



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report *2016-2017*

Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem

Visit Date: 11/3/2016
Date of Report: 2/8/2017

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem
Board Chair	Ruth Meyler
School Leader	Brett Gallini
District of location	132 West 124 th St New York (Grades 2-5) – NYC CSD 5 421 West 145 th St New York (Grades K-1) – NYC CSD 6
Opening Date	8/20/2012
Charter Terms	Initial charter term: 9/13/2011 – 6/30/2017
Authorized Grades/ Current Maximum Enrollment	Grades K-5 375 students
Management Company	N/A
Educational Partners	YAI Autism Center
Facilities	Private leased space
Mission Statement	<i>“To provide Harlem children with new educational opportunities through a rigorous, comprehensive K-8 program that cultivates the intellectual, social and emotional development of each child. Our school is an inclusive community that serves high functioning children on the autism spectrum along with their neighborhood peers. Our students will become independent learners and critical thinkers, will acquire the academic skills that they need to succeed in college preparatory high schools and will exhibit the social and emotional skills that will allow them to reach their full potential.”</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialized program of supports for high functioning children with ASD in an inclusive class setting • Collaborative team teaching with two certified teachers in each classroom • Rigorous academic program • A “no excuses” approach to school design, with a focus on social and emotional learning • Longer school day and year • Extensive teacher professional development and specialized training • A partnership with YAI Autism Center to identify and screen children with signs of ASD in community early childhood programs
Requested Revisions	Requesting to add Grades 6-8 from Grades K-5 and to increase maximum enrollment from 323 students to 605 students.

Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	K-5	375	375
2015-2016	K-5	323	312
2014-2015	K-3	323	261

METHODOLOGY

A renewal site visit was conducted at Neighborhood Charter School on November 3, 2016. The CSO team conducted formal interviews with two members of the board of trustees, the school leadership team, parents, and two of the special education staff.

The team conducted 18 classroom observations in Kindergarten through Grade 5 classrooms. The observations were approximately 10 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the executive director, assistant principals, and director of operations.

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

- **Teacher roster**
- **Current organization chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Board materials**
- **Board self-evaluation documents**
- **Blank teacher and administrator evaluation forms**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of curricular documents**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Enrollment data including subgroups**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Academic data**
- **NYSED-administered teacher survey**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework outlines 10 Performance Benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

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

Observational findings from 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 on November 3, 2016 at Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem, see the following Performance 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).	Exceeds
	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 NYS Learning Standards (NYSL) 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.	Exceeds
	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.	Exceeds
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.	Meets
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem (NCSH) is an elementary charter school currently authorized to serve students in Grades K-5. Based on academic outcome data, NYSED site visits, and conversations with parents and teachers, the school is faithful to its mission to *“cultivate the intellectual, social and emotional development of each child.”*

NCSH established a record of high academic achievement for all students over the course of testing years in its initial charter term, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The proficiency outcomes for elementary students at NCSH exceed district and state averages by wide margins in both ELA and math. For example, in 2015-2016, NCSH outperformed the state average by 21 points in ELA and by 31 points in math. Students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students have also outperformed their peers by wide margins at the district and state levels; data was not available for English language learners due to low *sample* sizes.

Teachers at NCSH provide a curriculum that is aligned with the New York Learning Standards (NYLS). Based on classroom observations and conversations with school leaders and teachers Instruction is data-driven and differentiated to address the varied needs of all students. For example, language arts instruction is delivered using an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to provide targeted instruction to small, needs-based groups.

The Board, along with the school administrative team, has established a system of formal and informal teacher evaluation which provides timely feedback to teachers on their practice. Professional development opportunities are differentiated to address the needs of specific teachers, groups of teachers, and the unique students they serve.

The school has a comprehensive student support system provided by counselors and social workers, among others, to address the social and emotional development needs of students.

A thirteen member Board of Trustees brings a variety of experiences and expertise to guide and monitor the operation of the school. They evaluate the school leader, ensure that the mission and key design elements are addressed, and regularly review policies and administrative decisions to make certain that the school is in compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the terms of the charter.

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: Exceeds

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1: See Appendix A for further information

1a. ESEA Designation: In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, NCSH received an accountability rating of *In Good Standing*.

1b. Similar Schools Comparison: As reported by NCSH in the Renewal Application, the school has demonstrated strong comparative performance in 2015 and 2016, outperforming the proficiency levels for CSD 5 and 6, New York City (NYC), New York State (NYS), and the similar schools comparison group.

According to the school's Renewal Application, the performance of students at NCSH exceeded that of the similar schools cohort in ELA and math, in both 2015 and 2016. In 2015, when compared to SED's similar schools cohort (see the table below), NCSH's students performed at a standard deviation of .22 above the mean in ELA, compared with similar schools, which performed at -.07 below the mean for ELA. In math, the school's students performed at a standard deviation of .41 above the mean, while similar schools performed at -.02 below the mean.

In 2016, NCSH's students performed at a standard deviation of .28 above the mean in ELA, compared with similar schools, which performed at -.107 below the mean. In math, the school's students performed at a standard deviation of .31 above the mean, while similar schools performed at -.026 below the mean.

Similar Matches for Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem – NYC CSD 5 ¹	
Johnson City Elementary/Primary School	Union East Elementary School
Evans Mills Primary School	Ohio Street School
North Elementary School	Neighborhood Charter School Of Harlem
Excellence Girls Charter School	PS 770 New American Academy
Lefferts Gardens Charter School	Turnpike Elementary School
Chambers School	North Rose-Wolcott Elementary School

2b (i)(ii) and (iii). Proficiency 3-8 Assessments: Proficiency scores on math and ELA assessments have consistently exceeded district and state averages for the school as a whole as well as for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students (see Appendix A). In 2015, the first cohort of third grade students took the NYS exams, scoring 53% proficient and 79% proficient in ELA and math, respectively. The following year, third and fourth grade classes took the exam. In ELA, 77% of fourth grade students scored proficient in ELA compared with 62% in third grade. In math, 75% of both third and fourth graders scored proficient in 2016.

¹ The similar schools are generated by SED's algorithm and based on the number from SED's database: 64% ED in 2015. Although this number is incorrect, the similar schools generator will not allow calculation using the correct number of 82% ED. This inconsistency is based on the way in which ED is calculated for schools not enrolled in the NYCDOE food service program.

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: Exceeds

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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:

NCSH has built a strong leadership team that fosters shared accountability and high expectations for their school community. Systems are in place to support students, staff, and families that lead to students' well-being and academic success. The education program is aligned to the NYSLS and teachers implement strategic practices and decision-making that helps students to succeed.

NCSH was chartered to serve students who have been diagnosed with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They have been faithful to this mission. Two of the three classes at each grade level include ASD students. Leaders state that the program is intended to foster inclusion, high standards for all students, teach ASD students flexibility, and the skills necessary to succeed in the school environment. Michelle Garcia's Social Thinking Curriculum is used to teach ASD students specific strategies to cope with changes and challenges. While many of these strategies are widely used by NCSH teachers with all students, the curriculum is specifically taught to ASD students in a kindergarten "social club" that meets once a day, and ASD students in Grades 1-4 three times each week." As a transition to middle school, fifth graders meet in advisory.

The curriculum is internally created with the design led by the head of school, who brings considerable knowledge and expertise to the role. All curricula is NYSLS aligned with the Teachers College Readers and Writers workshop as a framework for ELA, which also includes guided reading, literacy centers, whole class novels, and textual analysis. Math curriculum is delivered during a double-block and focuses on problem solving skills. Science curriculum is based on experimentation and the FOSS model. Students experience "specials" that rotate among art, technology and physical education. Early elementary students also have opportunities for structured play and choice time, while 5th graders have advisory.

A collection of common instructional practices, well-executed across the school, contributes to a productive and engaging learning environment. Observations at the school were directly aligned to the expectations described by school leadership team members before the classroom visitation. A member of the school leadership team accompanied each site visit team member into classrooms and described the instructional practices that would be observed as well as key design elements being implemented. A post observation debrief included an opportunity for the leadership team member to explain the feedback they would give to the teachers observed.

In the 2015-16 school year, 10% of the School's students were classified as ELL. NCSH teachers are trained in strategies for bringing ELL students to proficiency. ELL students at NCSH are taught using an immersion approach within the classroom. School leadership indicated when the School's kindergarten class moved to CSD 6, the School saw an increase in students classified as ELL. To meet the needs of these students, they introduced more support by emphasizing oral language skills beginning in kindergarten. These efforts included the introduction of a dedicated block playroom and block play curriculum that highlights speaking and language through structured collaborative play activities. Staff was trained by the School's child psychologist in practices to include language development through play.

As part of writing workshop, an oral story telling unit has been introduced, which will prompt students to use speech to generate ideas for writing. Additionally in the 2016-17 school year, kindergarten students will have additional opportunities for project-based learning, an approach that engages ELL students in speech acquisition as they collaborate with peers. In first through fifth grades, the daily science class requires extensive oral communication as students converse through group work while conducting experiments. These opportunities help ELL students develop their communication skills in an engaging manner.

The four school leaders responsible for the academic program - the principal, two assistant principals, math achievement coach and literacy achievement coach meet regularly to discuss classroom observations and assessment results. The leadership team uses this data to identify teachers who need instructional guidance. School leadership offers teachers support by mentoring and connecting them to resources—found both within NHCS and through external organizations.

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: Exceeds

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<p>1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:

The mission of the school is to cultivate the academic, social, and emotional development of each child so that they can exhibit the social and emotional skills that will allow them to reach their full potential. Based on conversations with school staff and families, as well as site visit observations, the school exceeds this benchmark.

NCSH implements a curriculum that builds students' social and emotional skills and abilities. Although this specialized socio-emotional curriculum is designed for students with autism, it benefits general education students as well. The school welcomes families to the school regularly, and provides workshops and interactive events to help families support children's academic, social, and emotional development.

Behavior management is focused on proactive teaching of values and social skills, which parents report build confidence in students. During a family focus group meeting with the CSO team, multiple parents noted a character and maturity change when enrolling at NCSH. According to the leadership team fewer than 10 students have been suspended, none of whom receive special education services.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

Financial Condition

NCSH appears to be in strong 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. NCSH's composite score for 2015-2016 is 3.0. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

**Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem’s Composite Scores
2012-2013 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	3.0
2014-2015	3.0
2013-2014	3.0
2012-2013	2.5

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 charter 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 2015-2016, NCSH had a current ratio of 9.2.

Unrestricted cash measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2015-2016, NCSH operated with 145 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment stability 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 percent is considered reasonable. NCSH’s enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 100 percent.

Long-Term Indicators

A school’s *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the charter 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 2015-2016, NCSH’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 2015-2016, NCSH’s total margin was 18 percent.

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

The CSO team reviewed NCSH’s 2015-2016 audited financial statement 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.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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:

The NCSH Board of Trustees has established systems and procedures to guide the actions of school leaders and staff to fulfill the mission of the school. Board membership reflects a diverse range of expertise, and includes six original founding members. Regular reports from the school leaders ensure that each board member is familiar with the performance and progress of the school. Organizational and operational challenges are recognized and addressed to ensure the school can best serve its students.

The board oversees the growth and fiscal planning for the school. NCSH has a positive cash flow each year of its charter and has worked within its budget. The current two facilities are leased, and NCSH will move into its own facility in summer of 2018. The board and head of school recognized a critical need for additional space as the school grew over the charter term, and identified a suitable private facility to ease space constraints housing kindergarten and first grade students in a separate facility in CSD 6, in a building recently vacated by another charter school.

The board engages in goal-setting with the head of school. The board uses a dashboard which tracks the progress of key data points in relation to these goals and incorporates this information into the evaluation of the head of school. In addition to the head of school’s monthly progress reports to the board, NCSH teachers regularly attend board meetings to describe their work. Assistant principals have begun formal presentations to the board as part of an effort to build leadership capacity and potential replication support. Board members visit the school regularly and solicit input from staff on these visits.

The board previously reported that it has not established a formal strategic plan. However, the board has determined informal priorities, such as school operations and locating a new facility. The board evaluates their needs informally and engages in self-evaluation. The board has sought and received authorizer approval to make revisions to the charter. Under consideration as part of renewal are requests to raise the enrollment cap and expand to serve students in grades 6-8.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 ensures 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. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:

NCSH has established a well-functioning organizational structure with clearly delineated roles for staff. The school has systems in place that allow for successful implementation and continuous improvement of its academic program. NCSH has a stable and consistent leadership structure, in which the board, staff, and parents all express confidence. The head of school manages the director of operations as well as the assistant principals (AP) of the two campuses. The AP’s and academic coaches manage and coach strategic cohorts of teachers and ensure that one AP is present at each site throughout each day, serving as the point person for that campus. The head of school and assistant principals work closely to orchestrate the work of staff members. Routines and schedules are evident in classrooms and are part of the management structure. In addition to frequent classroom observations, coaches, assistant principals, and the school leader meet weekly to review the performance and progress of teachers and students.

NCSH leadership and board describe values-based hiring strategies and processes. Teachers respond with overwhelming satisfied results on school surveys that are higher than the city average on almost all NYC DOE survey questions. Other retention and satisfaction initiatives at the school include 10% higher pay than NYCDOE teachers, a teacher’s assistant for each grade, flexibility with time, and a bonus program.

All classrooms at NCSH employ a co-teaching model where professional development focuses on finding and building a “dynamic duo” in both strategic matching and coaching. Teachers used the SLPP to collaborate on lesson planning, and receive weekly observations from coaches and/or leadership to ensure ongoing development. The school has established structures for teacher communication such as common preps and additional time before student arrival. Staff turnover is low and can be attributed to staff moving from the area or for career advancement

NCSH has a robust professional development calendar that leadership describes as a living document adjusted to fit the needs of teachers. The school is fully staffed and all teachers maintain valid and updated certification.

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

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

NCSH is faithful to its mission and key design elements have been fully implemented.

All interviewed stakeholders shared a common and consistent understanding of NCSH’s mission. Each group mentioned the focus on supporting the needs of ASD students, and referenced a number of practices and programs in place at the school that embody that intention. All groups were quick to offer that these same practices are beneficial to all students in the school. This common understanding is also reflected in shared detailed instruction and culture guides with a focus in staff training and student instruction of culture and routines.

The school’s approach to instruction, classroom management, leadership, and parent involvement is consistent with the school’s mission and key design elements. School leaders maintain an intense focus on the implementation of a common set of valuable practices in their work, as well as in classrooms. The purposeful development of strong relationships with families contributes to the school’s growing positive reputation within the community.

NCSH and the board reports it has fully implemented each of the key design elements outlined in its original charter.

- *A specialized program of supports for high functioning children with ASD in an inclusive setting:* ASD students are fully integrated in classrooms and activities. To improve the efficient delivery of targeted services, ASD students are clustered in two of the three classes at each grade level. Specialists provide additional intervention for ASD students.
- *Collaborative team teaching with two certified teachers in each classroom:* School leaders referred to their model of collaborative team teaching as a “dynamic duo,” with each lesson co-taught using parallel teaching. Teachers receive professional development during the summer and throughout the year to help them develop the skills necessary to work as true partners.

- *Rigorous academic program:* Classroom observations conducted with school leaders demonstrated that teachers and students were employing higher level questioning to their students. All students receive hands-on science lessons.
- *A no excuses approach to school design, with a focus on social and emotional learning:* The design of the school is characterized by a high level of attention to detail. School leaders continually examine processes in place and seek efficiencies that improve the learning experience of all students. The consistent implementation of strategies in the social thinking curriculum creates an orderly environment well-suited for all students.
- *Longer school day and year:* Students arrive each day between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., and instruction begins at 8:00 a.m., with dismissal at 4:15 p.m. The school’s charter calls for a school year of at least 195 instructional days.
- *Extensive teacher professional development and specialized training:* Professional development is offered to teachers for two weeks in August before school starts, and is ongoing throughout the school year. Professional development topics have included serving students with ASD, the social thinking curriculum, content area (math, language arts, science) curriculum planning, and co-teaching training. Professional development is also embedded in the course of the school day, as coaches frequently observe classes and provided feedback to teachers. Teachers have also participated in off-site professional development, where they frequently turn-key the strategies to their colleagues.
- *A partnership with YAI Autism Center to identify and screen children with signs of ASD in community early childhood programs:* NCSH uses its relationship with the YAI Autism Center to seek testing and support services for students to ensure appropriate educational placement.

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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	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. <i>Targets are not met</i>	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.

Table 3: Student Demographics –Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem Compared to NYC CSD 5

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment			Enrollment
	School	CSD 5	Variance ²	School	CSD 5	Variance	School ³
Enrollment of Special Populations							
Economically Disadvantaged	64%	83%	-19	81%	82%	-1	70%
English Language Learners	5%	10%	-5	4%	10%	-6	8%
Students with Disabilities	31%	22%	+9	33%	23%	+10	30%

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

The school exceeds the district’s enrollment of students with disabilities and parallels the enrollment of economically disadvantaged (ED) students. However, NCSH falls short of meeting the district’s percentage of English language learner enrollment. Meeting the target for English language learners (ELL) has been identified as an area of focus by the board of trustees. NCSH is implementing good faith efforts to improve this rate including in-person recruitment at community housing, the use of bilingual materials, and maintaining a strong community presence. NCSH has an extensive wait list of over 1,425 families. Due in part to low attrition and the small number of seats available in kindergarten, it may take several years before a substantial increase in the ELL population will be evident.

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

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

Finding: Meets

² Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.

³ Reported by the school.

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:

The NCSH charter is reviewed by the board annually and referenced when goal-setting with the head of school. Charter revisions have been approved, including enrollment increases and a move for the second facility to CSD 6, and NCSH is now requesting expansion to Grades 6-8.

The board has implemented safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. NCSH is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

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

All Students	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	N/A					N/A				
2014-15	53%	16%	+37	31%	+22	79%	23%	+56	42%	+37
2015-16	62%	21%	+41	41%	+21	75%	17%	+58	44%	+31

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

Economically Disadvantaged	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	N/A					N/A				
2014-15	58%	16%	+42	21%	+37	87%	19%	+68	31%	+60
2015-16	60%	19%	+41	30%	+30	73%	15%	+58	33%	+45

Table 3: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Students with Disabilities: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

Students with Disabilities	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	N/A					N/A				
2014-15	36%	6%	+30	8%	+28	73%	11%	+62	16%	+57
2015-16	42%	5%	+37	10%	+32	57%	6%	+51	15%	+42

Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – English Language Learners: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

English Language Learners	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)
2013-14	N/A	%				N/A				
2014-15	*	0%		7%		*	9%		17%	
2015-16	*	1%		7%		*	6%		15%	

**Data is suppressed due to small student sample size.*