New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2016-2017

New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science II

Visit Date: 10/7/2016
Date of Report: 3/13/2017

CONTENTS

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION **2**

METHODOLOGY **3**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS **4**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 6
BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE 7
BENCHMARK 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING 7
BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT 10
BENCHMARK 4: FINANCIAL CONDITION 11
BENCHMARK 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 13
BENCHMARK 6: BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE 13
BENCHMARK 7: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY 14
BENCHMARK 8: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS 17
BENCHMARK 9: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION 18
BENCHMARK 10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE 20

APPENDIX A: NYS ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES **21**

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science II
Board Chair	Nancy Grossman
School Leader	Sandy Manessis
District of location	NYC CSD 8
Opening Date	8/13/2012
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 7/1/2012 – 6/30/2017
Authorized Grades/ Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 9-12/ 566 students
Management Company	New Visions for Public Schools, Inc.
Educational Partners	Lincoln Center Education
Facilities	900 Tinton Avenue Bronx, NY (co-located)
Mission Statement	*AMS II is part of the New Visions Charter High Schools' (NVCHS) network. NVCHS is a network of secondary schools dedicated to supporting all students in meeting the highest academic standards. We shift classroom dynamics from one where students receive information to one where students find solutions to community-defined problems by using their imagination coupled with a mastery of content and skills. We challenge our students to present and defend their learning as part of preparing and supporting them to graduate ready for college, careers and a 21st century economy. Teaching and learning in AMS II, as in all New Visions Charter High Schools, is built upon the Lincoln Center Education Capacities for Imaginative Thinking, informed by challenge-based curricula that are aligned to the Common Core standards, applied to improving local communities and driven by student performance data.*
Key Design Elements	● Challenge-Based Curriculum ● Strong Focus on Writing ● Comprehensive Assessments ● Strong Teacher Support ● More Time to Succeed ● Learning through the Arts ● Working with Community Leaders ● Promoting Parent Support
Revision History	October 2015: Non-material revision to add a lottery preference for children of school employees – approved by NYSED
Requested Revisions	None requested

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

School Characteristics

Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	9-12	566	555
2015-2016	9-12	542	512
2014-2015	9-11	397	382
2013-2014	9-10	249	231
2012-2013	9	125	125

METHODOLOGY

A one-day renewal site visit was conducted at New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science II on October 7, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, and teachers. In cooperation with school leadership, the team also administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 10 classroom observations in Grades 9 - 12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal and two assistant principals.

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

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

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school that was chartered or renewed in 2012 or beyond, outlines 10 Performance Benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

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

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

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

For the site visit conducted on October 7, 2016 at New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science II, 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 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) 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

Academic outcomes for New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Sciences II (AMS II) met Board of Regents performance standards in the first charter term. In June 2016, the school graduated 109 students (of 115 students in the 2012 cohort), posting a 95% graduation rate and outperforming the NYS average. Twenty-five students earned a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, 76 earned a Regents Diploma, and eight students were awarded a Local Diploma.

The leadership team, teachers and parents at AMS II describe an individualized, collaborative culture in which all stakeholders – students, teachers, families - are supported in teaching and learning. As an example of this culture, the school leadership shared that two of the six students in the cohort who did not graduate in June had enough credits to do so. However, in partnership with the students and their families, it was decided that the students would benefit from a fifth year of academics and job readiness training. An individualized program was created for these two students, demonstrating the school's commitment to each individual student.

The school leadership affirmed that the 2013 cohort is on track to have an even higher graduation and Regents proficiency rate as they are outperforming their predecessors at the same checkpoints. The strength and collaborative nature of the supports for diverse learners is particularly strong. The Special Education and ELL coordinators demonstrated a thorough understanding of each learner's unique needs and described individualized and innovative programs to meet these demands.

Despite a potentially turbulent 2015 – 2016 year, with a number of administrators on personal leave, the school relied upon strong structures, protocols and procedures to retain its supportive, collaborative and solutions-oriented school culture. Each challenge that the visit team inquired about was met with clear data measures and an actionable plan for addressing the challenge going forward.

The AMS II Board of Trustees demonstrated significant growth in terms of both capacity and oversight over the latter years of the charter term.

As the initial charter term ends, AMS II is still enrolling a lower proportion of students with disabilities than NYC CSD 8. The school should continue to target efforts to increase this population, and consistently document its outreach and recruitment activities.

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: See Appendix A for further information.

AMS II achieved a 95% graduation rate for its first graduating cohort (2012). Students exceeded state proficiency rates in all cohort Regents testing outcomes, with the exception of U.S. History.

The school identified low cohort Regents pass rates for students with disabilities and English language learners as an area of focus. AMS II consistently and systematically uses student assessment data and teacher feedback to refine curriculum and pacing to achieve better outcomes for these and all students. Preliminary school level data suggests that a greater percentage of students with disabilities are on track to graduate in the 2013 cohort than 2012.

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 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) 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 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	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:

Curriculum

The school utilizes curricula that are aligned to NYSLS. The school leadership annually evaluates its curriculum by considering the pass rate for the Regents Exams. While a curricular framework is provided by New Visions for Public Schools, Inc., the leadership team reported that teachers are permitted to make modifications, as they deem appropriate, to better prepare students for these exams. In the subjects of science and English language arts, for example, the New Visions curriculum is followed rather closely, according to the instructional leaders. However, the social studies curriculum was re-written by teachers so that lessons would be taught chronologically rather than thematically to better align with the Regents.

The instructional leadership team reported that vertical and horizontal curricular alignment is achieved through weekly department level and monthly grade team meetings. Co-teachers have, at a minimum, one co-planning meeting per week, but the instructional leadership reported that while not mandated, these meetings often happen more frequently. On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, 83% of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that "faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction."

Instruction

The classroom instruction observed supported the "hands-on" approach that was described in the charter renewal application. Classroom observations confirmed the use of the workshop model, intentional pairings, well-managed classrooms and clearly posted agendas and objectives across grade levels and content areas. Instructional leadership was aligned with observations in identifying specific feedback for teachers that would further drive student achievement.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

During the Summer Bridge program, all incoming ninth and tenth graders receive a *Performance Series* baseline assessment. If the results indicate need, PRO-ED's *WIST* assessment, a word identification and spelling test, is administered. Students are assigned to *Wilson*, Reading Lab or *Just Words* interventions

based on this data. Data analysis time is built into the professional development and meeting protocols throughout the year.

According to the NYSED-administered teacher survey, staff strongly agreed (70.37%) and agreed (24.07%) that the administration uses data from assessments to make school-wide decisions, especially in regard to individualized programming.

Supports for Diverse Learners

AMS II has designed innovative, individualized interventions including Reading Lab, Algebra Lab, Geometry Lab, Global Lab, U.S. History Lab, as well as Humanities, Genre, and Theater courses. Teachers are assigned to these courses based on student learning needs. For example, two sections of English are co-taught with a SPED- and an ELL-certified teacher to serve both special populations in one section.

The supports for diverse learners are coordinated through a network-provided detailed spreadsheet, flags within PowerSchool and a snapshot document that is provided for each student with mandated services. At the time of our visit, the special education coordinator shared that 60% of students with disabilities in the 2013 cohort had enough credits to graduate and two to three were focusing on obtaining an Advanced Regents diploma.

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:

Behavior Management and Safety

Almost 70% of teachers surveyed agreed (38.29%) or strongly agreed (31.48%) that the school-wide discipline policy is consistently applied. The school's discipline policy has a clear ladder of referral for behavior infractions. No behavioral interruptions were observed during our visit, but students were observed conversing appropriately with staff members at the "Help Desk" on each hall.

Family Engagement and Communication

The school utilizes written communication (i.e. a bi-monthly school newsletter), as well as phone calls and in-person events to engage families. In the NYSED focus group, parents praised how they and their students were welcomed during Summer Bridge and how that set the stage for open lines of communication thereafter. On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, more than half of the

respondents strongly agreed that both administrators and teachers "regularly communicate(d) with families on issues related to academics." Family dinners are held each month to bring the community together. The October family dinner will include a PowerSchool training so that families could access student academic data at any time.

Social-Emotional Supports

Social-emotional support is a key design element of AMS II. The school shows its investment to this work in employing four school counselors and two clinical social workers. Additionally, each student is assigned an adult mentor who serves as his or her advocate for the academic year. During our visit, the school leader shared that both students and teachers were anxiously awaiting this year's assignments, which are finalized in October to account for group balance based on diagnostic and behavioral data. All school stakeholders (teachers, parents and school leaders) reported that the mentoring relationships at AMS II are meaningful and positive.

"Kid Talk" is a designated time during the monthly grade level meeting protocol. This agenda item allows teachers the time to raise issues that they have encountered and get support for these students.

Families also praised the benefits of "Hip Hop Therapy." This innovative elective program, led by one of the school counselors, meets three times a week; students utilize a recording studio to express their emotions through poetry and song.

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:

AMS II appears to be in strong financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's 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 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. AMS II's composite score for 2015-2016 is 3.00. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016.

New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science II's Composite Scores
2012-2013 to 2015-2016

Year	*Composite Score*
2015-2016	3.00
2014-2015	3.00
2013-2014	2.60
2012-2013	2.20

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. NYSED uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2015-2016, AMS II had a current ratio of 8.8.

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 2015-2016, AMS II operated with 178 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment stability measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85% is considered reasonable. AMS II's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 94%.

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 2015-2016, AMS II's debt to asset ratio was 0.1.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2015-2016, New Visions Charter High School for AMS II's total margin was 24%.

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 reviewed AMS II's 2015-2016 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.

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:

During the NYSED Charter School Office's full-site visit in the spring of 2015, the board was rated as "falls far below" on the Charter School Performance Framework as they did not demonstrate a thorough understanding of the schools' program nor was it evident that they actively hold the school or the charter management organization accountable for results.

During the October 5, 2016 meeting, the current board demonstrated an exemplary understanding and commitment to their governance and oversight. The trustees detailed the unique aspects of the programs and challenges for both AMS II and New Visions Charter High School for Humanities II (HUM II).

The board membership was enriched by bringing together members of previously separate boards of New Visions Bronx-based charter schools. The result is a diverse group of individuals with a range of expertise and a clearly articulated commitment to careful oversight. Two of the current board members were founding trustees, two others have personal and professional connections to the Bronx and one brings board experience from another non-profit.

The board demonstrated multiple specific examples of their oversight over the charter term. The board requires school leaders to report their suspension rates, for example, and both the trustees and school administrators credited this closer oversight with a significant decline in the rate of suspensions at both schools. The school leadership team reported the suspension rate at AMS II as six percent.

The board hired a third party organization, Quantum Governance, to evaluate the performance of both the board and the value add of the CMO, New Visions for Public Schools, to the school. This shows a strong commitment to monitoring and oversight of the school's academic, organizational, and financial health. Handbooks and policies are reviewed and modified each year by the board.

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:

<u>School Leadership</u>

The leadership team operates cohesively and has established a strong professional culture within the school. On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, almost 80% agreed (46% strongly agreed) that leadership demonstrates a high level of accountability for outcomes.

At the time of the visit, the administration consisted of the school principal and two assistant principals, one of whom was slated to begin as the director of operations the next instructional day. Two additional assistant principals would join the team on October 11. Both candidates had been on-site for two days during their interview process to observe and meet with teachers. The new APs would also participate in an all-day, network-led session to complete their onboarding.

On the NYSED-administered survey, 77% of teachers agreed (42% of which strongly agreed) that the school leadership has systems in place to solicit staff feedback. The administrative team demonstrated numerous ways they have incorporated this feedback into their practice. For example, a recurring Monday staff meeting was cancelled after internal surveys reported that this time was not valuable to teachers. The administrative team also shared that, as a result of feedback, they now ask for staff contributions rather than dictating extra responsibilities when a need arises. They reported greater staff buy-in as a result.

The school leadership identified four instructional priorities and designed specific professional development opportunities to achieve these goals. One goal for the 2016-2017 school year is supporting "student learning through the use of cooperative techniques." The school arranged three full-day trainings and three coaching sessions of *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. Four staff members would become Kagan certified by the end of the year to lead trainings in subsequent years. The Kagan approach was observed in multiple classrooms in the way students were instructed to provide specific praise to their classmates and how small group shares were structured.

The school is staffed with high quality personnel. While there is a math special education teacher position vacancy, the administration paired two high-performing algebra teachers who had an opening in their schedules to fill this need.

Teachers are observed, at minimum, 12 times over the course of the year; two of these observations are considered formal observations. During an internal teacher survey in the spring of 2016, 90% of AMS II teachers agreed that "expectations for effective teaching are clearly defined at my school."

Contractual Relationships

Lincoln Center Education is contracted to provide teaching artists to each New Visions Charter High School, including AMS II. Network-wide, the program focuses on ninth grade. The AMS II school leadership determined that the seniors no longer had the arts exposure that the administration had hoped. The program has now been restructured so that there are more opportunities for co-planning between the teaching artists and teachers in tenth and eleventh grades to increase students' continued exposure to the *Capacities of Imaginative Thinking* and the arts. The school leadership was not able to articulate how the program's effectiveness is evaluated.

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:

Seventy percent of teachers agreed (53% of whom strongly agreed) that the school has a clear sense of the mission, according to the NYSED-administered teacher survey. All key design elements are integrated into the current practices, as discussed throughout this report.

In some instances, the key design elements have been improved upon in practice. For example, AMS II offers a "Family Day" for eleventh and twelfth graders during Summer Bridge, which was originally intended for just freshmen and sophomores. During this day, families review transcripts and sign a contract to ensure their student is on-track for graduation. It also allows incoming students to meet their older peers and begin to build positive relationships.

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.

Table 3: Student Demographics – New Visions Charter High School for AMS II Compared to District of Location

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD	Variance[2]	School	CSD	Variance	School[3]
Enrollment of Special Populations							
Economically Disadvantaged	95%	80%	+15	83%	79%	+4	62%
English Language Learners	12%	13%	-1	9%	13%	-4	13%
Students with Disabilities	16%	25%	-9	16%	26%	-10	14%

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

AMS II is meeting or approaching an enrollment rate of economically disadvantaged (ED) students and English language learners (ELL) that is comparable to the district, but enrolls a lower percentage of

[2] Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.
[3] Reported by the school; 2016-17 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

students with disabilities (SWD). The school has been working to enroll an increased number of SWDs and ELLs over the duration of the charter term. AMS II employs an associate director of special education who supports five special education certified teachers through a comprehensive ICT model across grade levels and content areas. In those instances where students enter the school with a mandated service that AMS II does not provide, the associate director works with the family to determine ways that the student can be supported within the school, if the parents choose. The school hired a SETTS teacher this year as an added support.

Efforts to recruit and retain students in the ED, ELL, and SWD populations include participating in the citywide and borough-wide high school fairs hosted by the New York City Department of Education; organizing middle school visits to AMS II and principal presentations and visits to local middle schools; sending out direct mailings to over 17,000 eighth graders residing in the Bronx; hosting open houses for interested families and students; participating in local community events; and partnering with community-based organizations and social services networks.

According to NYSED data, the overall student retention rate at AMS II is 82.71%. The district-wide retention rate in NYC CSD 8 is 71.21%.

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:

AMS II has explicit processes and procedures to maintain compliance at the school and network level. The school appears to operate in compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

Table 1: 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	Variance
ELA							93%	84%	+9
Math							93%	86%	+7
Global History							84%	78%	+6
US History							78%	81%	-3
Science							93%	84%	+9
School Graduation Rate / NYS Target Graduation Rate							95%	80%	+15

Table 2: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students:
School & NYS Level Aggregates

4-Yr Cohort: **Economically Disadvantaged**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							91%	79%	+12
Math							91%	81%	+10
Global History							83%	70%	+13
US History							73%	74%	-1
Science							91%	78%	+13
Graduation Rate							93%	72%	+21

Table 3: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes by Subgroup – Students with Disabilities:
School & NYS Level Aggregates

4-Yr Cohort: **Students with Disabilities**	2010 Cohort			2010 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							63%	51%	+12
Math							58%	51%	+7
Global History							37%	40%	-3
US History							32%	47%	-15
Science							58%	50%	+8
Graduation Rate							79%	52%	+27

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

4-Yr Cohort: **English Language Learners**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							60%	30%	+30
Math							40%	48%	-8
Global History							20%	24%	-4
US History							0%	30%	-30
Science							60%	32%	+28
Graduation Rate							100%	26%	+74