New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2016-2017

New Visions Charter High School for Humanities II

Visit Date: 10/6/2016
Date of Report: March 13, 2017

CONTENTS

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	New Visions Charter High School for Humanities II
Board Chair	Dr. Nancy Grossman
School Leader	Richard Gonzalez
District of location	NYC CSD 7
Opening Date	8/13/2012
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 7/1/2012 - 6/30/2017
Authorized Grades/ Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 9-12 / 566 students
Management Company	New Visions for Public Schools, Inc.
Educational Partner(s)	Lincoln Center Education
Facilities	455 Southern Blvd., Bronx, NY (co-located with two NYC DOE schools)
Mission Statement	*HUM II is part of the New Visions Charter High Schools' (NVCHS) network. NVCHS is a network of secondary schools dedicated to supporting all students in meeting the highest academic standards. We shift classroom dynamics from one where students receive information to one where students find solutions to community-defined problems by using their imagination coupled with a mastery of content and skills. We challenge our students to present and defend their learning as part of preparing and supporting them to graduate ready for college, careers and a 21st century economy. Teaching and learning in HUM II, as in all New Visions Charter High Schools, is built upon the Lincoln Center Education Capacities for Imaginative Thinking, informed by challenge-based curricula that are aligned to the Common Core standards, applied to improving local communities and driven by student performance data.*
Key Design Elements	● Challenge-Based Curriculum ● Strong Focus on Writing ● Comprehensive Assessments ● Strong Teacher Support ● More Time to Succeed ● Learning through the Arts ● Working with Community Leaders ● Promoting Parent Support
Revision History	October 2015: Non-material revision to add a lottery preference for children of school employees – approved by NYSED
Requested Revisions	None requested

---

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

School Characteristics

Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	9-12	566	472
2015-2016	9-12	542	440
2014-2015	9-11	397	354
2013-2014	9-10	249	215
2012-2013	9	125	131

METHODOLOGY

A one-day renewal site visit was conducted at New Visions Charter High School for Humanities II (HUM II) on October 6, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the team also administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 10 classroom observations in Grades 9 – 12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with Alison Smith and Kezena Brown-Torres, Assistant Principals of Instruction.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:
- **Teacher roster**
- **Current organization chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Board materials**
- **Board self-evaluation documents**
- **Blank teacher and administrator evaluation forms**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of curricular documents**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Enrollment data including subgroups**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Academic data**
- **NYSED-administered teacher survey**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

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

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

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

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

For the site visit conducted on October 6, 2016 at HUM II, see the following Performance Benchmark Scores and discussion.

New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	**Benchmark 1: Student Performance:** The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Approaches
	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 New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	Meets
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	Meets
Organizational Soundness	**Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:** The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	**Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:** The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Approaches
	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

In the latter half of the charter term, the New Visions Charter High School for Humanities II (HUM II) school leadership team reports that they reflected on initial challenges and have created a staffing structure, designed a more responsive curriculum, and revamped the school culture to better serve the student population and progress toward the school's targets. HUM II must continue to refine and focus the instructional program to improve Regents testing outcomes for students and to increase the proportion of Regents diplomas (relative to local diplomas) awarded to its graduates.

While behavior management and discipline presented a challenge during the first three years of operation, the HUM II learning community was demonstrably focused during the renewal site visit and teachers report greater discipline support and alignment since the *R-Grades* system was implemented.

The board has demonstrated growth in terms of both their capacity and oversight.

The school created a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan, but will need to continue to focus on these efforts to achieve its approved enrollment numbers and subgroup targets.

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.

HUM II is approaching but has not yet met Board of Regents standards for student achievement. Although the school is exceeding the target graduation rate of 80%, the school's four year cohort Regents testing outcomes for the 2012 cohort are below state averages in all subject areas except math (see Appendix A). In the HUM II Renewal Application, the school states that the 2012 cohort outcomes led them to recognize that their incoming students require more time to make up for the deficit in literacy and numeracy with which they enter high school. HUM II reports that programmatic changes were made to the school structure to increase the amount of time in math and literacy for all incoming Lower House students. The leadership team expects that shifting to a literacy-infused curriculum in all core classes will increase achievement in those courses and in the Regents exams.

The graduation rate for the school's first cohort is 87%, which exceeds the performance target and the state average. The graduation rates for each of the three priority populations (economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners) also exceed the state average graduation rates for those populations.

The school awarded a relatively high percentage of local diplomas to its graduates: 19% of the school's 2012 cohort graduates were issued local diplomas, in comparison with a four percent average statewide. Similarly, 16 economically disadvantaged students or 21% of the 2012 economically disadvantaged student cohort (N=66) were issued local diplomas, as opposed to a state average rate of six percent, and 41% of graduating students with disabilities received local diplomas, in comparison to a state average rate of 21%. No Regents diplomas were issued to English language learners in the 2012 cohort, as all four graduates in this subgroup received local diplomas.

HUM II is encouraged to develop strategies to increase the proportion of Regents diplomas issued to its students so that graduation outcomes align more closely with state average performance and better meet the school mission and goals.

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

Finding: Meets

Element	Indicators
1. Curriculum	a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLS. b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.
2. Instruction	a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

Curriculum

As noted in the 2015 site visit report, HUM II school leadership reported that the New Visions' curricular resources were not applicable to their school's population and block schedule. During this visit, the principal reported that the assistant principals of instruction (APIs) focused on Understanding by Design/Backwards Planning during summer training to create a more responsive, aligned curriculum. Teachers created a curricular map, aligned to the NYSLS, from scratch and populated their own essential questions. The APIs reported greater teacher investment as a result of this change.

All curricular documents are housed and managed on the HUM II HUB, a GoogleSite created by the APIs over the summer. The APIs reported that this centralized organization helps ensure horizontal and vertical curricular alignment. Eighty-one percent of teachers on the 2015-2016 NYCDOE survey stated that the "curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are well coordinated across the different grade levels at this school."

<u>Instruction</u>
During the site visit, the skill of annotation was observed in all classrooms, across content and grade levels. As a result, students appeared to engage closely with texts supporting their higher order thinking. The APIs created a "HUM II Literacy Skills Pacing Guide," which identifies how each literacy skill, including annotation, will be mastered at each grade level. In ninth grade, for instance, students are expected to "annotate reactions to an author's work." By twelfth grade, they should be able to "annotate reflections, reactions, comments and author's biases."

The leadership team completes classroom walkthroughs each Wednesday, in addition to the formal teacher evaluation process. Instructional leaders provide "Praise or Propose" feedback for teachers through an electronic "HUM II Walkthrough Form." As a result of these frequent observations, the API's had a thorough understanding of the instruction we could anticipate during our observations. Classrooms appeared well-managed and focused on instruction.

The school leadership utilizes an internal, annual *Insight Survey* as one measure of its instructional effectiveness. HUM II improved in all "Instructional Climate" categories between spring 2015 and spring 2016 surveys. Most significantly, in 2016, 86% of teachers agreed that HUM II is "a good place to teach and learn," up from 53% the year before. Seventy-six percent of teachers on this survey agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with the support I receive at my school for instructional planning," exceeding the New Visions average by 11 percentage points.

<u>Assessment and Program Evaluation</u>
The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their academic program and modifies the program accordingly. The leadership team, for example, analyzes final exam data to determine programmatic changes prior to the next instructional year. Based on a review at the end of 2015-2016, twenty-five incoming ninth grade students were scheduled for a double math block based on their diagnostic data and eighth grade state assessment results.

During the Summer Bridge program, all incoming ninth and tenth graders receive a *Performance Series* baseline assessment. If the results indicate need, PRO-ED's *WIST* assessment, a word identification and spelling test, is administered. Almost all of the 9th grade students receive some form of a literacy intervention (122 out of 129 students completed the *WIST* assessment). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *Read 180* is administered every 40 days to track students' progress. The school leaders reported that students responded better to *Read 180* if exposed more frequently so students receive this intervention during a 55 minute daily *Read 180* block.

<u>Supports for Diverse Learners</u>
Five classrooms school-wide are co-taught with a special education teacher. The school, supported by the network, created a partnership with Brooklyn College to provide a special education extension for its teachers. APIs monitor the role of each adult during their observations. Professional development sessions on leveling texts, Lexile levels, and supporting ELLs through differentiation have been offered so far this year.

Stand-alone ESL courses are offered and ELL students are supported through Student Life Seminar (SLS), the school's advisory program. Each ESL student is placed in an SLS section taught by a Native Spanish speaker. The goal of this programming is to increase the student's comfort by allowing for communication in their native language.

The school leadership has also created a Regents Attack Team (RAT) and Credit Attack Team (CAT). These committees look at the individual performance of students to ensure that they are on track to pass their Regents and graduate. If a student is not, the committee is able to create targeted interventions and monitor progress.

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement

The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Behavior Management and Safety*	a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy. b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment. c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.
2. *Family Engagement and Communication*	a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students' strengths and needs. b. The school assesses family and student satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions. c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns. d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.
3. *Social-Emotional Supports*	a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students. b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students' social and emotional health.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

Behavior Management and Safety
In response to their internal *Insight Survey*, the school leadership "reset" their school culture during the 2015-2016 school year by creating *Five Universal Procedures* and *R-Grades*, founded upon the school values of Rigor, Respect, and Responsibility. Each student receives an *R-Grade* for each and every

period. An average *R-Grade* is calculated each week and reported on every progress report, report card and official transcript, just like academic grades. Students in need of additional support create an *R-Plan* to ensure further monitoring.

While the classrooms appeared well managed during our visit and the procedures were posted prominently in every classroom, we did not see teachers refer to these systems explicitly. The school principal asserted that having a clear framework helped create a more uniform approach to discipline within the school. On the internal *Insight Survey* administered in the spring of 2016, 57% of teachers reported "consistent expectations and consequences for student behavior" across the school.

The school leadership shared that they monitor incident reports, suspension rates and *R-Grade* data monthly. Since their emphasis has been on more restorative practices and closer monitoring, the principal reported that suspension rates went down from 18% to ten percent.

Family Engagement and Communication
During their Summer Bridge Program, HUM II families attend events to meet community members and learn more about the school, including the school's academic performance. Each family receives a call prior to the school year to emphasize the school's belief that parents are partners. The school leadership employs a variety of strategies, including some innovative approaches, to keep families engaged throughout the year. For example, the principal emails a "Parent Preview Video" posted through YouTube each Friday afternoon. The principal reported that the viewership is not as high as he had hoped so he is continuing to brainstorm additional communication methods.

Parent attendance is required at Progress Report Nights, which happen at the mid-way point for the first two trimesters. Any student failing three or more classes becomes the focus of a STAT Meeting (Student-Teacher Assistance Team), which brings together the student, parent, counselor and AP to create an intervention plan.

Attendance, report cards, credit accumulation, Regents exam and mock Regents exam data are shared regularly with the school community. Parents are provided with a PowerSchool log-in to access much of this information. Data not available through PowerSchool is shared via Town Hall meetings or visual displays within the school. On the 2015-2016 NYCDOE parent survey, 76% of parents agreed that "the principal/school leaders encourage feedback from parents/guardians and the community through regular meetings with parent and teacher leaders."

Social-Emotional Supports
The school has organized a number of initiatives and invested in staff to support students socially and emotionally. There are four guidance counselors, one social worker, three deans and two assistant principals that focus more closely on social-emotional development. The two assistant principals, for example, oversee the Summer Bridge and Peer Group Connection (PGC) programs.

The advisory program, Student Life Seminar (SLS), is built upon *CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning)*. SLS is mandatory for 9th graders and meets three times a week; teachers lead the seminar two days a week and the third day is led by an Upper House student who completed a credit-bearing PGC training course. Leaders reported that since PGC has been implemented, advisory has "higher attendance rates and greater buy-in from both the students and teachers involved."

Individualized plans are created to support each Upper House student's track to graduation. Those deemed at-risk are assigned a mentor with regular check-in meetings. Mentors capture their meeting notes into a Google forms for greater accountability.

<table>
<tr><td>Benchmark 4: Financial Condition</td></tr>
<tr><td>The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.</td></tr>
</table>

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

HUM II appears to be in strong financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

NYSED reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio (current assets to current liabilities) 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[2].

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. HUM II's composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.90. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016.

HUM II's Composite Scores
2012-2013 to 2015-2016

Year	Composite Score
2015-2016	2.90
2014-2015	2.40
2013-2014	2.40
2012-2013	2.30

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

---

[2] These rigorous indicators of fiscal soundness are aligned with those recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

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, HUM II had a current ratio of 5.3.

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, HUM II operated with 98 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment stability measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85% is considered reasonable. HUM II's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 81%.

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, HUM II'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 2015-2016, HUM II's total margin was 12%.

Benchmark 5: Financial Management
The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

NYSED reviewed HUM II's 2015-2016 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance	
The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Board Oversight and Governance*	a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school. b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy. c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals. d. The board regularly updates school policies. e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers. f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

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

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

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

The board demonstrated multiple specific examples of their oversight over the charter term. The board requires school leaders to report their suspension rates, for example, and both the trustees and school administrators credited this closer oversight with a significant decline in the rate of suspensions at both schools. HUM II principal reported that the suspension rate dropped from 18 to ten percent.

The HUM II principal also reported that the day of a board meeting, one or two trustees will spend the day on-site at the school to deepen their understanding of the community. He said that the board is

committed to understanding what problems the school leadership faces and engages in problem solving alongside his team.

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

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

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

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. School Leadership	a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning. b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities. c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school. d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.
2. Professional Climate	a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication. b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers. c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students' needs. d. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality—which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation geared toward improving instructional practice. e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.
3. Contractual Relationships ☐N/A	a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider. b. Changes in the school's charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures. c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

School Leadership
The HUM II leadership has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which are distinct from its fellow New Visions Charter High Schools. Most notably, the school does not have cohort-specific assistant principals, but has two assistant principals of instruction and two assistant principals, as discussed in Benchmarks Two and Three. The senior leadership team also includes a director of operations, who is a former AP. In our focus groups, the school leadership team documented how this structure enhances their capability to serves the school's needs and population.

The school leadership utilizes a variety of innovative staff communication systems including an electronic, nightly newsletter and YouTube-hosted morning announcements and monthly newsletter. Teachers meet as grade level teams, department teams, and inquiry teams roughly five teams each per trimester.

The school leadership acknowledged that the location of the school has posed challenges to teacher recruitment and retention. Only 35% of teachers identified the school as a "long-term, sustainable option for me as a place to work." One way the school has worked to address this challenge is by creating a partnership with Brooklyn College for teachers to earn a license extension for Students with Disabilities Grades 7 – 12. Tuition is paid in full for teachers who remain two years after the extension is completed. Five HUM II staff members are currently enrolled in this program.

Professional Climate
The school is staffed with high quality personnel, according to the school leadership. There was one vacant position at the time of our visit, a dean coordinator. The principal reported that due to the *R-Grades* and restorative discipline cycle, there is not a pressing need to fill this position so they were holding out until the right fit could be identified.

The school created personalized professional development and teacher-driven inquiry cycles. Through the HUM II HUB, educators can select from six different types of individualized PD, complete with the necessary resources. While formal feedback on this initiative has not yet been collected, the APIs reported greater buy-in from teachers in regards to their professional development.

Teachers are observed, at minimum, 12 times over the course of the year; two of these observations are considered formal observations. On the 2016 spring *Insight Survey*, 78% of teachers agreed with the statement, "The feedback I get from being observed helps me improve student outcomes" with 81% agreeing that the observer "consistently follows up to see how successfully I am implementing feedback from our last observation."

The school formally solicits teacher feedback through their annual, internal *Insight Survey* and the NYCDOE survey. On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, however, only 40% agreed that "school leadership has systems in place to solicit staff feedback."

Contractual Relationships
Lincoln Center Education is contracted to provide teaching artists to each New Visions Charter High School, including HUM II. Network-wide, the program focuses on ninth grade. At the time of our visit, there was a performance for ninth and tenth graders in the school auditorium. The school leadership was not able to articulate how the program's effectiveness is evaluated.

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements
The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. Mission and Key Design Elements	a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter. b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

On the NYSED-administered teacher survey, only 44% of respondents agreed with the statement, "My school has a clear sense of the mission that is shared by all stakeholders."

Most key design elements were observed in practice during our visit. Due to the organizational redesign detailed in Benchmark Seven, however, the assistant principals do not loop with their cohort. The school leadership stated that this reorganization allowed for important curricular and programming improvements.

As part of the school's mission is to *support all students in meeting the highest academic standards,* the school should work towards ensuring a greater percentage of their students graduate with a Regents diploma.

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

Element	*Indicators*
1. Targets are met	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. Targets are not met	a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets. b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include,

but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.

c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.

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

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD	Variance[3]	School	CSD	Variance	School[4]
Enrollment of Special Populations							
Economically Disadvantaged	85%	92%	-7	86%	92%	-6	57%
English Language Learners	11%	18%	-7	13%	17%	-4	15%
Students with Disabilities	23%	24%	-1	21%	25%	-4	17%

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

HUM II has not maintained a minimum of 85% of the approved enrollment as required in Board of Regents Initial Charter Agreement Section 2.2. At the time of the site visit, the school reported an enrollment of 440 students, which represents 83% of the approved enrollment (566). In 2015-2016, HUM II also served fewer than 85% of the approved enrollment for that year. HUM II serves lower percentages of students in each of the three subgroups than NYC CSD 7.

The school and CMO are well aware of the recruitment challenges that are presented by their location near an industrial zone. School-based parent and communications coordinators, overseen by the director of school operations, are responsible for executing recruitment and marketing efforts. Enrollment data is monitored monthly to the network and board of trustees.

The principal reported that the school staff now engages parents at the time of their application, rather than waiting until after the lottery, to ensure higher rate of enrollment. The principal and director of school operations said that now that the school has graduated its first class they can utilize their graduation rate in their marketing.

---

[3] Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.
[4] Reported by the school; 2016-2017 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

The current retention rate for all students is reported by the school as 88%, and the school created a *Retention Inquiry Team* to curtail attrition. One initiative that has been born out of these meetings is an exit interview for students. This conversation makes the school aware of issues in hopes of resolving them prior to the student withdrawal. The principal reported that there have been fewer withdrawals as a result.

According to NYSED data, the overall student retention rate over the initial charter term at HUM II is 78.23%. The district-wide retention rate in NYC CSD 7 is 73.63%.

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

Finding: Meets

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

HUM II has explicit processes and procedures to maintain compliance at school and network level. There was one formal complaint filed over the course of the initial charter term, but the school provided an alternate assignment for the student to successfully resolve the complaint at the school level.

Eighty-one percent of teachers were neutral or disagreed that DASA training was provided on the NYSED-administered teacher survey. This training must be provided annually.

Table 1: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes for All Students:
School & NYS Level Aggregates

4-Yr Cohort: **All Students**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							75%	84%	-9
Math							86%	86%	0
Global History							55%	78%	-23
US History							64%	81%	-17
Science							78%	84%	-6
School Graduation Rate / NYS Target Graduation Rate							87%	80%	+7

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

4-Yr Cohort: **Economically Disadvantaged**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							74%	79%	-5
Math							83%	81%	+2
Global History							55%	70%	-15
US History							62%	74%	-12
Science							75%	78%	-3
Graduation Rate							86%	72%	+14

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

4-Yr Cohort: **Students with Disabilities**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							45%	51%	-6
Math							55%	51%	+4
Global History							23%	40%	-17
US History							50%	47%	+3
Science							45%	50%	-5
Graduation Rate							68%	52%	+16

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

4-Yr Cohort: **English Language Learners**	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance	School	State	Variance
ELA							14%	30%	-16
Math							29%	48%	-19
Global History							0%	24%	-24
US History							29%	30%	-1
Science							14%	32%	-18
Graduation Rate							57%	26%	+31