



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report 2017-2018

The New American Academy Charter School

**Visit Date: 9/25/17
Date of Report: 8/21/2018**

CONTENTS

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION	2
METHODOLOGY	5
BENCHMARK ANALYSIS	6
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	8
BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE.....	9
BENCHMARK 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING.....	12
BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	15
BENCHMARK 4: FINANCIAL CONDITION	17
BENCHMARK 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	19
BENCHMARK 6: BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE	20
BENCHMARK 7: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY.....	21
BENCHMARK 8: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS.....	24
BENCHMARK 9: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION	25
BENCHMARK 10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE	27

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	The New American Charter High School
Board Chair	Varleton McDonald
District of Location	NYC CSD 19
Opening Date	September 9, 2013
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: November 12, 2012 – June 30, 2018
Proposed Renewal Term	July 1, 2018- July 1, 2021
Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-5/ 370 students
Management Company	N/A
Educational Partners	N/A
Facilities	9301 Avenue B, Brooklyn, NY at P.S 233 Langston Hughes
Mission Statement	<i>The New American Academy Charter School empowers learners and inspires leaders to make this a better world. Through our collaborative teacher team, mastery-based career ladder, and looping cycles, we offer personalized rigorous instruction that enables our students to succeed in high school, college, and their future lives.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Person Teaching Team • Looping Cycles • Mastery-based Career Ladder • Multi-dimensional Teacher Evaluation System • Lower Teacher/Student Ratio • Embedded Master Teacher • Five-Week Summer Training Program • Six-Step Hiring Process
Requested Revisions	None

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

Renewal Outcomes

The following renewal outcomes are possible:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school’s charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.
- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school’s charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal, which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:
 - (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school’s being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**
 - (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1, but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.
- **Non-Renewal:** A school’s charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school’s charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office’s Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

Please Note: The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school’s Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success, but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective action.

School Characteristics

Approved Enrollment for the Current Charter Term

	Year 1 2013 to 2014	Year 2 2014 to 2015	Year 3 2015 to 2016	Year 4 2016 to 2017	Year 5 2017 to 2018
Grade Configuration	Grades K-1	Grades K-2	Grades K-3	Grades K-4	Grades K-5
Total Approved Enrollment	370	370	370	370	370

Proposed Enrollment for the Renewal Charter Term

	Year 1 2018 to 2019	Year 2 2019 to 2020	Year 3 2020 to 2021	Year 4 2021 to 2022	Year 5 2022 to 2023
Grade Configuration	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5
Total Approved Enrollment	370	370	370	370	370

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at The New American Academy Charter School on September 25-26, 2017. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, and teachers. 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 Grades K-5. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with master teachers at various grade levels.

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

- **Renewal Application**
- **Academic data**
- **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**
- **Current organizational chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes, and strategic plan, if applicable)**
- **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Teacher and administrator evaluation processes**
- **Interventions offered at the school**
- **NYC DOE surveys**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets**
- **School submitted Annual Reports**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

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

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

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

For the site visit conducted on September 25-26, 2016 at New American Academy Charter School, see the following Performance Framework benchmark scores and discussion.

**New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating**

Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Falls Far Below
	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.	Approaches
	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.	Falls Far Below
	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.	Meets
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

The CSO renewal site visit team found that The New American Academy Charter School's ("TNAACS") performance varies on the Benchmarks of the Performance Framework. The school's academic performance falls far below the community school district (CSD) of location and state averages, across all grade levels. While the school has a documented curriculum in place, the instructional delivery varies across the school. Behavior management appears consistent across the school. However, the board has experienced significant turnover throughout the charter term, and does not have strategic planning or goal-setting processes in place. The school has a stable leadership structure. While ten teachers have been terminated during this charter term, TNAACS is working to strengthen its teacher recruitment plan. The school is making progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets and exhibits good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain English Language Learners and educationally disadvantaged students, as the school falls slightly below the district average for these subgroups. The school appears compliant with most laws, regulations, and provisions of its charter.

Please see additional summative evidence for each Benchmark of the Performance Framework below.

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: Falls Far Below

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:

NCHS’s ESEA accountability designation was *In Good Standing* for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-2018 school years.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:

Of the 16 schools that NAACS matched to with 3-8 math and ELA data in the 2016-2017 school year, in ELA NAACS outperformed 7 of the 16 schools (44%). In Math, NAACS outperformed only 3 of the 16 schools (19%). NAACS is not meeting Board of Regents expectations for this indicator. Similar schools serving similar students and grade levels tend to outperform NAACS.

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.b.i. Proficiency - Aggregate School Level Proficiency for All Students: See Table 1 below. NAACS falls far below NYSED and Board of Regent standards for renewal on this indicator. The NYSED Performance Framework requires, at minimum, that all Board of Regents-authorized charter schools, including NAACS, at a minimum, meet the district proficiency average for all students, students with disabilities, English-language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. With the exception of the ELA outcome for students with disabilities in SY 2016-2017, TAACS does not meet these standards and is in danger of nonrenewal at the conclusion of their current charter term.

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

	ELA					Math				
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
All Students										
2015-2016	16	36	-20	42	-26	18	31	-13	44	-26
2016-2017	21	36	-15	42	-21	16	32	-16	46	-30

2.b.ii. Proficiency – Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Tables 2-3 below.

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

	ELA					Math				
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2015-2016	7	7	0	11	-4	0	10	-10	16	-16
2016-2017	8	6	+2	12	-4	0	9	-9	16	-16

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

	ELA					Math				
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2015-2016	17	33	-16	31	-14	11	28	-17	33	-22
2016-2017	19	35	-16	31	-12	13	30	-17	34	-21

2.b.iii. Proficiency – Grade Level Proficiency: See Table 4 below.

Table 4: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2015-2016

	ELA					Math				
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to NYC Geog. DIST #18	NYS	Variance to NYS	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to NYC Geog. DIST #18	NYS	Variance to NYS
Grade 3	16%	36%	-20	42%	-26	18%	0.31	-13	44%	-26

Table 5: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2016-2017

	ELA					Math				
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to NYC Geog. DIST #18	NYS	Variance to NYS	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance to NYC Geog. DIST #18	NYS	Variance to NYS
2016-2017										
Grade 3	18%	34%	-16	43%	-25	21%	0.38	-17	48%	-27
Grade 4	23%	37%	-14	41%	-18	10%	0.27	-17	43%	-33

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: Approaches

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLs. b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<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. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<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. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<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:

Curriculum

TNAACP has a documented curriculum aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLs). For reading, the school uses Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) *Units of Study for Reading*, *The Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (F&P)*, *The Wilson Reading System*, *Fundations*, and *i-Ready*. For writing, TNAACS uses Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) *Units of Study for Writing*. The school utilizes *Engage NY* and *Ready New York* for math schoolwide. In Grade 2, teachers supplement with *Contexts for Learning Mathematics*, and in Grade 5, teachers utilize *Ready Math*. For science and social studies, the school creates its own interdisciplinary units of study in all grades.

All curricula at TNAACS are reviewed and evaluated by master teachers and their teaching teams. During TNAACS weekly ELT Meetings, master teachers across grades and looping cycles discuss the efficacy of the current curricula, modifying it and making changes, as needed. In the early elementary grades, teachers share lesson plans across grade level teams, with one teacher planning each subject. In upper elementary, teachers are departmentalized, but share plans with one another. Teachers have also begun utilizing plans created by the previous-year's teachers, making tweaks as necessary. Master teachers provide feedback on lesson plans during the 90-minute morning meeting.

While "looping" has always been a part of TNAACS's teaching structure, beginning this fall, teachers at TNAACS converted into two looping grand bands, so that early childhood teachers loop from K-Grade 2, and upper grades loop from Grades 3 through Grade 5. Master teachers from both loops provide communication between the upper and lower grades, discussing curriculum alignment. Classrooms are vertically aligned, as teachers from each grade lesson and unit plan together.

Instruction

During the 2017 renewal site visit, school personnel did not articulate a common description of high-quality instruction. Teachers and school leaders stated that high-quality instruction includes choice, having the opportunity to work in partnerships, and that teachers are asking the right questions. They also described strong classroom management and presentation of material, and more time on student work versus teacher talk. The headmaster stated that lesson structure should include a mini lesson, followed by students working independently or in small groups.

While on site, NYSED staff did not observe teachers asking higher-level thinking questions. "Turn and talk" was the only form of partner work observed. While classrooms appeared generally well-managed, most observed lessons involved "teacher talk" the majority of the time. Independent and small-group work was seen in a few classrooms.

Instructional engagement varied across observed classrooms at TNCAACS. While classrooms appeared safe, with students aware of rules, procedures, and expectations, few opportunities for students to engage with the material or complete independent work were observed. Observed engagement strategies included "turn and talk" and calling on students to answer individual questions.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

TNAACS utilizes formative and summative assessments. Starting in the 2015/2016 school year, TNAACS began utilizing the *i-Ready Diagnostic Assessment System* for both reading and mathematics. These assessments are administered three times per year; in the fall for first through fifth grade, in the winter for kindergarten through fifth grade and in the spring for kindergarten through fifth grade. *i-Ready Diagnostic* adjusts to determine the level at which students should receive instruction.

For reading, F&P Benchmark Literacy Assessments are administered three times per year. Utilized as both formative and summative assessments, F&P running records are used to observe and quantify specific reading behaviors, and then interpret and use that data to plan instruction. Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop pre- and post-unit assessments are also used at the end of each unit to support teaching teams in planning and revising units. The school utilizes the New American Academy writing rubrics to analyze student writing, which are aligned to the NYSLS. In math, *EngageNY* module assessments are used as summative assessments, and *EngageNY* exit slips are used as formative assessments.

The school has shown evidence of using data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program. For example, the headmaster and teachers shared that they are making shifts at TNCAAS to build

more opportunities into the day for students to write about math, as math scores are an area of focus for the 2017-18 school year.

Supports for Diverse Learners

Differentiation at TNAACS occurs through altering prescribed lesson plans to meet students' needs. Teachers use "reading learning progressions" to individualize reading instruction for each student, so that each student is able to successfully do the work of the reading units at each grade level. Members of the student support team meet with teachers to provide suggestions about how to modify instruction, materials and resources for students with IEPs, as well as those determined to be academically at-risk. *iReady* is used by the interventionist to provide instruction to students below grade level. Differentiation also occurs at TNAACS through homogenous grouping for reading and math blocks across most grade levels.

TNAACS utilizes the Response to Intervention model (Rti) to support all students. In the first tier of Rti, all students are placed into differentiated academic groups called "universities." In the second tier of Rti, individualized and targeted supplemental support in math and ELA are provided in small groups to students unable to make adequate progress in their differentiated learning groups. These supports are provided by the school's interventionist and additional small group interventions are given by the team's master teacher. In the third tier of Rti, individualized support is provided to students unable to make adequate progress in tier two. These supports are one-on-one or provided in groups of no more than three students and are provided by the school's interventionist. Tier three supports are targeted to address the specific areas each child is struggling with and are provided on a daily basis. Students that are unable to make adequate progress through the Rti process are referred for a special education evaluation. If a disability of any kind is suspected at any tier of the Rti process, then the school will refer that student for a special education evaluation.

TNAACS provides Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) as mandated by each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). TNAACS' SETSS program is provided as a pullout and push-in service in small, targeted skills-based groups. Progress monitoring is used to assess progress towards each student's academic IEP goals. The Special Education team uses the data from progress monitoring to determine if a different approach, a more appropriate goal, or change in academic program is needed for students not making adequate progress toward their IEP goals. Each classroom at TNAACS is considered ICT.

Mandated ENL/ESL services are provided in English to develop English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening to students requiring services, as per their New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

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>
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:

Behavior Management and Safety

TNAACS’s approach to behavior management is centered on HEARTS (*Humility, Empowerment, Aspiration, Responsibility Teamwork and Scholarship*) values, which are taught through read-alouds, Headmaster Town Halls, and are embedded into behavior management systems in classrooms. Schoolwide spirit days and *HEARTS and Kindness Challenge* highlight the values. HEARTS tickets are given out to students to reward demonstration of the values. Teachers are also trained in *Conscious Classroom Management*.

The dean of students leads the school’s discipline program. The school has a written code of discipline called the *New American Academy Code of Conduct*, which is shared with staff and families yearly.

The school appears to maintain a safe environment, free of harassment and discrimination. While on site, classrooms appeared safe and well-managed. The school has a DASA coordinator in place. The NYSED 2017 teacher survey indicated that 81% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the school is

generally free of bullying, discrimination, and harassment, and teacher comments indicated that various approaches are used to address these issues, including the HEARTS values, parent communication, Town Hall meetings, and a school-wide kindness challenge.

Family Engagement and Communication

TNAACS has an open door policy, which means parents and caregivers are free to visit the school to observe teaching and learning at any time. The school also communicates with families through the school website, weekly team newsletters, a biweekly “charter chat” (electronic newsletter), curriculum celebrations, and family curriculum night. Teachers also communicate with families through 90-minute morning meetings, which can be requested by families to discuss their child’s education; cell phone contact with the child’s master teacher; parent-teacher conferences which take place twice per year; and daily trackers, which are sent home to give parents a quick snapshot of their child’s daily progress. Robocalls are also used to share general school information directly with parents.

Parent satisfaction is assessed through NYC School Quality Surveys. Family concerns are addressed through a four-step process, which involves first meeting with the master teacher, then meeting with the headmaster, and finally filing a complaint with TNAACS board if the concern still cannot be resolved.

Academic data is share with parents through *I-Ready* instructional reports. The headmaster stated that NYS testing data will be shared with families at curriculum night in the fall of 2017.

Social-Emotional Supports

TNAACS has a student support team in place, which includes two guidance counselors. The school utilizes a socio-emotional learning rubric (SEL) based on the HEARTS values, which is used to assess socio-emotional learning for emotionally or behaviorally at-risk students and helps counselors determine the appropriate intervention response. TNAACS also uses *Skedula*, which provides a dashboard that tracks data on each student’s behavior. This data is used to identify trends and areas of concern that need to be addressed.

Once a student is identified for the counseling program or in-class behavioral intervention, that student is tracked by the Pupil Personnel Committee (PPC) to determine student progress. The team revises behavioral interventions based on student anecdotal data housed in *Skedula*.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school's performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and also provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

1. Near-Term Indicators:	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
2. Sustainability Indicators:	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

Financial Condition

New American Academy Charter School appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. New American Academy Charter School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.4. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**New American Academy Charter School’s Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.4
2014-2015	2.1
2013-2014	2.0

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Near-Term Indicators

Near-term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. The Charter School Office uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2016-2017, New American Academy Charter School had a current ratio of 2.5.

Unrestricted cash measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Charter schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2016-2017, New American Academy Charter School operated with 61 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment stability measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent is considered reasonable. New American Academy Charter School’s enrollment stability for 2016-2017 was at 105 percent.

Long-Term Indicators

A charter school’s *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2016-2017, New American Academy Charter School’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 or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2016-2017, New American Academy Charter School’s total margin was 8 percent.

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

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

Finding: Meets

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
2. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget in relation to those objectives.
3. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
4. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
5. The school has complied with state and federal financial reporting requirements.
6. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
7. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

The Charter School Office reviewed New American Academy Charter School's 2016-17 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

As a result of its 2015-16 audit, the auditor had a comment regarding internal controls that nonetheless were not considered to significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. The auditor provided an update on the status of the comment in the 2016-17 audit report:

- Board of Trustees finance/audit committee meetings minutes – minutes are insufficiently detailed.

Regarding the latter, the Charter School Office requests that New American conform to the New York State Nonprofit Revitalization Act by fully documenting finance/audit committee meetings.

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: Falls Far Below

<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 is comprised of six members, one of which has not yet been formally approved by NYSED at the time of the 2017 renewal site visit. One member has been on the board for the duration of this charter term. Five members have resigned throughout the charter term, the primary reasons cited as location of the school or seeking additional board opportunities. The board does not yet have a plan in place to address board member retention or recruitment, but the board chair stated their goal is to increase board membership from five to ten board members. Most current board members have either a finance or education background.

The board does not have a process in place for setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school’s mission and educational philosophy. At the 2017 renewal site visit, the board chair was unable to articulate schoolwide goals. The board has not participated in any formalized board training throughout this charter term.

The board updates school policies on a yearly basis.

The board has not demonstrated evidence of active oversight of the school. One of five board members attended the NYSED 2017 renewal site visit meeting. Additionally, the board chair stated that the majority of schoolwide decisions are left to the discretion of the headmaster.

To evaluate the headmaster, the board utilizes the Kim Marshall Principal Evaluation tool. This evaluation is conducted on a yearly basis, and has been used throughout the charter term. While the board is the process of developing a board self-evaluation tool, it has not yet been finalized or utilized as of the 2017 renewal site visit.

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>
<p>1. <i>School Leadership</i></p>	<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>
<p>2. <i>Professional Climate</i></p>	<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>
<p>3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<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:

School Leadership

The school has a defined leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities. The educational leadership team, which is the governing body of the school, is comprised of the headmaster, director of operations, the director of special education/student support services, and master teachers.

TNAACS has structures in place to obtain staff commitment to its mission and goals, including summer training, teacher reflection, and the embedded master teacher structure. Staff appear to have a clear understanding of the mission. The school does not appear to have a schoolwide set of goals; however, teachers engaged in an individualized goal-setting process at the start of the school year.

TNAACS provides communication across the school through weekly ELT meetings; monthly board meetings; TNAACS committee meetings; 90-minute daily teaching team meetings led by master teachers; PPC meetings, where student needs are discussed by master teachers, directors, deans, and special education teachers; staff interviews; monthly staff conferences; a weekly newsletter from the headmaster; weekly team newsletters and “charter chat” distributed to parents; PTO meetings; and parent-teacher conferences.

Teacher TNAACS teachers are primarily recruited through hiring fairs, sending job notifications to colleges and universities, and posting on platforms such as Indeed, Craigslist, Idealist, Glassdoor, etc., as well as local community blogs such as BKLNER and Ditmas Park Corners.

The school utilizes a six-step hiring process for teachers. Candidates are initially required to complete an application, write two essays, participate in a phone interview, and then attend a full-day interview where a lesson is modeled and the candidate is required to plan a unit with a team.

Professional Climate

All staff positions were filled at the time of the site visit. Of the 17 teacher departures since the inception of the school, ten were involuntary and based on performance or violation of company policies. In the 2016-17 school year, seven of 27 teachers departed the school, or 26%. Teacher retention has fluctuated, and the school leadership team and board acknowledged this challenge and are researching initiatives to improve retention over time. TNAACS has created a hiring committee to refine practices for hiring high-quality teachers, and has also created an on-boarding and compensation committee in order to review, refine and improve best-practices for teachers. The headmaster noted that TNAACS plans to make a few shifts in its hiring process to increase its objectivity, including edits to create a more objective rubric and standardizing the formal model lesson. The career ladder, teacher empowerment, competitive salaries, and a cohort structure offering support to teachers were cited as strategies intended to incentivize, attract, and retain teachers.

Teacher collaboration begins with new teacher summer training, and is encouraged throughout the school year through TNAAC committees, teaching teams, and monthly staff conferences. 100% percent of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction.”

Instructional quality is monitored through the teacher evaluation process, which begins at the start of each school year. Teachers complete a self-assessment at the beginning of the school year, based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. They then have a meeting with the headmaster and master teacher, where one or two professional learning goals are established. Teachers have three videotaped informal observations and one formal observation throughout the school year, and are frequently informally observed by master teachers.

Teacher feedback is gathered through the NYC DOE survey and exit interviews. The headmaster stated that an annual teacher survey will be administered in the future, as the exit interview provided valuable information. The headmaster also cited examples of instances where teacher feedback was taken into account, such as creating a robust student support team and hiring a dean for disciplinary support.

Contractual Relationships

TNAACS has utilized The New American Initiative, Inc. as its support organization since the school opened in September 2013. However, it has been operating under an expired contract since 2014. The New American Initiative qualifies as an entity that provides comprehensive management services, given that the organization provides academic, human resources, and policy/procedure development services, and oversees the management of two or more schools with a shared vision, mission, or design². As such, NYSED has instructed TNAACS to submit a full revision request, updated bylaws, and a revision to its 2017 renewal application stating that they are seeking to add a Comprehensive Service Provider.

The school does not have a process in place to evaluate the efficacy of The New American Initiative, Inc.

² Please see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/regentoversightplan/policy/definecmo.pdf> for the complete definition of what qualifies an organization as a Comprehensive Service Provider.

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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter.The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

TNAACS stakeholders share an understanding of the school's mission: *The New American Academy Charter School empowers learners and inspires leaders to make this a better world. Through our collaborative teacher team, mastery-based career ladder, and looping cycles, we offer personalized rigorous instruction that enables our students to succeed in high school, college, and their future lives.*

The school has implemented the key design elements in the approved charter. The following key design elements were observed in practice and/or discussed while on site:

- Four person teaching team;
- Looping cycles;
- Mastery-based career ladder;
- Multi-dimensional teacher evaluation system;
- Lower teacher/student ratio;
- Embedded master teacher;
- Five-week summer training program;
- Six-step hiring process.

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

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

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<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 – The New American Academy Charter School Compared to District of Location

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance	New American Academy CS	NYC GEOG DIST #18 - Brooklyn	Variance
Students with Disabilities	18%	18%	0%	16%	19%	-3%
English Language Learners	1%	5%	-4%	2%	6%	-4%
Economically Disadvantaged	60%	78%	-18%	81%	78%	3%

In the 2016-2017 school year, 67% of students were retained in Charter School compared with 72% in the district of location.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

TNAACS meets or comes close to meeting the enrollment plan set for in its charter. The school enrolls a slightly higher proportion of students with disabilities (SWDs), and a near-comparable proportion of English Language Learners (ELLs) and economically disadvantaged (ED) students.

The school has made good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students throughout the course of the charter term. Efforts to recruit and retain students in the ED, ELL, and SWD populations include the following:

- Contacting over one hundred agencies, libraries, preschools, and childcare service providers as part of its recruitment effort;
- Developing relationships with local stakeholders and community organizations, including High- Definition, Birch Family Services, Little Einstein, PacPlex, PS233, the Tilden Educational Campus, Innerforce Tots, and NYC Housing Authority;
- Utilizing an ELL team dedicated to properly identify and support ELL students, which also provides families with translated ELL program information and information on student/family rights;
- ED students are reached through local community housing developments, and fliers distributed to daycare centers;
- Using a translation hotline to communicate student/family rights via phone and in person to explain the ELL services students are entitled to and answer any questions;
- Creating a special education department focused on educating its SWD population; and
- Partnering with Special Education Collaborative to refine and enhance programming for SWDs.

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>	<p>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.</p> <p>b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.</p> <p>c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with most state and federal laws the provisions of its charter. TNAACS submits all DOE, NYSED, and federal deadlines for data submission, financial reporting, and works to ensure compliance with state laws. In the area of HR, the director of operations (DOO) received training and professional development in the areas of Risk Management and HR and completed several courses offered by Arthur J. Gallagher, Austin & Co., Charter School Business Management, Paylocity, and the New York City Charter School Center. TNAACS also partners with Austin & Co., which offers “as-needed” HR related guidance on a contractual basis. TNAACS reviews and updates its employee and Family Handbook each year.

TNCAAS is currently operating under an expired service provider contract with their Comprehensive Service Provider, The New American Initiative, Inc. This contract expired in 2014. On September 26, 2017, the NYSED CSO instructed TNAACS to submit a full revision request, updated bylaws, and a revision to its 2017 renewal application, stating that the school is seeking to add a Charter Management Organization.

Since inception, TNAACS has partnered with Charter School Business Management (CSBM) and Mengel, Metzger Barr & Co, LLP (MMB) to support with financial and legal obligations. A CSBM staff member is on-site two days per week managing and overseeing the “back-office” of the charter school in partnership with the DOO and headmaster. This ensures that all transactions and processes adhere to the Financial Policies and Procedures that govern the school. TNAACS also seeks guidance and information about any changes to applicable laws from CSBM to ensure that TNAACS is following requirements and laws. Following each year since inception, TNAACS has hired MMB to conduct an annual audit per the NYSED requirements. These audits have been submitted to NYSED on an annual basis.

TNAACS sought legal advice and services for a few issues that have arisen. Most legal services related to student or employee issues are handled through its insurance broker Arthur J. Gallagher; however, they have

also partnered with the law firm Cohen Schneider & O'Neill LLP that specializes in NYC Business, Startup and Education Law. They have offered guidance on issues that have not resulted in legal action.

The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.

TNAACS revises policies and procedures on a regular basis. Examples of these revisions include compliance with Avonte's Law, revisions to the Employee Handbook, and a shift in the policy behind the use of the school's debit card, as per MMB recommendation following the 2014-15 annual audit.

As part of both co-location processes at the Tilden Educational Campus (2013) and the PS233 co-location as 9301 Avenue B in 2016, TNAACS was named in formal complaints disputing the validity and legality of the approved co-locations. For both disputes, Cohen Schneider & O'Neill LLP represented TNAACS and both were dismissed. Neither parents nor staff has personally submitted any formal complaints during this the charter term.