



OFFICE OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MODELS
ROOM 471 EBA
Tel. 518/474-1762
Fax 518/474-3209

Executive Summary - Charter School Renewal

School:	Harriet Tubman Charter School (HTCS)		
Date(s) of Site-Visit:	September 23 and 24, 2010	Members of Site-Visit Team:	Kalimah Geter, Sharon Holder, Major Capers and Aaron Listhaus (NYCDoE)

I. Introduction/Background Information:

Harriet Tubman Charter School (HTCS) opened in the 2001-2002 school year with 120 students K through 3. It currently serves 469 students enrolled in grades K through 8. The school is located in New York City Department of Education (NYCDoE) Community School District (CSD) 9 in the Southeast section of the Bronx. The school currently is in a short-term renewal period, due to financial and academic challenges faced during its first years in operation. Over the course of the current charter term, the school has made substantial improvements in fiscal health and academic standing.

II. Guiding Questions:

A. Can the school demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally sound manner?

Evidence of Strengths:

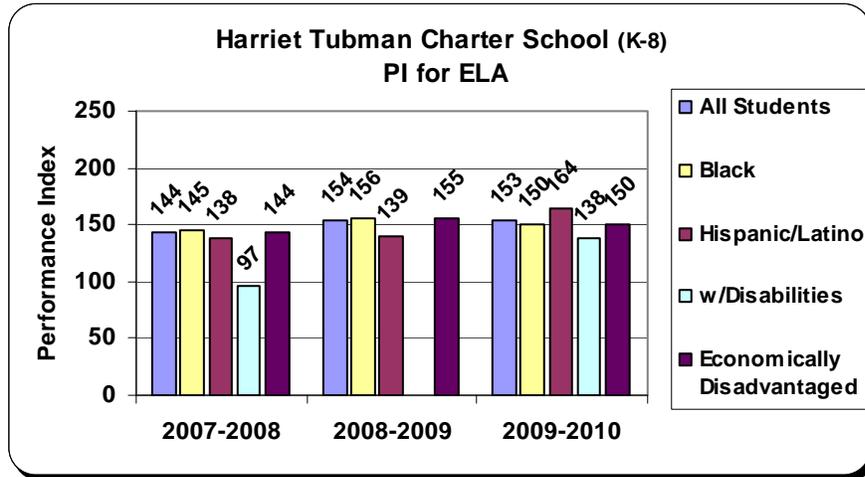
During the focus group interviews, the Board of Trustees and teachers stated that students receive services as required by federal and state law. These services include: providing extra academic support during the regular school day, the extended school day and during summer programs. The services are provided to all students, including students with disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELL). The school provides academic intervention services (AIS) for general education students in grades 3 through 8 who demonstrate the need for extra support. In addition, the school has extended day small group instruction program from Monday through Friday, from 3:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Academic Performance:

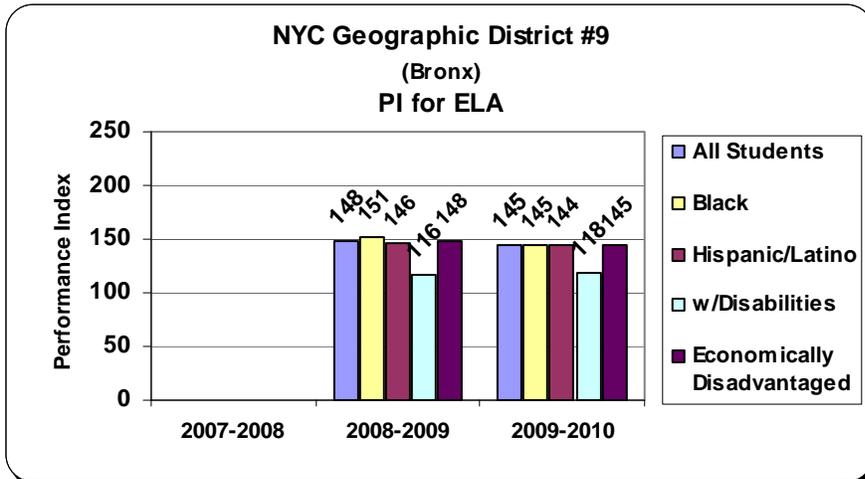
The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all areas over the duration of the current charter and remains in good standing.

The attached informational charts (see Appendixes 1 and 2) show that HTCS student performance in Math/ELA has exceeded District 9 student performance for the 2009-2010 school year. The site visit team reviewed accountability data (NYS Report Cards and NYC Progress Reports) that shows the school has remained in good standing over the course of

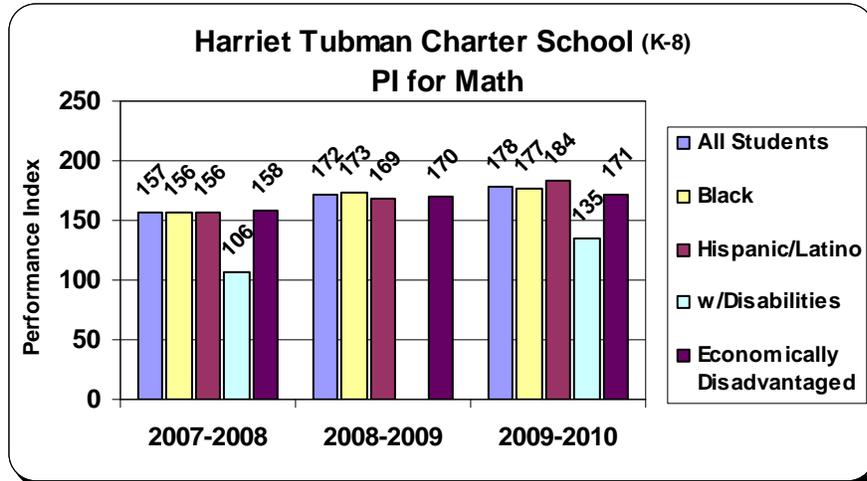
the last three years. The school's ELA proficiency level increased from 47.8% in 2007-2008 to 54.1% in 2009-2010; proficiency in ELA slightly decreased by 1.3% between the 2008-2009 and the 2009-2010 school years. The school's mathematics proficiency level steadily increased from 62.7% to 80.3% between the 2007-2008 and the 2009-2010 school years. The following charts provide information on the academic performance for HTCS between the 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 school years.



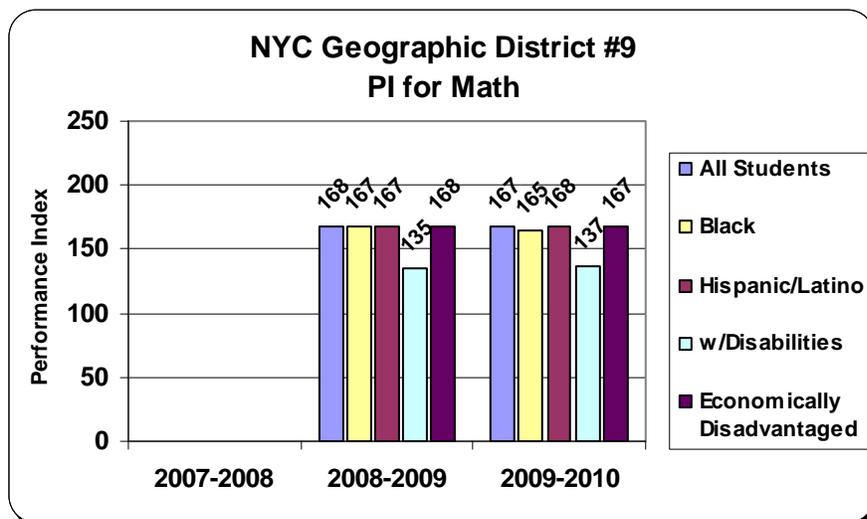
2008-09 data for SWD is unavailable due to insufficient subgroup size



2007-08 subgroup data unavailable due to appeal



2008-09 data for SWD is unavailable due to insufficient subgroup size
Source: New York State Report Cards



*2007-2008 subgroup data unavailable due to appeal
Source: New York State Report Cards

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

During focus group interviews during the renewal site visit, the board and the school administration stated that they are aware that their enrollment numbers for students with disabilities and English language learners are low as compared to the district. They stated that they would modify their application to attempt to increase the enrollment numbers for these populations. The school is working to increase and improve instructional methods in the areas of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction.

B. Can the school demonstrate the ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner?

Evidence of Strengths:

The school had a substantial net deficit of \$2,038,949 for the year ending June 30, 2007. Since the issuance of two detrimental audit reports, the school and the Board have addressed these issues. The school has eliminated all but \$20,306 of the deficit by reaching a debt forgiveness agreement with its management company, Edison Learning, Inc., the primary debt holder. An audit issued in 2007 by NYSED Office of Audit Services for the period 2004 through 2006 resulted in 82 recommendations. The school has implemented changes to address 79 of the 82 recommendations. The remaining three are in the process of being addressed. The school has appointed a new board member to head the finance committee. It has outsourced its accounting and bookkeeping to a firm with reputable expertise in not-for-profit entities. The school is planning to eventually eliminate its partnership with Edison Learning, Inc. This will give the school greater flexibility in seeking other consultants or hiring staff to perform the same services as the management company with greater cost savings.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

The school still maintains a management agreement with Edison Learning, Inc. The primary source of the school's deficit was due to late payment of management fees and subsequent interest incurred. As long as payments are timely, extensive debt will not be incurred again. However, the 2009 audit's internal control report still cited problems with the reconciliation of the inter-company accounts with Edison Learning, Inc. The projected budget amounts for the next charter term are on a break-even basis with expenses equaling revenues for all five budget years. Although this does not incur any additional debt for the school, any decrease in enrollment or revenue projections will lead to the school incurring debt again. The school has a proposal to increase facility space and plans to increase enrollment. It is not known if the increase in enrollment revenue will fully cover the increase in facility costs or other costs associated with an increase in students.

C. Can the school demonstrate adequate levels of parent and student satisfaction?

Evidence of Strengths:

The site visit team reviewed the parent survey for the 2009-2010 school year, the results from the 4th renewal charter goals and parent interviews during the renewal visit and found that most parents were satisfied with the education provided at the school. The New York City School Survey indicated that 94% of the parents were satisfied with the education their children received at the school. During focus group interviews, several parents indicated that their children have graduated from this charter school and are now in college preparatory programs. Parents stated that information about the progress of their children and school initiatives are shared with them on a regular basis. The parent survey distributed and designed by the New York City Department of Education indicated that the school's parent response rate on the survey increased from 18% in 2008 to 84% in 2010.

The survey indicated that 94% of parents are satisfied with the education their children receive; 94% of the parents are satisfied with the opportunities the school presents to allow parents to be involved in their children's education; and 92% of parents are satisfied with the way the school communicates with them. The board stated that they are having success recruiting and retaining students and indicates that there are over 100 students on the school's waiting list. Students stated that the principal encourages strong communication among teachers, students, parents and school administrators. Students shared that their teachers provide additional direct instruction before, during and after school. They also stated that teachers change the way they provide instruction to meet the specific needs of all students.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

Parents stated that they would like to receive more information from the board regarding meeting agendas, board minutes and school related reports. In addition, parents stated that they would like to have several parent representatives on the board. The board acknowledged that there is a need to improve relationships with the parents of students.

D. Can the school demonstrate that it is a viable organization?
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Evidence of Strengths:

The board implements the governance and leadership structure as defined in its current charter. The board has an organizational structure that includes standing and non-standing committees for governance, education, finance, personnel, grievance, fundraising and audit. The board maintains a contractual relationship with Edison Learning, Inc. to provide academic, legal and fiscal services to the school for a yearly fee. The existing contract with Edison has been extended through 2014. Focus groups indicated that the board is being responsive to the needs of the school and the community.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

Board members expressed that there is a sense of urgency in raising student performance and providing fiscal and operational oversight to the school. The board has not yet demonstrated that it operates with a clear set of goals for the school. It has not yet developed a set of tools for assessing progress toward meeting its goals, including those goals outlined in the school's Accountability Plan. The board acknowledged this during conversations with the site visit team, and stated that this would be an upcoming focus of their work. The site visit team interviewed parents who indicated that they feel disconnected from the board, and have not received information/reports outlining board agendas and/or minutes of board actions.

III. Conclusion

The board follows the governance plan delineated in its current charter. To accommodate fiscal issues raised in the past, the board has appointed a new member to head the finance committee. In addition, it has outsourced its accounting and bookkeeping to a firm with reputable expertise in not-for-profit entities. The school is planning to eliminate its partnership with Edison Learning, Inc., but is contracted with them until 2014. Eliminating the partnership will give the school greater flexibility in managing its own fiscal affairs. The school has overcome the primary source of its deficit which was due to late payment of management fees and subsequent interest incurred. The accountability data shows that the school has remained in good standing since the start of the last renewal period, and that student academic achievement is steadily increasing with each incoming cohort of students. Parent satisfaction is high, especially regarding communication between the school and the home. Information about student progress is shared regularly and there are opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education. Parents would, however, like to be represented on the board.

Appendix 1

Harriet Tubman Charter School - PI for ELA			
Student Group	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
All Students	144	154	153
Black	145	156	150
Hispanic/Latino	138	139	164
W/ Disabilities	97	**	138
Economically Disadvantaged	144	155	150

NYC Geographic District #9 – PI for ELA			
Student Group	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
All Students	*	148	145
Black	*	151	145
Hispanic/Latino	*	146	144
W/ Disabilities	*	116	118
Economically Disadvantaged	*	148	145

Harriet Tubman Charter School – PI for Math			
Student Group	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
All Students	157	172	178
Black	156	173	177
Hispanic/Latino	156	169	184
W/ Disabilities	106	**	135
Economically Disadvantaged	158	170	171

NYC Geographic District #9 – PI for Math			
Student Group	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
All Students	*	168	167
Black	*	167	165
Hispanic/Latino	*	167	168
W/ Disabilities	*	135	137
Economically Disadvantaged	*	168	167

Did not make Adequate Yearly Progress

* Data unavailable due to appeal

**Data unavailable due to insufficient subgroup size

Appendix 2

**Charter School Longitudinal ELA & Math Data
2007-2008 through 2009-2010**

School and Grades	2007-2008				2008-2009				2009-2010			
	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 3	5.9	37.3	54.9	2	3.9	33.3	60.8	2	30	38	28	4
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 3	14.9	44.2	38.4	2.5	11.2	36.4	50.3	2.2	30.7	41.1	23	5.2
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 4	4.1	59.2	34.7	2	2	44.9	53.1	0	16.7	66.7	16.7	0
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 4	18.6	38.9	41.2	1.3	8.6	35.2	55	1.2	17.8	51.3	29.7	1.2
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 5	0	31.3	68.6	0	0	57.4	40.4	2.1	26	42	26	6
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 5	6.1	45.5	47.8	0.6	2.5	41.6	53.7	2.2	25.1	48.1	22.7	4.2
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 6	0	50	50	0	0	35.3	64.7	0	8	54	38	0
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 6	6.3	61.4	32.1	0.3	0.5	43.4	54.8	1.2	26.7	50.2	22.5	0.5
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 7	0	51.2	48.8	0	0	28	72	0	6.1	61.2	32.7	0
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 7	5	50.8	44	0.1	1.2	45	53.6	0.1	26.7	54.1	17.9	1.3
Harriet Tubman CS ELA Grade 8	11.1	69.4	19.4	0	0	58.5	41.5	0	4.8	66.7	28.6	0
NYC Bronx District #9 ELA Grade 8	14.9	62.5	22	0.6	4.5	56.2	38.9	0.4	21.5	54.4	23	1
Harriet Tubman CS Math Grade 3	0	16.3	81.6	2	0	13.7	80.4	5.9	6.1	30.6	38.8	24.5
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 3	4.4	14.7	68.5	12.4	1.6	11.8	70.9	15.6	20.8	42.4	25.7	11.1
Harriet	4	32	54	10	4.2	12.5	77.1	6.3	16.7	54.2	25	4.2

Tubman CS Math Grade 4												
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 4	10.5	21.2	57	11.4	7.7	15.3	58	19.1	10.8	50.5	29.2	9.6
Harriet Tubman CS Math Grade 5	2.1	21.3	76.6	0	0	30.4	65.2	4.3	10	50	32	8
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 5	10.4	25.1	55.8	8.7	6.4	21.1	56.9	15.5	14	44.4	31	10.6
Harriet Tubman CS Math Grade 6	0	32	60	8	2	21.6	62.7	13.7	4	38	30	28
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 6	13.5	31.7	47.4	7.4	9.5	25.2	54.1	11.2	19.4	43.7	25.2	11.7
Harriet Tubman CS Math Grade 7	2.4	34.1	61	2.4	0	25	70.8	4.2	8.2	32.7	36.7	22.4
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 7	9.5	34.9	48.5	7	3.3	28.1	60.8	7.8	20.1	45.1	25.9	8.9
Harriet Tubman CS Math Grade 8	30.6	58.3	8.3	2.8	4.9	48.8	43.9	2.4	9.5	57.1	33.3	0
NYC Bronx District #9 Math Grade 8	16.1	38.9	40.3	4.7	7.2	30.4	55	7.5	21.2	48.3	24	6.5