Office of Innovative School Models

Charter Schools

Renewal Report

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

1. CAN THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO OPERATE IN AN EDUCATIONALLY SOUND MANNER?

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL	
Mission	The school is faithful to the mission, vision, and educational philosophy defined in the charter application and subsequent approved amendment(s), if applicable.

"The Harriet Tubman Charter School is committed to helping each child develop to his or her full potential. We recognize that all human beings are endowed with unique talents and gifts, and we believe that the process of schooling should lead each student to the realization, development, and expression of his or her potential. We are a performance-based charter school created to serve the children of the Southeast Bronx while exploring the heritage of the many cultures represented in our neighborhood. We are an extended family of students, teachers, parents, and community members who promote the educational achievements of our children through relentless focus on high academic standards for all. HTCS is designed to help students develop the skills to become leaders who read, think, write, and communicate at high levels. Our mission is to prepare children for success throughout their college years and beyond."

Evidence:

The Principal states that Harriet Tubman Charter School (HTCS) conducts a yearly lottery for prospective applicants from the surrounding community at large. To support the school's mission, the school has an activities coordinator who plans events that allow the students to make discoveries regarding the varied cultures represented in the student body. The school has various theme based celebrations for African, Caribbean and Hispanic cultures and diverse religions represented by the students and staff. Events that have taken place during the current charter are as follows: African Diaspora Bee (spelling bee) and the dance recital "Dances from Around the World." The school promotes the educational achievements of its students by displaying student accomplishments on the walls of the school hallways. Plaques are displayed

recognizing student participation in a recent New York City Cancer Awareness drive; student participation in serving food to the homeless during the Thanksgiving holiday and letters were exhibited written to HTCS students from students who visited HTCS from the United Kingdom. Also on display, are letters of recognition for being the top school in the city of New York to collect essential items for United States soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. An award recognizing a Harriet Tubman Charter School student who won the Arthur Ashe essay contest is also displayed. In addition, student awards and accomplishments are also posted on the school's website. The school's lobby is decorated with the flags of colleges and universities that were attended by staff members, parents and visitors, to encourage students to select a college or university to attend in the future.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	
Academic Program	The school establishes an academic program, including pedagogical approach, curriculum, assessment, and other unique elements of the educational philosophy defined in the charter application or subsequent approved amendments.
Student Services	The school provides services for all students, including but not limited to those with special education, English Language Learner needs and those eligible for the federal free- and reduced-price lunch program, as defined in the charter application or approved amendments and as required by law.
Enrollment	The school's student recruitment and enrollment process is faithful to that intended in the charter and as defined by statute and regulation.

Evidence:

- The administrative team and teachers shared that each school year begins with a two week professional development series to plan for the upcoming school year. During the series, teachers are provided with training and a framework for the new school year. During the summer of 2010, teachers were trained in the use of a new literacy curriculum for the early childhood grades called *Story Town*. In addition, teachers received further training in the instruction and programs for science, math, social studies and *Urban Education Exchange*, a reading comprehension curriculum implemented at the school. In addition, to the summer professional development sessions, the school works with a consultant during the school year who is a reading specialist in the area of Balanced Literacy. The consultant works at the school once a month assisting teachers with classroom set-up, library book leveling, and the *Columbia University Teacher's College Writing Project*.
- The school provided documentation on the use of the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (*DIBELS) assessment. In addition, HTCS students are paired with high school students who visit weekly to read with them and help them build stamina in reading. Three times a year, the school administers mock assessments using previously administered New York State tests in preparation for yearly grade level State assessments.
- The site visit team observed small group instruction being provided by the English Second Language (ESL) teacher for English Language Learners (ELL), within a larger classroom setting. Although the school does not have self-contained special education classes,

students receive Special Education Teacher Technology Specialist (SETTS) services that provides individualized instruction. In addition, the school has purchased a software program called *IEP Direct*, which assists teachers in working with students with IEPs, to meet their plan objectives. The school also has a student support services committee that observes and meets, to conduct child studies to meet the needs of HTCS students.

- The Board of Trustees (BoT) and teachers stated that students receive services as required by federal and state law. Services include lunch, extra academic support both during the day and during the extended day, and summer programs. These services are provided to all students including Students with Disabilities (SWD) and the ELL population.
- The BoT and administration acknowledge that HTCS enrollment numbers for SWD and ELL are low as compared to the district. They plan to modify their application to increase the enrollment numbers for these populations.
- In May 2010, the school submitted a request to the Board of Regents to add a second kindergarten class; the approved request increased the total enrollment from 444 to 469.
- The school distributes fliers to advertise its application period and has a marquee outside of the school that announces when applications are available for distribution. The school accepts applications for enrollment annually with a deadline of April 1. In addition, parents with children already enrolled at HTCS, are part of an "all call" from the school to inform them to submit an "Intent to Return Letter" each year. This information helps the school determine whether a lottery is necessary in any given school year.

STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENT	
NYS Testing Program	Students at the school demonstrate proficiency, or progress toward meeting proficiency targets on state standards, as measured by the NYS Testing Program assessments in all subject areas and at all grade levels tested for accountability purposes.
Accountability Goals	The school meets, or shows progress toward meeting, NYS Testing Program goals.
AYP	The school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and for all statistically significant sub-groups. The school is not identified for accountability purposes (not designated as in Needs Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring).

Evidence:

- The school accountability documents show that the school has met proficiency targets on State assessments in all subject areas and grade levels. The data shows that the school continues to show progress toward meeting NYS testing goals. The State data also shows that the school has made adequate yearly progress in Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics and science during each year of the current charter for the aggregate and sub-groups. The New York City Department of Education progress report shows that the school has remained in good standing since the start of the current charter. The school is not designated as a school in need of improvement, corrective action or restructuring. Although the school has met its New York State Testing Program goals, student achievement data demonstrates that students who were considered to be at grade level in 2007-2008, fell below grade level in 2008-2009. When the renewal visit was conducted, it

was found that the school did not have a tracking mechanism to ensure that students receive targeted instruction. During 2009-2010, the school met or exceeded the proficiency rate of their district of location in English language arts and mathematics. Performance data from the past four years are indicated below. (For further disaggregated data, see Appendix 1)

2009-2010
Grades 3-8 State ELA and Math Assessments
Percent of HTCS Students at Levels 1 – 4

3-8 ELA					3-8 Math				
%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency
1	45	52	2	54	2	18	64	16	80

***NYS implemented new cut points for the State assessments in 2009-2010, as reflected in student performance.**

2008-2009
Grades 3-8 State ELA and Math Assessments
Percent of HTCS Students at Levels 1 – 4

3-8 ELA					3-8 Math				
%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency
>1	44	55	>1	55	2	25	66	7	74

2007-2008
Grades 3-8 State ELA and Math Assessments
Percent of HTCS Students at Levels 1 – 4

3-8 ELA					3-8 Math				
%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency
4	49	47	>1	48	6	31	59	4	63

2006-2007
Grades 3-8 State ELA and Math Assessments
Percent of HTCS Students at Levels 1 – 4

3-8 ELA					3-8 Math				
%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency	%L1	%L2	%L3	%L4	Proficiency
6	55	38	>1	39	13	40	44	3	47

- According to the New York State Report Card for the 2009-2010 school year, the school made AYP for all statistically significant sub-groups.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENT, IMPROVEMENT, AND ASSESSMENT MEASURES	
Accountability Goals	The school meets, or shows progress toward meeting external assessment goals.
Internal Measures of Student Achievement	Students demonstrate progress on internal measurements linked with the school's promotion or exit standards.
Accountability Goals	The school meets, or shows progress toward meeting internal assessment goals.

Evidence:

- The New York State Report Card for the 2009-2010 school year stated that the school has met all of its external assessment goals and has made AYP in the years included in the current charter.
- The Principal stated that students are assigned research projects, homework assignments, oral/visual presentations, teacher-made tests and quizzes that demonstrate student progress in meeting the promotional criteria set forth by the NYSED. Parents receive a progress report every five weeks and a report card every ten weeks as a method of monitoring and informing parents of student progress.
- The school administration and BoT stated that student data shows an upward trend for many of the internal academic and non-academic goals set by the school. To ensure that the school is moving toward meeting internal assessment goals, the school develops a syllabus for each grade level to each parent to inform them of what their child should learn and be able to do. Benchmark assessments are administered several times a year to track the academic progress of students. The school is showing progress toward meeting its internal assessment goals; however, the assessment goals approved in the fourth renewal period are not comprehensive and do not include absolute goals.

CURRICULUM	
Skills and Knowledge Expectations	The school's curriculum, as implemented in the classroom, consistently addresses the skills and concepts that all students must know and be able to do to meet NYS Learning Standards, and supports opportunities for all students to master these skills and concepts.
Diverse Learners	The school's curriculum articulates the skills and concepts that all students must know and be able to do, and supports opportunities for all students to master established skills and concepts. The school establishes and implements an accommodation plan that addresses the needs of diverse learners.

Program Evaluation	The school has systems and structures in place to regularly and systematically review the quality and effectiveness of the academic program.
Implementation of the Curriculum	The school's curriculum is documented, and teachers plan and deliver lessons directed by the school's curriculum guidelines.

Evidence:

- The teachers and administrators stated that the school uses a pacing calendar, NYS benchmarks and curriculum maps. The teachers stated that they use *Prentice Hall* math concepts, *Everyday Math* (which uses a hands on approach) *Harcourt (Story Town*) for ELA (K through 5); *Wilson Reading* and *Foundations* for ELA intervention strategies; and other supplemental resources aligned with the New York State Learning Standards. The school provides Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for general education students in grades 3 through 8 who demonstrate the need for extra support. The school has an extended day small group instruction program from Monday through Friday, 3:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Academic intervention during extended day is provided to students. The administration purchased supplemental programs such as *AIM Higher* and *STARS* for ELA and *STAMS* for math.
- Classroom observations included findings of differentiated instruction for the ELL population. A review of the charter school documents shows that the administration has also focused on providing appropriate interventions for students who are performing below standard. For example, data showed that fifth graders showed significant losses at Level Three and Four in both ELA and math for 2008-2009. As a result of this analysis, the administration reassigned staff and increased professional development for teachers. The administration provides academic interventions to support struggling students at all grade levels. Academic intervention during extended day is provided to students.
- The administrative team prepares daily classroom visitation logs that are submitted to the principal each week. The logs include observations of instructional content and delivery, as well as comments and feedback for teachers. Each month the elementary and middle school academy directors meet with the teachers to discuss instructional practices. The administrative team meets every Tuesday to review observation logs and the implementation of the educational program. The Edison Learning consultant stated that she works collaboratively with the board and the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program and to agree upon modifications needed to improve the academic program.
- During the renewal visit, curriculum documentation was observed. In addition, teachers stated that lesson plans are collected each week and approved by Academy Directors. Once approved, lesson plans are placed on classroom doors for review by visitors to the classroom. Site visit team members observed these plans posted on many of the classroom doors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Instruction	School-wide instructional practice is aligned with the school design and student learning objectives, is consistently and effectively delivered, and conveys clear expectations to students. Teachers are purposeful in their lessons and students are engaged in meaningful learning.
Effective Teaching	There is evidence of rigor, relevance, pacing, alignment of curriculum to State Standards, and student engagement.
Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making	Teachers and school leaders use qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform and guide instructional planning and practice.

Evidence:

- Teachers stated that instruction at the school focuses on a well-defined aim and making lesson plans relevant to students. Several teachers stated they use Bloom's Taxonomy to teach students to be critical thinkers. Teachers and parents stated that students receive an adequate amount of homework to reinforce what they learn in class daily. Teachers post student work and get students to increase the amount of time they write, read, and use technology. Teachers also expressed an understanding that it is important to make lessons rigorous and relevant. Teachers have to create lesson plans and submit them to the principal for review. The principal stated that lesson plans are placed in folders on each teacher's door so that HTCS Academy Directors know what is being taught throughout each day. Teachers noted that they are observed regularly. Some have three formal observations per year with feedback provided. Classroom observations found that student objectives are not always effectively delivered. During the visit to a second grade classroom, students were directed to read a portion of text within a small group of their peers. The two teachers in the classroom circulated, listening to small groups as they read; however, there were several groups that did not receive a visit from either teacher. Some of the groups were notably distracted and/or unable to read the text. While observing, no strategies were given to help students read unknown words. Classroom observations did not provide evidence of rigor, relevance or student engagement. The observation of another second grade class displayed a teacher directed lesson with very little evidence of student engagement. The teacher asked questions that were unrelated to the posted objective: "How can we make text-to-self connections to characters in the story?" Questions asked were not relevant and did not connect to real life situations.
- In a third grade classroom, students were not engaged in meaningful learning. Students were observed with their heads lying on the desks. Students seated at a small table in the back of the room were continuously distracted as they played hand games while the music teacher taught a lesson with his back to the small table. These students received no attention or redirection of the inappropriate behavior. During the observation of an art class, students were asked to integrate writing into an artistic project. The class consisted of third graders and the task was to write four separate short sentences. The task did not represent rigor or engagement for the students. Many students talked among themselves as the teacher warned them of the removal of points due to the noise level, but the students did not respond and the teacher never followed through with the consequence announced.

One teacher was observed checking for student understanding during the direct instruction part of the lesson. Classroom observations, found teachers relying on recall questions that required simple short answers instead of higher order thinking questions. In addition, classroom instruction did not include elements of differentiated instruction for general education students. Other than a small group of ELL students being taught in a third grade classroom, instruction was delivered in a whole group approach, and teacher directed without notable modifications for struggling students or advanced level students.

- HTCS students take practice assessments and internal assessment tools called *eValuate*, *DIBELS*, *RTI* and *Brigance*, to inform student placement and progress. Teachers receive professional development weekly to discuss student performance and the delivery of instruction in all core subject areas.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	
Effective Leadership	The school leader has the experience and skills needed to successfully implement the school's charter.
Leadership Development	School leaders receive appropriate and timely professional development. Mentoring or coaching programs are in place and effective.
Building Level Leadership Team	The school is utilizing its Building Leadership Team to implement school improvement.
Instructional leadership	School leaders provide teachers with feedback and guidance that leads to improved instructional practice and student achievement.

Evidence:

- The BoT, parents and teachers agree that the Principal is an effective leader. Examples of effectiveness include his focus on the academic success of students, and the safety of the school. The principal conducts teacher evaluations on a regular basis and has a professional development plan for those teachers who have State certification pending. The teachers stated that they have opportunities to be involved in weekly sessions that focus on instructional practice and student achievement. The BoT's belief is that the principal has developed a strong leadership team that can move the school toward a higher level of achievement. School administrators stated that they also have opportunities to participate in professional leadership training. The charter renewal application shows that teachers have participated in Edison Leadership Conferences. This resulted in teachers attending recruitment fairs at colleges to recruit new staff, and some advanced coursework for administrative and supervisor internships. The administrative staff has also participated in the Edison Learning Development Academy. Academy directors conduct informal walkthroughs daily and record feedback to teachers from visitation logs that are reviewed by the principal on a weekly basis. Teachers stated that they receive feedback from the informal walkthroughs immediately in a non-intrusive way. Teachers stated an appreciation for the ongoing constructive feedback from academy directors.
- The Edison Learning consultant stated that there is a schedule each year for professional development training sessions. There are yearly off-site conferences and some are focused on developing leadership.

- School administrators stated that they also have opportunities to participate in professional leadership training. Academy directors conduct informal walkthroughs daily and record feedback to teachers from visitation logs that are reviewed by the principal on a weekly basis.
- During interviews, HTCS teachers confirmed receiving ongoing, constructive feedback from academy directors during informal walk-throughs.

SCHOOL CLIMATE	
Environment is Conducive to Learning	The classroom and school environment is orderly and supports the goal of student understanding and mastery of skills and is consistent with the school's mission. Supervision is sufficient, respectful, and consistent.
Collaboration	Administrators, teachers and staff communicate openly, positively and effectively. Professional learning communities exist and affect improvement efforts.

Evidence:

- Parents and teachers stated that since the arrival of the new principal the school climate has immensely improved. There are few incidents in the building, and when they do occur they are addressed immediately and in a fair manner. Parents state that if there is an issue with students or if information is needed they hear immediately from teachers. If there are any complaints, they have the opportunity to speak with the administrator.
- Teachers stated that they have regular time during the week to have content meetings with grade level and subject area teams. They expressed feelings of good synergy and collegiality amongst the staff.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
Parent Involvement	Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of parents.
External/Community-Based Partners	Strategies are being implemented to increase the involvement and contributions of community partners.

Evidence:

- Surveys provided evidence of parent support. Parents stated that information about the progress of their children and school initiatives are shared with them on a regular basis. Parents are involved in the Parent Association, trips community events, parent newsletter and some parents volunteer in the classroom.
- The school maintains partnerships with MLK Center for Non-violence and the Claremont Center, which received a 21st Century multi-year grant to serve middle school students. The Claremont Center chose Harriet Tubman Charter School to be the recipient of the grant that funds an after school program for HTCS students. The school maintains a

partnership with the local police precinct, which visits the school every six weeks to speak to the students about community issues and concerns.

PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION	
Organizational Needs	The school has realistic plans for program improvement, possible future expansion, and adequate facilities based on evaluation and analysis of data, if applicable.
Academic Program Needs	The school evaluates the impact of its academic programs on student achievement and modifies its programs to ensure improvement.
Teacher Evaluations	Teacher evaluations linked to student performance have been put into place. The system and data used must be consistent with State APPR system.

Evidence:

- The BoT expressed the desire for expansion but stated that the school has no plans to move forward until it is certain that a full five year renewal will be received.
- The administrative team and the teaching staff assess the academic programs regularly and make the necessary adjustments as necessary. During the current renewal period, the school has chosen a new ELA program to support literacy, called *Story Town*. A new science textbook for Grades 4 and 5 and a new social studies textbook for Grades 5-8 have been purchased. *IEP Direct* has also been purchased for SETTS staff.
- The school has a teacher evaluation system but the evaluation is not linked to student performance

2. CAN THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO OPERATE IN A FISCALLY SOUND MANNER?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	
Solvency and Stability	The school develops budgets that are realistic and in support of student academic achievement. The school demonstrates a history of positive net assets, adequate cash flow to sustain operations and support the academic program, and consistently operates within budget. The school develops a budget that can be sustained by its enrollment.
Fiscal oversight	The Board of Trustees and school leadership implement effective structures and systems to enable responsible fiscal oversight of the school. The Board of Trustees has an external company complete a yearly audit. The Board of Trustees demonstrates long-term fiscal oversight through appropriate planning processes.
Internal controls	The school implements an effective system of internal controls over revenues, expenses, and fixed assets, and exercises good business practices.

Evidence:

- The school was audited by the NYSED Office of Audit Services (OAS) in 2007 for the operating period of July 1, 2004 to March 28, 2006. The focus of this audit, as opposed to the annual independent certified audit, was the review of the use of public funds as it pertained to the mission of the charter school and as it pertained to the public interest. The result of the OAS audit was 82 recommendations based on significant findings. These findings included mismanagement of funds, lack of internal controls and lack of fiscal oversight by the Board of Trustees. The school had a negative fund balance of $2,038,949 for the year ending June 30, 2007.
- The school was able to eliminate this deficit to a fund balance of ($20,306) by the end of the 2009 fiscal year. The elimination of the deficit was mainly due to the debt forgiveness from the charter school's management company, *Edison Learning, Inc*. The debt, due to the management company, was an accumulation of overdue management fees and interest assessed at 10% per annum for payments not received within 10 days of the due date.
- The school was issued an unqualified opinion for 2009 and, as stated above, the net asset balance deficit was $20,306. Per the Statement of Cash Flow submitted in the audit, the

school maintained a substantial positive balance at the end of 2009 and 2008. The school had also received an unqualified opinion in the certified independent audits for the year ending June 2008. By contrast, in the independent audit report ending June 30, 2007, the charter school was issued a going concern opinion by the auditors. This indicates there is doubt by the auditors that the school can continue in operation due to deficits and lack of assurance that management will be successful in efforts to overcome the deficit. This opinion was reversed by the end of the 2008 report year.

- The per-pupil expense for the budgeted period compared to the audit years of 2009 and 2008 indicated that per pupil expenses have increased but expenses are fully covered by the district's per pupil revenue and anticipated revenue from federal and state grants.
- In 2007, the BoT was cited in the OAS audit for lack of governance and fiscal responsibility. The BoT response to the OAS audit was an agreement to implement the corrective actions for all 82 recommendations as suggested by the OAS auditors. The management letter issued in the June 30, 2009 independent audit report in the renewal application stated that the school had implemented 79 of the 82 recommendations. The remaining three corrective actions needed did not pertain to the 13 findings that were specific to the Board of Trustees.
- The Board has demonstrated proper fiscal oversight in moving forward by the implementation of the 79 recommendations in the two operating years since issuance of the OAS audit. The Board has changed the independent auditors and does have an external annual audit performed as required. Also, the school has hired an outside bookkeeping and accounting firm, *Kiwi Partners, Inc.* to address the school's fiscal problems. The firm has taken initiative in addressing and correcting the school's fiscal problems.
- As part of the annual independent audit report, the independent CPA's conducting the audit, issue a report on internal controls. The report on internal controls for the year ending 2009 stated two deficiencies. There was also follow-up in this report for three deficiencies noted in the 2008 audit report. One deficiency from 2008 was corrected in 2009 and two were being addressed at the time. The main deficiency in both years was the reconciliation of accounts with *Edison Learning, Inc*, the school's management company.
- As noted in the auditor's 2009 report, the Board has appointed a Certified Public Accountant as a Board member and head of the Board's finance committee. They have also outsourced the position of chief financial officer to Kiwi Partners. These appointments are a strong indication that the Board intends to maintain the internal control recommendations in the OAS audit and the external independent audits performed annually.

3. CAN THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE ADEQUATE LEVELS OF PARENT AND STUDENT SATISFACTION?

PARENT AND STUDENT SATISFACTION	
Family Satisfaction	Through the use of parent and student (where appropriate) surveys, the school demonstrates that families are satisfied with the school's program
Student Retention	The school can document the numbers and reasons for student attrition.

Evidence:

- Parents stated that they have seen and completed the parent survey. Parents are satisfied with the academic progress of the school under the current leadership. The parent survey distributed and designed by the New York City Department of Education indicates that the school's parent response rate on the survey increased from 18% in 2008 to 84% in 2010. The survey indicates that 94% of parents are satisfied with the education their children receive; 94% of the parents were satisfied with the opportunities the school presents to allow parents to be involved in their children's education; and 92% of parents were satisfied with the way the school communicates with them.
- A review of the charter renewal application (2011 through 2016) provides information on student retention rates. The student retention information shows that the largest number of students (25), in 2007-08, left the school due to either parental choice, school transfer closer to residence, or local elementary school or parent convenience.

4. CAN THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS A VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	
Leadership/ Governance	The Board of Trustees implements the governance and leadership structure as defined in the charter application or subsequent approved amendment(s), if applicable.
Board Accountability	The Board of Trustees is responsible to the school community it serves.
Decision Making and Communication	The school has a clear understanding of decision-making and communication that result in a common sense of purpose for all school constituencies.
Contractual Relationships (if applicable)	The Board of Trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with their management company. Changes in the school's relationship with its management company comply with required charter amendment procedures.
Roles and Responsibilities	The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among board and staff.

Board Oversight	The Board of Trustees regularly and systematically assesses the performance of school administrators against school-wide goals and makes effective and timely use of the evaluations. The Board of Trustees operates with a clear set of goals for the school and has developed a set of tools for understanding progress toward meeting those goals including those outlined in the school's Accountability Plan.
Board Development	Board members receive appropriate and timely professional development.
Personnel	The Board of Trustees employs leadership who demonstrate effective leadership of the school's programs. The school's leadership establishes an appropriate professional climate, resulting in a purposeful learning environment, reasonable rates of retention for effective school leadership, staff, and teachers, and manageable levels of overall staff turnover.

Evidence:

- The Board of Trustees 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 to provide academic, legal and fiscal services to the school for a yearly fee. This Board contract with Edison Learning is in effect until 2014.
- During the renewal visit, parents stated that they feel disconnected from the Board and have not received information or reports outlining board agendas, and or minutes of Board actions.
- The Board members state that they receive professional development that provides them with the tools to make appropriate decisions regarding governance. They agreed that they should development a strategic plan which would outline the five year goals and objectives for the school.
- The Board reviews monthly reports on enrollment, finances, audits and the principals' report. These reports provide an update to the Board on the long term goals, and overall status of the school.
- 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 Board contract with Edison Learning is in effect until 2014. The Edison Learning consultant to the school states that the contract stipulates that one of Edison's responsibilities is to evaluate the principal. The Board has evaluated the current principal once since he began employment, in August 2008. The school's management partner has evaluated the principal twice during this time.
- The school has not used the available monthly meeting information to develop an evaluative tool to understand and modify methods to improve overall school progress. The desire to create a strategic plan for the future charter term was shared during the interview with the Board.

- The Board has attended numerous professional development events on an on-going basis. Some of the sessions attended in the past two years are as follows:
    - Compliance – Open Meeting Law; Freedom of Information Law - NYS Committee on Open Government
    - HR Compliance, Best practices and Special Education Discipline – NYCSA Conference 2009
    - Board Matching Portal- Recruiting and Identifying Needs – DLA Piper, NYCSA 2010
    - Managing the News Media, BoT and Governance Issues – NYCSA Conference 2010
- During the renewal visit, teachers expressed their admiration and support for the principal. They state that the principal has implemented a stronger discipline policy and that students and parents are receptive and have been held accountable for student behavior. In addition, the principal has implemented several initiatives, which highlight student success and encourage student engagement and accountability. Administrative staff members display a strong respect for the principal and his approach to leadership and student discipline.

COMPLIANCE	
Safety	The school establishes and maintains a physically safe environment for students and staff. The school establishes a healthy environment ensuring civil rights for all.
Facilities	The school provides facilities that meet applicable state and federal requirements, are suited to its programs, and are sufficient to serve diverse student needs.
Staff Qualifications	Staff employed by the school meets all applicable state and federal qualifications and standards.
Implementation of Strategies to Recruit, Place, and Retain Qualified Staff	Activities are funded to recruit, place, and/or retain highly qualified staff.

Evidence:

- Observations at the Claremont Center found students traveling to unsecured bathrooms alone, even though parents of students being educated in the center's classrooms are assured that students will be escorted to the bathrooms.
- The school establishes and maintains a safe environment; however, some of the rooms were either too cool or too hot. Interviews conducted with the BoT, parents, teachers and administration confirm that the school is outgrowing its current facility and the Board will need to acquire the necessary funding (e.g., Capital Campaign) to purchase additional space in order to implement the school's expansion plan as outlined in their charter.

- This number of uncertified teachers is within the guidelines of the 30% or 5 rule. The four teachers that are not certified have been identified as highly qualified individuals.
- The Board of Trustees, teachers and parents interviewed are aware of the challenges the school faces to recruit and retain qualified staff; through Edison Learning, the Board recruits in the major newspapers, and in the community, however Board members acknowledged that they will have to devise creative methods to recruit and retain staff for their school moving forward.
- The staff qualifications examined on-site show that there are four teachers that need to obtain New York State certification. These teachers are currently on a professional development plan that has a specific timeframe for them to complete certification requirements.
- The school has had a high teacher attrition rate for the last four years. Board members and school administration attributed the attrition rate partly to the need to discharge and hire new staff who understood their vision to meet the needs of students in the school. See the chart submitted in the 2008-2009 annual report:

Charter School Teacher Attrition Rates

2008-09

	2008-09	**2007-08**	**2006-07**	**2005-06**
Number of Classroom Teachers	19	18	16	14
Number of Special Area Teachers	9	5	4	3
Total Number of Teachers	28	23	20	17
Total Number of Teachers Leaving	6	7	10	7
Total Percent Attrition	**21%**	**30%**	**50%**	**41%**

DISSEMINATION	
Dissemination of Best Practices (If applicable)	The school has provided models for replication and best practices.

Evidence:

- The school partners with local elementary school, P.S. 132. HTCS eighth graders visit this school weekly to tutor third graders in mathematics. The school principal has reached out to other charter school principals to form a network of charter school leaders that can share best practices with one another.

Appendix 1

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
HTCS ELA Grade 3	5.9	37.3	54.9	2	3.9	33.3	60.8	2	30	38	28	4
NYC CSD #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
HTCS ELA Grade 4	4.1	59.2	34.7	2	2	44.9	53.1	0	16.7	66.7	16.7	0
NYC CSD #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
HTCS ELA Grade 5	0	31.3	68.6	0	0	57.4	40.4	2.1	26	42	26	6
NYC CSD #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
HTCS ELA Grade 6	0	50	50	0	0	35.3	64.7	0	8	54	38	0

NYC CSD#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
HTCS ELA Grade 7	0	51.2	48.8	0	0	28	72	0	6.1	61.2	32.7	0
NYC CSD#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
HTCS ELA Grade 8	11.1	69.4	19.4	0	0	58.5	41.5	0	4.8	66.7	28.6	0
NYC CSD#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
HTCS 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 CSD #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
HTCS Math Grade 4	4	32	54	10	4.2	12.5	77.1	6.3	16.7	54.2	25	4.2
NYC CSD #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

HTCS Math Grade 5	2.1	21.3	76.6	0	0	30.4	65.2	4.3	10	50	32	8
NYC CSD #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
HTCS Math Grade 6	0	32	60	8	2	21.6	62.7	13.7	4	38	30	28
NYC CSD #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
HTCS 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 CSD#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
HTCS 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 CSD #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