New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2018-2019

Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School

Visit Date: November 15-16, 2018
Date of Report: January 18, 2019

Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234
charterschools@nysed.gov
518-474-1762

CONTENTS

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION **2**

METHODOLOGY **4**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS **6**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 8
BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE 9
BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT 17
BENCHMARK 4: FINANCIAL CONDITION 20
BENCHMARK 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 22
BENCHMARK 6: BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE 23
BENCHMARK 7: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY 25
BENCHMARK 8: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS 28
BENCHMARK 9: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION 29
BENCHMARK 10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE 31

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School
Board Chair	Jonathan Harber
District of location	NYC CSD 16 (Brooklyn)
Opening Date	Fall 2012
Charter Terms	• Initial Term: July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2017 • First Renewal: July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2019
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	Grades 6-8/ 310 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	K- Grade 8/ 735 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	1580 Dean Street, Brooklyn – (NYC DOE Public Space)
Mission Statement	*Launch's mission is to prepare students in under-resourced communities to thrive in college and careers by providing a public education rooted in active learning experiences and powerful character development.*
Key Design Elements	EL Education Core Practices—5 Domains • Curriculum • Instruction • Culture and Character • Student-engaged Assessment • Leadership Three dimensions of Student Achievement: • Mastery of Knowledge and Skills • Character • High Quality Work
Requested Revisions	• Expansion of grade levels served to include kindergarten through Grade 5, from the existing grades 6 through 8, by the end of the proposed charter term • Increase enrollment from 310 students to 735 students by the end of the proposed charter term

Noteworthy: The school's students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students both outperformed the district of location last year.

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

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 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8
Total Approved Enrollment	271	271	302	302	310

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 - Grades 1, 6-8	K - Grades 2, 6-8	K – Grades 3, 6-8	K – Grades 4, 6-8	K – Grade 8
Total Approved Enrollment	460	525	591	660	735

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School Charter School on November 15-16, 2018. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, students, parents and teachers. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 25 classroom observations in Grades 6-8 as well as Crew advisory classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the school's Chief Academic Officer and Director of Academics.

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, and strategic plan, if applicable)**
- **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**
- **Surveys 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 from November 15-16, 2018 at Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School, 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.	Meets
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

- Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School is in year seven of operation and serves students in Grades 6-8. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting all ten benchmarks. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.

- **Areas of Strengths**: The school has refined its program while maintaining its commitment to key design elements, particularly the Expeditionary Learning (EL) Education) model. It has adjusted its curriculum, added self-contained special education classes, and enhanced its response to the intervention process and intervention options. It has invested heavily in co-teaching in most classes, which provides frequent opportunities for small group instruction. The school has established a strong school culture among students, staff and families, has reduced its reliance on punitive consequences, and continues to refine its Crew advisory program, positive behavior incentive systems, and social emotional development strategies. Finally, the school has been organized and purposeful in hiring and planning for the addition of an elementary school program.

- **Areas in Need of Improvement**: The school has taken a continuous improvement approach to curriculum and instruction and needs time to solidify its programs to determine if it is having the desired impact on student learning. While the school has recently formalized a Multi-lingual learner (MLL)/English language learner (ELL) teacher position, the role is not clear and intervention strategies for MLL/ELL students continue to evolve. Finally, the school has been very deliberate in hiring staff aligned with its vision and continues to engage in working towards this. The school should work towards enrolling a comparable number of students with disabilities as compared to its district of location.

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

- Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School is a middle school program currently serving grades 6-8.
- The school model is based, in part, on Expeditionary Learning (EL) Education Core Practices. NYC Outward Bound Schools is an institutional partner. Launch is the only EL Education affiliated school in NYC CSD 16 and the only EL Education charter school in New York City.
- The school is focused heavily on literacy development using readers and writers' workshop and close reading programs and mathematics using the Open Up program.
- The school has invested heavily in co-teaching in most classrooms with additional push-in support to facilitate small group instruction.
- The school provides a daily period for the Crew advisory program for social emotional development.
- The school offers two self-contained, multi-grade special education classes as well as integrated co-teaching on every grade. The school also employs multiple counselors to provide mandated counseling as well as contracted services.
- The school has created a formal Multi-lingual learner (MLL)/English language learner (ELL) teacher position to provide pull-out instruction and push-in support to MLL/ELL students.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:
The school's ESEA Accountability Designation for 2017-18 was Focus Charter.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:
In ELA and math, Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School students did tend to outperform students in schools with similar grade spans and demographics.

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.a.i. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:
In 2015-2016, 34% of students attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2016-2017, the rate was 40%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 50%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 28% of students attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2016-2017, the rate was 25%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 37%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency - Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:
In 2015-2016, 15% of students with disabilities attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2016-2017, the rate was 21%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 36%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2015-2016, 14% of students with disabilities attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2016-2017, the rate was 7%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 24%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 38% of MLLs/ELLs attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2016-2017, the rate was 10%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 46%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2015-2016, 22% of MLLs/ELLS attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2016-2017, the rate was 8%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 8%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 30% of economically disadvantaged students attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2016-2017, the rate was 39% and in 2017-2018, the rate was 50%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2015-2016, 28% of economically disadvantaged students attending Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2016-2017, the rate was 27%, and 38% in 2017-2018. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

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				
	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	10%	16%	-6	32%	-21	11%	11%	0	33%	-22
2015-2016	16%	18%	-2	37%	-21	18%	14%	+4	34%	-16
2016-2017	25%	20%	+5	40%	-15	16%	9%	+7	34%	-18
2017-2018	39%	24%	+15	46%	-7	28%	13%	+15	40%	-12

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

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)***	***MLL/ELL (Variance to the district of location)***	***Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)***
ELA	2014-2015	1% (-3)	0% (-5)	8% (-7)
	2015-2016	4% (-1)	0% (-2)	14% (-4)
	2016-2017	8% (+1)	0% (-4)	23% (+4)
	2017-2018	16% (+7)	15% (+5)	39% (+15)
Mathematics	2014-2015	5% (0)	23% (+17)	10% (-1)
	2015-2016	6% (+3)	10% (+4)	18% (+5)
	2016-2017	5% (0)	0% (-4)	17% (+8)
	2017-2018	14% (+7)	0% (-14)	28% (+16)

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 MLL/ELL 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 these 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**

	SY 2015-2016			SY 2016-2017			SY 2017-2018		
	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS
Grade 6	19%	13% / 34%	+6 / -15	17%	13% / 32%	+4 / -15	41%	23% / 49%	+18 / -8
Grade 7	11%	16% / 36%	-5 / -25	29%	20% / 42%	+9 / -13	29%	21% / 40%	+8 / -11
Grade 8	18%	24% / 41%	-6 / -23	28%	28% / 46%	+0 / -18	49%	28% / 48%	+21 / +1

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**

	SY 2015-2016			SY 2016-2017			SY 2017-2018		
	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Launch Expeditionary Learning CS	NYC CSD 16 / NYS	Variance to NYC CSD 16 / NYS
Grade 6	18%	10% / 40%	+8 / -22	20%	8% / 40%	+12 / -20	36%	13% / 44%	+23 / -8
Grade 7	22%	13% / 36%	+9 / -14	21%	10% / 38%	+11 / -17	25%	12% / 41%	+13 / -16
Grade 8	13%	17% / 24%	-4 / -11	7%	9% / 22%	-2 / -15	26%	16% / 30%	+10 / -4

NOTE:

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

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 comprehensive curriculum in place. On the staff survey 85 percent of respondents said the school "has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the New York State learning standards." The school has recently added the Teachers College Writing Workshop to its use of the Readers Workshop and close reading lessons and last year introduced the Open Up Program by Illustrative Mathematics. The school continues to deepen teachers' knowledge of state learning standards and refine school-developed curriculum, e.g., in science, social studies and multi-grade classrooms. Interviewed school

leaders reported that the school has invested in both classroom and school libraries to facilitate the workshop model. In addition, the school added this year the Accelerated Reader program with the goal of each student reading one million words per year as well as the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program for struggling readers.

- **Indicator b:** The site visit team observed 25 subject area classes across all three grades and core subjects. Observed lessons were purposeful with clear objectives and aligned activities. The use of deliberate grouping within classes indicated planning based on identified needs. Teachers expect students to understand and use academic vocabulary, as evidenced by observed classroom discussions and word walls. Teachers also frequently asked higher order questions and many lessons challenged students to develop conceptual understanding.
- **Indicator c:** Horizontal alignment is evident in collaboration between reading and writing teachers, the use of separate Humanities and STEM teachers for multi-grade classes, and the implementation of Expeditions, multi-disciplinary projects that are a key part of the school's commitment to Expeditionary Learning. Interviewed teachers voiced the desire for more cross-disciplinary learning. The school uses vertically aligned programs such as Open Up Math. In addition, instructional leaders facilitate vertical alignment through ongoing review and revision of the school's curriculum and interviewed teachers reported creating their own pacing guides for math and choosing the order of units in ELA. School leaders noted that high teacher retention results in a faculty that can knowledgeably reflect on and identify gaps in the curriculum.
- **Indicator d:** Interviewed school leaders noted this year's emphasis on parallel and other co-teaching strategies to provide frequent opportunities for differentiated instruction. Multiple adults were observed in most classrooms. While classes maintain common learning objectives, co-teaching teaching provides opportunities to modify text level, pacing, questioning and tasks. As noted, the school invested in leveled libraries for each classroom and differentiated tasks were observed in co-taught classrooms. In addition, multi-grade classes use a variety of supplemental curricula and the school introduced LLI for struggling readers this year.

2. Element: ***Instruction***:
   - **Indicator a:** School leaders described their focus on Expeditionary Learning's three dimensions of student achievement: mastery of skills and knowledge, character development, and high-quality student work. They noted that through deliberate hiring and professional development the school is changing staff mindsets and raising expectations for instructional rigor and engagement. Instructional leaders spoke knowledgably about the strengths and areas for growth of observed teachers, reflecting their high expectations for teaching and learning. The school is in the beginning stages of implementing the Active Classroom approach to foster more student-centered learning, with an emphasis on student self-reflection and agency. While 66 percent of surveyed teachers felt there is "a uniform expectation for teachers' implementation of academic rigor," instructional leaders noted ongoing teacher development in this area to facilitate the shift to more student ownership of learning. There was some evidence of this shift in observed classrooms, such as the use of "turn and talk" strategies, independent work time, peer editing, and self-assessment.
   - **Indicator b:** Students were generally engaged by instruction during observed lessons. The school provides multiple teachers in most classrooms with the expectation that they target instruction to small groups of students, a practice the visit team frequently observed on both days of the visit. Teachers employed a variety of co-teaching strategies. School leaders

and teachers both indicated that all adults are expected to have an active instructional role in the classroom, not just monitor behavior.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation***:
   - **Indicator a:** The school has a variety of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments in place. Incoming students are screened using the Fountas & Pinnell assessment to gauge reading level at the beginning of the year. The school also administers the iReady standardized assessments three times per year and quarterly school-developed interim assessments. Cross-curricular "expeditions" are used as project-based assessments. During classroom observations the site visit team noted regular checks for understanding, including questioning, conferencing, observation of student work, and exit tickets.
   - **Indicator b:** Interviewed school leaders attributed academic progress in part to improved use of data to inform lesson planning and interventions. They reported that teachers use frequent formative assessments, such as weekly math quizzes and review of student work, to group students in co-taught classrooms. Grade teams meet regularly to review student work as well as assessment and behavior data. Interim assessment and other data are used to identify students for intervention programs, such as LLI. In the periods leading up to state tests, frequent assessment identifies priority standards for re-teaching and intervention.
   - **Indicator c:** Interviewed school leaders were familiar with both academic and other data; and described using data to monitor and evaluate program implementation and outcomes. For example, review of discipline data informed their decision to push culture team staff into classrooms to bolster behavior management within classes and reduce removal of students from learning time. Interviewed school leaders indicated that the Instructional Leadership Team regularly reviews academic achievement and progress, which has informed a number of programmatic changes and refinements, including curriculum, instructional practices such as co-teaching, and professional development foci.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners***:
   - **Indicator a:** The school has a response to intervention (RTI) process in place to identify and serve at-risk students. Co-teaching in most classrooms provides frequent opportunities for targeted small group instruction. Interviewed students noted ample opportunities for one-on-one support when needed. A student support team (SST), which includes support staff and teacher representative from each grade, was formed last year to review data, identify students in need, coordinate IEP development with the district, and organize services and interventions. The school offers a wide range of services for students with disabilities, including two multi-grade, self-contained classrooms as well as integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms on every grade. A reading specialist became a dedicated Multi-lingual learner/English language learner (MLL/ELL) teacher this year, thought school leaders acknowledged they are still figuring out the role of this position. The teacher survey indicated that 15 percent believe the school has "a strong and effective program for MLLs/ELLs," though school leaders indicated that much of their intervention for their small number of MLL/ELL students is provided through the school's primary literacy programs.
   - **Indicator b:** The school uses a co-teaching model to differentiate classroom instruction and co-teachers and grade teams are provided with professional development, time and support to collaboratively plan instruction. Eighty-eight percent of surveyed teachers agreed that "Faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction." Furthermore, interviewed school leaders and teachers described frequent use of data to identify students in need and target interventions within and outside the classroom, e.g.,

flexible small group instruction and Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) pull-out instruction.

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:** School leaders indicated that the school culture has evolved with an emphasis on safe and structured classrooms using anchor techniques based on *Teach Like a Champion* teacher moves with the goal of developing not just compliant but "self-managed" students. As such, the school is now promoting more intrinsic motivation to foster student-centered learning. In the past the school used a merit and demerit system; but has dropped the demerit component and is considering eliminating the point system altogether. They have made a deliberate effort to reduce the number of students removed from classroom instruction by having staff such as deans and counselors push in to classes and increasing the use of restorative practices. Finally, professional development for teachers now focuses on Management in the Active Classroom (MAC) that is aligned with the school's Expeditionary Learning and Responsive Classroom approaches. The school has a written Code of Conduct as well as a Family Handbook that explains due process and discipline for

students with disabilities. Rules and Habits of Hearts and Minds were posted throughout the school. Moreover, interviewed students noted that they had had the opportunity to participate in making some rules.

- **Indicator b:** On both days of the site visit the school appeared safe and orderly. Student ambassadors welcomed guests with a handshake and guided them through the building. Transitions between classes were orderly and interactions between students and staff were respectful. Interviewed parent uniformly believe the school to be safe and described it as a "family." From the faculty perspective, 100 percent of surveyed teachers believe "Teacher-student interactions could typically be described as supportive and respectful." On the NYC School Survey 86 percent of students said that they "feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria" and 91 percent said that they "feel safe in their classes." In addition, 95 percent of parents indicated that families "are greeted warmly when they call or visit their school." The school has a variety of staff positions to support students and maintain a learning environment; the culture team includes a counselor, social worker, two deans, and a family engagement coordinator. Interviewed school leaders, staff and students all noted the role of Crew, a daily advisory program to foster social emotional development.
- **Indicator c:** Interviewed school leaders, teachers and parents all described a communication system that provides families with academic and behavioral information, including regular report cards, conferences, and Kickboard for documenting points for positive behaviors. According to the most recent NYC School Survey, 91 percent of families say that school staff regularly communicates with them about how families can help their child learn and 93 percent of families say that they feel well-informed by the communication they receive from the school. Similarly, 92 percent of teachers say that staff regularly communicates with families about how they can help students learn.
- **Indicator d:** In observed classes most students were engaged in learning activities and there was no evidence of disruptive behavior in classrooms or public spaces. With multiple adults in most classrooms, most disengaged students were noticed and redirected quickly and effectively. Interviewed school leaders indicate that they are shifting to a more student-centered Active Classroom approach and are in the process of developing teacher's classroom management styles to support this shift.

2. Element: ***Family Engagement and Communication***:
   - **Indicator a:** Interviewed parents described a number of communication strategies employed by the school to inform them about their child's performance, including e-mail, texts, phone calls, and group chats. Crew advisors serve as a primary point of contact for families, but interviewed parents indicated that all staff are accessible. The school provides quarterly report cards that parents indicated include detailed comments about their child's performance. They also noted the use of Kickboard to provide information about student behavior in addition to academic information. Finally, the school has implemented student-run conferences, which parents described as informative and confidence building for their children.
   - **Indicator b:** The school uses survey results as well as the aforementioned direct communication with parents to identify parent and student concerns. The school also employs restorative justice practices, including the use of reflection, which provides opportunities not only for consequences but also better understanding of students.
   - **Indicator c:** Interviewed parents described the school as welcoming, respectful and professional. They described an open-door policy so that parents could access staff and

leadership to voice any concerns. Parents are welcome to attend breakfast and visit their child's classroom. The school also hosts a quarterly coffee for parents. Finally, the board of trustees holds public meetings that are open to the school community.

- **Indicator d:** School leaders have created detailed data presentations to share with their board and the school community, which include overall and subgroup performance as well as comparison to local district and charter schools. Details are shared during board meetings and parent meetings with school leadership.

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports***:
   - **Indicator a:** The school uses a variety of strategies to collect data regarding the social emotional needs of students. Kickstarter is used to document points for positive behavior. Regular grade team meetings are used to discuss students of concern. Crew advisors work with small groups of students and communicate with other staff about student needs. 88 percent of survey teachers believe the school has systems in place to support students' social-emotional needs.
   - **Indicator b:** Interviewed school leaders described ongoing monitoring of social emotional develop programs leading to continuous improvement. For example, the Crew program has a revised curriculum to promote consistency while also increasing student choice of activities. In addition, changes have been made to group composition and looping practices in order to better reflect each grade's unique needs.

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

Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School 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. Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School's 2016-17 composite score is 3.0.

Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School's Composite Scores
2014-2015 to 2016-2017

Year	*Composite Score*
2014-2015	3.0
2015-2016	2.5
2016-2017	3.0

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, Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School had a current ratio of 6.8.

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, Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School operated with 132 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 percent is considered reasonable. Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School's enrollment maximization for 2016-2017 was at 118 percent.

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, Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School'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, Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School's total margin was 7 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

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 Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School's 2016-17 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 opportunities to strengthen internal controls:

- Debit Card Receipts – The auditor noted that receipts were not maintained for a substantial number of debit card transactions and recommended that the school either adhere to the debit card purchasing policy as written or revise it to include a monetary threshold for submission of receipts.
- Fixed Asset Tracking – School staff could not locate two out of three assets selected from the school's fixed asset tracking system, indicating a lack of controls over physical management of assets. The auditor recommended that management establish clear rules and reinforce staff's responsibility for equipment.
- Special Education Billing – During testing of a sample, the auditor identified one student who was classified for special education billing but did not have an IEP on file. The auditor recommended that, to mitigate risk of under- or over-billing the school district, the school conduct a thorough reconciliation of special education billing to supporting IEP documentation on an annual basis, prior to filing the final per-pupil reconciliation to NYC DOE.
- Bidding Policy – the auditor noted that the school does not have a bidding policy for recurring vendors. The auditor recommended that the school adopt a written policy regarding bidding requirements and that, as needed, the school's staff document the reason for not going out to bid.

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 is stable and includes founding members as well as some relatively new members. The board's skill sets include education, finance, legal, as well as experience with Expeditionary Learning and Outward Bound. They are pursuing additional members with expertise in real estate, government relations and marketing.
    - **Indicator b:** The board has a strategic planning committee and has conducted a strategic planning process. While maintaining a clear focus on academic performance, the board has also maintained its commitment to implementing the Expeditionary Learning model. Board members noted refinements to the school program, including extra investment in more teachers in classrooms, the employment of literacy consultants, and increased subject intensity.
    - **Indicator c:** Interviewed board members were very familiar with the school's academic performance data as well as other pertinent information, including enrollment, social emotional development, and finances of the school. They also noted review and discussion of staff and parent survey results. They described active questioning of leadership and clear priorities for academic growth and program implementation.
    - **Indicator d:** Interviewed board members described a regular process for reviewing and updating policies, including the use of an attorney. They also use auditor feedback to inform policy changes and indicated that they are currently in the process of refining their fiscal policies and procedures.

- **Indicator e:** Board members described in detail their annual evaluation process for school leadership, including leader self-evaluation and a 360 tool to solicit staff feedback about leadership performance. The board is using Board On Track tools to conduct evaluation of itself and noted an annual retreat where they examine areas for improvement. Board members described their focus on EL implementation and noted the use of external expert evaluations and national comparison data as part of the EL credentialing process. They also indicated that their partnership agreement with EL and NYC Outward Bound is reviewed annually.
- **Indicator f:** Board members noted the use of an attorney to review policies and advise on decision-making. They are also monitoring political and legislative changes that might impact the school.

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 some new additions who bring additional academic expertise. The interviewed leadership team described a clear commitment to the Expeditionary Learning model and their efforts to translate their vision into practice, which they acknowledge is a work in progress. Moreover, 82 percent of surveyed teachers reported that the school's mission is clear and is shared by all stakeholders. The school also relies on a number of consultants: after a number of changes, the school has settled on an Expeditionary Learning school designer who aligns

with their model and approach and provides regular coaching and support to school leadership and staff. In addition, they are using the Lavinia Group to support instructional leadership and develop their coaching skills. Instructional leaders conduct class "walk-throughs" to norm their expectations and align schoolwide improvement efforts.

- **Indicator b:** Although the school has a large number of leadership positions, culture and student support staff, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. In addition, the school is developing teacher leadership through department chairs, including Crew, who coach and analyze student work with teachers. As the school has grown, it has created teams and committees to formalize communication, e.g., culture team, student support team.
- **Indicator c:** Interviewed school leaders described summer training and planning as well as ongoing professional development and planning opportunities during the school year. They have used these opportunities to refine their vision for EL implementation and translate it into teacher and student practices. Interviewed leaders and teachers all described regular meetings at a variety of levels, e.g., school-wide, grade team, department, co-teacher, with clear leadership and agendas. On the teacher survey, 88 percent believe that school leadership has systems in place to solicit staff feedback. Teachers noted the use of surveys, staff meetings, coaching sessions, and performance reviews as opportunities for input and feedback. Teachers said that they do not feel inundated, that they have space to grow.
- **Indicator d:** On the teacher survey conducted by the Charter Schools Office, 74 percent of teachers reported the school is a long-term, sustainable option as a place to work.

2. Element: ***Professional Climate:***
    - **Indicator a:** At the time of the renewal site visit, most positions were filled. One instructional leadership position had been deliberately left vacant because school leaders said they could not find an appropriate person and did not want to hire someone without the requisite skills and knowledge; however, that role was being covered by another school leader with the needed expertise.
    - **Indicator b:** Interviewed school leaders described a deliberate schedule to facilitate opportunities for both student interventions and teacher collaboration. Grade teams meet at least weekly and school leaders created formal time for co-teachers to plan. Eighty eight percent of surveyed teachers indicated that they "frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction."
    - **Indicator c:** School leaders described a range of professional development activities, including active participation and modeling in planning meetings, regular observations and feedback, and analysis of student work. The school is also using video taping of instruction for professional development.
    - **Indicator d:** School leaders reported, and teachers corroborated, that instructional leaders are a frequent presence in classrooms. Interviewed teachers indicated that instructional leaders provide immediate feedback via e-mail and texts that typically includes glows, grows and next steps. While each faculty member has a formal supervisor, any school leader may observe and give feedback on academic and class culture issues. Ninety-seven percent of surveyed teachers believe the school has systems in place to monitor and evaluate teacher instruction. Interviewed teachers were familiar with the school's evaluation system, which includes a school-developed

rubric, self-assessment, goal-setting, and mid- and end-of-year meetings. For teachers not meeting expectations, the school implements improvement plans with a focus on professional growth through additional support and guidance.

- **Indicator e:** As noted, the school employs surveys to gauge teacher satisfaction and solicits teacher feedback via frequent school, grade and co-teacher meetings. Interviewed teachers described an open professional culture where their input was solicited.

3. Element: ***Contractual Relationships:***
    - **Indicator a:** While the school does not have a partnership with a management company or comprehensive service provider per se, it has an ongoing relationship with Expeditionary Learning and NYC Outward Bound. The President of Outward Bound sits on the school's board of trustees and another founding board member is a former member of Outward Bound's board of trustees. The school has worked with Expeditionary Learning to define its needs, which has led to changes in the EL coach at the school.
    - **Indicator b:** N/A
    - **Indicator c:** The board of trustees indicated that it evaluates the quality of program implementation and is monitoring the EL credentialing process.

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:** Stakeholders have a clear and consistent view of the school's mission and key design elements. Interviewed students described the mission of the school as college readiness, preparation for life and their future, and experiences to increase open-mindedness. Students said the school acknowledges learning differences and focuses on their personal improvement, not failures. Interviewed parents described the school mission in terms of college preparation, personal fulfillment, and building character, confidence and accountability. On the teacher survey, one teacher wrote "Launch's mission is to uphold the principles of an EL education: teaching students to be lifelong learners who are also good people and good citizens of the world. We want to provide a high-quality education for students in a low-income neighborhood, that will prepare them to get into the city's best high schools and set them on a path to college and career." School leaders indicated the school community now has a common vision of the EL model and interviewed parents also noted the importance of Expeditionary Learning at the school, describing opportunities to learn outside of the building.
   - **Indicator b:** Interviewed school leaders noted their ongoing commitment to implementing the Expeditionary Learning model and noted working on all three EL dimensions: Mastery of Knowledge and Skills, Character and High-Quality Student Work. The board has developed a strategic plan and school leaders have likewise developed a five-year work plan with the goal of becoming an EL credentialed school. Instructional leaders are conducting professional development and developing model classrooms that illustrate all three EL dimensions. In addition, the school has hired staff and begun planning for implementation of an elementary school in 2019 that embodies EL philosophy and practices.

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

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: Last spring the school had 635 applications for 150 seats. At the time of the site visit, the school reported that 95 percent of its students were economically disadvantaged, 27 percent were students with disabilities, and 4 percent were MLLs/ELLs. The school has a greater percentage of economically disadvantaged students than the district; and is slightly below the percentage of students with disabilities and MLLs/ELLs. School leaders noted that Launch has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities of any DOE or charter school in the district. In addition, it offers two self-contained special education classrooms, which is unique to other charter schools in the district. Interviewed school leaders noted their awareness of gentrification in the school catchment area and reiterated their commitment to provide a unique option for under-served students and their desire to stay true to their mission of serving at-risk students in the immediate community.

Table 5: Student Demographics –

Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School Compared to District of Location

	2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School	NYC CSD 16	Variance	Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School	NYC CSD 16	Variance
Students with Disabilities	28%	33%	-5	27%	34%	-7
MLL/ELL	5%	9%	-4	4%	8%	-4
Economically Disadvantaged	88%	90%	-2	95%	91%	+4

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 MLL/ELL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.

According to NYSED data, in the 2017-2018 school year, 91% of students were retained in Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School compared with 88% 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:** At the time of the renewal site visit there was no evidence that the school was out of compliance with its charter or rules, regulations or laws.
    - **Indicator b:** The school conducts regular independent audits of its finances and employs an attorney to review policies and advise on decision-making.
    - **Indicator c:** The school chose to terminate in the 8th grade, rather than continuing into high school grades and sought appropriate authorizer approval for this change to its charter.