New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2018-2019

Bronx Charter School for Children

Visit Date: November 7-8, 2018
Date of Report: May 21, 2020

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	Bronx Charter School for Children
Board Chair	Jane Ehrenberg Rosen
District of location	NYC CSD 7
Opening Date	Fall 2004
Charter Terms	• Initial Term: January 15, 2003 – January 15, 2008 • First Renewal: January 16, 2008 – June 30, 2011 • Second Renewal: July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2016 • Third Renewal: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	K – Grade 5/ 432 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	K – Grade 8/ 672 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	388 Willis Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454 (Private Space)
Mission Statement	*The Mission of The Bronx Charter School for Children is to empower our children to achieve their greatest potential both as students and as members of their communities.*
Key Design Elements	• Fostering Academic Excellence • Nurturing the Whole Child • Ensuring a Safe Environment • Developing Critical Thinkers • Building Partnership • Advisory Blocks • Restorative Justice Practices
Requested Revisions	• Expand grade levels from kindergarten through Grade 5 to kindergarten through Grade 8and an increase in enrollment from 432 students to 672 students, by year 4 of the next charter term.

Noteworthy: The school is mission driven, serving under-resourced families in a high-need community. to make a positive impact on the lives of students and families each day, and year after year. The school aims at creating unprecedented opportunities for the community, and for exceeding state and district performance standards. Equally important for the school is nurturing socio-emotional development and

[1] The information in this section was provided by the NYS Education Department Charter School Office.

cultivating personal ownership of lifelong education as a pathway to change for the students and their family.

Renewal Outcomes

Pursuant to the Board of Regents Renewal Policy, the following are possible renewal outcomes:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal**,** which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:

  (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school's being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**

  (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1, but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Non-Renewal:** A school's charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school's charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office's Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

Please Note: The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school's Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success, but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective action.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2014 to 2015	Year 2 2015 to 2016	Year 3 2016 to 2017	Year 4 2017 to 2018	Year 5 2018 to 2019
Grade Configuration	Grades K - 5	Grades K - 5	Grades K - 5	Grades K - 5	Grades K - 5
Total Approved Enrollment	432	432	432	432	432

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2019 to 2020	Year 2 2020 to 2021	Year 3 2021 to 2022	Year 4 2022 to 2023	Year 5 2023 to 2024
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 6	K - Grade 7	K - Grade 8	K - Grade 8
Total Approved Enrollment	432	512	592	672	672

METHODOLOGY

A two day renewal site visit was conducted at Bronx Charter School for Children on November 7-8, 2018. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the board of trustees and school leadership team. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 19 classroom observations in K - Grade 5. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with instructional leaders.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- **Renewal Application**
- **Academic data**
- **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**
- **Current organizational chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes)**
- **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**
- **Student/family handbook**

- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Teacher and administrator evaluation processes**
- **Interventions offered at the school**
- **Charter School Office survey of teachers and NYC DOE surveys**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets**
- **School submitted Annual Reports**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will be presented in alignment with the Performance Framework benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below, although not all indicators will necessarily be assessed on every site visit. A brief summary of the school's strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; however, the report narrative will highlight those indicators not fully met by the school.

Level	Description
Exceeds	The school meets the performance benchmark; potential exemplar in this area.
Meets	The school generally meets the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted.
Approaches	The school does not meet the performance benchmark; a number of concerns are noted.
Falls Far Below	The school falls far below the performance benchmark; significant concerns are noted.

For the site visit conducted November 7-8, 2018 at Bronx Charter School for Children, see the following Performance Framework benchmark scores and discussion.

New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

	Performance Benchmark	Level
Educational Success	**Benchmark 1: Student Performance:** The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Meets
	Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	Meets
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	Meets
Organizational Soundness	**Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:** The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	**Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:** The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Approaches
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

- The Bronx Charter School for Children is in year 15 of operation and serves students in K - Grade 5. *During its current charter term, the school is rated as meeting nine of the benchmarks of NYSED Charter School Performance Framework and approaching one.*

  Areas of Strengths: Previously given a short-term renewal, the school immediately began a strategic planning process to enhance its academic program, including improving curriculum alignment to standards, developing a more effective assessment system, and restructuring its leadership team and intervention programs. The school has established a strong culture among students, staff and families, with high levels of staff and parent satisfaction. The school has also invested heavily in family support, including dedicated family outreach coordinators.

- **Areas in Need of Improvement**: The school continues to refine its curriculum, assessments and intervention programs to meet the needs of its students. School leaders are attempting to shift to a more student-centered approach, but need to continue developing teachers' skills in this area.

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).

Finding: Meets

ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- Bronx Charter School for Children currently serves K - Grade 5.
- The school uses a combination of school-developed curriculum and established programs, such as Core Knowledge Language Arts and Eureka Math. It has focused on aligning curriculum to standards and establishing effective scope and sequences to guide instructional planning.
- The school uses a variety of intervention strategies, including small-group instruction, early morning and summer programs.
- The school uses a variety of assessments, including summative unit assessments and state mock assessments.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)/MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (MLLS):

- The school uses push-in and pull-out interventions to support struggling students. It provides an integrated co-teaching class on each grade, as well as speech, OT/PT and counseling for students with disabilities.
- The majority of ENL instruction is delivered through push-in support with some pull-out support for students with limited proficiency levels.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:

According to the 2017-2018 school year ESEA accountability designations, Bronx Charter School for Children is in *Good Standing*.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:
The school consistently outperformed the district of location with growth trending in both ELA and math for each subgroup and in the past two years have been performing at the state average in ELA and in math.

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.a.i. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:
Student scores over the past four years show a consistent growth: in 2017-2018, 63% of students in the school maintained a proficient testing level in ELA, which is double the score achieved in peer public schools in the district and 18 points higher that the state average. In math 49% of the students reached proficiency, equal to the state average.

2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency - Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:
All student subgroups in the school maintained a proficient testing level higher that their peers in the districts in ELA. In math, over the four-year period examined, student subgroups fared a few points below similar subgroups in peer public schools in the district of location,

2.b.i. Proficiency - Aggregate School Level Proficiency for All Students: See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

	ELA					Math				
	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	11%	12%	-1	31%	-20	15%	18%	-4	43%	-29
2015-2016	35%	21%	+14	39%	-4	44%	21%	+23	43%	+1
2016-2017	44%	24%	+20	40%	+4	45%	24%	+21	45%	0
2017-2018	63%	30%	+33	45%	+18	49%	30%	+19	49%	0

NOTE:

(1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessments.

2.b.ii. Proficiency – Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup

Subject	School Year	***Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)***	***ELL/MLL (Variance to the district of location)***	***Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)***
ELA	2014-2015	11% (+7)	4% (-4)	11% (-2)
	2015-2016	24% (+17)	28% (+17)	35% (+14)
	2016-2017	27% (+19)	18% (+4)	43% (+19)
	2017-2018	42% (+29)	46% (+26)	63% (+33)
Mathematics	2014-2015	0% (-8)	11% (-3)	14% (-4)
	2015-2016	24% (+14)	39% (+22)	43% (+23)
	2016-2017	24% (+12)	25% (+7)	44% (+20)
	2017-2018	36% (+19)	46% (+19)	49% (+19)

NOTES:

(1) Data in the table above represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

(2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.

(3) In some cases, student subgroups still did not have enough tested students to form a representative sample (<5 students). For those subgroups testing data was withheld.

2.b.iii. Proficiency – Grade Level Proficiency: See Tables 3-4 below.

Table 3: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: ELA

Comparison of Bronx Charter School for Children and NYC CSD 7

	2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS
Grade 3	46%	26% / 42%	+20 / +4	65%	28% / 43%	+37 / +22	77%	38% / 51%	+39 / +26
Grade 4	29%	24% / 41%	+5 / -11	43%	26% / 41%	+17 / +1	59%	33% / 47%	+25 / +11
Grade 5	30%	14% / 34%	+16 / -3	23%	19% / 35%	+4 / -12	52%	20% / 37%	+33 / +16

NOTE:

(1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

Table 4: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: Mathematics

Comparison of Bronx Charter School for Children and NYC CSD 7

	2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Bronx CS for Children	NYC CSD 7 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 7 / NYS
Grade 3	68%	24% / 44%	+44 / +24	61%	28% / 48%	+33 / +13	69%	39% / 54%	+30 / +15
Grade 4	38%	23% / 45%	+15 / -7	43%	22% / 43%	+21 / 0	39%	30% / 48%	+9 / -9
Grade 5	23%	16% / 40%	+7 / -17	30%	21% / 43%	+9 / -13	40%	23% / 44%	+17 / -4

NOTE:

(1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

N/A

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Curriculum	a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLS. b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.
2. Instruction	a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

1. Element: ***Curriculum***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school has a documented curriculum in place and has shifted from commercial programs to more school-developed curriculum, which it continues to refine and align with curriculum resources and materials. Instructional leaders have developed scope and sequences based on state standards that teachers use to guide instructional planning. School leaders indicated that school developed curriculum sequences are well established but they continue to review and revise based on data, and then change

according to state assessment results. While the school had adopted the Common Core shifts, interviewed school leaders described their recent emphasis on increasing teacher content understanding and curriculum alignment with formative assessments in all content areas.

- **Indicator b:** Reviewed lesson plans and observed instruction showed evidence of rigorous learning objectives being provided and implemented. Lesson planning includes grouping and differentiation with input from student support staff.
- **Indicator c:** School leaders described a deliberate focus on strengthening the curriculum to increase student performance. Interviewed instructional leaders noted regular ongoing grade team and department meetings for grades 3-5 to review and plan curriculum. Commercial programs, such as Core Knowledge Language Arts, facilitates vertical alignment. The school also provides both classroom-based science instruction by the general education teachers as well as lab science, which school leaders reported they are working to align. On the NYSED teacher survey, 84% of teachers felt the curriculum is horizontally aligned among each grade while 72 % indicated it is vertically aligned across grades.
- **Indicator d:** Student support teachers have access to general education classroom lesson plans and differentiate them. In addition, integrated co-teaching (ICT) teachers co-plan together. The What I Need (WIN) period provides opportunities for targeted instruction based on assessed needs to ensure all students can access the curriculum.

2. Element: ***Instruction***:
    - **Indicator a:** School leaders reported having raised expectations for teaching and learning, and during the site visit observed instruction was organized and purposeful. Most observed instruction was rigorous with clear grade-level objectives posted or communicated. Academic vocabulary was evident in a number of lessons. Pacing, however, was not always effective. Most teachers used questioning and observation to check for understanding as well as more formal formative assessment such as Do Nows and Exit Tickets.
    - **Indicator b:** In most classes that were observed, students were engaged. In some classes students were placed in either stations or other targeted instructional groups. While instructional leaders described an emphasis on student-centered learning, this was inconsistently observed in the classes.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school has a balanced system of assessments in place. School leaders reported shifting to more internally developed assessments in order to facilitate data analysis and make them more predictive. Professional learning communities were used to create common formative assessments and summative assessments have been created for each unit.
    - **Indicator b:** School leaders indicated that every eight weeks professional learning communities (i.e., grade-level teams) meet with leaders to review data, identify student needs and plan.
    - **Indicator c:** Interviewed school leaders described paying close attention to student assessment data, which led them to raise expectations for teaching and increase resources for interventions. The WIN period was expanded so that all students benefit from targeted instruction and enrichment.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school has a response to intervention (RTI) process in place based on regular assessment and checks for understanding, such as exit tickets. Tier 1 intervention, i.e., classroom-based differentiated instruction, is provided through co-teaching and push-in support. The school has a morning math program for students identified in need up additional instruction. The school has also implemented a daily What I Need (WIN) period to target support and enrichment to students based on identified needs and has hired more math and reading interventionists. For students with disabilities, the school offers push-in and pull-out support services as well as an integrated co-teaching (ICT) class on every grade with common learning objectives and formative assessments. The majority of ENL instruction is delivered through push-in support with some pull-out support for students with limited proficiency levels. There was also some evidence of general education teaches using ENL techniques, such as English labels and vocabulary walls. Finally, school leaders reported that approximately 20-25% of the most needy students participate in the school's summer program. Interviewed student support staff reported ample resources provided by the school to meet the needs of at-risk students.
    - **Indicator b:** Interviewed student support staff indicated that the school uses a variety of assessment tools for progress monitoring, including DIBELS and Fountas & Pinnell assessments. Curriculum and lesson plans exist on shared drives to facilitate communication and planning between general education teachers and interventionists. Teachers also conduct monthly review of IEP goals. In addition, interventionists share an office with special education teachers, which fosters collaboration. Interviewed student support described "very open communication" with parents.

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement

The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Behavior Management and Safety*	a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy. b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment. c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.
2. *Family Engagement and Communication*	a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students' strengths and needs. b. The school assesses family and student satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions. c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns. d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.
3. *Social-Emotional Supports*	a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students. b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students' social and emotional health.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

1. Element: ***Behavior Management and Safety***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school's Family Handbook includes its Code of Conduct, is published in English and Spanish, and is posted on the school website. School leaders indicated that students and their families know and believe in the school's behavioral expectations and the school does not experience a lot of seriously disruptive behavior. As a result, the school focuses primarily on incentivizing positive behavior. For example, students earn points to buy prizes at the school store. In addition, the school has invested in two family and outreach counselors, who provide both mandated and non-mandated counseling.
    - **Indicator b:** During the site visit, the school was orderly and interactions between and among students and staff were respectful. On the NYCDOE survey, 96% of the families said that "at their school their child is safe" and 87% of teachers said that "order and discipline are maintained at their school." School leaders emphasized making a significant investment in student support staff, including counseling, and said "most parents partner

with us." As a result, the school reports three suspensions this year and no expulsions for the last four years.

- **Indicator c:** The school has a policy on harassment, with a specific Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) section on the school's website. The school uses a referral process to report incidents to school administrators and the student support staff. The school also uses a point system to incentive positive behavior and Class Dojo to document student adherence to the school's core values.
- **Indicator d:** The school has established a scholarly environment that recognizes academic achievement. For example, students who score greater than 90% on summative unit assessments are posted on a public board. The school also has a high attendance rate (96% last year) and uses competitions between teams in the upper grade to encourage attendance.

2. Element: ***Family Engagement and Communication***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school uses a variety of strategies to communicate with parents. The school has implemented home visits, which teachers conduct in pairs at the beginning of the school year, and school leaders said parents have come to expect them. On the NYSED survey, 100% of teachers felt that "teachers regularly communicate with families on issues related to academics." On the NYCDOE survey, 96% of families said that "teachers work closely with them to meet their child's needs." Teachers also noted the used of software to translate materials sent home. School leaders also noted surveying parents at the beginning of the year to identify their needs and interests.
    - **Indicator b:** The school uses a variety of strategies to gauge parent concerns and interests, including home visits, surveys, and meetings and conferences with parents. School leaders said they also survey teachers and parents to identify students and families in need of support. On the NYCDOE survey, 96% of families say that "the principal is strongly committed to shared decision making."
    - **Indicator c:** The school has developed a Family Support Team comprised of two counselors, a middle school placement coordinator and a family liaison. School leaders describe the team as a "broker of resources" that connects families with community organizations and agencies. Teachers communicate parent concerns and issues to the Family Support Team. In addition, the Family Support Team assists alum and their families with entering into high schools and colleges, and coordinates testing for entry into independent schools.
    - **Indicator d:** The school presents its annual report and publishes some of its performance data on its website.

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school has a schoolwide morning meeting program and is using the Sanford Harmony program to promote social-emotional development. In addition, the school posts weekly pictures of students and staff who reflect the school's core values.
    - **Indicator b:** The school has invested in its family support team based on data regarding students' and families' needs, including attendance, discipline and academic performance.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.

Finding: Meets

Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school's performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and also provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

1. Near-Term Indicators:	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
2. Sustainability Indicators:	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

Financial Condition

Bronx Charter School for Children appears to be in very good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. Bronx Charter School for Children's 2016-2017 composite score is 2.7.

Bronx Charter School for Children's Composite Scores
2014-2015 to 2016-2017

Year	*Composite Score*
2014-2015	3.0
2015-2016	2.9
2016-2017	2.7

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Near-Term Indicators

Near-term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. The Charter School Office uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2016-2017, Bronx Charter School for Children had a current ratio of 6.9.

Unrestricted cash measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Charter schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2016-2017, Bronx Charter School for Children operated with 232 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment maximization measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85% is considered reasonable. Bronx Charter School for Children's enrollment maximization for 2016-2017 was at 100%t.

Long-Term Indicators

A charter school's *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2016-2017, Bronx Charter School for Children's debt to asset ratio was 0.1.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2016-2017, Bronx Charter School for Children's total margin was 1%.

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.

Finding: Meets

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
2. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget in relation to those objectives.
3. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
4. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
5. The school has complied with state and federal financial reporting requirements.
6. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
7. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

The Charter School Office reviewed Bronx Charter School for Children's 2016-2017 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

However, the auditor identified an opportunity to strengthen internal controls. The school's accounting manual should be updated and expanded to account for changes in certain accounting procedures, specifically regarding electronic approval and payment of invoices as well as travel and conference expenses.

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Board Oversight and Governance	a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school. b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy. c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals. d. The board regularly updates school policies. e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers. f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

1. Element: ***Board Oversight and Governance***:
    - **Indicator a:** The board of trustees possess a range of relevant skill sets with which to govern the school, including education, finance, accounting, and legal. Board members noted their continuing efforts to increase the size of the board to enhance diversity and add expertise in development.
    - **Indicator b:** In response to student performance, the board participated in a strategic planning process and set priorities with the assistance of a consultant. In addition to its focus on improving the academic program, the board has also expanded its vision to include social emotional and family support issues, which it believes will contribute to increased student achievement. School leaders noted that the board has been responsive and provides the resources they need to improve teaching and learning at the school. While the board does not have a leadership succession plan, board members noted that the new organizational structure includes an assistant head of school role and the school has strengthened systems that do not depend on a specific school leader.
    - **Indicator c:** Interviewed board members described strengthening their committee structure to focus on all key aspects of the school, including academics, finances, governance and facility. The board receives regular reports and data from school leadership, including both external and internal assessment results. Board members described familiarity with disaggregated data; for example, they noted adding an ICT class in kindergarten to meet the needs of special educations students. The board also actively monitors enrollment, student demographics, and staffing.

- **Indicator d:** Board members described review and revision of policies and by-laws based on legal advice.
- **Indicator e:** The board described a formal evaluation process for the school leader based on a rubric from Heritage Schools. The school leader sets goals with the board and the governance committee produces an annual written evaluation. The board also described retreats for strategic planning and the new, ongoing self-evaluation format. Through this process they have identified the need for succession planning, development to support wraparound programs, and increased diversity.
- **Indicator f:** The board employs a legal firm that provides advice on changes to by-laws and policies and monitors changes in law that might impact the school. The board reported no citations and clean audits as evidence of compliance.

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. School Leadership	a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning. b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities. c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school. d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.
2. Professional Climate	a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication. b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers. c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students' needs. d. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality—which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation geared toward improving instructional practice. e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.
3. Contractual Relationships ✓*N/A*	a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider. b. Changes in the school's charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures. c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

1. Element: ***School Leadership***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school has a stable leadership team, with 83% administrative retention from last year. School leaders and staff noted their commitment to high expectations for all students and that the "BCCS Way" connotes a commitment to hard work to ensure

strong student outcomes. On the NYSED teacher survey, 90% of teachers felt that "the school's mission is clear and is shared by all stakeholders."

- **Indicator b:** The school has revised its leadership structure and interviewed school leaders and staff described clear roles and responsibilities. Subject-specific directors of curriculum instruction positions have transformed into an Assistant Head of School position and more reading specialists. The director of family and student support services became the director of culture and engagement. Teacher coaching positions have been replaced with more interventionists, which some interviewed teachers felt was a loss.
- **Indicator c:** The school schedules regular leadership, student support and faculty meetings to facilitate communication and planning. On the NYSED teacher survey, 77% of teachers agreed that school leadership "has systems in place to solicit staff feedback." School leaders reported the use of data as a driving force in decision-making and 100 % of surveyed teachers indicated that the school administration "uses data from assessments to make school-wide decisions."
- **Indicator d:** School leaders described a conscious effort to recruit high quality staff, including starting the hiring process earlier in the year and more actively pursuing hard-to-fill positions. They have revised marketing material and the school website, casted a larger net through local and national networks, and instituted a bonus system to incentivize retention and compete with other schools. In addition, teachers are included in the teacher hiring interview process. The school retained 78% of teachers from last year and on the NYSED teacher survey, 87% felt the school is a long-term, sustainable option as a place to work.

2. Element: ***Professional Climate***:
    - **Indicator a:** Though one leadership position was technically vacant at the time of the site visit, school leaders described the new staffing structure as effective and responsive to the school's needs, particularly the emphasis placed on student support and intervention. In addition, staffing was noted as the first priority in the school's annual budgeting process.
    - **Indicator b:** The school promotes collaboration through professional learning communities that meet regularly with school leaders. In addition, computer-based shared lesson plans and resources facilitate communication and collaboration between classroom teachers and support staff. On the NYCDOE survey, 87% of teachers said that "at their school the principal, teachers, and staff collaborate to make the school run effectively." In addition, on the NYSED survey of teachers, 87% of faculty members said they "frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction."
    - **Indicator c:** School leaders described a deliberate increase in expectations for student performance that resulted in the departure of some teachers, which they felt resulted in a stronger professional community and overall teacher quality. The school has a robust and ongoing professional development program, including summer training and planning as well as coaching, modeling, observation and feedback during the school year. In addition, professional development is provided for administrators; for example, the Head of School is supported by an executive coach.
    - **Indicator d:** The school has systems in place for developing and evaluating faculty. Teachers receive two formal evaluations each year, as well as ongoing formative feedback. Underperforming teachers are placed on professional growth plans and receive additional support, including coaching and modeling.

- **Indicator e:** School leaders are in constant dialogue with teachers through the professional learning community process. In addition, NYSED survey results indicate that 77% of teachers said school leadership has systems in place to solicit staff feedback. The NYCDOE survey indicated that 87%of teachers say that "the principal encourages feedback through regular meetings with parent and teacher leaders."

3. Element: ***Contractual Relationships***:
    - **Indicator a:** N/A
    - **Indicator b:** N/A
    - **Indicator c:** N/A

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Mission and Key Design Elements	a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter. b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

1. Element: ***Mission and Key Design Elements***:
    - **Indicator a:** Interviewed stakeholders all spoke the school's mission of raising student achievement and preparing them for the next steps in their academic careers. They also spoke to the importance of social-emotional development. In addition, 100% of NYSED surveyed teachers felt the "school's mission is clear and is shared by all stakeholders."
    - **Indicator b:** The school is faithfully implementing its key design elements. The school's board and leadership have enhanced the academic program with a focus on rigorous curriculum.

      The school uses instructional programs noted for rigor and complexity, Core Knowledge Language Arts (Listening and Learning) and Eureka Math as foundations in curriculum planning deepening conceptual development. The Five E and Workshop Model support students' abilities to construct and defend viable arguments. The daily schedule allocates time for interdisciplinary development as well as extensions from core instruction.

      The school works hard to create and maintain a physically safe environment, and to create an atmosphere that is free from exclusion, and promotes tolerance, celebrates differences, and includes all members of the community. This is evident in class observations that show a safe environment conducive to learning with an emphasis on social emotional development, evident in class observations. On the NYCDOE survey, 100 % of teachers say that "students are safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria of their school." It is also committed to supporting not only students but their families as well to ensure progress and achievement. This includes building partnerships and leveraging community assets.

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. Targets are met	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. Targets are not met	a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets. b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations. c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

- **Indicator a**: the school is making progress toward meeting its targets. In 2017-2018 by the school had lower percentages of SWDs and ED students than the local district but a higher percentage of ELLs/MLLs than CSD 7.
- **Indicator b**: The school implements substantial recruitment strategies to attract students with disabilities, through the newly hired family and outreach counselors The school is continuously outreaching to the community and to service providers to help recruit students with disabilities, as proven by the new hire of family and outreach counselors.
- Bronx Charter School for Children resides in the poorest Congressional district in the nation. Through efforts towards increasing the percentage of at-risk students enrolled, the school is coming close to but not yet meeting its target for SWDs. The school has a robust enrollment waiting list. In order to enroll, recruit, and retain ELL/MLL students, the school collaborates with community-based organizations and local religious organizations that cater for non-native English speakers.

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students. The school has a set aside percentage for SWDs and ED Students. Efforts to recruit and retain SWDs include:

- Building positive relationships with district elementary schools;

- Outreach to local health services providers and community support centers with visits and translated flyers;
- Clear outreach emphasizing school programming to support SWDs; and
- Building partnerships with community youth organizations serving all students, including SWDs.

Table 5: Student Demographics – Bronx Charter School for Children Compared to District of Location

	2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Bronx Charter School for Children	NYC CSD 7	Variance	Bronx Charter School for Children	NYC CSD 7	Variance
Students with Disabilities	13%	26%	-13	14%	27%	-13
ELL/MLL	21%	21%	0	24%	23%	+1
Economically Disadvantaged	90%	97%	-7	91%	96%	-5

NOTES:

(1) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.

(2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.

According to NYSED data, in the 2017-2018 school year, 95% of students were retained in Bronx Charter School for Children compared with 92% in the district of location.

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Legal Compliance	a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to: those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health and safety requirements. b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

1. Element: ***Legal Compliance***:
    - **Indicator a:** No evidence was identified during the site visit to suggest the school is out of compliance applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter.
    - **Indicator b:** The school developed a correction action plan as part of its last renewal, which was withdrawn in November 2016 as the school's academic performance improved.
    - **Indicator c:** The Board of Regents' approved a material revision to the school's charter, increasing enrollment from 22 students to 24 students in each class at each grade level