



# New York State Education Department

Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem

Visit Date: 11/3/2016  
Date of Report: 2/8/2017



## SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

### Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Neighborhood Charter School of Harlem
Board Chair	Ruth Meyler
School Leader	Brett Gallini
District of location	132 West 124 <sup>th</sup> St New York (Grades 2-5) – NYC CSD 5 421 West 145 <sup>th</sup> St New York (Grades K-1) – NYC CSD 6
Opening Date	8/20/2012
Charter Terms	Initial charter term: 9/13/2011 – 6/30/2017
Authorized Grades/ Current Maximum Enrollment	Grades K-5 375 students
Management Company	N/A
Educational Partners	YAI Autism Center
Facilities	Private leased space
Mission Statement	<i>“To provide Harlem children with new educational opportunities through a rigorous, comprehensive K-8 program that cultivates the intellectual, social and emotional development of each child. Our school is an inclusive community that serves high functioning children on the autism spectrum along with their neighborhood peers. Our students will become independent learners and critical thinkers, will acquire the academic skills that they need to succeed in college preparatory high schools and will exhibit the social and emotional skills that will allow them to reach their full potential.”</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A specialized program of supports for high functioning children with ASD in an inclusive class setting</li> <li>Collaborative team teaching with two certified teachers in each classroom</li> <li>Rigorous academic program</li> <li>A “no excuses” approach to school design, with a focus on social and emotional learning</li> <li>Longer school day and year</li> <li>Extensive teacher professional development and specialized training</li> <li>A partnership with YAI Autism Center to identify and screen children with signs of ASD in community early childhood programs</li> </ul>
Requested Revisions	Requesting to add Grades 6-8 from Grades K-5 and to increase maximum enrollment from 323 students to 605 students.



## BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

New York State Education Department  
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Exceeds
	Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the NYS 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.	Exceeds
	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.	Exceeds
Organizational Soundness	Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Meets



### Benchmark 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: Exceeds

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

1a. ESEA Designation: In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, NCSH received an accountability rating of *In Good Standing*.

1b. Similar Schools Comparison: As reported by NCSH in the Renewal Application, the s





NCSH was chartered to serve students who have been diagnosed with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They have been faithful to this mission. Two of the three classes at each grade level include ASD students. Leaders state that the program is intended to foster inclusion, high standards for all students, teach ASD students flexibility, and the skills necessary to succeed in the school environment. Michelle Garcia's Social Thinking Curriculum is used to teach ASD students specific strategies to cope with changes and challenges. While many of these strategies are widely used by NCSH teachers with all students, the curriculum is specifically taught to ASD students in a kindergarten "social club" that meets once a day, and ASD students in Grades 1-4 three times each week." As a transition to middle school, fifth graders meet in advisory.

The curriculum is internally created with the design led by the head of school, who brings considerable knowledge and expertise to the role. All curricula is NYSL aligned with the Teachers College Readers and Writers workshop by Lucy Calkins.



The mission of the school is to cultivate the academic, social, and emotional development of each child so that they can exhibit the social and emotional skills that will allow them to reach their full potential. Based on conversations with school staff and families, as well as site visit



### 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:

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

### Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

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

Finding: Meets

Element

Indicators

a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expBTef2 g0.502

1. *Board Oversight and Governance*

The board oversees the growth and fiscal planning for the school. NCSH has a positive cash flow each year of its charter and has worked within its budget. The current two facilities are leased, and NCSH will move into its own facility in summer of 2018. The board and head of school recognized a critical need for additional space as the school grew over the charter term, and identified a suitable private facility to ease space constraints housing kindergarten and first grade students in a separate facility in CSD 6, in a building recently vacated by another charter school.





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:

NCSH is faithful to its mission and key design elements have been fully implemented.

All interviewed stakeholders shared a common and consistent understanding of NCSH's mission. Each

*Rigorous academic program:* Classroom observations conducted with school leaders demonstrated that teachers and students were employing higher level questioning to their students. All students receive hands-on science lessons.

*A no excuses approach to school design, with a focus on social and emotional learning:* The design of the school is characterized by a high level of attention to detail. School leaders continually examine processes in place and seek efficiencies that improve the learning experience of all students. The consistent implementation of strategies in the social thinking curriculum creates an orderly environment well-suited for all students.

*Longer school day and year:* Students arrive each day between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., and instruction begins at 8:00 a.m., with dismissal at 4:15 p.m. The school’s charter calls for a school year of at least 195 instructional days.

*Extensive teacher professional development and specialized training:* Professional development is offered to teachers for two weeks in August before school starts, and is ongoing throughout the school year. Professional development topics have included serving students with ASD, the social thinking curriculum, content area (math, language arts, science) curriculum planning, and co-teaching training. Professional development is also embedded in the course of the school day, as coaches frequently observe classes and provided feedback to teachers. Teachers have also participated in off-site professional development, where they frequently turn-key the strategies to their colleagues.

*A partnership with YAI Autism Center to identify and screen children with signs of ASD in community early childhood programs:* NCSH uses its relationship with the YAI Autism Center to seek testing and support services for students to ensure appropriate educational placement.

**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.

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17



Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students:

All Students	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	N/A					N/A				
2014-15	53%	16%	+37	31%	+22	79%	23%	+56	42%	+37
2015-16	62%	21%	+41	41%	+21	75%	17%	+58	44%	+31

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students:

Economically Disadvantaged	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	N/A					N/A				
2014-15	58%	16%	+42	21%	+37	87%	19%	+68	31%	+60
2015-16	60%	19%	+41	30%	+30	73%	15%	+58	33%	+45

Table 3: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Students with Disabilities:

Students with Disabilities	ELA					Math				
	School	District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)	School	District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)

Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup –