



New York State Education Department

Mid-Term Site Visit Report 2016-2017

The Bronx Charter School for Children

**Visit Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2017
Date of Report: 05/30/2017**

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	The Bronx Charter School for Children
Board Chair	Jane Ehrenberg Rosen
School Leader	Denise Alexander, Head of School
District of location	NYC CSD 7
Opening Date	September 9, 2004
Charter Terms	Initial Term: 1/15/2003 – 1/15/2008 First Renewal Term: 1/16/2008 - 6/30/2011 Second Renewal Term: 7/1/2011 – 6/30/2016 Third Renewal Term: 7/1/2016 – 6/30/2019
Facilities	388 Willis Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454 (private)
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of The Bronx Charter School for Children is to empower our children to achieve their greatest potential as students and as members of their communities.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Academic Excellence • Nurturing the Whole Child • Ensuring a Safe Environment • Developing Critical Thinkers • Building Partnership
Revision History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision to the enrollment policy to add a set aside for special populations

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	K – 5	432	431
2015-2016	K – 5	432	422
2014-2015	K – 5	432	429

METHODOLOGY

A one day mid-term site visit was conducted at The Bronx Charter School for Children (BCSC) on Wednesday, March 8, 2017. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, instructional leadership team, and other school leaders. In cooperation with school leadership, the NYSED Charter School Office (CSO) administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 13 classroom observations in kindergarten through Grade 5. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the head of school and directors of curriculum and instruction.

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

- Academic data and enrollment data <https://data.nysed.gov/>
- Mid-Term Site Visit Workbook
- Current organization chart and job descriptions
- A master school schedule
- Interventions offered at the school
- Board materials (roster, minutes, and/or strategic plan)
- Board self-evaluation processes and documents
- Teacher and administrator evaluation processes
- Student/family handbook
- Staff handbook and personnel policies
- Key school policies: Discipline Policy, Complaint Policy, Enrollment & Admissions Policy, and By-laws
- Teacher, parent, and/or student surveys
- A list of major assessments
- Enrollment data including subgroups
- Professional development plans and schedules
- Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets
- School submitted annual reports
- 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 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 March 8, 2017 at the Bronx Charter School for Children, 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 New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	Meets
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students’ social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school’s academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	Meets
Organizational Soundness	Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	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.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Approaches
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

The Bronx Charter School for Children (BCSC) received a three-year short-term renewal with corrective action in 2016 due to declining academic outcomes and declining proportional enrollment of at-risk SPED and ED populations. The renewal recommendation is based on outcomes in the penultimate year (fourth year) of the charter. BCSC achieved notable academic growth and outperformed CSD 7, its district of location, on both the state math and English language arts 2016 assessments. In February 2017, NYSED ended corrective action due to the school's satisfactory response to the implemented corrective action plan. Stakeholders credited a greater focus on data analysis and data-driven instruction for this growth. The site visit team noted that most observed classrooms engaged closely in standards-aligned, differentiated instruction.

The school has stayed true to its mission and key design elements over time. The staff clearly articulated how the school's mission drives their work and employs a robust student support team to develop the whole child while building partnerships with families and the larger community. The internal family survey, low rate of student attrition, and parent focus group all provide clear and strong evidence of a distinct and vibrant school culture.

The board remains stable and closely involved with the school's financial management and oversight. The trustees currently support priorities and goals identified by the school leadership rather than setting governance priorities and long-term organization goals.

BCSC approaches its enrollment targets. The student support team has joined the operations team to increase the school's community outreach, in hopes of attracting families of the identified special populations. The 2017 lottery will also include a 15% set aside for students with disabilities in kindergarten through Grade 2, which the school leaders expect will help them meet this target.

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: Approaches

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

BCSC is currently “In Good Standing,” per the ESEA Accountability Designation. During the 2015 renewal site visit report, BCSC’s academic outcomes were rated as “Falls Far Below” in Benchmark One, due to a declining trend. One year later, however, the academic outcomes moved significantly in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. BCSC has shown growth and needs to continue to sustain this level of academic performance to secure a full-term renewal. The school now meets the benchmark by outperforming its district and approaching – or exceeding – the state average on the 2016 state assessments.

On the 2015 NYS ELA assessment, only 11% of BCSC’s tested students achieved proficiency. In 2016, 35% of students were proficient – 13 percent more than NYC CSD7, its district of location, and just three percent shy of the state average. To further indicate BCSC’s student growth, while half of all tested students scored a Level 1 on the ELA assessment in 2015, only 11% earned a Level 1 in 2016 – well below the state (28%) and CSD7 (44%) Level 1 average.

When looking at the ELA performance of special populations within BCSC, all three subgroups – economically disadvantaged (+24%), students with disabilities (+7%), and English language learners (+11%) – improved over the previous year’s assessment and outperformed their district of location. The proficiency for economically disadvantaged and English language learners outperformed both the district and the state average.

In math, the school’s results appear to have moved forward even more significantly from 2015 to 2016. On the 2015 NYS mathematics assessment, for example, only 14% of tested students achieved proficiency. In 2016, 44% of students were proficient, exceeding the state average of 39%, and exceeding the district’s performance by 23%. As in ELA, the number of students who tested at Level 1 fell significantly from 49% to 20% the following year, which was below the state (30%) and district’s (53%) Level 1 testing percentage.

All three subgroups’ performance showed demonstrable growth and outperformed both the district and state averages on the 2016 NYS math assessment. No BCSC student with disabilities scored proficiently in 2015, but 25% were proficient in 2016 (+16% over NYC CSD7 and +14% over the state). English language learners’ proficiency also moved from five percent in to 16% the following year (+4% more than the district and state averages). BCSC’s economically disadvantaged students’ proficiency tripled from 14% in 2015 to 43% a year later, outperforming the state (28%) and CSD7 (16%).

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 (NYSL) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

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 NYSL.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:

The school reported that their curriculum is aligned to NYSL. Horizontal curricular alignment is supported by co-planning time built into monthly data days and weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings. Content-specific (math and ELA) directors of curriculum and instruction are responsible for vertical curricular alignment. According to the NYSED-administered anonymous teacher survey,

nearly three-quarters of teachers (74%) agreed that “faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction.”

Teachers submit their lesson plans electronically and receive feedback from their coaches and directors of curriculum and instruction before and during their observations. Lesson plans were only provided for two of the 13 classroom observations conducted by the site visit team, but the directors of curriculum and instruction were knowledgeable of topics covered in most classrooms visited for the co-observations with the site visit team members.

In focus groups, stakeholders emphasized that high-quality instruction at BCSC is driven by the use of data. In our survey, 86% agreed with the statement “the administration at BCSC uses data from assessments to make school-wide decisions.” Benchmark reading assessments every six weeks, mock state assessments three times a year, and bi-weekly summative assessments are three examples of internal assessments utilized by BCSC to plan and modify.

The ELA Mock III assessment was held approximately three weeks prior to the site visit. When instructional leaders were asked what data this test yielded, they were able to cite specific findings. For example, students on this assessment performed stronger on multiple choice responses so teachers planned lessons to develop students’ short responses. These lessons were observed by the site visit team in classrooms.

Students appeared engaged in their classrooms consistently throughout the school; 12/13 classroom observations received the highest rating (2/2) in response to the indicator, “All students are engaged and are participating in learning activities.”

The school leaders reported a recent shift to supporting diverse learners. The school’s leadership now views every student as an English language learner and has organized professional development sessions for all teachers. Teachers have now the capacity to help all students with language acquisition and to build their students’ language skills. Nearly 73% of teachers agreed on the NYSED-administered teacher survey that the school has a strong and effective program for English language learners. ELL students are assessed three times a year to track their performance across modalities. In nearly every classroom lesson observed by the site visit team, key vocabulary was specifically highlighted.

Differentiation was observed in several ways – student grouping, leveled texts, questioning, and staffing structure. The special education coordinator also shared that entrance and exit tickets make it easy for teachers to create timely interventions for individual or groups of students.

A math camp is held daily before school and a literacy-focused after-school program targets students on the cusp of grade level proficiency. Teachers and reading interventionists utilize Fountas and Pinnell’s *Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI)* to support each grade’s lowest readers. Reading intervention groups are re-assigned every six weeks, based on the most current benchmark assessment data.

Special education teachers, service providers, and English as a new language (ENL) teachers plan with general education teachers in weekly PLC meetings and monthly data days. During these co-planning sessions, coordinators emphasized that the goal is to provide push-in services whenever possible.

On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, less than half (45.45%) of teachers surveyed agreed that BCSC has a “strong and effective special education program.” The special education coordinator

reported that teachers create monthly academic goals for each student with disabilities. The progress for these students is captured in individual binders to show growth over time. Given the comparatively low number of students with disabilities attending BCSC, the school should continue to improve its special education program, in order to increase its appeal for families and continue its positively trending student outcomes. The recent addition of ICT classes in Kindergarten and Grade 1 appears to be a positive step in this direction.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<p>1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i></p>	<p>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy.</p> <p>b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment.</p> <p>c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination.</p> <p>d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</p>
<p>2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i></p>	<p>a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students' strengths and needs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns.</p> <p>d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.</p>
<p>3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i></p>	<p>a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students.</p> <p>b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students' social and emotional health.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

The school has a clear approach to behavioral management and safe, well-managed classrooms were observed during the site visit. Families in the focus group praised the school's safe, nurturing culture;

several parents shared that their children had been bullied in previous schools, but those behaviors stopped when their children enrolled at BCSC.

The school employs a school-wide color chart system to track student behavior. In the NYSED-administered teacher survey, about two-thirds (63.63%) of teachers agreed that “school-wide discipline is consistently applied.” The director of students and families shared in our focus group that the school leadership is focusing on building teachers’ recognition that they are responsible for all students in the school, not just those in their classroom.

The school employs two counselors who lead mandated counseling and teach classes to build a positive, safe school culture. When teachers raised concern, for example, one counselor began teaching a weekly “Love Your Brother” session to build kindness amongst the fifth grade and the staff organized a support group for parents so that they can also band together.

A key design element for BCSC is building partnership and the staff takes pride on utilizing families as partners. At the start of each school year, the family support team issues a survey to gauge parent needs and then designs a series of workshops to accompany the monthly Family Staff Association (FSA) meetings. Each teacher is expected to conduct at least one home visit at the start of each academic year. On the teacher survey, 86% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that “teachers regularly communicate with families on issues related to academics.” This sentiment was echoed in the parent focus group as well. Parents unanimously praised the accessibility of the school’s staff; one parent even shared that the school leader came to her home to provide additional work and resources for her child.

In the 2015-2016 school year, BCSC added a goal of having at least 90% of parents/guardians attend the bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences. The school reports having achieved 99% attendance at these conferences.

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

BCSC 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. BCSC's composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.9. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016.

**Bronx Charter School for Children's Composite Scores
2012-2013 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.9
2014-2015	3.0
2013-2014	2.8
2012-2013	3.0

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Near-Term Indicators

Near-term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. 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 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, BCSC had a current ratio of 7.7.

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, BCSC operated with 243 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 is considered reasonable. The Bronx Charter School for Children's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 99 percent.

Long-Term Indicators

A charter school's *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2015-2016, BCSC's debt to asset ratio was 0.2.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether 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, BCSC's total margin was 3.0 percent.

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

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

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

The Charter School Office reviewed the BCSC'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: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school.b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy.c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals.d. The board regularly updates school policies.e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers.f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

The board demonstrates great stability with the majority of trustees having served for multiple years and terms. In the board focus group, however, the trustees shared that it has been a challenge to recruit and select additional board members. They expect to add another member imminently and will continue to explore other avenues to recruit additional trustees.

The board relies on the head of school to set their strategic goals and has not identified a set of priorities on which they measure their effectiveness. The board has developed a well-defined rubric to evaluate the school leader, but the trustees have not created or suggested additional ways to support or retain staff members.

The school leadership provides the board with a dashboard three times a year. The dashboard contains academic assessment data for all students. The board reports that the trustees find the dashboard a useful and complete tool to help inform their decisions.

The board hires outside counsel to update school policies on an annual basis, but self-identified their need to familiarize themselves with compliance requirements. They have also, with large input from the head of school, implemented a performance-based evaluation process for its school leaders.

During the focus group, the CSO team highlighted that all locations of members participating and voting by video-conference must be included in each meeting’s public notice to maintain compliance with Open Meetings Law. The board continues to work on ensuring that they are in compliance with all applicable aspects of the Open Meetings Law.

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

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

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning. b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities. c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which 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:

BCSC reorganized their leadership structure this academic year. The head of school shared that, by doing so, the school has been able to “remove silos to focus on academics” and that having two directors of curriculum and instruction (DCI) allowed the staff to prioritize both content areas simultaneously. The team also informally includes two content-specific coaches that support teachers' implementation of instructional strategies. The head of school also meets with the DCIs and coaches bi-weekly to improve cross-curricular alignment.

The new structure retains a director of data and assessment as part of the leadership team, which the DCIs report frees them up to do more classroom observations. In addition to the instructional leaders detailed above, the school's leadership team includes directors of operations, finance, talent, and students and families. All positions have distinct roles and responsibilities and the leadership team meets weekly as a team.

The school provided a detailed evaluation process for each position as part of our document review. The head of school, coaches, and master teachers are supported by an outside leadership consultant. The leadership team also formalized a professional coaching plan process for each teacher, which is one prong of BCSC's teacher retention strategy. Just over half of teachers surveyed (54.55%) agreed or strongly agreed that BCSC is a “long-term, sustainable option for me as a place to work.” 36% of teachers were neutral in their response. Teachers who agreed cited the positive school culture and familial atmosphere for staff.

There is an annual formal evaluation process for each position that is completed by the head of school. The school leader is evaluated by the board of trustees.

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 stakeholders articulated a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements. More than 80 percent of teachers surveyed (81.81%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My school has a clear sense of the mission that is shared by all stakeholders." The school takes great pride in its ability to nurture the whole child, ensure a safe environment, and build partnership.

Fostering Academic Excellence and Developing Critical Thinkers

Parents surveyed by the school in May 2016 nearly unanimously agreed (98.6%) with the statement, "BCSC has high standards and expectations for my child." Classroom observations conducted by the site visit team further support this finding, as detailed in Benchmark 2.

Nurturing the Whole Child

As discussed more substantively in Benchmark 3, the school employs a robust staff focused on developing the whole child. Each teacher is expected to conduct at least one home visit at the start of each year to establish a home-school connection. Counselors work with both mandated students, those at-risk, and larger groups, as necessary.

Ensuring a Safe Environment

More than three-quarters of teachers surveyed (77.27%) surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the school has systems in place to support students' social-emotional needs. In this same NYSED-administered survey, 82 percent of teachers agreed that the school community was "generally free of bullying, discrimination and harassment." In May 2016 on a BCSC-administered survey, 98.2% of parents agreed with the statement, "I feel my child is safe at school."

Building Partnership

In focus groups, the family support team and families both emphasized BCSC's home-school partnership. The school also partners with community organizations to enhance their work. The school's director of operations cited a partnership with the NY Restoration Program as one example. Two teachers provided by this organization facilitate lessons over a five-week session. During the spring, BCSC students go to the garden and have a harvest party. The school has also partnered with local bodegas to collect egg shells and coffee grinds for garden compost. She also detailed other partnerships for fundraising (i.e. Yankee Stadium), the arts (i.e. Ballroom Basix), and family support (i.e. Legal Aid).

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>	<p>a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.</p>
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment		Variance ²	Percent of Enrollment		Variance	Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD		School	CSD		School ³
Enrollment of Special Populations							
Economically Disadvantaged	93%	92%	+1%	88%	92%	-4%	90%
English Language Learners	15%	18%	-3%	18%	17%	+1%	26%
Students with Disabilities	15%	24%	-9%	14%	25%	-11%	11%

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

³ Reported by the school; 2016-2017 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

BCSC has a high demand for a limited number of seats. For the 2016-2017 school year, 1,897 students submitted applications and the school admitted 124 students, according to the site visit workbook submitted by the school.

For the past three years, BCSC has not met its enrollment targets and the gap with students with disabilities is most significant.

The percentage of economically disadvantaged students comes closest to meeting the target of the three special populations. The school reports in its “Enrollment and Retention Efforts” document that it offers free lunch to all students and covers the meal costs of those that do not qualify for free lunch under federal guidelines. The school also employs a full-time family liaison and two school counselors to support economically disadvantaged students and their families.

The number of English language learners appears to trend in the right direction with the school potentially surpassing the CSD this year, if the district rate holds steady. The school employs two full-time and one half-time ELL teachers, provides translation services and implements Tier 2 Response to Intervention services to support this special population.

The school plans to weight the enrollment lottery, beginning in this year’s lottery, to address the students with disabilities enrollment disparity and should continue to conduct high impact outreach to all at-risk communities. For the 2017-2018 school year, at least 15% of available kindergarten – Grade 2 seats will be reserved for students receiving special education services. The school produced a flier with what special education services the school provides and the special education coordinator and director of students and families traveled to Head Start centers to recruit for this special population.

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

Finding: Meets

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

The site visit team determined that the Bronx Charter School for Children demonstrates evidence of legal compliance and adhere to the provisions of its charter.

The board has appointed a DAC Coordinator and reviewed the Family Handbook

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

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

All Students	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	16%	10%	+6%	31%	-15%	25%	13%	+12%	36%	-11%
2014-15	11%	12%	-1%	31%	-20%	14%	18%	-4%	38%	-24%
2015-16	35%	21%	+14%	38%	-3%	44%	21%	+23%	39%	+5%

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

Economically Disadvantaged	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	14%	10%	+4%	20%	-6%	25%	13%	+12%	26%	-1%
2014-15	11%	12%	-1%	21%	-10%	14%	18%	-4%	27%	-13%
2015-16	35%	21%	+14%	27%	+5%	43%	20%	+23%	28%	+15%

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

Students with Disabilities	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)
2013-14	3%	3%	0	5%	-2%	15%	4%	+11%	10%	+5%
2014-15	11%	3%	+8%	6%	-5%	0%	7%	-7%	11%	-11%
2015-16	18%	6%	+12%	8%	-10%	25%	9%	+16%	11%	+14%

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

English Language Learners	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)
2013-14	4%	2%	+2%	3%	-1%	14%	6%	+8%	12%	+2%
2014-15	0%	4%	-4%	4%	-4%	5%	10%	-5%	13%	-8%
2015-16	11%	5%	+6%	4%	+7%	16%	12%	+4%	12%	+4%