

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*FIRST YEAR SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT
THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL -
WYANDANCH*

VISIT DATE: APRIL 6, 2023

REPORT DATE: JUNE 2, 2023

SUNY Charter Schools Institute

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Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

CONTENTS

1

Introduction and Report Format

2

Charter Background

3

Executive Summary

4

Benchmark Summary

Appendices

A: Charter School Overview

B: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the SUNY Charter Schools Institute’s (the “Institute’s”) observations and findings from its April 6, 2023 first year school evaluation visit to the The Academy Charter School – Wyandanch (“The Academy – Wyandanch”).

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 based on data gathered during the visit. 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). The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks evaluate 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

THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL – WYANDANCH

244 Long Island Ave, Wyandanch, NY 11798 | Grades: K-2 | Wyandanch School District

The SUNY Trustees approved the original charter for The Academy – Wyandanch on October 7, 2021. The charter opened in fall 2022, serving 175 students in Kindergarten – 2nd grade. The Academy – Wyandanch is a replication of The Academy Charter School’s (“The Academy Schools”) academic program. The Academy Schools is a SUNY authorized not-for-profit education corporation with the authority to operate two charters including The Academy Charter School (“The Academy”) and The Academy Charter School – Uniondale (“The Academy – Uniondale”).



MISSION

To create world-class competitive scholars who will learn today, lead tomorrow, and serve in the future. The Academy Charter School – Wyandanch will graduate students with the content mastery and life skills needed to move into the top five percent of their middle and high school classes. To accomplish this, The Academy Charter School – Wyandanch offers an exceptional interdisciplinary curriculum in a technology-rich environment that challenges students to explore connections across subjects and use experiential learning to bridge gaps between theory and practice.

CURRENT CHARTER

Serves:
Kindergarten – 2nd
Chartered Enrollment:
175
Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2027

ANTICIPATED 2026-27

Grades Served:
Kindergarten – 6th
Chartered Enrollment:
475

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Extended learning time;	+
Low teacher to student ratio;	+
Standards-based instruction;	+
Ongoing support for teachers; and,	+
Character development.	+

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Academy – Wyandanch replicates the highly successful academic program currently in place at The Academy Schools. The Academy Schools supports all three charters with curriculum development, student testing, recruiting, training, professional development, financial management, and technology through a shared services team paid for by all three charters. The Academy – Wyandanch uses a variety of research-based curricular programs aligned to New York State standards and implements a rigorous curricular framework that develops students' foundational skills and prepares them for middle school and beyond. The school's English language arts ("ELA") curriculum engages students in read aloud, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, and reading conferences as well as modeled writing, shared writing, independent writing, and writing conferences. The ELA curriculum also includes explicit phonics and vocabulary instruction to support students in developing foundational fluency and comprehension skills. Mathematics lessons include a review of the previous day's lesson, direct teacher instruction, group work, and enrichment. In addition, mathematics lessons consist of centers, during which students rotate through a series of play-based activities aligned to standards-based skills with the support of both the lead teacher and the teaching assistant.

All classrooms at The Academy – Wyandanch are co-taught to ensure individualized attention for each student. Leaders provide ongoing professional development, which includes pre-service training, regular observation and feedback cycles, and an annual formal evaluation aligned with a research-based instructional skills rubric. The deputy chief academy officer ("deputy CAO") and instructional leaders from The Academy Schools support curriculum development, coach teachers, and ensure the implementation of all curricular programs with fidelity.

The Academy – Wyandanch's organizational structure provides effective management of the school. The principal retains primary oversight of the school's mission and vision, and has the support of the shared services team in the areas of curriculum and instruction, operations, and finance. The Academy – Wyandanch's deputy CAO and the shared services team's chief academic officer ("CAO"); directors of academic intervention services, counseling and student support; director of assessment; and, director of student support services provide the principal with instructional support in their areas of focus.

Pursuant to the Institute's prior inspection of The Academy – Wyandanch at the above address on August 23, 2022, (and documentation provided to or inspected by the Institute at that visit and prior/post thereto), the Institute determined that The Academy – Wyandanch (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 beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

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

The Academy – Wyandanch has a rigorous assessment system that aligns to state standards and improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school administers Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to assess students' reading levels and the Renaissance STAR assessment to monitor students' growth in mathematics, reading, and early literacy thrice annually. To identify and progress monitor English language learners ("ELLs"), the school administers New York State Identification of English Language Learners ("NYSITELL") and New York State English as a Second Language ("NYSESLAT"). In addition, teachers also regularly administer curriculum-based or internally-developed formative assessments, such as weekly quizzes and daily exit tickets, in order to track student mastery. The shared services CAO and shared services director of curriculum and instruction develop interim assessments along with school leaders to ensure rigor and alignment to state standards.

Teachers at the Academy – Wyandanch use data to effectively monitor students' growth and drive student learning. To prepare teachers for effective scoring and assessment analysis, school and shared services leaders provide teachers with common rubrics for ELA and mathematics and facilitate sessions multiple times during the school year where teachers score collaboratively. During those sessions, leaders ensure scoring practices are consistent across the school by discussing expectations and rubrics, addressing issues with teachers, and answering teachers' questions for the purposes of norming scoring and data analysis practices. Following data days and common planning, teachers use data to drive lesson planning, identify gaps, and form guided reading and other instructional groups in order to drive student learning and mastery of standards. The school keeps parents informed about student progress through formal report cards and informal family conferences.

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

The Academy – Wyandanch has a curriculum aligned to state standards that supports teachers with instructional planning. In mathematics, the school uses Eureka Math Squared, an extension of Eureka Math that continues to support students’ conceptual understanding and problem solving skills with increased opportunities for discourse. For ELA and early literacy, the school uses SAVVAS myView Literacy, a comprehensive, research based literacy approach to teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening using authentic texts and writing workshops. In addition to SAVVAS, the school uses Foundations for phonics, literacy footprints for guided reading, and iLitELL literacy for ELLs. For pull out interventions, the school uses Leveled Literacy Instruction (“LLI”), an intensive small group program aimed at developing students’ foundational reading skills. For mathematics interventions, Academic Intervention Services (“AIS”) teachers use EnVisions Math. The school uses SAVVAS Elevate for science and SAVVAS myWorld for social studies.

Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on the resources the school provides. Teachers have access to online resources and curriculum books to support instructional planning and can modify instructional materials to support effective instructional delivery. The shared services CAO and shared services director of curriculum and instruction oversee the selection of all curricula to ensure alignment to the school’s educational program and state standards. The shared services and school leaders set clear expectations and provide teachers with supporting materials including curricular maps and pacing guides. Teachers develop lesson plans using the shared services’ instructional framework, then submit lesson plans to school leaders and instructional coaches. Instructional coaches and school leaders provide feedback on lesson plans and teachers discuss misconceptions, teaching strategies, and differentiation strategies during common planning time and team meetings.

PEDAGOGY

The Academy – Wyandanch has high quality instruction across classrooms. Teachers at The Academy – Wyandanch deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to lesson activities. Teachers explicitly build on students’ prior knowledge in their plans and reinforce the lesson objectives and necessary skills with their deliberate language. The school implements a co-teaching structure across all classrooms and teachers demonstrate clear roles and responsibilities. In most classrooms, both teachers effectively engage students and proactively address student needs. Teachers use effective checks for understanding and adjust instruction accordingly. For example, most teachers leverage frequent turn and talks to surface misconceptions across all students. During turn and talks, co-teachers circulate the room, gather information from student pairs, and reframe whole class questioning to address common mistakes or celebrate exemplar responses. The majority of teachers at The Academy – Wyandanch provide opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking questions and problem solving. For example, in lessons that exhibit higher order thinking, teachers ask students open ended questions and press them to elaborate on short responses often prompting them to provide evidence. However, in some lessons teachers did not ask challenging questions and did not accelerate the pace of the lesson activities despite evidence that the lesson did not challenge students. Teachers

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

establish warm classroom environments focused on academic achievement. Across all classrooms, students demonstrate high engagement with the material and participate in common rituals and routines. Teachers consistently use positive narration and recognize students for behavior or academic excellence. In some classrooms, teachers are still working on optimizing their pacing to maximize learning time and move through transitions smoothly.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Academy – Wyandanch has strong instructional leadership that supports teachers through consistent coaching and professional development. The instructional leadership team at the school consists of the principal and two instructional coaches who receive additional support from shared services leaders including the CAO and director of curriculum and instruction. The leaders set clear, mission-aligned instructional expectations including increasing student discourse, building character, and hitting proficiency targets across grade levels based on the school's internal assessments.

With support from the principal, the school's instructional coaches evaluate and provide targeted coaching to teachers in their respective subject areas of expertise. Coaches conduct regular, informal classroom observations and meet with teachers individually each week. During one on one meetings, coaches debrief observations and discuss progress on teachers' goals. Following each meeting, coaches document strengths and areas for growth in writing. In cases where teachers struggle to demonstrate progress, coaches initiate formal coaching cycles tailored to specific areas of concern. Over the four to six week period, coaches document progress against specific pedagogical growth areas and may provide more intensive supports such as co-teaching lessons. If teachers fail to improve during these cycles, coaches raise the issue to the principal for further deliberation.

The Academy – Wyandanch has regular professional development activities aligned to the school's priorities with particular emphasis on building mastery of the curricular program. Teachers participate in summer pre-service training during which they internalize the school's mission, practice the instructional approach, and learn systems. Instructional leaders use the summer training to identify lead teachers who support common planning meetings and write lesson plans. During weekly common planning meetings, instructional coaches and lead teachers go over feedback on lesson plans, review student work, analyze data such as MAP results, and discuss case studies of struggling students. The school has monthly early release days for formal professional development. External providers such as consultants from the Eureka curriculum deliver modeled lessons and debrief with teachers on their progress with the content. Additionally, lead teachers traveled to The Academy – Uniondale to observe veteran teacher lessons, participate in discussions about pedagogical strategies, and subsequently turnkey their findings to all staff. Although the professional development calendar is initially set by the shared services, school leaders modify the content and timing of the activities based on assessment of teacher needs during frequent lesson observations and analysis of student assessment data.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

AT-RISK PROGRAM

The Academy – Wyandanch has a program in place that meets the educational needs of at-risk students. The shared services director of student services and English as a New Language (“ENL”) oversees the effective implementation of programs and structures for at-risk students with the support of the special education coordinator on site at the school. For targeted academic interventions, The Academy – Wyandanch uses a three tiers. Tier 1 is general classroom instruction, Tier 2 provides moderate academic support and intervention in small group settings, and Tier 3 provides a high level of individualized support.

Teachers and the AIS team identify students with disabilities and hold child study team meetings with parents. Following those meetings and approval from parents, the school supports the family to submit a request for evaluation to the home district by the parent with supporting documentation from the school. The Academy – Wyandanch offers integrated co-teaching classrooms as well as counseling. Home districts provide resource room teachers, speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. The school identifies ELLs by administering the Home Language Survey to all students at the time of registration. ENL teachers review the survey responses and administer the NYSITELL at the beginning of the school year. ENL teachers support students using a push-in and pull out model and the iLITELL program, which accelerates English language development through a mix of strategic scaffolding, interactive content, visual aids, academic vocabulary support, survival vocabulary for newcomers, and home language support.

General education, ENL, and special education teachers communicate regularly to plan lessons as well as share strategies to use during classroom instruction. Special education and ENL teachers also monitor student progress in general education classes. In addition, special education teachers monitor progress toward meeting Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) goals using data as well as teacher observation and assessment. ENL teachers assess ELL’s English language proficiency using NYSESLAT. Leaders and teachers monitor progress for students at risk of academic failure through the STAR online assessment as well as teacher made assessments, which are administered every four to six weeks.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Academy – Wyandanch’s organizational structure effectively supports the delivery of the educational program. The school’s senior director of operations oversees all operational responsibilities allowing the principal and instructional coaches to focus on academics. Shared services and school staff members have clear lines of reporting, and teachers know whom to turn to for instructional and operational support when needed. Teachers follow clear procedures for procuring necessary materials and technology for classrooms. At the time of the visit, the school was fully staffed, and leaders reported a high percentage of teachers intended to return for the 2023-24 school year.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

The school establishes a strong school culture that maintains a safe and orderly environment. Instructional leaders and teachers implement a management system with clear expectations that is consistently applied across classrooms. Teachers use a color coded system to issue warnings for student misbehavior and reward them for exceeding behavior expectations, which is also implemented at The Academy Schools. Teachers use the digital platform ClassDojo to systematically track these behavior data and communicate to parents in real time. In order to further support teachers in maintaining orderly classrooms with a sense of purpose and joy, instructional leaders and counselors may circulate rooms during lessons. As a result, students at The Academy – Wyandanch are consistently on task in classrooms and engaged in academic activities with minimal disruptions.

The Academy - Wyandanch

Ax

APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-14

CO^A
CHARTER
OVERVIEW

PAGE Ax 1

SB^B
SUNY RENEWAL
BENCHMARKS

PAGE Ax 3



THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL – WYANDANCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Robert Stewart	Dale James
VICE CHAIR	Beth A. McKenzie
Dawn West-Bloise	Dr. Roger Ball
	Carol Beckles
	Dorothy Atkinson-Burton
	Peter Goodman
	Marie M. Graham
	Roderick Roberts
	Claudette Harrison
	Stephen Rowley

CHARTER LEADERS

PRINCIPAL
Quinton Dupree, 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	175	140	80%	K-2

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	April 6, 2023

CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
April 6, 2023	Vickie Masséus	School Evaluation Analyst
	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Director of Performance and Systems

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.

