWN 3 enrolls a population of ELLs that is over three times higher than the other two OWN Schools' charters. OWN 3 has the opportunity to closely analyze and reflect on its first year of programming, determine its effectiveness, and quickly modify English language acquisition strategies if the current programming is not effective enough.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

OWN 3 is organized, structured, and managed so that teachers and leaders can deliver the educational program. Even as the school had to pivot quickly over the summer to occupy temporary space as construction delayed opening the permanent building, leaders ensure that teachers are clear about who to go to for what as it relates to resources and instructional materials. Teachers reported that the move to temporary space meant that supplies were delayed, but the school leaders put systems in place to respond to teacher concerns and provide them with the resources needed to execute the lessons. There is a clear system for requesting, receiving, and approving replenishment or supplemental supplies and materials. At the time of the visit, teachers reported improved systems for obtaining resources.

The pivot to a temporary space negatively impacted student enrollment, also. However, OWN 3 used radio advertisements, neighborhood canvassing, newspaper ads, social media, and mailings as strategies to recruit new families and attract an applicant pool that surpasses the number of seats available for the next school year in the new building. Translation into Spanish has been pivotal in ensuring that families in the OWN 3 neighborhood have an understanding of the school's offerings. For current families, school leaders send all notices home translated into Spanish and maintain an open-door policy for parents to visit the school to have notices, policies, and expectations explained to them in-person in their native tongue.

Students are held to clear expectations for behavior with rules listed in each classroom. Although school leaders articulate a multitier system for student discipline matters, teachers report a lack of awareness of this system and noted that most discipline responses live in the classroom with teachers. As the school grows, it has an opportunity to train teachers on the available Responsive Classroom curriculum and tools so that teachers are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources to effectively support students within schoolwide culture expectations and the consistent application of the discipline system.

As OWN 3 grows, leaders have been intentional about being responsive to the feedback of constituents. Staff member surveys have been the impetus for changes and updates in policies. Feedback from family members has driven programmatic enhancements including the addition of an afterschool program that serves about half of OWN 3 students. Upcoming summer school programming will provide academic and enrichment opportunities for students as OWN 3 builds a bridge from the inaugural year to the second year and from the temporary space to the permanent building.

OWN 3

Ax

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SUNY RENEWAL
BENCHMARKS

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OUR WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL 3 BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

| CHAIR | TRUSTEES |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Dr. Jeanette Betancourt | Kalimah Ayele |
| VICE CHAIR | Richard Bogle |
| Melissa Chin | Olubunmi Emigil |
| SECRETARY | Liz Fernandez |
| Maura Fitzgerald | |

CHARTER LEADERS

| PRINCIPAL |
|--|
| Douglas Ricketts, Principal (2022-23 to Present) |

CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

| SCHOOL YEAR | CHARTERED ENROLLMENT | ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ² | ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT | GRADES SERVED |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 2022-23 | 156 | 77 | 49% | K-1 |

1. Source: The Institute’s board records at the time of the visit.
2. Source: Institute’s Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW



CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

| SCHOOL YEAR | VISIT TYPE | DATE |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| 2022-23 | First Year Visit | April 18, 2023 |

CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

| DATE(S) OF REVIEW | EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS | TITLE |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--|
| April 18, 2023 | Andrew Kile | Managing Director of School Evaluation |
| | Ana Quian | Administrative Assistant |
| | Carl Anthony Watson | External Consultant |

CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

| CHARTER TERM | ACCOUNTABILITY PERIOD | ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| Initial | First Year of a Four Year Accountability Period | Fall 2026 |

VERSION 5.0, MAY 2012

INTRODUCTION

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks¹ (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

- They provide a framework for the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) to gather and evaluate evidence to determine whether a school has made an adequate case for renewal. In turn, this evidence assists the Institute in deciding if it can make the required legal and other findings in order to reach a positive recommendation for renewal. For example, the various benchmarks that the Institute uses to determine whether the school has had fiscally responsible practices in place during the last charter period allow the Institute to determine with greater precision whether the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter period, a finding that the New York Charter Schools Act requires the SUNY Trustees to make.
- At the same time that the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks provide a framework for the Institute to collect and review evidence, they also provide the school with a guide to understanding the Institute’s evaluative criteria. As the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (or some sub-set of them) as the framework for conducting its ongoing school evaluation visits, school leaders should be fully aware of the content of the Benchmarks at the time of renewal.

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect the interwoven nature of schools from an academic, organizational, fiscal and/or legal perspective. For example, the Institute could reasonably place many of the academic benchmarks under the heading of organizational effectiveness. More generally, some redundancy exists because the Institute looks at the same issue from different perspectives.

Precisely how the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, during both the renewal process and throughout the charter period, is explained in greater detail in the Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”), available on the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal/>. Responses to frequently asked questions about the Institute’s use of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks appear below:

- The Institute does not have a point system for recommending renewal. A school cannot simply tally up the number of positive benchmark statements in order to determine the Institute’s recommendation
 - Some benchmarks are weighed more heavily than others. In particular, the Institute gives the greatest weight to how well the school has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.

1. Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share. These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the Correlates of Effective Schools. The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

- Despite the fact that the Accountability Plan comprises only a single benchmark, a school’s performance on that benchmark is critical. In fact, it is so important that while the Institute may recommend non-renewal for fiscal and organizational failures (if sufficiently serious), excellence in these areas will not excuse poor academic performance.
- The Institute does not use every benchmark during every kind of renewal review, and how the benchmarks are used differs depending on a school’s circumstances. For example, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (Benchmarks 1B-1F, 2C and 2D) are given far less weight in making a renewal decision on schools that the Institute has previously renewed. Similarly, less weight is accorded to these benchmarks during an initial renewal review where a school has consistently met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - The Institute also may not consider every indicator subsumed under a benchmark when determining if a school has met that benchmark, given the school’s stage of development or its previous track record.
- Aside from Benchmark 1A on academic Accountability Plan goals (which is singular in its importance), no school should fear that a failure to meet every element of every benchmark means that it is not in a position to make a case for renewal. To the contrary, the Institute has yet to see a school that performs perfectly in every respect. The Institute appreciates that the benchmarks set a very high standard collectively. While the Institute certainly hopes and expects that schools aim high, it is understood that a school’s reach will necessarily exceed its grasp in at least some aspects.

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated. Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

It is important that the entire school community understand the renewal process. All members of a school’s leadership team and board should carefully review both the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks and the SUNY Renewal Practices. Note that a renewal overview document for parents, teacher and community members is also available on the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal/>. Please do not hesitate to contact the Institute with any questions.



RENEWAL QUESTION 1 IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

1A – ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS

OVER THE ACCOUNTABILITY PERIOD, THE SCHOOL HAS MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

The Institute determines the extent to which the school has met the Accountability Plan goals in the following areas:

- English language arts;
- mathematics;
- science;
- social studies (high school only);
- NCLB;
- high school graduation and college preparation (if applicable); and
- optional academic goals included by the school.

1B – USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA

THE SCHOOL HAS AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING.

The following elements are generally present:

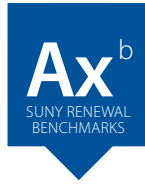
- the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state performance standards;
- the school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments;
- the school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders and board members;
- teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention;
- school leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and
- the school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students’ progress and growth.

1C – CURRICULUM

THE SCHOOL’S CURRICULUM SUPPORTS TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades;



- in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans;
- teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents;
- the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and
- teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.

1D – PEDAGOGY

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION IS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL.

The following elements are generally present:

- teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum;
- teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding;
- teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills;
- teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and
- teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement.

1E – INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

THE SCHOOL HAS STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;
- the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff;
- instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers’ instructional effectiveness;
- instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels;
- instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers;
- professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice;
- instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses; and
- instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.



1F – AT-RISK STUDENTS

THE SCHOOL MEETS THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically;
 - the school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students;
 - general education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program;
 - the school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students;
 - teachers are aware of their students' progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students;
 - the school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and
 - the school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including the school nurse, if applicable.
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RENEWAL QUESTION 2

IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

2A – MISSION & KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

THE SCHOOL IS FAITHFUL TO ITS MISSION AND HAS IMPLEMENTED THE KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN ITS CHARTER.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school faithfully follows its mission; and
- the school has implemented its key design elements.

2B – PARENTS & STUDENTS

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families;
- families are satisfied with the school; and
- parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.

2C – ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program;
- the organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- the school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied;
- the school retains quality staff;
- the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals;
- the school maintains adequate student enrollment;
- the school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and
- the school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary.

2D – BOARD OVERSIGHT

THE SCHOOL BOARD WORKS EFFECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE SCHOOL'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

The following elements are generally present:

- board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school's future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization;
- the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school's program and finances;
- it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision;
- the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively;
- the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and
- the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.

2E – GOVERNANCE

THE BOARD IMPLEMENTS, MAINTAINS AND ABIDES BY APPROPRIATE POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES.

The following elements are generally present:

- the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships;
- the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;
- the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members;
- the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;
- the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter;

- the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner;
 - the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion;
 - the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and
 - the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.
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2F – LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIES WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS AND THE PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law;
 - the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations;
 - the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan;
 - the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements;
 - the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and
 - the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.
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RENEWAL QUESTION 3
IS THE SCHOOL FISCALLY SOUND?

3A – BUDGETING AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

THE SCHOOL OPERATES PURSUANT TO A LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN IN WHICH IT CREATES REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures;
- board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate;
- the school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions;
- the school routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and
- actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.

3B – INTERNAL CONTROLS

THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures;
- the school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management's direction, laws, regulations, grants and contracts;
- the school safeguards its assets;
- the school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions;
- the school has controls in place to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy;
- the school's trustees and employees adhere to a code of ethics;
- the school ensures duties are appropriately segregated, or institutes compensating controls;
- the school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained;
- the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements;
- a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions;
- the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy;
- the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and
- the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.

3C – FINANCIAL REPORTING

THE SCHOOL HAS COMPLIED WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS BY PROVIDING THE SUNY TRUSTEES AND THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH REQUIRED FINANCIAL REPORTS THAT ARE ON TIME, COMPLETE AND FOLLOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES.

The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:

- annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable;
- annual budgets and cash flow statements;
- un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment;
- bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and
- grant expenditure reports.

3D – FINANCIAL CONDITION

THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS. CRITICAL FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL ARE NOT DEPENDENT ON VARIABLE INCOME (GRANTS, DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING).

The following elements are generally present:

- the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;
- the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months);
- the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections;
- If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;
- If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and
- the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.



RENEWAL QUESTION 4

IF THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER IS RENEWED, WHAT ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE TERM OF THE NEXT CHARTER PERIOD, AND ARE THEY REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?

4A – PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL'S STRUCTURE

KEY STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL, AS DEFINED IN THE EXHIBITS OF THE APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL, ARE REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period;
- the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program;
- the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget;
- key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing;
- a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and
- plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program.

4B – PLANS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

THE SCHOOL'S PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ALLOW IT TO MEET ITS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school's educational program;
- for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and
- where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation standards set by the Board of Regents.



4C – PLANS FOR BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES A REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE PLAN FOR BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school;
- plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board's ability to carry out its responsibilities;
- if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and
- if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization.

4D – FISCAL & FACILITY PLANS

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES A REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE FISCAL PLAN INCLUDING PLANS FOR AN ADEQUATE FACILITY.

Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- the school's budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections;
 - fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs;
 - fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions;
 - information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and
 - facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.
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