




TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: John B. King, Jr. 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Renewal of Charters Authorized by the
Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
(NYCDOE)

DATE: January 4, 2011

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the following proposed first renewal charters as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) in his capacity as a charter school authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law and that their charters be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

1. Achievement First Endeavor Charter School*
2. Community Roots Charter School*
3. Democracy Prep Charter School*
4. Hyde Leadership Charter School
5. International Leadership Charter School
6. South Bronx Classical Charter School

The following tables outline information about each of these proposed charter schools. Additional information about each of the applications and the review of those applications is included in the attached Executive Summary and Findings from the NYC DOE's Renewal Reports for each school (Attachment).

* The charter renewal for this school includes a material revision to the charter which is highlighted in the chart that outlines the material terms for each school.

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School

Name of Charter School	Achievement First Endeavor Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: January 10, 2006 to January 10, 2011 Renewal Charter: Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Tom Kaiser, Lesley Redwine, Claire Robinson
Management Company	Achievement First
Other Partner(s)	N/A
Community School District of Location	13 16
Grade Levels	5-8 (current); 5-12 (proposed at scale)
Enrollment	320 (current); 937 (estimated at scale)
New Material Term	K-12, 966 students

Below is AF Endeavor's Growth Plan:

Grade	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Capacity
K		88	88	88	88	88
1		88	88	88	88	88
2			86	86	86	86
3				80	80	80
4					74	74
5	85	85	85	85	85	85
6	80	80	80	80	80	80
7	75	75	75	75	75	75
8	70	70	70	70	70	70
9	64	64	64	64	64	64
10		61	61	61	61	61
11			59	59	59	59
12				56	56	56
	374	611	756	892	966	966

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for Achievement First Endeavor Charter School on the following conditions:

"The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal."

Community Roots Charter School

Name of Charter School	Community Roots Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: December 9, 2005 to December 8, 2010 Renewal Charter: Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Ellen Cogut, Katharine Darrow, Allison Keil, Sara Stone
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	Brooklyn Academy of Music (CBO)
Community School District of Location	13
Grade Levels	K-5 (current; at scale)
Enrollment	300 (current; at scale)
New Material Term	K-8, 450 students

Below is Community Roots growth plan:

Grade	2010 – 2011	2011 – 2012	2012 – 2013	2013 - 2014
K	50	50	50	50
1	50	50	50	50
2	50	50	50	50
3	50	50	50	50
4	50	50	50	50
5	50	50	50	50
6		50	50	50
7			50	50
8				50
Total	300	350	400	450

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for Community Roots Charter School on the following condition:

“The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal.”

Democracy Prep Charter School

Name of Charter School	Democracy Prep Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: December 9, 2005 to December 8, 2010 Renewal Charter: Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Seth Andrew, Chris Kraus
Management Company	Democracy Prep
Other Partner(s)	Building Excellent Schools (CBO)
Community School District of Location	5
Grade Levels	6-10 (current); 6-12 (at scale)
Enrollment	450 (current); 672 (estimated at scale)
New Material Term	Addition of CMO, Democracy Prep

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for Democracy Prep Charter School without conditions.

Hyde Leadership Charter School

Name of Charter School	Hyde Leadership Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: January 10, 2006 to January 10, 2011 Renewal Charter: Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Herbert Fixler, Cozen O'Connor, Clifford van Voorhees
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	Hyde Foundation of Maine
Community School District of Location	8
Grade Levels	K-4, 6-10 (current); K-12 (proposed at scale)
Enrollment	712 (current); 940 (estimated at scale)

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for Hyde Leadership Charter School on the following conditions:

“The school demonstrates improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal.”

International Leadership Charter School

Name of Charter School	International Leadership Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: January 10, 2006 to January 10, 2011 Renewal Charter; Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Dr. Elaine Ruiz-Lopez
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
Community School District of Location	10
Grade Levels	9-12 (current; at scale)
Enrollment	365 (current); 352 (estimated at scale)

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for International Leadership Charter School on the following conditions:

1. "The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal."
2. "The Board must demonstrate a plan for sound oversight and evaluation of school leadership."
3. "The school must demonstrate attainment of charter goals each year."

South Bronx Classical Charter School

Name of Charter School	South Bronx Classical Charter School
Terms and Dates of Charter	Initial Charter: December 9, 2005 to December 8, 2010 Renewal Charter: Ends on June 30, 2015
Lead Applicant(s)	Stephen Baldwin, Lester Long
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
Community School District of Location	12
Grade Levels	K-5 (current; at scale)
Enrollment	350 (current; at scale)

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE proposes a 5 year renewal period for South Bronx Classical Charter School on the following conditions:

1. "The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal."
2. "The Board must demonstrate a plan for sound oversight and evaluation of school leadership."
3. "The school must demonstrate attainment of charter goals."

Reasons for Recommendation

The proposed charter schools: (1) meet the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) are likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the Achievement First Endeavor Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the Community Roots Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the Democracy Prep Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

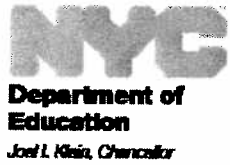
VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the Hyde Leadership Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the International Leadership Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues the first renewal charter of the South Bronx Classical Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

Attachment

ATTACHMENT



**Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011**

**ACHIEVEMENT FIRST ENDEAVOR
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

NOVEMBER 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is a middle school serving approximately 322 students from grade 5 through grade 8 in the 2010-2011 school year.¹ The school opened in 2006 with grade 5, and is currently operating at scale with students in grade 5 through 8.² The school is currently housed in a private facility on 510 Waverly Avenue in District 13.³ The student body includes 1.6% English language learners and 13.9% special education students.

The school earned a C on its progress report in 2009-2010, an A in 2008-2009, and an A in 2007-2008. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.8%.⁴ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁵

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys, student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the school's finances, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: October 12 & 13, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Nancy Meakem, Director of Evaluation, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Aaron Listhaus, Chief Academic Officer, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Aquila Haynes, Director of Community Affairs, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Rana Khan, Director of Operations, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Julian Cohen, Director of Post-Secondary Readiness, NYC DOE
- Fred Lisker, Division of Students with Disabilities, NYC DOE

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the Achievement First Endeavor Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database. The school was chartered to serve students in District 13 and District 16. The school's previous location was in District 14.

⁴ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

⁵ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

The NYC DOE CSO has found Achievement First Endeavor Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

The School will be offered this renewal with the following conditions:

1. The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school has developed and implemented a rigorous assessment system and strong data-tracking tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
 - The school administers a wide range of assessments to measure student levels and progress in key subject areas and skills. Results from these assessments are tracked in the online data tracking system "Athena," created by Achievement First. Teachers and administrators note the effectiveness of the new online tool and note that while certain elements of the software are still in development, the tool provides useful student, class, and school level data including item analysis and longitudinal reports.
 - The school benefits from data professional development program called "Data Days" in which teachers, administrators and staff learn to use Athena data to track student progress and inform school-wide planning and classroom instruction. In 2008 the school improved structures to make this more systematic.
- Rituals, routines and protocols are in place to ensure a safe and consistent environment for students.
 - Classes observed shared consistent norms, protocols and routines including school-wide behavioral management techniques.
 - Students note that they love their classes and feel safe, happy and challenged at school.

- The school is reflective and uses a data-driven approach to make modifications and plan for the future.
 - The school has developed systems to survey teachers, parents and staff to identify key areas of development. When certain areas of focus have required additional attention, such as training in the use of data, the school has re-organized its systems to better address these needs. The development of regular “Data Day” professional development is an example.
 - After reflecting on quantitative and qualitative data, the school decided to prioritize the improvement of quality in reading and ELA achievement. This entailed the re-structuring of the ELA curriculum and the creation of a differentiated reading enrichment period for all members of the school community.
 - In response to staff needs, the school developed a strong coaching model with academic deans who provide ongoing professional development and support to all teachers. These deans receive individualized support from the school leader and from the Achievement First Charter Management Organization.

- The school promotes a culture of high expectations for all students and staff and communicates these expectations clearly to all members of the community.
 - The school has developed a consistent form of parent communication through in-person meetings and newsletters sent home. Teachers also share regular progress reports and call home frequently.
 - The school leadership and staff meet frequently to establish priorities and to address school-wide needs.
 - Parents express satisfaction with the school and note strong communication between school and parents.

- The school’s Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school’s mission and vision, and maintains sound finances and internal controls.
 - The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of Achievement First Endeavor Charter School were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
 - The school has effectively managed its operations and is currently located in a newly constructed private facility that boasts state-of-the-art amenities and resources for students.
 - According to the school’s audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2010, the school possessed assets totaling \$7,387,819 and total liabilities of \$1,468,435. All of the school’s net

assets totaling \$5,919,384 remain unrestricted for use purposes. Achievement First Endeavor Charter School has about \$270,000 dollars in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within a 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

What the school needs to improve

- The school should continue to support teachers in differentiating their instruction to ensure that the individual learning needs of every student are met so that all students can make progress.
 - The school earned a C on the 2009-2010 progress portion of the NYC DOE progress report.
 - Some lessons observed provided full-group, teacher-directed instruction with minimal opportunities to check for individual students' understanding. In some instances the needs of students who were struggling went unmet. Likewise, in some instances high-performing students who finished tasks quickly and appeared to understand the material were not challenged to move on to higher-level learning opportunities.
 - The school has developed new coaching and professional development systems to support teachers in using data to differentiate their instruction. This work should continue.

- The school should work to ensure that all classrooms are rigorous and engaging, and that all classes support the development of higher-order thinking and student voice in order to meet the school's goal of college readiness.
 - The school earned a C on its 2009-2010 NYC DOE Progress Report, with an overall score of 38.3, including low performance on ELA. The school has pursued structural changes as well as revisions to curriculum and professional development plans to address this need. These areas should continue to be a focus of school improvement measures.
 - Some classes observed did not present students with the opportunity for thinking critically or expressing their ideas.

- The school should continue to develop systems to effectively evaluate and support school leaders at all levels, and should ensure that leadership transitions run smoothly to ensure high performance and academic achievement at all times.
 - The school hired a new leader for the 2009-2010 school year. This principal continues to receive coaching and support from the Achievement First Charter Management Organization. The school notes that the transition to a second school leader was challenging and seeks to develop improved systems for leadership evaluation and succession.

- The school should continue to enhance systems to communicate with all constituents including parents.
 - During the leadership transition, some parents expressed concern that they were not effectively notified about changes and were not involved in decision-making processes.
 - Some students and parents have expressed frustration that the school's behavioral management system and dress code policy was too strict and punitive. The school modified these systems accordingly but should continue to involve parents and students in key decisions, and communicate these decisions clearly to families.



**Department of
Education**

Jeff I. Klein, Chancellor

**Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011**

COMMUNITY ROOTS CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Community Roots Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 300 students from kindergarten through grade 5 in the 2010-2011 school year.⁶ The school opened in 2006 with students in kindergarten and first grade.⁷ It is currently co-located in PS 67 in District 13.⁸ The student body includes 1% English language learners and 16% special education students.

The school has a significant waitlist and experienced low student attrition during the charter period. The student attrition rate for Community Roots was 1.98% in 2008-2009, compared to 5.9% for the district. In 2010-2011 714 students applied for only 50 open seats. There are currently 710 students on the waitlist. 98% of parents report on parent satisfaction surveys that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the school. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.7%.⁹ The school earned an A on the Environment section of the NYC DOE Progress Report.

Community Roots Charter School significantly out-performed the City and its Community School District in both the NY State English Language Arts and Math Exams; however, the school did not perform well compared to its peer group as calculated by the NYC DOE Progress Report. As such, the school earned an F on its progress report in 2009-2010. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.¹⁰

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys; student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the school's finance, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: May 12 and 13, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Michael Duffy, Executive Director, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Sam Sloves, Principal in Residence, Office of Portfolio Development, NYC DOE
- Aquila Haynes, Director of Community Engagement, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE

⁶ NYC DOE ATS system

⁷ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

⁸ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁹ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

¹⁰ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the Community Roots Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application on the following condition:

- The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal.

The NYC DOE CSO has found Community Roots Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, Community Roots Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well:

- The school is a safe, collaborative learning environment that fosters student engagement and learning.
 - Classes are co-taught with several different modes of instruction. Teacher teams work together to support all students in the classroom, differentiating classroom activities and varying the way students and teachers interact throughout the day. In addition, learning specialists, high school interns, and parents may be found working with students. As many as four adults were observed supporting students in a single classroom.
 - All stakeholders including students, staff, and parents embrace the school's values such that a collaborative and academically focused atmosphere exists in each classroom. Students demonstrated an understanding of the school's core values in class, on the playground, and during informal discussions.
 - The hallways and classrooms display a variety of contemporary student work in all subject areas.
 - The school has created a dedicated space -- popular with students -- for special needs students to work with specialists.

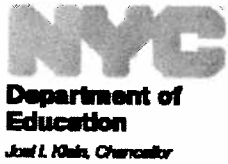
- Students are warmly approached and guided to their destination if found in the hallway.
 - Leadership collaborated with community organizations and other schools in the building to create a playground for students. Well over half of the students were observed playing there before school -- supervised by school staff -- until teachers came and escorted them to class. Students are split in two groups and alternate lunchtime between the cafeteria and the playground.
 - High School students work as interns in the classrooms.
- The school has aligned its curriculum to State standards and works collaboratively to integrate the curriculum horizontally and vertically.
 - The school has worked collaboratively to seamlessly weave the “Integrated Studies” program and the “Community Open Work” into a broad curriculum that addresses affective learning and includes the arts, music, and sciences – all while focused on the surrounding community.
 - Students investigate “community roots” through an integrated studies program that rigorously incorporates all aspects of literacy. All core subject areas connect in the project-based learning built into the curriculum.
 - Weekly “Community Open Work” sessions allow students to pursue an interest in a mixed-age setting. Classes are taught by teachers, parents, and other staff members.
 - Leadership has targeted staff developers to work with the teachers to align the curriculum vertically. Teachers and school leaders described working with a staff developer to adjust the writing curriculum and build stamina in student writing. All teachers go through the Teachers College Writing and/or Reading Workshop Program.
 - The school maps out clear and understandable exit outcomes for each grade that describe what each student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of the school year.
 - Grade teams plan over the summer and meet regularly to align and refine the curriculum.
 - The school partners with community organizations to offer students diverse after-school activities.
- The school regularly collects individual student data to differentiate instruction and support all learners.
 - Teachers developed tri-annual interim assessments in math. They also created assessments for each unit, using data to create differentiated learning opportunities to support students struggling with particular skills and/or content. The assessments are cumulative to assess whether students are retaining previous learning.
 - The school uses the ECLAS, the DRA, and/or the QRI administered every other month to track each student’s progress in ELA.

- Teachers meet weekly for staff professional development and in grade teams to reflect on data and adjust classroom practices. Teachers described building math interventions for students in need of additional work after examining unit assessments.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with the community and with parents.
 - There are regular formal and informal lines of communications established with parents. Parent surveys reflect a high degree of satisfaction with nearly 70% responding and 99% expressing satisfaction with the school.
 - Student stability was 98% last year.
 - Each class sends home a weekly letter to parents with both school-wide announcements and specific notices about events and activities related to the particular class.
 - Parents, teachers and administrators informally discuss students during before-school play time in the playground.
 - The school sponsors math nights for parents and students.
 - Parents visit the school throughout the school day, helping in classrooms and teaching or assisting with the weekly “Community Open Work” classes. At the time of this visit, one parent was discussing his work at the U.N. with a first grade class. Another parent led a Community Open Work class on campfire songs.
- The school’s Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school’s mission and vision, and maintains sound finances and internal controls.
 - The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of Community Roots were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
 - According to the school’s audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2009, the school possessed assets totaling \$1,591,651 and total liabilities of \$300,151. All of the school’s net assets totaling \$1,291,500 remain unrestricted for use purposes. Community Roots has over \$1.3 million dollars in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within a 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

What the school should improve:

- The school should continue efforts to develop and enhance systems to collect and analyze student performance data.

- While the school gathers and uses individual student data, there is not a comprehensive approach to disaggregate school-wide data to examine potential demographic or academic trends within the school.
- The school has found the norm-referenced Terra Nova test for first and second grades inadequate, and is in the process of establishing a systematic approach to replacing or substituting other consolidated data to give a clear picture of school-wide success and performance among subgroups.
- The school has developed a pilot program in which teachers share an overview of student achievement during the course of an academic year. This type of reflective practice should be continued and enhanced with an increased focus on individual student performance and progress.
- The school should continue to train teachers to use data to inform their instruction to ensure that all students receive the support they need to perform at high levels and make progress.
 - Evidence of differentiation was not evident in all classrooms visited.
 - According to the NYC DOE Progress Report, students at Community Roots did not achieve acceptable scores on the NY State ELA or in Math exams, and did not make acceptable progress on NY State ELA or Math exams. The school should review these results carefully to assess areas of strength and weakness, and formulate data-directed plans to increase student achievement next year
- The school should continue efforts to recruit students from the immediate community.
 - The school has a diverse student body and fosters an inclusive community environment in which all students are welcomed and accepted. Currently approximately 30% of students reside outside of the district. According to the school, this proportion will change do to the schools new district preference policy.
- The school should ensure that all teachers consistently follow school-wide and individual classroom goals.
 - A document shared by school leadership announced the use of accountable talk. However, none of the classrooms visited demonstrated use of this technique.
 - The school values student understanding, but in several instances, teachers did not always check for understanding during the course of a lesson. In one instance a student gave an accurate answer to a question, but could not explain. This student was not pushed to demonstrate understanding or to provide further explanation. In another instance, a student misspoke when commenting on another student's work. The comment was neither corrected nor probed.



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011

**DEMOCRACY PREP
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

OCTOBER 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Democracy Prep Charter School (DPCS) is a middle/high school serving approximately 450 students from grade 6 through grade 10 in the 2010-2011 school year.¹¹ The school opened in 2006 with grade 6. It has plans to grow to serve students grades 6 through 12.¹² The middle school is currently housed in P.S. 197 located at 2230 5th Avenue in Manhattan. The High School is located in a private facility at 207 West 133rd Street in Manhattan. The student body is 6.5% English language learners and 10.2% special education students.¹³

The school has a significant waitlist and has experienced low student attrition during the charter period. In 2006-2007, the waitlist for DPCS was 450% percent of available seats. In 2007-2008, the waitlist was 700% of available seats, and, in 2008-2009, the waitlist was 1,250% of available seats. In 2006-2007, the student attrition rate for DPCS was 11.1%, in 2007-2008, the student attrition rate was 10.6% and in 2008-2009, 9.3% of students left the school. For reference, the District 5 student mobility rate in 2005-2006 was 35%.¹⁴

The school earned an A on its progress report in 2009-2010, an A in 2008-2009, and an A in 2007-2008. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 98.7%.¹⁵ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.¹⁶

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys; student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics, as well as a detailed audit of the school's finance, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: May 26 and 27, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Aaron Listhaus, Chief Academic Officer, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE

¹¹ NYC DOE ATS system

¹² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

¹³ NYC DOE ATS system

¹⁴ The school's retrospective report

¹⁵ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

¹⁶ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Policy, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Nathaniel Horton, Associate Director New School Development, NYC DOE
- David Vasquez, Principal Urban Assembly Bronx, NYC DOE

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the Democracy Prep Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

The NYC DOE CSO has found Democracy Prep Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, Democracy Prep Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well:

- The school supports a coherent strength-based approach to classroom instruction and behavioral expectations to ensure a safe and consistent environment that supports student learning.
 - Classroom systems, rituals, and routines are well-established and consistent throughout the schools. For example, all classes begin with a silent “Do Now” assignment, setting a focused and productive tone for the class.
 - Classroom routines and expectations, such as the expectations for answering questions, are explicitly and consistently reinforced.
 - Teacher/school expectations for student transitions are explicit. Passing between classes is silent, and teachers monitor students’ behavior.
 - Teachers speak respectfully to students when correcting their behavior; students do not react with embarrassment or anger.
 - As a whole, the school is committed to reinforcing positive behavior and acknowledging student achievement.
- The school effectively uses data, and supports all teachers in providing rigorous, standards-based instruction that meets the individual needs of all students.

- The school focuses on reinforcing key academic and organizational skills across all content areas and promotes high levels of rigor and student achievement.
- All teachers are responsible for teaching and reinforcing key academic skills, including critical reading, writing, and grammar.
- Both academic classes and advisory classes spend dedicated time explicitly teaching organizational strategies that will help prepare students for success. Students are taught the tools of note-taking, highlighting, and writing in different formats.
- The school is committed to recruiting and serving the needs of all students in the community.
 - The school has a policy of accepting students in all grade levels; the school fills every available seat as students discharge and leave the school.
 - The school actively recruits special education students and works to serve their needs through differentiated instruction including small group instruction, pull-out and push-in, and targeted lessons.
- All members of the school community including teachers, students, parents, and staff, express great satisfaction with the school. The school fosters strong communications amongst all members of the community.
 - The school communicates frequently with families and emphasizes sharing extensive data about students' academic and behavioral performance so that teachers and parents can partner more effectively to help students.
 - Information is shared with parents via text message, email, automated calling, and/or letters home. Teachers call home to communicate both misbehavior and positive achievement/improvement.
 - Weekly report cards are sent home that detail student achievement data from every class.
 - The school staff collaborates frequently to ensure that high quality instruction is promoted throughout the school and that all members of the community are meeting their individual and collective goals.
 - Teacher and student retention rates are high. Likewise, parent and community survey responses indicate strong satisfaction.
- The school's Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school's mission and vision, and maintains sound finances and internal controls.
 - The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of Democracy Prep were prepared on the accrual basis of

accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.

- According to the school's audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2009, the school possessed assets totaling \$2,138,716 and total liabilities of \$808,291. All of the school's net assets totaling \$1,330,425 remain unrestricted for use purposes. Democracy Prep has over \$1.3 million dollars in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within a 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

What the school should improve:

- The school aims to prepare students for success in college, yet some of the key skills necessary for college success were not observed in classrooms.
 - While all students were generally on task throughout the school, few lessons observed required higher-order thinking skills or deep analysis of concepts.
 - Students were not given multi-step projects that required them to monitor their own learning or manage their time productively.
 - All class discussions took the form of the teacher asking questions and students responding. Students were not observed participating in discussion or responding directly to each other.
 - Students were not observed using technology in their learning.



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011**

**HYDE LEADERSHIP
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

DECEMBER 2010

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street,
New York, NY 10007
212-374-5419
CharterSchools@schools.nyc.gov
<http://schools.nyc.gov/CharterSchools>

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Hyde Leadership Charter School is a K-12 school serving approximately 725 students from kindergarten through grade 4, and grade 6 through grade 10 in the 2010-2011 school year.¹⁷ The school opened in 2006 with students in kindergarten and grade 6. It has plans to grow to serve students kindergarten through grade 12.¹⁸ Hyde Leadership is currently co-located in MS 424 in District 8.¹⁹ The student body includes 8.3% English language learners and 14.2% special education students.²⁰

Hyde Leadership Charter School has consistently had more demand than available seats, and currently has a waitlist of 409 students. The school earned a C on its progress report in 2009-2010, an A in 2008-2009, and a B in 2007-2008. The school has not yet received any progress reports for its high school students. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.3%²¹. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.²² Over 90% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch²³.

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office (CSO) conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys, student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the school's finances, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: October 5 and 6, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Nancy Meakem, Director of Evaluation, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Aquila Haynes, Director of Community Engagement, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Anyeli Matos, Associate Director of Operations, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Jaclyn Lee, Director, Office of Portfolio Planning, NYC DOE
- Jordanna Birnbaum, Intern, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE

¹⁷ NYC DOE ATS system

¹⁸ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

¹⁹ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

²⁰ Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

²¹ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

²² New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

²³ NYC DOE ATS system

- Fred Lisker, Office of Special Education, NYC DOE

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the Hyde Leadership Charter School for a period of five years consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

The NYC DOE CSO has found Hyde Leadership Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, Hyde Leadership Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

The School will be offered this renewal with the following condition:

- 5 year renewal on the condition that the school demonstrates improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school has a strong, consistent culture based on shared values which is evident at all levels of school operations.
 - Students note that the school is a safe place where they are happy and feel comfortable taking risks and showing vulnerability.
 - Staff and students note that they feel supported and that the school has a focus on character building and educating the “whole child”.
 - Systems and structures in the school such as Advisory groups and rubrics for self-assessment along with full-school trips and team-building activities support the school’s values of self-reflection, leadership and team work.
- The school promotes a collaborative open door policy in which all community members including parents are empowered to share feedback and participate in goal setting and enhancing the life of the school.
 - The family learning center supports parents and encourages them to get involved.

- The school provides regular communications to families along with regularly scheduled meetings and activities to engage the community in support of increased student learning.
- Teachers collaborate across subject areas and grade levels to share best practices, support each other, and promote consistency in academics.
- The school Leadership Team, Education Committee and Board of Trustees collaborate to develop short-term and long-term goals for school improvement with input from parents and community members.
- The school has established systems to train and support staff and has developed a leadership pipeline through which staff are retained and empowered to take on more authority over time.
 - The school has crafted a succession plan to promote strong instructional leaders to become administrators and leaders. Likewise, the school works with assistant teachers and new staff to develop and grow into more senior roles.
 - Teachers benefit from coaching, inter-visitation, team meetings, formal and informal observations, and regular professional development sessions.
- The school is reflective and uses a data-driven approach to make modifications and plan for the future.
 - The school developed a coaching system that provides individualized support for teachers after reviewing performance data and receiving feedback and requests from teachers.
 - The school has been responsive in developing creative solutions to manage a range of challenges relating to the school facility, the school growth plan, and other key operational matters.
 - After conducting an item analysis in state exams in Math and ELA, the high school noted a need for improved focus on writing and ELA skills, and developed a stronger system to address remediation and strategic student grouping.
 - The elementary school uses Friday meetings to look at school-wide trends and analyze student performance data. Based on this information they have developed unit and lesson plans and identified areas for re-teaching, remediation, and enrichment.
 - After reflecting on previous years' performance, the middle school established a new benchmark system to better align middle school planning and instruction with material and structures in the elementary school to ensure high levels of rigor and consistency for students.
- The school's Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school's mission and vision, and maintains sound finances and internal controls.

- The Board of Trustees meets regularly and is closely involved with the school. The board includes members who are parents, members of the community, and parents of alumni of other Hyde schools. All Board members participate in the school's "self discovery" retreat facilitated by their sister school in Maine.
- The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of Hyde Leadership were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
- According to the school's audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2010, the school possessed assets totaling \$3,452,636 and total liabilities of \$540,327. All of the school's net assets totaling \$2,912,309 remain unrestricted for use purposes. Hyde Leadership has \$2,286,000 in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within a 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

Areas of Improvement:

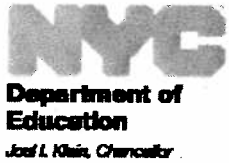
- The school should continue to enhance data systems and continue to train teachers to collect data and analyze trends in student achievement.
 - The school uses a variety of interim and benchmark assessments to measure student learning. The current data systems do not provide the school easy access to longitudinal data to analyze trends. The school has worked to develop its data systems and seeks to further develop this capacity.
 - The High School Discovery groups support students in tracking their progress towards developmental goals and academic assignments. The school should consider expanding this work to empower students to track their own credit accumulation and progress on State exams and college readiness activities.
 - While students in the lower school were aware of their reading levels, some students in the middle and high schools were unable to articulate individual learning goals or specific goals for academic achievement.
- The school should support teachers in implementing ongoing checks for understanding throughout lessons to ensure that all students are learning.
 - Reviewers noted that in some classes observed, students did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and lessons lacked a wrap-up, exit ticket or check for understanding.
 - In some classes observed, teachers performed verbal checks for understanding to get a general sense of the whole class' learning,

but did not employ tools to gauge individual student needs. Likewise, in some classes teachers only called on the same small group of vocal student volunteers while the majority of students did not participate.

- The school should continue to support teachers in using data to differentiate instruction to meet the individual learning needs of all students including low performers, high performers, and all sub-groups so that all students make progress in their learning.
 - The school earned a score of D (15 out of 60) on the progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report, with low scores in student progress in English Language Arts.
 - Many classrooms observed involved full-class instruction using non-differentiated texts and worksheets. Students who worked quickly were not challenged to move on to more advanced work.

- The school has developed structures for coaching, mentoring and Professional Development, and should continue to provide necessary support and structured feedback so that teachers can improve their practice.
 - Efforts to support teachers' work in unit and lesson planning should continue. Some classes observed lacked effective plans for instruction. For example, in one 3rd grade class, students sat in tables for more than eight minutes with no work to complete.
 - Efforts to support teachers in executing smooth and efficient transitions to maximize instructional time should be continued.

- The school should continue to push for increased rigor in classroom instruction with a focus on achievement and results.
 - Reviewers noted periods of down time and/or slow transitions in which students were not engaged in learning, or were not on task.
 - In some lessons observed, the work that students completed was not aligned with the stated aim. For example, in a high school science class, the stated aim was "Students will be able to explain what the electromagnetic spectrum is and what it represents," and the activity involved using tables to complete a worksheet. At the end of the lesson, most students had completed the worksheet but no students could explain what the electromagnetic spectrum was.
 - While the school demonstrated a strong focus on excellence in character development, a focus on academic achievement and excellence was less evident. Structures such as rubrics for academic assessment or rewards for academic achievement were not observed.



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011

**INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

DECEMBER 2010

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street,
New York, NY 10007
212-374-5419
CharterSchools@schools.nyc.gov
<http://schools.nyc.gov/CharterSchools>

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

International Leadership Charter School is a high school serving approximately 365 students from grade 9 through grade 12 in the 2010-2011 school year.²⁴ The school opened in 2006 with grade 9. It is currently operating at scale with students in grades 9 through 12.²⁵ The school is currently housed in a private facility on 2900 Exterior Street in District 10.²⁶ The student body includes 13.4% English language learners and 8.3% special education students.

The school earned a C on its progress report in 2009 - 2010. On the school's Learning Environment Survey, the school was rated at the highest satisfaction level for Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect, with 25% of parents, 90% of teachers, and 80% of students participating. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 90.0%.²⁷ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.²⁸

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys, student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the school's finances, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: April 26 - 28, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Aaron Listhaus, Chief Academic Officer, NYC DOE CSO
- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Governance, NYC DOE CSO
- Fred Lisker, Senior School Improvement Specialist, Division of Students with Disability, NYC DOE
- Jill Herman, Consultant, NYC DOE CSO

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the International Leadership Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

²⁴ NYC DOE ATS system

²⁵ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

²⁶ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

²⁷ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

²⁸ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

The NYC DOE CSO has found International Leadership Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, International Leadership Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

The School will be offered this renewal with the following conditions:

2. The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal.
3. The Board must demonstrate a plan for sound oversight and evaluation of school leadership.
4. The school must demonstrate attainment of charter goals each year.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school community provides a safe space where students value the level of support they receive for social and academic development.
 - Students stated that they feel exceptionally comfortable and respected at the school. They are able to articulate the rules of the school and they claim to appreciate the high levels of mutual respect. Students were observed being helpful to each other in classrooms.
 - Students receive additional support after school and on Saturdays. Their teachers keep them up-to-date on their academic achievement and on necessary steps for improvement through frequent progress reports as well as formal report cards.
 - Students report that their teachers uphold high expectations for all students. Teachers make academic expectations clear by displaying daily lesson aims, alignment to State standards, and Do Now assignments.
 - Students expressed gratitude for the various opportunities at the school. When possible, clubs and after school activities are put in place based on student request; for example, a Step Program was recently formed after students expressed interest.

- The theme of the school is well-integrated and reinforced throughout the school community.
 - Students in grades 9 and 10 participate in a Youth Leadership Advisory class, integrating the school's theme by reinforcing the power of young people and instilling a sense of social responsibility. One observed class was examining environmental issues; students were asked to choose an area and design a project to improve an environmental problem.
 - Every Wednesday, all subject area teachers link a contemporary issue into their content material. For example, an American history class was observed discussing the recent law passed in Arizona regarding undocumented immigrants.
 - Some students participate in the school's model UN program, further developing their awareness of global issues.
 - In grades 11 and 12, students spend one afternoon a week in a supervised internship. They also attend a class that discusses issues related to the workplace. Students keep journals, complete culminating projects, and reflect on their learning.

- Coaches work with teachers to collaborate, plan curriculum and share ideas and best practices with the mutual goal of improving student outcomes.
 - The science teachers meet weekly. They critique each other's lesson plans, visit each other's classrooms, and share pedagogical strategies and behavior management techniques. Their collegiality and respect for each other is evident.
 - The science teachers share a goal of making science accessible to their students and helping their students make real-world connections. With the support of their coach, they have designed a project for grades 9-12 in which students study a disease from the perspective of one specific content area. For example, if the choice were Diabetes, a student in Biology would study the biological makeup of the disease while a student in Chemistry would examine the molecular structure of the disease.

- The school's Board of Trustees maintains sound finances.
 - Most processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school can improve on following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of International Leadership Charter School were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
 - According to the school's audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2010, the school possessed assets totaling \$677,072 and total liabilities of \$226,322. All of the school's net assets totaling \$450,750 remain unrestricted for use purposes. International Leadership Charter School has about \$75,000 dollars

in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within 90 day period.

What the school needs to improve

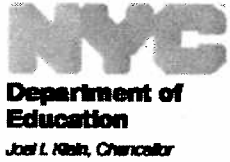
- The school should work to align classroom practices with school-wide goals in order to improve student learning.
 - The leadership team articulated a set of goals that were not reflected in the classrooms observed. These goals include inquiry-based lessons, high levels of student engagement and discourse, and a focus on cooperative learning. Most of the 13 classrooms observed over the two-day visit were teacher-directed. The number of students who responded to teachers' questions was less than half of the class. This does not include students being asked to read aloud. Teachers' questions mainly asked for recall of information (the lowest level on Bloom's taxonomy), with minimal questions that required explanation. Students' responses were generally one or two words. In classrooms observed students did not respond to each other's comments. Students sat in rows and did not interact with each other except for two instances in which students sat in pairs. Students did not discuss or share their ideas for the purpose of building their own knowledge base.
 - Assignments given during the two-day visit most often required students to locate information and define vocabulary words. There was no evidence of analysis, evaluation, or providing students with opportunities to create a new product or defend a point of view. For example, students in a global history class were assigned a project relating to a particular genocide. The assignment asked students to identify location, names of leaders, timeline, groups affected, responses from the international community, how the genocide ended, and what happened to responsible parties. The assignment did not require analysis or personal response and did not challenge students to think critically.
- The school should ensure that professional development supports and strengthens the school's goals.
 - Professional Development is provided weekly on a variety of subjects. There are also full staff retreats. In addition, there are individual coaches for science, math, and ELA. The leadership team meets with these coaches on a regular basis. Based on teachers' comments, the opportunity to plan together or to discuss individual students in a particular grade is not consistent. Many conversations amongst teachers take place informally, especially regarding individual students, but there is not a dedicated time allotted for these collaborations.
 - Leadership observes classes both formally and informally. The school's official observation form contains a check-off list and a

form on which visitors describe the content of the lesson, classroom management, student engagement, the strengths of the lesson, and any areas for development. This form includes more management areas than pedagogical ones, and more items focus on teachers' behaviors than students'. None of the indicators relate to reinforcing skills and dispositions that indicate college readiness.

- The school should continue to increase rigor and scaffold college readiness skills so that all students perform at high levels and graduate prepared for post-secondary success.
 - There was no visible evidence of scaffolding that demonstrated a different set of expectations from grade 9 to grade 12. Students in a 12th grade economics class were given a vocabulary sheet comprised of seven words. They were not asked to put definitions in sentence form, and most just looked up the words in the glossary of the textbook. All students, regardless of grade, follow similar procedures. In addition, the level of rigor in the classroom itself, with the exception of math (which followed a strict format consistent across all grade levels), was not evident.
 - Students related that the longest paper they had been asked to write was three to four pages. When asked what they were reading this year, seniors replied that they were only reading poems and short stories. The aim in the observed 12th grade English class was: "How does the media impact self-worth and self-esteem?" A few students presented based on an advertisement, cartoon or article they found in *Glamour* magazine. Each spoke for two or three minutes, retelling what they had found without offering analysis or deeper interpretations. The teacher's questioning included: *How would a young girl without make-up feel? Who do they have in acne commercials?* Students were then put into groups named "TV commercials," "talk shows," and "music videos." They were told to discuss that particular medium and how it could negatively impact youth, and asked to come up with solutions. This part of the lesson observed did not exhibit the academic rigor expected of a 12th grade English class.
- The Board of Trustees should work to strengthen oversight responsibilities to ensure improved organizational viability and increased student achievement.
 - The CSO acknowledges that the external financial auditor's conclusion found no "material weaknesses" in ILCS's financial controls. However, the management letters produced by external auditors do indicate that the school needs to strengthen financial controls, ensure that adequate checks and balances are in place, and manage conflicts of interest in school governance.
 - During the charter period, multiple complaints - some anonymous - have been submitted to the NYC DOE CSO by students, staff and parents. These complaints have centered on the effectiveness of

school leadership and a lack of consistent communication from the school and the Board. In the Fall of 2010, the Board sent a letter to all families providing the Board Chair's contact information and published a link on their website with the Board's contact information and. The Board should continue to develop systems to respond to the needs of these key constituents, and should work to effectively communicate to all key stakeholders when remedies have been established.

- We understand that the Board's academic committee conducts periodic walkthroughs and an annual evaluation of the school's leadership, and provides direct feedback to the school's leadership. The Board should increase its rigor in oversight and evaluation of school leadership and student academic achievement.



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011

**SOUTH BRONX CLASSICAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

NOVEMBER 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

South Bronx Classical Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 325 students from kindergarten through grade five in the 2010-2011 school year.²⁹ The school opened in 2006 with students in kindergarten and first grade. It is currently housed at IS 217 located at 977 Fox Street in District 12, the Bronx.³⁰ The student body includes 6.8% English language learners and 5.3% special education students.

The school earned a D on its progress report for the 2009-2010 school year. The average attendance rate for the 2009 - 2010 school year was 95.4%.³¹ The school has maintained an attrition rate of less than 10% for all five years of its charter, and its waitlist currently numbers 485 students. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.³²

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducted a thorough review of this school's Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys, student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the school's finances, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: September 21 and 22, 2010.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Nancy Meakem, Director of Evaluation, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Justin Barra, Deputy Chief of Staff, Division of Portfolio, NYC DOE
- Aquila Haynes, Director of Community Engagement, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Rana Khan, Director of Operations, Charter Schools Office, NYC DOE
- Fred Lisker, Special Education Specialist, NYC DOE

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the South Bronx Classical Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application on the following conditions:

²⁹ NYC DOE ATS system

³⁰ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

³¹ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

³² New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

5. The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal.
6. The Board must demonstrate a plan for sound oversight and evaluation of school leadership.
7. The school must demonstrate attainment of charter goals.

The NYC DOE CSO has found South Bronx Classical Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, South Bronx Classical Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the Charter Schools Act and applicable law.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school is a safe learning environment and promotes a strong school culture.
 - Classrooms and hallways were orderly with consistent rituals and routines in place. Students and teachers note that the school maintains a safe and supportive environment.
 - The school has successfully navigated a co-location and has developed a strong working relationship with the district schools co-located in the building.
- The school has made progress in developing capacity in data collection and analysis with the goal of targeting instruction to meet individual student needs.
 - A range of assessments are used throughout the subject areas and grade levels to collect student performance data. This information is tracked in a school-generated system of spreadsheets along with proprietary data tracking systems.
 - Staff regularly analyzes student achievement data and refines instructional priorities to address students' areas of weakness.
- The school is reflective and seeks to improve its practice in order to improve student learning.
 - The school acknowledges that its performance on the ELA exams in 2010 was below expectations. As such, the school has begun seriously focusing on improving ELA instruction throughout the school. This work includes structural changes to the school day,

such as the extension of a writing block from 40 to 50 minutes, as well as more systemic changes such as a re-examination of the curriculum, the development of a teacher-mentor program, the infusion of technology, and training for all teachers to infuse literacy and writing in all subject areas.

- The Executive Director and school leadership has identified trends such as the “summer slide” in which student performance levels dip after summer vacation, and developed plans to target these areas of need.
- The school has an engaged corps of teachers, and has established a system to develop teachers as leaders.
 - The school has selected a grade team leader for each grade level. This teacher leads regular group meetings and works with instructional specialists and grade level teachers in planning and reflection.
- The school’s Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school’s mission and vision, and maintains sound finances and internal controls.
 - The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of South Bronx Classical were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
 - According to the school’s audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2009, the school possessed assets totaling \$2,332,053 and total liabilities of \$173,433. All of the school’s net assets totaling \$2,158,620 remain unrestricted for use purposes. South Bronx Classical has over \$1.9 million dollars in liquid assets that could be converted to cash within a 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

What the school needs to improve

- The school has not had consistent instructional leadership during the charter term and currently the Executive Director is serving as acting Principal.
 - Two different principals have worked at the school during the charter term and the position is currently vacant.
 - The Board of Trustees has communicated with and relied on the Executive Director to oversee hiring, firing and assessment of the Principal position.

- The school should continue efforts to support teachers in improving their instruction, especially in ELA.
 - There is currently one Director of Curriculum who is responsible for supporting and evaluating over 25 teachers, many of whom are in their first or second year of teaching.
 - In some instances, teachers who serve as grade team leaders are only in their second or third year of teaching.
 - According to the NYC DOE Progress Report students did not make sufficient progress, especially in ELA in which 48.9% of students scored at proficient or above. As such, the school should continue efforts to improve ELA instruction and to infuse literacy across the curriculum.
 - Many lessons observed involved whole-group direct instruction with non-differentiated worksheets. Some students were observed to be disengaged.

- The school should continue to refine systems for collecting and analyzing data, and should continue to support teachers in using data to inform instruction so that lessons are differentiated to meet the individual learning needs of all students.
 - The school purchased and began to implement the Pearson Inform data system in May 2010. Prior to this the school staff used a series of Excel spreadsheets to track student performance. The school is developing capacity to allow teachers to easily assess trends and evaluate data longitudinally.
 - The current data system indicates whether or not students have met proficiency, but does not routinely measure student gains once proficient.
 - The school provides professional development sessions to train teachers to collect and analyze data, and to use data to target instruction. However, staff noted that additional training and support in this area would be useful.

- The school should continue to develop systems to include parents and the community in the life of the school.
 - The school has an active family advisory council but parents are not formally involved in the process of planning and setting goals for the school community.
 - No parents sit on the board.