



# New York State Education Department

## ***Renewal Site Visit Report 2016-2017***

### **Northside Charter High School**

**Visit Date:** 11/08/2016  
**Date of Report:** 2/28/2017

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## SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

### Charter School Summary<sup>1</sup>

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	Northside Charter High School
<b>Board Chair</b>	Kaley Childs Karaffa
<b>School Leaders</b>	Lori Fitzmaurice, Executive Officer
<b>District of location</b>	NYC CSD 14
<b>Opening Date</b>	August 24, 2009
<b>Charter Terms</b>	Initial Term: January 2009 – June 30, 2014 First Renewal: Term: July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2017
<b>Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment</b>	Grades 9-12/ 400 students
<b>Facilities</b>	424 Leonard Street, Brooklyn (co-located with Citizens of the World Charter School and John Ericsson Middle School 126)
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<i>The mission of Northside Charter High School (NCHS) is to provide a 9 to 12 educational program that results in mastery of the New York State Learning Standards, high school graduation, and acceptance to colleges and universities of choice by all students.</i>
<b>Key Design Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance-Driven Accountability</li> <li>2. Exhibition of Longitudinal Knowledge</li> <li>3. Participation in the Youth Development Framework</li> <li>4. Performance Equal to or Exceeding NYS Mandated Requirements for Graduation</li> <li>5. Participation in Ongoing Evaluation and Analysis Processes</li> <li>6. Instruction and Other Activities of a Highly-Qualified Teaching Staff</li> <li>7. Support for Appropriate Instructional and Administrative Technology</li> </ol>
<b>Requested Revisions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Revision of mission statement</li> <li>b) Revision of Executive Director and Principal job descriptions</li> <li>c) Revision of bylaws</li> <li>d) Changes to the Student Life Guide and Personnel Policy (Personnel Handbook).</li> </ol>

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

**School Characteristics  
Enrollment**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Grades Served</b>	<b>Maximum Authorized Enrollment</b>	<b>Actual Enrollment</b>
2016-2017	9 – 12	400	405
2015-2016	9 – 12	400	380
2014-2015	9 – 12	400	380

**METHODOLOGY**

A one day renewal site visit was conducted at Northside Charter High School (NCHS) on November 8, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, instructional leaders, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the team also administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 13 classroom observations in Grades 9 – 12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal and the assistant principal.

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

For the site visit conducted on November 8, 2016 at NCHS, see the following Performance Benchmark Scores and discussion.

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

<b>Performance Benchmark</b>		<b>Level</b>
<b>Educational Success</b>	<b>Benchmark 1: Student Performance:</b> The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning:</b> 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
	<b>Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement:</b> 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
<b>Organizational Soundness</b>	<b>Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:</b> The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 5: Financial Management:</b> 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
	<b>Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance:</b> 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
	<b>Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity:</b> 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
<b>Faithfulness to Charter &amp; Law</b>	<b>Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:</b> The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention:</b> 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
	<b>Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance:</b> The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

## Summary of Findings

Northside Charter High School (NCHS) meets all the performance benchmarks for the current charter term.

The school's distributed leadership model has been refined over the charter term to continually increase the leaders' ability to observe teachers and provide them with targeted feedback. The board actively supported the school in the hiring of the new executive director and assistant principal to increase the school's leadership capacity.

Across subjects and subgroups, NCHS' Regents performance is comparable to the state average. The school aims to incorporate more baseline assessments and targeted Regents preparation to increase these scores further.

The school demonstrated its ability to respond to student needs to create programmatic changes, as needed. For example, more math and science sections are being offered than in years past and the school can provide more individualized instruction through a reduction in the average class size to 22 students.

### **Benchmark 1: Student Performance**

*The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).*

#### **Finding: Meets**

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

NCHS's ESEA accountability designation was *In Good Standing* for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years.

#### Cohort Regents Outcomes

Over the current charter term, NCHS exceeded the state cohort Regents outcome averages in most subjects. In the instances where the state average was not met, the variance was no more than four percentage points (i.e. 2014-2015 Math Regents).

In all instances, NCHS' economically disadvantaged (ED) students exceeded the state average.

In 2014-2015, students with disabilities (SWD) outperformed both the district and the state in the Global and Science Regents. During 2015-16, however, this subgroup's pass rates were lower than the state average in all subjects.

Despite the positive comparisons, the four-year Regents outcomes for all students were lower for the 2012 cohort than for the 2010 cohort in all five subject areas. Scores for several subject areas (Math, U. S. History and Science) went down for the 2011 cohort and rose slightly for the 2012 cohort, but not to the extent of meeting the 2010 cohort's scores.

Cohort data for the sub-groups, students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students, went up and down with no consistent pattern from cohort to cohort.

#### Graduation Outcomes

NCHS graduation rates have varied over the past three years - 95% graduated in 2014, decreasing to 75% in 2015, and increasing again to meet the state average of 80% in 2016. This was probably due to a new attendance policy that requires students to have 14 days or less of absences to receive credit for the course. The policy was derived from data of students passing courses with excessive absences negatively affecting a student's ability to master course knowledge and materials. The graduation rate for ED students exceeded the state average in both 2015 and 2016. The graduation rate for SWD was 11% lower than the state in 2015, but exceeded the state average by 20 percentage points in 2016. All eight NCHS SWDs (100%) were issued local diplomas (9% of the total cohort). In comparison, NYS issued local diplomas to 21% of the SWD graduates (4% of the total cohort).



## 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

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to NYSLs.</li><li>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.</li><li>c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.</li><li>d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.</li></ul>
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.</li><li>b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.</li></ul>
3. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments.</li><li>b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes.</li><li>c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.</li></ul>
4. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>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.</li></ul>

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

#### Curriculum

NCHS utilizes a Regents preparatory curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLs. In math and English language arts, NCHS utilizes EngageNY. The social studies and science departments create their own

curriculum, which they report is aligned to Regents preparation. The Regents pass rates in these subjects exceeded the state averages over this charter term, supporting this assertion.

The principal meets with department coordinators in the summer and early fall to integrate their year-long plans. The school leaders reported that this long-term planning allows for horizontal and vertical curricular alignment. A *Northside Dashboard* provides expectations for school-wide classroom appearance and daily procedures. Teachers are responsible for creating and submitting weekly overviews, which are reviewed by department coordinators. Formal lesson plans are created at the discretion of the teacher, but are required for all observations. All classrooms during the site visit had a full lesson plan available.

### Instruction

Increasing rigor has been the central focus of NCHS' second charter term. The school leaders reported that they have increased rigor by explicitly planning for the student "hook" in their overviews, more explicit NYSLS-alignment, increased "walk through" observations, focus on accountable talk, and increased college readiness supports.

The school has also increased rigor through its programming. For example, this year more 11<sup>th</sup> graders were enrolled in Algebra II than in previous years, two sections of Pre-Calculus were offered instead of one, and AP Biology is offered as a two-year sequence so that students will earn college credits. For students who do not pass the Algebra I Regents on the first attempt, a one semester remedial course is offered as a supplement. The school plans to offer CUNY's *College Now* program in the spring where select students will take college courses on the weekends and after school.

### Assessment and Program Evaluation

School leadership and Guidance reviews class pass/fail rate weekly. When tenth graders showed that highest rates of failure during the 2015-2016 school year, the principal, department coordinators, and guidance counselors met with all sophomore students and provided targeted incentives to increase pass rates.

NCHS plans to roll out new baseline assessment programs to provide earlier indicators of Regents preparedness. *LearnerPal*, *Renaissance Learning* and McGraw-Hill's *ALEKS Program* will assess students and provide exposure to Regents-like questions. NCHS selected *LearnerPal*, in part, because the platform includes science assessment and remediation in addition to ELA and math. Since the introduction of the *ALEKS Program*, the math department coordinator reported that internal Algebra I results jumped from the teens to more than 50 percent passing rate.

The school has also added several science electives including Urban Ecology, Aerospace Engineering, and Forensics to expose students to science in more engaging settings than a traditional lab.

### Supports for Diverse Learners

NCHS supports diverse learners in a variety of settings – a Special Education Teacher Support stand-alone resource room and ESL classes, and 20 integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms. Resource room teachers are expected to submit weekly curricular overviews to ensure cross-curricular alignment. The school also employs two special education coordinators and one ELL coordinator to oversee this work. General and special education teachers have a daily, common prep period and are required to meet formally at least once per week. Grade level teachers also meet bi-weekly with guidance counselors to

encourage and deepen differentiation. A discussion of struggling students is part of each department meeting protocol.

The school staff includes key roles that are bilingual, including the attendance coordinator, operations team member and a building substitute who is a native Arabic speaker. The school also hired an Arabic translator to tutor students for the Regents and, due to the success of this strategy, plans to rehire this translator.

**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"> <li>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy.</li> <li>b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment.</li> <li>c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination.</li> <li>d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students’ strengths and needs.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns.</li> <li>d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students.</li> <li>b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students’ social and emotional health.</li> </ul>

### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:**

#### Behavior Management and Safety

The *NCHS Student Life Guide* serves as the school's code of conduct. The school leadership noted that the document has been refined to include more restorative practices (i.e. there is now a required meeting following a student suspension) and clearer processes (i.e., parents now receive notification of their child's detention via both phone and letter). Each year, students and families review and sign the NCHS Student Life Guide to ensure clarity over behavioral expectations and consequences.

The school incentivizes positive behavior through a Student of the Month initiative and ten students are selected each semester to participate in a special luncheon. Site visitors consistently observed classrooms that were conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.

#### Family Engagement and Communication

Advisors are the first point of contact for families and students. Teachers are expected to call families of their advisees, at a minimum, three times a semester. The school utilizes an Immediate Response Information System (IRIS) to send voice, text and email messages to the entire school community. Monthly newsletters are sent home to all families and student outcome reports are shared with parents twice each semester. All communication is tracked through PowerSchool and the NYCDOE parent survey is utilized to gauge formal family feedback. Ninety percent of parents agreed with the statement, "Teachers communicate regularly with parents/guardians," in the 2015-16 NYCDOE survey.

This year, the executive director also created a SurveyMonkey and instituted office hours to gauge parent needs and interest on an ongoing basis. This data was integrated into planning for a newly revamped Parent-Teacher Association. The executive director reported that there are "modest beginnings" in response to these initiatives.

#### Social-Emotional Supports

NCHS employs four full-time guidance counselors and one full-time social worker. Each guidance counselor loops with their cohort through graduation. The school leadership credited this continuity with the positive community the school has created.

Student Support Team Meetings occur once a week – each counselor brings two student cases to discuss with the school leadership team. The department coordinators share these outcomes with their teachers to further support these individual students.

Each student is part of an advisory that meets four times each month. This year, students selected an advisory group from a catalogue of interests. The school leadership reported that students are responding more positively to advisory than in years past.

#### Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

**Finding: Meets**

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

##### Financial Condition

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

NYSED CSO 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 in strong financial health. Northside Charter High School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 3.00. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

**Northside Charter High School's Composite Scores  
2012-2013 to 2014-2015**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	3.00
2014-2015	3.00
2013-2014	3.00
2012-2013	3.00

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

##### Near Term Indicators

Near term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. NYSED CSO uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The

higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2015-2016, NCHS had a current ratio of 11.2.

*Unrestricted cash* measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2015-2016, NCHS operated with 268 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. NCHS's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was 98 percent.

### **Long Term Indicators**

A charter school's *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2015-2016, NCHS' debt to asset ratio was 0.1.

*Total margin* measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is operating 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, NCHS' total margin was 14 percent.

### **Benchmark 5: Financial Management**

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

**Finding: Meets**

#### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:**

NCHS 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.

The Charter School Office reviewed NCHS' 2015-2016 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The independent audit 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

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school.</li><li>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.</li><li>c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals.</li><li>d. The board regularly updates school policies.</li><li>e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers.</li><li>f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.</li></ul>

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

The board is demonstrably stable, experienced, and actively governs NCHS. During the on-site visit, the team met with five trustees, including one who called into the meeting. The board operates in four committees, as it has since the previous renewal. No members joined or departed the board during the 2015-16 school year, but the board is currently looking to add two members to further expand its capacity.

The board forecasts goals for three to five years. The board has completed formal self- and school leader evaluations consistently since 2012-2013 and utilizes the NYSED Performance Framework to evaluate the school’s performance. This year the trustees plan to hold their first formal retreat with the support of an outside consultant.

The board receives regular reports from the school leadership team and supports as needs arise. When the executive director resigned unexpectedly in January 2016, for example, the board delegated responsibilities and expedited the selection of a successor. The board supports the school’s staff retention initiatives by researching additional benefits programs.

The board reviews school policies annually and this process is detailed in their approved meeting minutes. In the focus group with the renewal team, the board members demonstrated a thorough understanding of their legal obligations.

### Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

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

#### Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>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.</li><li>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.</li><li>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</li></ul>
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</li><li>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</li><li>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students’ needs.</li><li>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.</li><li>e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.</li></ul>
3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.</li><li>b. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</li><li>c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.</li></ul>

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

##### School Leadership

The school has an effective leadership team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. NCHS moved to an executive director/principal leadership structure in the 2013-2014 school year so that the principal may focus exclusively on academics. The director of operations maintains operational health. Three department coordinators have reduced class loads to provide additional instructional supervision and teacher coaching. An assistant principal was added to the staff in 2016-17 to increase the team’s



capacity to coach teachers. The executive director also credited the assistant principal with creating more cohesion between the teachers and the dean.

The school has clear and well-established communication systems; the principal publishes a weekly staff newsletter and three formal meetings (instructional leaders, all staff, and a student support team) are conducted weekly. Department and grade level meetings alternate each Wednesday.

#### Professional Climate

All staff positions were filled at the time of the visit and the school leadership and board of trustees are actively expanding their staff retention initiatives. Teacher retention has fluctuated over time and is currently at 70 percent. The school leadership team and board acknowledged this challenge and are researching initiatives to improve retention over time; the school's tuition reimbursement incentive, for example, was expanded in 2015-2016. While these initiatives are notable, in the NYSED-administered teacher survey, only 35 percent of teachers agreed with the statement "I see NCH as a long-term, sustainable option for me as a place to work." Most of the teachers who disagreed cited the lack of a pension as their primary concern.

Teacher collaboration is encouraged through co-teaching, as evidenced in Benchmark 2's discussion of the supports for diverse learners, and the collaborative meetings described above. Sixty-five percent of teachers surveyed agreed with the statement "faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction."

Through classroom observations, it was evident that the school has systems to monitor and maintain instructional quality. During our co-observations, instructional leaders had a clear sense of what instruction could be anticipated in each classroom and there were high levels of student engagement in almost all classrooms. In the two classrooms where students were not all engaged, the leaders had clear next steps that would be communicated to the teachers to increase future engagement.

Teachers are formally observed three times a year – once by the teacher's department coordinator, another by the principal, and the third by the assistant principal. Teachers regularly receive informal observations and support, as necessary.

The school emphasizes an open-door policy, which the leadership cites as encouraging teacher feedback. Less than half of teachers surveyed, however, agreed that "school leadership has systems to solicit staff feedback." Most staff indicated that the teacher feedback is collected more informally, which led to their disagreement or neutral response. The school leadership cited the creation of the school musical and TV production courses as a direct result of teacher feedback.

#### Contractual Relationships

The charter school has operated independently of any management organization since 2012.

### Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

*The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.*

#### Finding: Meets

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

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

The school stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school’s mission and key design elements outlined in the charter. All key design elements were observed in practice.

Incorporated into the renewal application is a revision request to change the mission statement. This is a non-material revision as it does not alter the purpose of the school, only elaborating on the prior language.

To encourage college enrollment, for example, the school offers college scholarships for students earning a 3.0 GPA or higher. Each student that graduates with an advanced diploma receive a printer and a laptop and four students are awarded a “continuity scholarship” that provides \$500/semester for each year in a four-year college.

### 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>	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 – Northside Charter High School Compared to District of Location**

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment		Variance <sup>2</sup>	Percent of Enrollment		Variance	Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD		School	CSD		School <sup>3</sup>
<b>Enrollment of Special Populations</b>							
Economically Disadvantaged	83%	72%	+11	76%	70%	+6	78%
English Language Learners	6%	12%	-6	7%	11%	-4	7%
Students with Disabilities	18%	22%	-4	16%	23%	-7	15%

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:**

NCHS enrolls a higher proportion of economically disadvantaged (ED) students than the district of location, and a near-comparable proportion of English Language Learners (ELL).

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students. Efforts to recruit and retain students in the ED, ELL, and SWD populations include targeting recruitment toward local students, offering a stand-alone resource room for all grade levels, and employing staff for SWD and ELL who coordinate with subject course teachers to provide support and differentiation. NCHS also employs a social worker who creates workshops and clubs for the SWD population and ELL population who require informal supports in addition to providing mandated services.

The school employs a recruitment coordinator to provide support for its enrollment process. While the Renewal Application focuses on a strategy of outreach to feeder schools, the school leadership detailed additional initiatives to build a positive reputation within the community to meet and exceed its targets. For example, Muslim students are permitted to leave classroom for prayer during lunch break at 1 p.m. on Fridays. The executive director stated that as a result of this cultural sensitivity, families will be more likely to recommend the school to potential ELL families.

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

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

## Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

*The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.*

### Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.</li><li>c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.</li></ul>

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

NCHS complies with all laws and regulations and the terms of its charter. The school consults outside counsel where appropriate. Two complaints arose during the charter term, but both were resolved at the board level.

## APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

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

4-Yr Cohort: All Students	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS
ELA	88%	82%	+6	85%	84%	+1	81%	84%	-3
Math	92%	84%	+8	82%	86%	-4	86%	86%	0
Global History	89%	78%	+11	85%	79%	+6	78%	78%	0
US History	91%	80%	+11	84%	81%	+3	85%	81%	+4
Science	96%	83%	+13	89%	84%	+5	91%	84%	+7
School Graduation Rate / NYS Target Graduation Rate	95%	80%	+15	75%	80%	-5	80%	80%	0

- Means data suppressed due to small n-size

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

4-Yr Cohort: Economically Disadvantaged	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
Subject	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS
ELA	88%	75%	+13	86%	78%	+8	80%	79%	+1
Math	95%	79%	+16	82%	81%	+1	86%	81%	+5
Global History	89%	70%	+19	84%	71%	+13	78%	70%	+8
US History	93%	72%	+21	83%	74%	+9	86%	74%	+12
Science	97%	76%	+21	90%	78%	+12	92%	78%	+14
Graduation Rate	96%	71%	+25	74%	73%	+1	78%	72%	+6

- Means data suppressed due to small n-size

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

4-Yr Cohort: Students with Disabilities	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State
ELA	29%	43%	-14	33%	49%	-16	27%	51%	-24
Math	57%	46%	+11	25%	50%	-25	27%	51%	-24
Global History	50%	39%	+11	58%	40%	+2	9%	40%	-31
US History	43%	43%	0	42%	46%	0	45%	47%	-2
Science	79%	48%	+31	67%	49%	+18	45%	50%	-5
Graduation Rate	86%	53%	+33	42%	53%	-11	73%	52%	+21*

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\* All eight (100%) NCHS SWDs graduates were issued local diplomas; NYS issued local diplomas to 21% of SWD graduates.

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

4-Yr Cohort: English Language Learners	2010 Cohort			2011 Cohort			2012 Cohort		
	Subject	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State	Delta = Sch-NYS	School	State
ELA	63%	39%	+24	0%	41%	-41	-	30%	-
Math	63%	58%	+5	33%	56%	-28	-	48%	-
Global History	75%	39%	+36	33%	35%	-2	-	24%	-
US History	88%	42%	+46	17%	41%	-24	-	30%	-
Science	75%	45%	+30	33%	43%	-10	-	32%	-
Graduation Rate	63%	36%	+27	33%	38%	-5	-	26%	-

- Means data suppressed due to small n-size