



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report 2016-2017

New Dawn Charter High School

Visit Date: 9/29-30/2016

Date of Report: 5/31/2017

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	New Dawn Charter High School
Board Chair	Ronald Tabano
School Leader	Sara Asmussen
District of location	NYC CSD 15
Opening Date	August 5, 2012
Charter Terms	Initial charter term: July 1, 2012-June 30, 2017
Approved Grade Levels and Maximum Enrollment	9-12; 500 students
Educational Partners	Borough of Manhattan Community College - College Now Program
Facilities	242 Hoyt Street, Brooklyn NY (private facility)
Mission Statement	<i>New Dawn Charter High School will provide over-aged and under-credited students 15 to 21 years of age including those who are English Language Learners and those with special needs, the opportunity to return to school and obtain a high school diploma through a rigorous NYSED standards-based education program. Within the framework of the education program, three programs will be offered: 1) interventions for those with fewer than 11 credits, and for those with 11 or more credits: 2) internships in the community and 3) college enrollment."</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A literacy-rich general education program • An intensive Grade 9 intervention program for students with fewer than eleven credits • A daily advisory to address social-emotional needs • Balanced instruction integrated into the workshop model • A pre-college program following completion of internships • A longer school year of at least 200 days beginning in Year 2 (214 days) • A daily common planning time and professional development • Regularly embedded professional development in the classroom
Requested Revisions	Non-material revisions to NDCHS bylaws and complaint, enrollment, discipline policies.

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

School Characteristics

Enrollment

Current Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	Ungraded (high school)	500	417 ²
2015-2016	Ungraded (high school)	400	291
2014-2015	Ungraded (high school)	400	280
2013-2014	Ungraded (high school)	250	215
2012-2013	Ungraded (high school)	150	156

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment
2017-2018	Ungraded (high school)	500
2018-2019	Ungraded (high school)	500
2019-2020	Ungraded (high school)	500
2020-2021	Ungraded (high school)	500
2021-2022	Ungraded (high school)	500

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at New Dawn Charter High School (NDCHS) on September 29-30, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, parents, students and teachers. In cooperation with school leadership, the team also administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 14 classroom observations in Grades 9-12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal and the special education coordinator.

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

- **Teacher roster**
- **Current organization chart**

² Self-reported by NDCHS in Renewal Site Visit Workbook

- 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 Charter School 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 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 9/29/16 to 9/30/16 at NDCHS, 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).	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 NYS Learning Standards (NYSLs) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making 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.	Approaches
	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.	Approaches
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Approaches
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

New Dawn Charter High School (NDCHS) was authorized in 2011 to serve over-aged under-credited (OA/UC) students in a high school program modeled after NYC DOE schools and a NYC DOE-authorized charter school serving a similar population. NDCHS offers a standards-based education program and the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma to OA/UC students 15-21 years of age by providing academic interventions, individualized programming, community internships, and college and career support.

NDCHS opened in 2012 and enrolls students of any age who have attempted and failed high school at least once. Students are accepted on a rolling basis throughout every year. In its Renewal Application, the school reports a total enrollment of 642 over the first four years of the initial charter term. Entering students vary widely in age, credits earned, and number of Regents exams passed. Of the 642 students that enrolled in NDCHS over the charter term, 109 students (17%) have transferred to other schools, moved out of state, or are in jail or rehabilitation programs. The school provided academic outcome data for the remaining 533 students it has served over the initial charter term in the Renewal Application: 105 students (19.7%) have dropped out; 239 students (44.8%) are still enrolled, and 189 students (35.5%) have graduated.

NDCHS has worked with the NYC DOE and NYSED to establish objective comparative metrics to assess the school's academic performance over the initial charter term and inform the school's renewal recommendation to the Board of Regents. These metrics will be discussed in Benchmark 1. In summary, the analyses include:

1. Differentiated cohort analyses (9th grade year, charter school entry year, risk factors)
2. Six-year graduation rate in comparison with schools serving students with similar learning needs and challenges
3. Student persistence rate, compared with students with similar learning needs and challenges
4. Information provided in the *2015-2016 NYCDOE School Quality Snapshot for Transfer High Schools*
5. School reported efforts to place students in employment and college acceptance

NDCHS has put in a place an academic program designed to meet the varied needs of its students. Students have personalized schedules based on their credit and Regents exam needs, including remedial lab classes and intervention programs for students in need of foundational skills and content. It offers full-day instruction as well as opportunities for work-based experiences through internships. The school has very small class sizes; nevertheless, rigorous and engaging instruction was inconsistently observed during the evaluation visit. The faculty includes many novice teachers and teachers new to the school and staff turnover has been a challenge at NDCHS over much of the term. The school does have a comprehensive professional development program in place, including regular informal and formal observations and feedback. The school environment is safe and conducive to learning. Social emotional supports are provided through the school's advisory and mentoring programs.

The school has a small but stable board with relevant skills and backgrounds. It receives regular reports and data, but has not established clear goals for evaluating mission attainment and holding itself and school leaders accountable. The board is providing active financial oversight and strategic planning related to acquisition and renovation of a facility. The school also has an experienced leadership staff in place

with a robust instructional leadership team. The school is at full enrollment with a large percentage of students with disabilities but attracts and retains few English language learners.

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

In the initial charter application, NDCHS requested a waiver that would base the school's ESEA accountability status calculation on six-year traditional cohort graduation rates (rather than four year rates), due to the unique characteristics of the model and population served. NYSED did not exempt nor modify the accountability methodology, and NDCHS was categorized as *Local Assistance Plan Charter School* in 2015-2016, *Focus Charter School* in 2016-2017 and in 2017-2018. Charter schools that are designated as *local assistance plan, focus or priority* must comply with the terms of their charter agreement and authorizer oversight³. Board of Regents-authorized charter schools are subject to the performance expectations set forth in the NYSED Oversight Plan and Charter School Performance Framework. The NYSED Charter School Performance Framework establishes the six-year Grade 9 entry cohort graduation rate as a measure of graduation outcomes for charter schools which exclusively serve students who are over-age and under-credited and have failed traditional high school at least once.

Because of the unique needs of the student population served by NDCHS, and to fully and fairly evaluate the performance of the school, NDCHS was invited to submit an alternative accountability measurement plan as part of the Renewal Application, describing the school's outcomes over the initial charter term. The alternative accountability plan presents data provided by the NYC DOE to compare the school's performance with similar students attending NYC DOE schools that serve OA/UC students. The comparison analysis is used to supplement but not supplant other NYSED Performance Framework criteria. This section will summarize the information provided by the school as part of the charter Renewal Application.

³ NYCRR 100.18(h)(ii)(c) and 100.18(h)(2)(iii)(e).

Differentiation of Cohorts

The table below demonstrates the range of high school entry cohorts that are served at NDCHS and the difficulties of applying traditional high school entry cohort-related graduation rate data to this population.

Table 1: Relationship Between NDCHS Student High School Entry Cohort and Charter School Entry Year (2012-2016)

(From NDCHS Renewal Application; based on total enrollment of 533 students over the charter term)

High School Entry Cohort Year	NDCHS Enrollment Year				
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	Total
2007-2008	5				5
2008-2009	11	6	3		20
2009-2010	50	20	6	3	79
2010-2011	56	46	26	2	130
2011-2012	16	22	52	16	106
2012-2013	2	10	51	39	102
2013-2014		1	18	52	71
2014-2015				20	20
2015-2016				2*	0
Grand Total	140	105	156	132	533

*Both students have moved.

Table 2 summarizes NDCHS student outcomes by traditional high school entry cohort over the first four years of the initial charter term.

Table 2: NDCHS Student Outcomes as of August 2016 by School Entry School Cohorts

(From NDCHS Renewal Application; based on total enrollment of 533 students)

High School Entry Cohort	Dropped/Aged Out		Still Enrolled		Graduated		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
2007-2008	4	80.0%			1	20.0%	5
2008-2009	11	55.0%	1	5.0%	8	40.0%	20
2009-2010	24	30.4%	7	8.9%	48	60.8%	79
2010-2011	45	34.6%	21	16.2%	64	49.2%	130
2011-2012	13	12.3%	49	46.2%	44	41.5%	106
2012-2013	4	3.9%	77	75.5%	21	20.6%	102
2013-2014	3	4.2%	65	91.5%	3	4.2%	71
2014-2015	1	5.0%	19	95.0%			20
Total	105	19.7%	239	44.8%	189	35.5%	533

Similar Schools Comparison

Using the NYC DOE O/A Peer Target Graduation Rate, the table below compares NDCHS graduation outcomes to NYC similar school graduation outcomes as of June 2016. The table is based on the charter school entry year to provide context for the length of time the students have been attending NDCHS.

Table 3: 2016 NDCHS Student Outcomes Compared to similar NYC DOE Student Outcomes (“Peer Target”)

School Entry 2012 N = 140	# in Cohort	% of Cohort	NYC DOE Peer Target Graduation Rate	NDCHS Graduation Rate	Variance to Date
15-year-old OA/UC	20	14.3%	30%	70.0%	+40
16-19 year old OA/UC	19	13.6%	50%	63.2%	+13.2
16-19 Most At Risk OA/UC	64	45.7%	25%	37.5%	+12.5
Non OA/UC	37	26.4%	67%	89.2%	+22.2

School Entry 2013 N = 105	# in Cohort	% of Cohort	NYC DOE Peer Target Graduation Rate	NDCHS Graduation Rate	Variance to Date
15-year-old OA/UC	6	5.7%	30%	50.0%	+20
Collapsed OA/UC	23	21.9%	50%	70%	+20
Collapsed MAT	51	48.6%	25%	27.5%	+2.5
Non OA/UC*	25	23.8%	67%	64%	-3

The NYC DOE 2015-2016 School Quality Snapshot for New Dawn Charter High School lists a graduation rate of 56% and is a more weighted measure of the school’s performance. The DOE transfer school graduation rate is “based on whether students graduated within six years of starting high school, or seven years for students who entered this school very far off-track for their age. Other students from prior cohorts who graduated this year are also included.” The Quality Snapshot states that NDCHS has outperformed its similar school comparison group by +9 percentage points.

Table 4: Cumulative Six-Year Graduation Rate Compiled by NYC DOE*

2016 Cumulative Six-Year Graduation Rate - NDCHS	2016 Cumulative Six-Year Graduation Rate – Comparison Group	Variance
All Students: 56%	All Students: 47%	+9
Most At- Risk Students: 38%	Most At-Risk Students: 33%	+6
Other OA/UC Students: 55%	Other OA/UC Students: 53%	+2

* According the NYC DOE, the calculation of similar schools’ graduation rate is “based on whether students graduated within six years of starting high school, or seven years for students who entered this school very far off-track for their age. Other students from prior cohorts who graduated this year are also included.”

The table below provides information about traditional Grade 9 entry NYSED cohort graduate rate, as well as enrollment and dropout information that is included in the NYS 2015-2016 NDCHS School Report Card.

Table 5: NDCHS 2016 Outcomes by NYSED Grade 9 Entry Cohort*

Source: data.nysed.gov

Cohort	# Students in Cohort	Grad Outcome	Still Enrolled	Dropped Out
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2010 Cohort: Six-year outcome	138	Graduated 58 students (41%)		28% (39)	28% (39)
		Regents 54 (38%)	Local 4 (3%)		
		GED: 2 (1%)			
2011 Cohort: Five-year outcome	112	Graduated: 29% (33) Regents: 26% (29) Local: 4%(4)		59% (66)	12% (13)
2012 Cohort: Four-year (inclusive of August 2016) outcome	108	Graduated: 14% (15) Regents: 12% (13) Local: 2% (2)		83% (90)	3% (3)

* NYSED defines cohort as a group of students who first entered grade 9 in the same school year.

The 2016 NYSED school report card six-year graduation rate, based on student date of entry in Grade 9 is 41%. It should be noted that the ratio of Regents and local diplomas issued at NDCHS mirrors the aggregate NYS average, despite a high percentage of special education students who graduated NDCHS.

College Enrollment

NDCHS reported the following information about college enrollment. The college data below comes directly from the Naviance⁴ system, a comprehensive college and career readiness system. Naviance collects data directly from colleges and reports findings in a series of reports. NDCHS used these reports to present the data shared below.

	College Enrollment Data 6 Months After Graduation				
	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Overall Combined
% Enrolled*	39%	56%	29%	40%	40.5%
Post-Secondary Data 7 to 24 months or more after graduation					
	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Combined 2013-2015
% Enrolled*	67%	64%	40%	Not available yet	57%
% Preparing to Enroll	0%	10%	17%	14%	10%
% Working	5%	15%	34%	31%	21%
% Not Enrolled/Status Unknown***	28%	11%	26%	26%	22%

* From Naviance

⁴ [Click to go to the Naviance website](#)

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

<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 CCLS.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:

NDCHS has a curriculum in place and is continuing to refine it. Instructional leaders review and revise scope and sequences and curriculum maps over the summer and provide faculty with guidance resources to inform lesson planning. School leaders reported increasing alignment of the curriculum with state learning standards, including via the adoption of EngageNY modules. In addition, the school is in the process of revising its Advisory and Internship programs. It has enhanced career awareness for C week students (equivalent of 9th graders) and is implementing a research project associated with internships to enhance connections between students' academic and experiential education.

As a school serving OA/UC students, NDCSH utilizes a student intake process that includes an audit of accumulated credits and Regents exams as well as a diagnostic assessment. The results are used to place students in a sequence of courses designed to build foundational knowledge and skills and then prepare them for Regents exams. The school has developed a range of courses to meet the needs of students who enter the school at various levels across subjects. Interviewed teachers reported sufficient curriculum resources and guidance. The school also uses targeted intervention programs and is adding Math 180 this year in response to low Regents pass rates in that subject.

Teachers develop lesson plans that are reviewed weekly by the school's principal and have adopted a lesson plan template specifically designed for co-teaching. The school uses a workshop model and observed class sizes were very small, many with less than 10 students. The rigor and engagement of instruction was not consistent. While most lessons appeared purposeful with clear learning objectives, many teachers missed opportunities to use higher order questions and challenge students to seek answers from rigorous text. Classroom management was adequate, with little evidence of disruptive behavior. However, while students were generally compliant with behavioral expectations, they were not consistently engaged in learning. For example, slow pacing in some classes led students to wander off task and in some classes students had their heads down on their desks without consequence. In addition, while many classes were co-taught, there was limited evidence of targeted instruction and it was not clear that the use of multiple adults in the classroom is being maximized.

The school uses a variety of assessments, including Scantron, curriculum-based, and practice Regents tests, to identify student needs, assign them to classes, and inform instruction. As part of the PICCS program teachers also develop student learning objectives (SLOs) to measure student growth, which is incorporated into a performance pay system. While teachers reported regular use of performance data for targeting instruction to individual students, there was no clear identification among staff and leaders regarding measurable schoolwide goals with which to evaluate improvement efforts and mission attainment. The school is in the process of developing alternative accountability measures appropriate for a school serving OA/UC students, but has not yet established and communicated clear and measurable performance goals.

The faculty include many novice teachers and teachers new to the school. The school does have a comprehensive professional development program in place, including regular informal and formal observations and feedback. The principal provides weekly feedback on lesson plans and meets biweekly with individual teachers and biweekly with departments. She also provides additional formative feedback via informal conversations and e-mail. The school also makes use of professional learning communities (PLCs) that are led by staff certified in PLC leadership. The school has adopted two "problems of practice" to focus on throughout the year: feedback and questioning, which aligns with clear needs identified by renewal site visit team members during classroom observations. Teachers also participate in inter-visitations among peer faculty and other schools.

NDCSH provides supports for diverse learners and school leaders noted that the educational approach is similar to that for students with special needs. Students have personalized schedules based on their credit and Regents exam needs, including remedial lab classes and intervention programs for students in need of foundational skills and content. Students who enter with few credits/Regents (C week) take classes at the school daily; more advanced students alternate weeks between academic study at the school and off-site internships (A/B week). School staff, students, parents and board members all felt this schedule worked well, providing access to valuable authentic work experiences. The school implements a full inclusion model with many classes co-taught by a general and a special education teacher. The school has

a special education coordinator who administers the special education program, supports teachers and provides direct services to students. In addition, all students have a mentor who monitors their progress and serious social emotional needs are addressed by a social worker and counselors. However, at the time of the visit the school was attempting to fill two special education teacher vacancies and a counselor position.

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

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i>	<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.
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<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.
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<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:

During the two day visit the school was calm and orderly and no disruptive behaviors were observed in classrooms or public spaces. Furthermore, interviews with parents, teachers and students all indicated the school has established a safe learning environment. Most the teachers surveyed described teacher-

student interactions as supportive and respectful. The school has ample security and hallways were consistently monitored. The school leader reported few out of school suspensions with strong efforts to keep already at-risk students in school. However, the school has not established a scholarly culture within the classroom. For example, not all teachers effectively engaged students and some allowed off-task behavior, including heads down on desks, without notice or consequences. In addition, staff survey results indicate that attendance is a serious challenge.

The school uses a variety of strategies to communicate with families, including its online Jupiter system. Parents reported that the staff is accessible and responsive. Interviewed family members were uniformly positive about the school, describing it as a “last chance” opportunity for their children.

The school provides social emotional supports, including advisory classes and mentors who regularly review individual learning plans (ILPs). It also employs a social worker and is hiring more counselors. The school is also improving its internship program. It provides training to prepare students for work-based experiences and has provided more training and enhanced communication with site supervisors to ensure adequate support for students.

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

NDCHS appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the schools independently audited financial statements.

NYSED 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 NYSED Office of Audit Services. The 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 in strong financial health. NDCHS' composite score for 2015-2016 is 3.0. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

**New Dawn Charter High School'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	2.6

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. NYSED uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether 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 charter 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 charter school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 a cause for concern. For 2015-2016, NDCHS had a current ratio of 152.6.

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, NDCHS operated with 600 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment stability measures whether a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent of its projection is considered reasonable. NDCHS' enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 58 percent.

Long-Term Indicators

A charter 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, NDCHS' debt to asset ratio was 0.00.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether the charter 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, NDCHS' total margin was 62 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:

NYSED CSO reviewed NDCHS' 2015-2016 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor observed that there were un-cleared checks more than six months old on the school's bank reconciliations and recommended that the issue be investigated and resolved. The auditor also noted a 2014-2015 recommendation that the school's board adopt a policy regarding operating reserves that would define and set goals for reserve funds, establish authorization of use of the funds and outline requirements for monitoring and reporting. As of June 30, 2016, such a policy was under the board's review, and its status will be part of the 2016-2017 audit.

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: Approaches

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ol 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 school has a small but stable board of trustees that possesses a range of skills and background relevant to charter school governance, including education, legal, and finance. It is in the process of adding one additional member. The board is organized with officers and committees, including executive, finance/audit and education.

The board indicated that it receives and reviews regular reports and data from school leaders. However, the board did not demonstrate a clear understanding of how to evaluate whether the school is achieving its mission. Interviewed board members described only a general awareness of academic improvement rather than detailed knowledge of key indicators of school performance. They described oversight via classroom visits and conversations with staff and did not articulate clear and measurable academic performance goals by which to hold themselves and school leaders accountable. Specifically, as a school serving exclusively OA/UC students, the board has not established clear expectations for graduation rates and timelines.

The board is providing active financial oversight and strategic planning related to acquisition and renovation of a facility.

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: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.</p> <p>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</p>
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<p>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</p> <p>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</p> <p>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students’ needs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.</p>
3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.</p> <p>b. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p> <p>c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

The school has an experienced leadership staff in place with a robust instructional leadership team, including a principal, two assistant principals, director of school partnerships and college readiness, and special education coordinator. The school has a system for supervising and supporting teachers, including regular observations, coaching and feedback, as well as a formal evaluation process. The school uses

professional learning communities (PLCs) that are facilitated by certified PLC leaders to organize staff. A survey of teachers indicated that leadership has systems in place to solicit input from staff.

The school has struggled over the first four years of the charter term to retain teachers and has experienced high staff turnover. At the time of the evaluation visit the school employed a high percentage of novice teachers and faculty new to the building (almost half of the faculty), and classroom observations found that not all teachers evidenced deep content knowledge in their taught subjects. The teacher survey found that many teachers have only 1-3 years of experience in their subject or grade, and less than half viewed the school as “a long-term, sustainable option for me as a place to work.” Teachers have left for a variety of reasons, including termination, resignation and moving out of state. To address this, school leaders reported that high turnover has required ongoing professional development to continuously train staff on the school model and described a shifting organizational structure as they have continued to move people into positions based on available expertise and needs. School leaders have stated that they have revised their recruitment efforts to seek candidates with better alignment to the school’s mission and practices. These efforts are ongoing. At the time of the visit two special education positions remained vacant.

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>	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:

The school has a specific mission to graduate OA/UC students and has not yet fully achieved its mission. Interviews with stakeholders, including board members, school leaders and staff all evidenced a commitment to serving at-risk students and trying to meet their academic and social emotional needs. Notably, the school continues to enroll students who age out, despite not continuing to receive per pupil funding for these students. In addition, a survey of teachers found that the majority felt the school “has a clear sense of the mission that is shared by all stakeholders.” As noted, the school is clearly focused on Regents pass rates but has not established clear goals for graduation rates with which to measure mission attainment. School leaders also described limited communication within the school community about schoolwide performance and said teachers are not motivated by these data.

The school is implementing and continuing to refine its key design elements. Its academic program is differentiated based on student need, e.g., credits and Regents, and provides a full inclusion model for special education and English language learners. The school also has a range of programs and services focused on social emotional development, including advisory and mentoring programs. The school

provides both college and career readiness via an enhanced internship program and college prep courses and assistance. The school utilizes an extended year and day to meet student needs and provide opportunities for professional development and planning.

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

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

Finding: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter. 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.
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 6: Student Demographics – NDCHS Charter School Compared to NYC CSD 15

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment		Variance ⁵	Percent of Enrollment		Variance	Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD		School	CSD		School ⁶
Enrollment of Special Populations							
Economically Disadvantaged	67%	58%	+9	64%	56%	+8	66%
English Language Learners	5%	19%	-14	4%	17%	-13	3%
Students with Disabilities	38%	20%	+18	36%	21%	+15	38%

⁵ Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.

⁶ Reported by the school; 2016-2017 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

The school enrolls over-age, under-credit students, which is an at-risk category. While under-enrolled in the past the school is currently at full enrollment and backfills continuously. The school reported that two-thirds of its students are economically disadvantaged and nearly two out of five have a disability. The school offers a full inclusion model with individualized programs for all students facilitated by very small class sizes. School leaders reported that students with disabilities perform at similar levels to general education students. However, the enrollment of English language learners (ELLs) is low at 3%, and their retention is about 50%.

As reported in the NYSED School Report Card, the school’s dropout rate in 2015-2016 was 15% overall and 17% for students with disabilities.

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance
The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding: Meets

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

NDCHS complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Over the charter term, the school has made some changes to its policies without submitting them to its authorizer for review and approval.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

Note: The tables below are a standard component of all Renewal Site Visit Reports. Additional information about the school's academic outcomes is included in Benchmark 1 text.

**Table 7: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes for All Students:
School & NYS Level Aggregates**

4-Yr Cohort: All Students	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State
ELA	34%	82%	-48	39%	84	-45	33%	84%	-52
Math	38%	84%	-46	36%	86	-50	43%	86%	-43
Global Hist.	22%	78%	-56	19%	79	-60	28%	78%	-50
US History	24%	79%	-55	29%	81	-52	26%	81%	-55
Science	44%	83%	-39	40%	84	-44	39%	84%	-45
Graduation Rate	6 yr 41%			5 yr 29%			4 yr 14%		

**Table 8: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students:
School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

4-Yr Cohort: Economically Disadvantaged	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State
ELA	35%	75%	-40	42%	78%	-36	34%	79%	-45
Math	40%	79%	-39	37%	81%	-44	43%	81%	-38
Global Hist.	23%	70%	-47	16%	71%	-55	28%	70%	-42
US History	24%	72%	-48	30%	74%	-44	26%	74%	-48
Science	45%	76%	-31	40%	78%	-38	36%	78%	-42

**Table 9: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes by Subgroup – Students with Disabilities:
School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

4-Yr Cohort: Students with Disabilities	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State
ELA	18%	43%	-25	22	49%	-29	17%	51%	-34
Math	10%	46%	-36	19%	50%	-31	15%	51%	-36
Global Hist.	3%	39%	-36	5%	40%	-35	11%	40%	-29
US History	3%	42%	-39	11%	46%	-35	13%	47%	-34
Science	33%	48%	-15	22%	49%	-27	24%	50%	-26

**Table 10: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes by Subgroup – English Language Learners:
School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

4-Yr Cohort: English Language Learners	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State
ELA	33%	39%	-6	~	44%		~	30%	
Math	33%	58%	-25	~	56%		~	48%	
Global Hist.	22%	39%	-17	~	35%		~	24%	
US History	22%	42%	-20	~	41%		~	30%	
Science	33%	45%	-12	~	43%		~	32%	

~ suppressed because number of students tested is too small