

1. *Is the School An Academic Success?*

1a. *High Academic Attainment and Improvement*

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- *Meet absolute performance goals established in school charter*
- *Meet student progress goals established in school charter*
- *Meet other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter*
- *Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth*
- *Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students*
- *Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools*
- *Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages*

Describe the school's progress toward meeting the academic goals delineated in its charter, including evidence on the performance of specific at-risk subgroups. Please compare the school's performance to its district, city, and peer schools.

Throughout the current charter term, TRCS has been successful in promoting student achievement and growth. This section of the renewal narrative chronicles the progress The Renaissance Charter School ("TRCS," the "School") has made during the current charter term in meeting its academic charter goals. In addition, it documents the School's performance against other objective indicators that characterize academic success. Please refer to the corresponding tables in Attachment 1 indicated at the beginning of each response for the data that supports the narrative. The first part of this section will summarize the School's progress against both its academic charter goals as well as against other academic performance indicators (non-academic charter goals will be discussed elsewhere in this Renewal Narrative). This will be followed by a detailed discussion and analysis of the overall progress of TRCS in achieving its charter goals, including the measures the school leadership took when student achievement and progress fell short of charter goals.

Absolute Performance Goals

1. Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA assessment.
2. Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA assessment.
3. Each year, 75% of 4th and 8th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science assessment.
4. Each year, 75% of 5th and 8th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies assessment.
5. Each year, 75% of kindergarten students who were enrolled at the school on BEDS day will perform at a Level 1 on the rhyme recognition, rhyme generation, syllable clapping, initial consonants, and at a Level 2 on the final consonants, blending, segmenting, ABC recognition, writing, spelling, decoding, sight words, and emergent reading strands on the Spring administration of the ECLAS-2. (2010-11 through 2012-13)
6. Each year, 75% of the first grade students who have been enrolled on BEDS day for two consecutive years will perform at or above a Level 4 on the spelling, decoding, vocabulary, sight words, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension strands on the Spring administration of the ECLAS-2. (2010-11 through 2012-13)
7. Each year, 75% of the second grade students who have been enrolled at the school On BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 6 on the spelling, decoding, vocabulary, sight words, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension strands on the Spring administration of the ECLAS-2. (2010-11 through 2012-13)
8. By the end of the year, 80% of Kindergartners who were enrolled on BEDS day will perform at or above Level B on the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) A-Z Text Level Gradient. (2013-14 through 2014-15)

9. By the end of the year, 80% of 1st graders who were enrolled at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above a Level G on the F&P A-Z Text Level Gradient. (2013-14 through 2014-15)
10. By the end of the year, 80% of 2nd graders who were enrolled at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level K on the F&P A-Z Text Level Gradient. (2013-14 through 2014-15)

Results: (See *Tables 1-5* in Narrative Attachment 1)

English Language Arts (*Table 1: Absolute Performance—NYS ELA Assessments*)

TRCS has not yet achieved its Absolute Performance Goal in the majority of its grades thus far in its second renewal charter term. *Table 1* shows that in each year of the current charter term, TRCS students in the aggregate (grades 3-8) fell short of the 75% benchmark achieving at least a Level 3 on the NYS ELA assessment. TRCS, however, did exceed the 75% benchmark scoring at least a Level 3 with three grade level cohorts—5th grade in 2010-11 and 3rd and 6th grade in 2011-12; the remaining individual grade level cohorts fell short of the performance benchmark on the NYS ELA assessment during the charter term.

Mathematics (*Table 2: Absolute Performance—NYS Mathematics Assessments*)

TRCS had mixed results on this performance measure during the course of the charter term. In the 2011-12 school year, TRCS met its Absolute Performance Goal on the 2012 NYS Math for students in the aggregate (3rd - 8th grade). That year, 79.9% of 3rd through 8th graders who had been enrolled in the school for at least two consecutive BEDS dates performed at or above Level 3 on NYS Math Assessment. TRCS also achieved strong student performance with each individual tested grade's two-year student cohort on the 2012 NYS Math Assessment. With the exception of the performance of the two-year Grade 5 cohort that year, all other grade level cohorts achieved the Absolute Performance Goal on the NYS Math assessment, in many cases significantly above the 75% benchmark. In addition, the two-year Grade 5 and Grade 7 cohorts met the 75% absolute performance benchmark on the 2011 NYS Math assessment. Other than these individual grade cohorts, the remaining individual tested grade level cohorts fell short of benchmark on the NYS math assessment during the charter term.

Science (*Table 3: Absolute Performance—NYS Science Assessments*)

As a whole, TRCS exceeded this performance measure during the charter term. While TRCS' two-year 4th and 8th grade student cohorts fell slightly short of the benchmark on the 2011 NYS Science test, the students ultimately exceeded the proficiency benchmark on the 2012, 2013 and 2014 NYS Science Assessment. The aggregate performance of the 4th and 8th grade cohorts in each of the three years far exceeded the 75% performance benchmark with 81.7%, 88.6% and 90.8% of the students performing at or above Level 3, respectively. Likewise, the individual grade level 4th and 8th grade cohorts exceeded the benchmark in each of these three years.

Social Studies

Note that the absolute goal for performance on the NYS Social Studies assessment is not applicable as NYS has removed the Social Studies assessment from its testing program.

Early Literacy (*Table 4: Absolute Performance—ECLAS-2*)

Table 4 summarizes TRCS student performance results on the ECLAS-2 during the charter term. In 2012-13, the final year in which TRCS utilized the ECLAS-2 as the assessment tool for early literacy in the K-2 strand, with very few exceptions, K-2 students met and exceeded benchmark on all the grade level strands. This represents a significant improvement of the three years in which the assessment was administered. In the first year of the renewal term, TRCS' Kindergartners had mixed results on their reading readiness skills, meeting grade level expectations for the basic phonemic awareness skills (initial consonants, rhyme generation, rhyme recognition, etc.) but falling short in the more complex skills (blending, segmenting, decoding, spelling, etc.). Likewise in 2010-11, Grade 1 had mixed results, falling short in decoding and

vocabulary but meeting benchmark in the five remaining strands while in Grade 2 fell short of benchmark on the strands assessed.

Early Literacy (*Table 5: Absolute Performance—F&P*)

The 2013-14 school year was the first year in which TRCS administered the Fountas and Pinnell assessment for reading. As Table 5 indicates, Grades 1-2 met benchmark; however, Kindergartners fell short of benchmark.

Value-Added Performance Goals

1. Each grade-level cohort of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam (baseline) and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's ELA exam. If the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeded 75% on the previous year's ELA exam, the school is expected to demonstrate some growth (above 75%) in the current year.
2. Each grade-level cohort of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam (baseline) and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's ELA exam. If the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeded 75% on the previous year's Math exam, the school is expected to demonstrate some growth (above 75%) in the current year.
3. Kindergarten will serve as the baseline year for value-added goals for students in 1st and 2nd Grades. Utilizing the F&P Benchmark Assessment System, at least 80% of 1st and 2nd grade students will demonstrate growth from the Fall to the Spring of at least (1) reading level in the F&P A-Z Text Gradient.

Results (See Tables 6-7 in Attachment 1)

English and Math (*Tables 6 and 7: Value-Added Performance—NYS ELA and Value-Added Performance—NYS Math*)

Tables 6 and 7 show how grade level cohorts of TRCS students performed against this value-added measure on the NYS ELA and math assessments. Overall, TRCS had mixed results over the course of the charter term, with some cohorts meeting the benchmarks in some years, several cohorts showing growth that fell short of the benchmarks in some years and some cohorts in some years failing to show growth. In total five distinct grade level cohorts of TRCS students showed enough year-over-year growth in Math from 2009-10 to 2010-11 and 2010-11 to 2011-12 to meet the value-added performance measure. In addition, another 3 distinct grade level cohorts showed year-over-year growth from 2009-10 to 2010-11 and 2012-13 to 2013-14 albeit not enough to meet the benchmark. TRCS was not as successful in achieving the year over year growth target on the NYS ELA assessment. During the charter term, only two distinct grade level cohorts met the value added performance benchmark, both from 2010-11 to 2011-12. However, while not sufficient to meet the value-added target, it is noteworthy that an additional 7 distinct grade level cohorts did demonstrate growth from 2009-10 to 2010-11 (2 cohorts), from 2010-11 to 2011-12 (1 cohort) and from 2012-13 to 2013-14 (4 cohorts).

Early Literacy (*F&P*)

The value-added goal utilizing the F&P Benchmark Assessment System is not applicable as the first year in which results can be assessed will be the 2014-15 school year.

High School and Post-Secondary Success Goals

1. Each year, 75% of the 9th grade cohort will have scored at least a 65% on the New York State Regents examinations in ELA by the end of their fourth year in the school.
2. Each year, 75% of the 9th grade cohort will have scored at least a 65% on the New York State Regents examinations in Math by the end of their fourth year in the school.

3. Each year, 75% of the 9th grade cohort will have scored at least a 65% on the New York State Regents examinations in History by the end of their fourth year in the school.
4. Each year, 75% of the 9th grade cohort will have scored at least a 65% on the New York State Regents examinations in Science by the end of their fourth year in the school.
5. Each year, at least 80% of each 9th grade cohort will graduate within four years.
6. Each year, the school will meet Adequate Yearly Progress graduation rate targets.

Results (See Tables 8-10 in Attachment 1)

Regents Exams (*Table 8: High School and Post-Secondary Success Goals: New York State Regents Examinations*)

TRCS significantly exceeded this performance measure in each year of the charter term and for each Regents examination in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History.

Four-Year Graduation Rate (*Table 9: High School and Post-Secondary Success Goals: Graduation Rates*)

TRCS significantly exceeded this performance measure during the charter term, exceeding the benchmark graduation rate by an average of 12 percentage points each year.

AYP Graduation Rate (*Table 10: High School and Post-Secondary Success Goals: AYP Graduate Rate Target*)

TRCS met its AYP Graduation Rate Target each year of the charter term.

Comparative Performance Goals

1. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA examination in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the CSD in which the school is located. This will be measured by an analysis of performance compared to CSDs conducted by NYCDOE.
2. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the CSD in which the school is located. This will be measured by an analysis of performance compared to CSDs conducted by NYCDOE.
3. Each year, the School will receive a “B” or higher on the Student Progress section of the NYCDOE Progress Report.
4. Each year, the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing an English Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools as determined by the NYCDOE Progress Report peer schools.^{1 2}
5. Each year, the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing an English Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools as determined by the NYCDOE Progress Report peer schools.^{3 4}

¹ Because TRCS is unable to secure Regents data for each of its Peer Schools in its Peer Group, it has always alternatively compared its results to that of CSD 30 high school results on the Regents exams on the Progress Towards Goals analysis that it has submitted to NYCDOE/NYSED each year as part of its Annual Report as the CSD 30 Regents results are available on NYSTART.

² Because TRCS is unable to secure Regents data for each of its Peer Schools in its Peer Group, it has always alternatively compared its results to that of CSD 30 high school results on the Regents exams on the Progress Towards Goals analysis that it has submitted to NYCDOE/NYSED each year as part of its Annual Report as the CSD 30 Regents results are available on NYSTART. In addition, because of the timing of the release of district data on NYSTART which occurs after TRCS submits in annual Progress Towards Charter Goals, TRCS has always reported on the comparison of its current year performance on the Regents exams with the previous year’s performance of the district on the Regents exams.

³ Because TRCS is unable to secure Regents data for each of its Peer Schools in its Peer Group, it has always alternatively compared its results to that of CSD 30 high school results on the Regents exams on the Progress

Results: (See *Tables 12-15* in Attachment 1)

Comparative Performance—New York State ELA (see *Table 12*) and *Math Exams* (see *Table 13*)

Overall, TRCS compared very favorably with CSD 30 on the NYS Math assessment during the course of the charter term. With the exception of the 2014 when 40% of TRCS' combined Grades 3-8 scored at least Level 3 compared to 41% in CSD 30, TRCS' average Grade 3-8 performance exceeded that of CSD 30 in every year. Looking specifically at each grade level's performance on the NYS Math test, on average 5 out of the 7 tested grades at TRCS would outperform their respective grade level peers in CSD 30 each year. TRCS' performance on the NYS ELA assessment compared with CSD 30's performance was not as positive. While TRCS' combined Grades 3-8 exceeded that of CSD 30 in 2011 and 2012, it fell slightly short of CSD 30's performance in 2013 (28% at TRCS vs. 31% in CSD 30) and 2014 (31% vs. 32%).

NYCDOE Progress Report "Student Progress" (*Table 13: Comparative Performance—Progress Report "Student Progress" Grade*)

This goal is not applicable in 2013-14 as the former NYCDOE Progress Report was replaced by the NYCDOE Quality Report which no longer uses a letter grading system. TRCS' high school division has consistently received strong grades in the area of Student Progress, meeting the goal in each of the three years in which it received Progress Report Grades. TRCS' high school program received an A, B and B in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13, respectively. TRCS' elementary/middle school division has not performed as well. It received a C on Student Progress in 2010-11 and 2011-12 and an F in 2012-13. While exceeding the comparable growth made by Peer and City schools for early grade progress in math, TRCS fell short of the remaining benchmarks used to determine the Progress Report grade.

Comparative Performance—New York State ELA Regents (see *Table 14*) and *Math Regents Exams* (see *Table 15*)

TRCS has consistently well outperformed CSD 30 on this comparative measure. The percentage of TRCS' students passing the NYS Regents in ELA and math has exceeded that of the district. Where in excess of 90% of TRCS students pass the Regents with at least a 65, less than 80% of CSD 30 students do the same.

Closing the Achievement Gap for At Risk Populations

While not a formal charter goal in the TRCS accountability plan, TRCS works to close the achievement gap for at risk populations (SWD, English Language Learners (ELLs) and economically disadvantaged students (FRL)) and their non-at-risk peer groups as well as the gap between minority students and their white counterparts. According to the New York State Accountability Reports for TRCS for 2010-11 through 2012-13, TRCS made AYP for all accountability subgroups (for which there were enough students to make an AYP determination) in both the elementary/middle division and the secondary division thus making adequate progress towards proficiency achievement by at-risk groups, including ELLs, Students with Disabilities (SWD), Economically Disadvantaged students, Black and Hispanic students. Further, according to the *2013-14 Quality Guide*, TRCS' Elementary/Middle School Closing the Achievement Gap domain has been rated as "Approaching Target" in helping high-need students succeed in its elementary/middle school. The *Quality*

Towards Goals analysis that it has submitted to NYCDOE/NYSED each year as part of its Annual Report as the CSD 30 Regents results are available on NYSTART.

⁴ Because TRCS is unable to secure Regents data for each of its Peer Schools in its Peer Group, it has always alternatively compared its results to that of CSD 30 high school results on the Regents exams on the Progress Towards Goals analysis that it has submitted to NYCDOE/NYSED each year as part of its Annual Report as the CSD 30 Regents results are available on NYSTART. In addition, because of the timing of the release of district data on NYSTART which occurs after TRCS submits in annual Progress Towards Charter Goals, TRCS has always reported on the comparison of its current year performance on the Regents exams with the previous year's performance of the district on the Regents exams.

Snapshot rates TRCS elementary/middle school as “Good” in the improvement of ELLs and SWD on the NYS Math test compared to other students who scored at their same level last year. At the high school level, the 2014 *Quality Snapshot* rates the school as “Excellent” in moving students with special needs to less restrictive environments. *Section 1b. Instructionally Sound and Responsive Education Program* provides detail regarding TRCS’ instructional program and supports for its at-risk students.

Of further note in support of the quality of the School’s ELL services is the percent of ELLs who have been declassified from ELL status. As the Data Collection Templates illustrate, TRCS has declassified approximately 16% of ELLs annually over the charter term thus far.

Summary: While TRCS has not met all of its academic goals in each year of its charter term, the entirety of its performance against its charter goals along with the strength of its academic performance as evidenced by other meaningful performance measures during this period reflects a charter school that has clearly demonstrated overall academic success.

Students in the high school division have experienced strong academic performance and achievement throughout the charter term. Its overall grades on the NYCDOE Progress Reports that were in effect in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 (where the school received a B, B, and A, in each of the respective years) and the ratings it received on the 2013-14 Quality Guide (*Meeting Target* for “Student Progress” and “Student Achievement” and *Exceeding Target* for “College and Career Readiness”) all reflect a high academically performing school. On the Quality Snapshot, TRCS was rated “Excellent” in helping students improve from their incoming proficiency levels to pass the English Regents. Its 2013-14 four year graduation rate of 86% well exceeded the City average of 68% and the Queens Borough average of 71%.

The strength of TRCS’ high school students’ performance is a reflection on the strong academic foundation that these students received in elementary and middle school at TRCS. Of the total number of students currently enrolled in TRCS’s high school, the vast majority, 78.3%, were students in TRCS’s elementary and middle school. The elementary/middle school students have performed strongly during this charter term. TRCS’ Student Performance Grade on the 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 NYCDOE Progress reports improved from a first year C to solid B’s in the latter years. This year on the 2013-14 *Quality Guide* it was rated as “Meeting Target” for Student Achievement. The *Quality Snapshot* indicates that TRCS proficiency on the NYS ELA and Math tests exceeded the City Average while virtually matching the district’s average.

The following provides deeper analysis of the performance of TRCS students in Math and ELA and steps taken by the school to address weakness identified by student assessment data.

Math

The math curricular and instructional program at TRCS has consistently been one of its strengths both in the elementary/middle school division and the high school division.

Elementary/Middle School: The Absolute Performance Goal on the NYS Math was met in the 2011-12 school year for students in the aggregate (3rd - 8th grade) with 79.9% meeting proficiency that year while TRCS fell just 1 percentage point short of the benchmark in 2011 with 74% of students in the aggregate meeting math proficiency. TRCS also achieved strong student performance with each individual tested grade’s two-year student cohort on the 2012 NYS Math assessment. With the exception of the performance of Grade 5 students on the 2012 NYS Math Assessment, all other grade level cohorts achieved, and in many cases significantly exceeded, the Absolute Performance Goal on the NYS Math assessment. Likewise in 2012, TRCS performed strongly against its value-added goal. Of note is that according to the New York State Accountability Report Cards for TRCS, it made AYP for elementary/middle school math for all students and all applicable accountability subgroups in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 (the Accountability Report Card is not yet available for 2013-14) with its Performance Indices, in each case, *exceeding* its Effective Annual Measureable Objective.

With the institution of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), TRCS experienced a drop, as did the vast majority of all schools in the City and State, in proficiency in Math as measured by the newly CCSS-aligned NYS math assessments in the 2012-13 school year. In response to the new expectations and increased rigor of the CCSS environment, TRCS addressed gaps identified in its math program by (1) introducing new mathematics curriculum to support the new standards and utilizing EngageNY Math modules to support curriculum and instruction across all grades; (2) providing intensive professional development for teachers delivered both from outside curriculum and instructional specialists as well as from within its collaborative professional learning community in using both these new instructional and curricular resources to support CCSS-aligned math instruction as well as formal and informal assessment data to support student groupings, differentiation and re-teaching; (3) building the literacy proficiencies of TRCS students with the support of highly qualified reading teachers recognizing the connection between strong literacy skills and the ability to understand and solve mathematical problems; (4) promoting the use of math and literacy skills across the curriculum and (5) utilizing the Danielson Framework to support highly effective teaching.

TRCS' efforts to strengthen elementary/middle school math instruction are having a positive impact. As Table 2 illustrates, average proficiency for the aggregate Grade 3-8 two-year cohort showed an increase on the 2014 NYS Math assessment over that of the 2013 NYS Math assessment.

The overall strength of TRCS' math program is also evident in the performance of its students compared with their peers in traditional public schools in CSD 30 and the New York City district and with their peers in CSD 30 charter schools and all charter schools in New York City. *Table 12* shows that the average aggregate performance of TRCS students on the NYS Math test in Grades 3-8 outperformed that of the aggregate performance of CSD 30 students on the assessment in every school year except for 2013-14.

TRCS' aggregate proficiency rate in each of the four years thus far in the charter term exceeded the New York State aggregate proficiency (see *Table ___*) by an average of ten percentage points each year. Moreover, with the exception of the 2012-13 school year where its aggregate proficiency was 6 percentage points lower than that of New York City, TRCS' aggregate proficiency exceeded New York City's performance each year by an average of almost 11 percentage points.

Tables ___30 and 32_ compare TRCS' performance on the NYS Math assessments with all New York City charter schools and the CSD 30 charter schools. TRCS' aggregate proficiency rate exceeded that of the average aggregate performance of all New York City charter schools in every school year but 2013-14. TRCS' average aggregate proficiency exceeded that of the CSD 30 charter schools on the 2012 NYS Math assessment; however, in each of the other years, its aggregate proficiency rate was on average 5 percentage points lower than that of the average proficiency of CSD 30 charter schools. Finally, *Table 33* in Attachment 1 summarizes TRCS percentile ranking and quartile position among its NYCDOE identified Peer Group of schools from its Progress Reports and Quality Guide. While TRCS' performance on the NYS Math assessments has placed it within the 45th percentile or 3rd quartile (with the exception of 2012 when it was in the 71st percentile and 1st quartile), of importance is the fact that TRCS was showing an continued increase in its percentile ranking prior to the institution of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned assessment (moving from 45th to 71st percentile from 2011 to 2012). Its percentile ranking dropped from 2012 to 2013 (71st to 44th) as a result of the drop in scores related to the first administration of the CCSS-aligned test (a drop it should be noted that almost every school experienced). However, TRCS percentile ranking did increase from 2013 to 2014 a reflection of the school's progress in aligning instruction with the CCLS through the efforts described previously. It should be noted, however, that its Peer Group contains Gifted and Talented Schools which require an academic admissions test for entry. As TRCS admits students through a random lottery, regardless of academic ability, it is unfair to compare it against schools whose admission criteria are based solely on academic aptitude.

Perhaps one of the most compelling data points that supports the strength of TRCS' middle school math program is the comparison of the percent of TRCS' 8th graders earning high school credit (at TRCS that is specifically due to students passing the Integrated Algebra Regents and the Earth Science Regents Examination) with 8th graders in their Peer Group and with 8th graders in the New York City public school system as a whole. The percent of TRCS 8th graders passing Regents exams and thus earning high school credit placed the school in the 100th percentile of its Peer Group and of all of New York City Public Schools in 2013-14 according to its *Quality Guide*. Its percentile ranking within all of NYC Public Schools was similarly high in 2012 (95th percentile) and 2013 (100th percentile) while its percentile ranking among its Peer Schools increased dramatically from 2012 (70th percentile) to 2013 (92nd percentile). By 2013-14, 79% of our 8th graders were earning high school credit.

High School: TRCS' high school division has had consistently high performance in Mathematics meeting all of its charter goals in the area of high school mathematics. According to the school's NYCDOE Progress Report (2011-2013) and Quality Guide (2014), the percent of students passing a Math Regents examination in each of the four years of the charter term thus far has placed the school in the second quartile of all New York City public high schools in 2011, 2012 and 2014 and in the top quartile in 2013. In these same four years, TRCS was ranked in the 2nd quartile of its Peer Schools, albeit, falling to the 3rd quartile in 2014. However, as *Table 15* illustrates, the percent of TRCS students in the high school accountability cohort passing a Math Regents exam by the end of their fourth year in the school well exceeded the percentage pass rate of the high school accountability cohort in CSD 30 each year by an average of 18 percentage points.

English Language Arts

Elementary/Middle School: TRCS' elementary and middle school literacy program has been a focus of the school during the current charter term, particularly addressing the need for younger children to learn to read critically and analytically. The shift to the CCLS has presented a challenge to TRCS in maintaining a balance between its philosophical commitment to a holistic curriculum and the needs to align with the CCLS. TRCS has been addressing the need to support students in meeting and exceeding CCSS in ELA, working closely with teachers to change their instructional practice. Among the improvements to the instructional program made during the charter term in the elementary/middle school span are daily 90-minute literacy blocks for students to participate in guided literacy groups and shared inquiry discussion (groups informed by F&P Benchmarking that is conducted three times per year), small group Leveled Literacy Intervention taught by four literacy specialists (two in elementary grades and two in middle school grades), extensive and ongoing professional development with an external consultant in CCSS-aligned literacy instruction and the implementation of Teachers College Readers and Writers Workshop units of study supported by TC professional development in Writers Workshop.

The enhancements made to the K-8 literacy program have resulted in some measurable progress against CCSS from 2013 to 2014 as evidenced from the results of the NYS ELA assessments. The average aggregate proficiency level for the Grades 3-8 two year cohort, while short of benchmark, did improve from 28.1% in 2013 to 30.6% in 2014 (See *Table 1* in Attachment 1) and with the exception of the Grade 7 two-year cohort, each individual grade cohort saw an increase in the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards. Furthermore, with the regard to Value-Added Performance, all individual grade level cohorts saw an improvement in their performance on the 2014 NYS ELA assessment compared to their performance on the 2013 NYS ELA Exam, with the exception of Grade 5 which remained at virtually the same percentage proficiency as they did as 4th graders in 2012 (see *Table 6* in Attachment 1).

Table 11 in Attachment 1 compares TRCS' performance on the NYS ELA assessment with that of schools in CSD 30. Prior to the implementation of the CCSS-aligned NYS ELA assessment, TRCS's average aggregate proficiency exceeded that of CSD 30. On the 2013 and 2014 NYS ELA assessment, TRCS' performance fell short of CSD 30. However, it did improve its standing against CSD 30 from 2013 to 2014 falling just 1 percentage point lower than that of CSD 30. It is worth noting, that TRCS' Grades 3, 4, 6 and 8 students did outperform their peers in CSD 30.

According to Table 29, a comparison of TRCS proficiency on the NYS ELA assessment over the course of the current charter term with public schools in New York City and New York State shows that in each year, TRCS average aggregate proficiency rate exceeded that of New York City and with the exception of 2013 when its performance fell slightly below New York State, TRCS matched or exceeded the State's performance in each of the remaining three years. In addition, Table 31 compares TRCS' performance on the NYS ELA exam with the performance of charter schools in CSD 30 and all New York City charter schools. In each year, TRCS' average aggregate proficiency exceeds that of both charter school comparison groups.

Table 33 in Attachment 1 contains a comparison of TRCS with its NYCDOE Peer Group of schools from the NYCDOE Progress Report (2010-11 through 2012-13) and Quality Guide (2013-14). It should be noted that its Peer Group contains Gifted and Talented Schools which require an academic admissions test for entry. As TRCS admits students through a random lottery, regardless of academic ability, it is unfair to compare it against schools whose admission criteria are based solely on academic aptitude. With the exception of 2012 when it was in the 2nd quartile of the group, TRCS has remained within the 3rd quartile of its Peer Schools. As with its performance in Math, TRCS was showing a continued increase in its percentile ranking prior to the institution of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned assessment (moving from 27th to 57th percentile from 2011 to 2012). Its percentile ranking dropped from 2012 to 2013 (57th to 33rd as a result of the drop in scores related to the first administration of the CCSS-aligned test (a drop it should be noted that almost every school experienced). However, TRCS' percentile ranking did increase from 2013 to 2014, a reflection of the school's progress in aligning instruction with the CCSS through the efforts described previously.

Finally, it should be noted that according to the New York State Accountability Report Cards for TRCS, it made AYP for elementary/middle school ELA for all students and all applicable accountability subgroups in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 (the Accountability Report Card is not yet available for 2013-14) with its Performance Indices, in each case, *exceeding* its Effective Annual Measureable Objective.

High School: The metrics used to evaluate TRCS' secondary English program indicate that the School has a high performing ELA program. According to the school's NYCDOE Progress Report (2011-2013) and Quality Guide (2014), the percent of students passing an English Regents examination in each of the four years of the charter term thus has consistently placed the school in the 1st or 2nd quartile of all New York City public high schools. In these same four years, TRCS was ranked in the 1st or 2nd quartile of its Peer Schools, albeit, falling to the 3rd quartile in 2014. However, as Table 14 illustrates, the percent of TRCS students in the high school accountability cohort passing an English Regents exam by the end of their fourth year in the school well exceeded the percentage pass rate of the high school accountability cohort in CSD 30 each year by an average of 22 percentage points.

1b. Instructionally Sound and Responsive Education Program

Schools with successful education programs have many of the characteristics below:

- Are selfreflective and examine practice based on outcomes against goals*
- Have wellthought out curricular programs that are aligned with NYS learning outcomes as described by state and Common Core Learning Standards*
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and flexible in addressing the needs of all learners*
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap*
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration*
- Utilizes a coherent and effective interim assessment system (eg., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction*
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback*

□ Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs

□ Use a defined process for evaluating and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

Schools should describe how successful their core curriculum and instructional programs have proved to be in meeting the needs of all students. Be sure to explain how the school’s curriculum program is aligned with the new Common Core Learning Standards. Schools should explain how they have met the instructional needs of at-risk learners as well as those of accelerated learners. Finally, this section should also include an explanation of how the school’s interim assessment system has supported instructional decision-making at the school, class, and individual student level.

Throughout the current charter term, TRCS’ core curriculum and instructional programs have been effective in meeting the needs of all students. TRCS’ student population is diverse and, and discussed later in this narrative, TRCS has established differentiated programs and practices to address the needs of each student. The demographic profile of the student population at TRCS is reflected in the table below:

Demographic Category	TRCS K-8	TRCS HS	TRCS Total
African American/Black	8.1%	15%	10.4%
Hispanic/Latino	57.3%	55.6%	57%
Economically Disadvantaged	69%	79%	72.7%
SWDs	16.4%	21%	15.9%
ELLs	8.6%	3.74%	6.5%

TRCS established a comprehensive curricular program that is aligned with the NYS CCLS and that has been effective in helping students achieve academic growth and success. The original instructional program designed was aligned to the then-current NYS Learning Standards, as demonstrated by the curriculum-related exhibits and curriculum cross-walks submitted in the original charter and renewal applications. In the summer of 2010, NYS adopted the CCLS and, as with other traditional and charter public schools in NYS, TRCS was faced with the challenge of aligning its curriculum and academic programs to the NYS CCLS. TRCS began to address this challenge immediately, beginning with a formal school-wide commitment to alignment of all curriculum and instruction with the NYS CCLS. The school’s Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSGC) established as an objective in its Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) that TRCS would “Monitor and refine, as necessary, the curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the assessment of student performance, based upon the TRCS Charter, its amendments and common core standards.” In each year following the state’s adoption of CCLS, planning and implementation of CCLS has been designated a school-wide “priority area” by the CSGC. Accordingly, TRCS has engaged its leadership and faculty in a comprehensive initiative to align its curriculum with the NYS CCLS that included:

- *Ensuring that all academic programs, instructional materials and assessments used at TRCS are aligned with the NYS CCLS*—TRCS conducted a comprehensive review of its curriculum and made substantive changes to better align it with the CCLS. For instance, TRCS modified its entire Math program to better align with the CCLS. In Math, TRCS now uses CCLS-aligned Singapore Math in grades K-3, Math in Focus (Standards Edition) in grades 4-5, Go Math in grades 6-8 and Prentice Pearson in grades 9-12. In addition, TRCS has developed and continuously enhances “home grown” curricula and units of instruction based heavily on the materials and resources of EngageNY. In ELA, TRCS has increased its emphasis on Junior Great Books in grades K-8 and teachers across all grades use the resources of EngageNY to inform their selection of texts and literature and support the development of units of instruction. TRCS also changed its early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS to Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking to better measure attainment of CCLS benchmarks, and it expanded its use of Guided Reading and Writers Workshop.
- *Supporting teachers working in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to develop, implement, assess and modify CCLS-aligned lessons and learning experiences*—Teachers in all grades and subject areas worked collaboratively

in PLCs to design CCLS-aligned units of instruction and learning experiences, to peer review CCLS-aligned lessons and to support integration of the CCLS into all instructional programs. PLCs are dynamic and collaborative endeavors in which teachers engage in protocol-driven discussions and curriculum development activities. PLCs at TRCS meet and work together at least weekly to analyze student data and to develop, align, discuss and assess units of instruction and learning experiences.

- *Providing professional development to support teachers in implementing the CCLS*—TRCS has engaged ELA and Math consultants and trainers to provide professional development focused on building teacher capacity to design and implement effective CCLS-aligned instruction. Considerable time and resources during TRCS’ summer and school-year professional development events have been devoted to improving implementation of CCLS.
- *Leveraging the curriculum mapping, CCLS alignment and professional development initiatives of the Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS)*—TRCS was a member of the initial cohort of charter schools in the federally-funded PICCS program (which is described in greater detail later in this narrative). As a member of the PICCS consortium, TRCS was provided access to a comprehensive data warehouse that supported effective organization, analysis and use of student data, along with extensive professional development, PLC support and access to expert technical assistance providers. Beginning in 2011, PICCS adapted its professional development initiatives and other programs and resources to support its member schools in implementing the CCLS, including support in curriculum mapping, design of instructional units, peer review and PLCs. Accordingly, TRCS teachers engaged in grant-supported professional development that helped them adapt curricula and instruction to the CCLS. During the last year of the PICCS grant, the TRCS’ CSGC instructed the school’s instructional leaders and teachers to “Develop a transition process for the management of professional development, data management, instructional improvement and other initiatives included in the PICCS grant for after the federal funding ceases at the end of 2011-2012.” As a result, TRCS has continued to build upon the PICCS-supported foundation of knowledge throughout the current charter term.
- *Leveraging grant funding to support CCLS alignment and integration*—TRCS is one of a select group of charter schools that was awarded a NYS Charter School Dissemination Program grant. TRCS is now a partner in the grant-funded program with Truman High School and, accordingly, is sharing several of its recognized effective practices with a traditional public school. A key component in the \$500,000 grant-funded program is training for TRCS and Truman High School teachers regarding the CCLS. TRCS is continuing to identify and apply for grants to support its CCLS initiatives.

TRCS has been a reflective, adaptive and data-driven organization throughout its history, and it has built upon and enhanced many of its reflective and adaptive practices and its data-culture during the current charter term. The NYCDOE recognized TRCS’ self-reflective and data-driven learning environment in its 2012 site visit report, stating that “TRCS’ leadership is self-reflective and focused on improvement” and “TRCS is making strides towards using data effectively to group students and to meet individual needs.” TRCS has instituted several practices and initiatives to support ongoing reflection based on analysis of data and appropriate modification of programs and practices to address identified needs, including:

A Culture of Collaboration—To further its mission to support students in becoming educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will become global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development, TRCS has established a culture of community, cooperation, and collaboration. As is stated clearly in the charter, the TRCS school culture is “a village of learners” in which student interactions with one another and with staff moves “beyond cooperation to the level of collaboration” and decisions regarding policy, instruction, governance and operations are made by multiple school constituencies working in collaboration with one another. Indeed, collaboration is embedded at all levels of decision-making, including—

- (a) *The Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSGC)*, a decision-making body that comprises representatives of all school constituencies, including the school Principal; the UFT Chapter Chair; teachers and other representatives of instructional staff; parents; students; and alumni. The CSGC is

charged by the Board of Trustees with the tasks of regularly assessing the quality of life in the school, reviewing instructional policies and establishing instructional priorities (subject to approval of the Board of Trustees). A critical responsibility of the CSGC is the development and amendment (as necessary) of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), which outlines TRCS' goals, objectives and strategies for improvement in areas of Academic Success, Addressing the Needs of At-Risk-Students, School Environment and Safety, Parent Involvement, Organizational Viability, Technology, Data, Communication and Collaboration and Supporting Students in being Renaissance Persons with Global Competencies. The importance of the CSGC in the life of TRCS is underscored by the fact that specific Charter Goals describe its responsibilities—i.e. “ The Collaborative School Governance Committee, consisting of elected parents, students, teachers and staff, will...develop an annual Comprehensive Education Plan, which guides the school's priorities for the following year” and “Each year, the Collaborative School Governance Committee will meet or make substantial progress towards meeting the leadership, student leadership and governance goals in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan.” The CSGC was also cited by the NYCDOE in its 2010-11 Site Visit Report as evidence that “The TRCS culture is positive, inclusive of all stakeholders and encourages teacher autonomy and collaboration.” Over the course of the current charter term, the CSGC refined its CEP planning process and developed a protocol-driven process for addressing important school-wide issues brought before it. It also established a “social contract” that supports open and respectful dialogue, provides for “every voice to be heard” and governs its collaborative decision-making process.

- (b) *The School Management Team (SMT)*, which comprises the Principal, the Director of Data and Accountability, the Director of Teaching & Learning (K-5), the Director of Teaching & Learning (6-12), the Director of Development and Partnerships and the Director of Operations and Finance. The SMT meets at least weekly to discuss and make decisions about day-to-day and longer-term instructional matters, including curricula, assessments, evaluation, professional development, progress made towards achieving academic goals, special education and experiential learning projects. Through the SMT, most major instructional matters at TRCS are decided collaboratively and by consensus of the school's instructional leaders. During the current charter term, TRCS expanded collaborative decision-making with the inclusion of additional school stakeholders in a less-formal “Expanded SMT.” In addition to the aforementioned SMT members, the Expanded SMT includes the Administrator of School Culture and Student Support, the Coordinator of Special Education, the Science Coach and the CSG Chairperson and Teacher Member of the Board of Trustees. The Expanded SMT meets frequently and provides opportunities for additional constituencies to provide input into SMT decision-making.
- (c) *PLCs*, which enable teachers to collaborate effectively around issues of instruction, assessment, use of data, CCLS-alignment and professional practice. At TRCS, formal practices that promote and facilitate teacher collaboration have always been central to its approach to teacher development and school improvement. In prior charter terms, TRCS teachers worked in Critical Friends Groups (CFGs), which was the primary forum through which small cohorts of teachers, organized around “clusters” of grades, met to discuss student work and professional practice. During the current charter term, TRCS reviewed its use of CFGs with the intention of expanding teacher collaboration, improving instructional decision-making through protocol-driven discussions among teachers and integrating effective practices developed or enhanced through its participation in PICCS (e.g., uses of Data Coaches, peer review). Throughout this process, it became evident that TRCS' vision of collaborative teacher groups was a broad one best described as comprehensive Professional Learning Communities. PLCs are now the primary professional development practice at TRCS. Teachers also work in PLCs to administer and analyze the results of diagnostic, interim and summative assessments; to observe and provide warm and cool feedback of instruction and to collaborate in designing, implementing, assessing and modifying units of instruction. TRCS has expanded its use of PLCs over the course of the current charter term and has established new categories of PLC teacher leadership (i.e. Coaches). TRCS has also been committed to improving the PLC process throughout the current charter term, as evidenced by the following CEC Objective in furtherance of the school's Professional Development and Staff Collaboration goal: “Continue and

expand the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to support student academic growth, reflective teacher practice, collaboration and inquiry-based discussions among faculty.”

A School wide Data Culture—Data-driven decision-making forms the basis of instructional decisions at TRCS. During the current charter term, TRCS strengthened and expanded its school-wide data culture through targeted professional development, effective use of PLCs to facilitate collaborative analysis and use of data and investments in technology (in addition to leveraging access to a data warehouse and other technology provided to TRCS through PICCS). TRCS collects and uses a variety of student data to inform its instructional decision-making and programming, including state assessments, standardized diagnostic assessments, locally-developed assessments and portfolio-based student project and presentation data. Collection of this data has been and continues to be a starting point for a series of ongoing analysis, questioning and decision-making by the SMT and by teachers—both independently and working in PLCs—regarding ways that the school can address gaps and needs evidenced by the data.⁵

Frequent and Ongoing Opportunities for Reflection and Appropriate Change of Academic Programs—TRCS’ school culture is one that supports, facilitates and responds to ongoing reflection by its board, CSGC, leadership and teachers. At the board level, TRCS Trustees are presented with information about the school’s academic programs, assessment results, operations, financial condition and other important matters, and they deliberate to establish policies and take other appropriate actions in response to problems or concerns. As discussed later in this narrative, the Board has developed a “dashboard” with an annual calendar of required presentations to ensure that discussion and consideration occurs regarding all relevant aspects of the school. Similarly, the CSGC engages regularly in reflective practice—particularly in its development of the CEP. The CEP development process—and especially the process of establishing strategies to achieve CEP goals and objectives—is one in which all members of the CSGC engage in analysis of data, airing and consideration of ideas from diverse school stakeholders and discussion, including discussions facilitated by expert consultants. CSGC members also work in committees, where they research, discuss and deliberate about specific topics, goals and objectives before presenting their findings and recommendations to the CSGC. TRCS’ leadership also engages in deliberative decision-making based on analysis of data, consideration of input from diverse school stakeholders and discussion. Under the leadership of the Principal, the SMT meets at least weekly to review data, discuss areas of strength and challenge and develop strategies for improvement. In its discussions and decision-making, the SMT focuses not only on improving instruction and academic outcomes as reflected on state and other assessments but also on the need to balance rigorous CCLS-aligned instruction in core academic subjects with project-based and experiential learning experiences that promote creativity, self-expression, critical thinking, collaboration skills and other attributes that will help TRCS students become global citizens and leaders. The reflective nature of the TRCS SMT was noted by the NYCDOE 2011-12 Site Visit Report, which said “TRCS’ leadership is reflective and focused on improvement.” Ongoing reflection also characterizes the work of TRCS’ teachers. As noted earlier, TRCS teachers work collaboratively in PLCs to review and analyze student data, develop and assess units of instruction and engage in professional development. PLCs at TRCS use protocols and activities that result in meaningful and effective communication, problem-solving and learning. PLCs focus on improving practice, encouraging questioning and effective feedback and providing a context for teachers better understand their work with students, their relationships with peers and their thoughts, beliefs and assumptions about teaching. Through such dialogue and reflection, TRCS teachers support one another in improving instruction throughout the school.

TRCS’ academic program is consistent with its mission and flexible in addressing the needs of all students. The academic program supports the objectives embedded in its mission statement, including:

a) *Providing a comprehensive academic program aligned with the New York State Common Core learning standards*—Since its founding as a charter school in 2000, TRCS has used curricula, instructional practices and resources that are effective and aligned with NYS Learning Standards. As discussed above, TRCS reviewed its curricula and resources during the current charter term and aligned them with the CCLS. In the process, TRCS replaced

⁵ TRCS’ data culture, resources and practices are discussed in greater detail in Section 2a of this narrative.

some curricular programs and resources to better align with the CCLS. Throughout the current charter term, TRCS has engaged in an ongoing process of reviewing the appropriateness and effectiveness of its academic program and modifying its curriculum and instructional resources, as necessary, to improve academic outcomes. This process has been a data-driven and collaborative one in which all school stakeholder groups have had input –most notably through the CSGC. Among the improvements in TRCS’ curriculum, assessments and instructional programs that occurred during the current charter term are:

- Substantial modifications of the **math** curriculum at all grades to better align with the CCLS, including—
 - Use of Singapore Math (Primary Common Core Edition) in grades K-3
 - Use of Math in Focus (Standards Edition) in grades 4-5
 - Use of Go Math in grades 6-8
 - Use of Prentice Pearson in grades 9-12
 - School-wide use of Engage NY resources
 - Teacher-developed, CCLS-aligned units of instruction across all grades
 - A school-wide review, modification and expansion of the “math skills” program.
- A substantial shift in the **ELA** program, with greater emphasis on Junior Great Books at grades K-8 and school-wide use of Engage NY resources and materials to support teachers in selecting texts and literature and designing instructional units. TRCS’ board and leadership firmly believe that the school’s strong commitment to literacy instruction will support students in becoming proficient and analytical readers which, in turn, will help make them successful in all other academic disciplines. The ELA shift incorporates guided reading in every classroom. Guided reading sessions involve a teacher working with a small group of students several times per week on a set of specific learning objectives. This supports differentiated and targeted instruction that addresses the specific literacy learning needs of individual students. Guided reading is paired with Shared Inquiry which fosters whole group discussions and analysis of both fiction and nonfiction texts. TRCS’ reading intervention programs are implemented not only by classroom teachers and Reading Specialists, but also by special education teachers and the ELL teacher. Through these strategies and practices, TRCS is addressing the needs of all learners within its very diverse student body.
- Additional changes in **ELA** instruction made during the current charter term include—
 - In 2013, the TRCS Board voted to amend its charter goals to change its early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS to Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking. This change was the result of SMT decisions regarding a school-wide focus on literacy in response to the CCLS.
 - In response to analysis of state and local assessment data, TRCS expanded its Writing Workshop to provide additional and targeted support to all students focused on improving their writing skills. This expansion of Writing Workshop has resulted in a substantial increase in the classroom time that students spend writing and in school-wide improvements in student writing. At the middle school level, expanded ELA blocks with Writing Workshop have replaced the Literacy Blocks used in prior charter terms and the early part of the current charter term.
 - TRCS retained additional Reading Specialists to support teachers. Reading Specialists also use the Leveled Literacy Intervention System by Fountas and Pinnell to provide additional support to TRCS’ at-risk readers. In addition, several TRCS teachers are proficient in Wilson Reading and one Reading Specialist is currently being trained in Wilson Reading to support students in decoding.
 - TRCS is currently working with the Children’s Literacy Initiative to improve instruction at grades K-3.
 - TRCS recognizes the importance of developing strong cursive writing skills, particularly in this age when more and more students are using computers. Indeed, research indicates that cursive writing improves brain development in the areas of thinking, language and working memory and stimulates brain synapses and synchronicity between the left and right hemispheres. (In fact, the College Board found that students who wrote in cursive for the essay portion of the SAT scored slightly higher than those who printed which experts believe is because the speed and efficiency

- of writing in cursive allowed the students to focus on the content of their essays.) In the current charter term, TRCS adopted the “Handwriting Without Tears” program in grades K-3. Students work from writing readiness to printing and cursive. The scope and sequence of lessons is based on research about how children learn best—i.e. research that found that children learn more effectively by actively doing and by using the different senses. Cursive instruction at TRCS emphasizes the use of cursive writing in classroom note-taking and other skills that students will use throughout their lives.
- TRCS introduced a new Advanced Placement course and examination in Literature
 - TRCS introduced the CCLS-aligned FOSS program as its primary **science** curriculum. FOSS is now used in grades K-7. To support the use of FOSS, TRCS has leveraged its relationship with CEI-PEA to identify an outstanding science consultant and FOSS expert to provide professional development and support to teachers. Another critical change in the TRCS science program during the current charter term was the commitment to prepare 8th grade students to take and pass the Earth Science Regents examination. TRCS’ 8th grade students taking the Earth Science Regents exam during the current charter term have been very successful—i.e.—
 - In 2011-12, 25 students out of 54 in the Earth Science class took the Regents Exam and 22 students—i.e. 88%—passed the exam.
 - In 2012-13, 39 students out of 54 in the Earth Science class took the Regents Exam and 35 students—i.e. 90%—passed the exam.
 - In 2013-14, 45 students out of 54 in the Earth Science class took the Regents Exam and 40 students—i.e. 88%—passed the exam
 - In addition, TRCS integrated the Urban Advantage program into its **science** programs. This initiative included enhanced professional development for teachers and increased access to museums and other science-based organizations and institutions. This initiative also expanded opportunities for parents and families to visit museums and participate in science education programs. In addition, TRCS now offers an Advanced Placement course in Biology.
 - TRCS modified its **Social Studies** curriculum to expand student work in Global History Labs and to support teachers in using student data and integrating geography into the Social Studies curriculum. To this end, TRCS leveraged Global Humanities grant funds to secure the services of consultants with expertise in Geography to support TRCS’ middle school teachers. In addition, TRCS now offers Advanced Placement courses in World History, U.S. History and Human Geography.
 - TRCS restructured its **Arts** program dramatically during the current charter term. TRCS believes that instruction in the arts is essential in helping students become creative thinkers. The current arts program comprises—
 - Creative movement in grades K-4.
 - Art and music in grades 5-6
 - In 7th grade, students rotate between art, music and drama, and then choose a “major”
 - In 8th grade, students engage in study in the “major” they selected the previous year.
 - In 9th grade, students rotate between art, music and drama, and then choose a “major”
 - In 10th and 11th grades, students engage in study in the “major” they selected
 - In 12th grade, students can engage in further study in the “major” they selected or can engage in a multi-media arts elective and/or arts internships.
 - TRCS modified its **Physical Education/Health** programs to introduce an anti-bullying curriculum that provided anti-bullying instruction to students and parents, supported teachers with considerable professional development and aligned curricula across several subjects with the Dignity for All Students Act. In addition, TRCS modified its health education curricula to increase emphasis on nutrition education. In addition, TRCS introduced a culinary program overseen by the in-house school chef in which students learn about and prepare healthy and nutritious food. With the support of a federal Carol White Physical Education Program (PEP) grant, TRCS has expanded its Physical Education program to include martial arts and dance and to emphasize to students the importance of being active throughout their lives. The PEP grant has also supported TRCS in integrating the

SPARK curriculum into its Physical Education program and in using pedometers to track the movement of students throughout each day. The integration of SPARK has proven to be an interesting challenge since several teachers were initially reluctant to stop using the school's old Physical Education curriculum and adapt SPARK activities. Over the course of the PEP grant term, TRCS has engaged in several efforts to inform teachers about the benefits of the SPARK curriculum and to build "buy-in" on the part of its Physical Education program teachers. The teachers were trained in the SPARK curriculum last year and are currently working independently and collaboratively to integrate SPARK into their classes.

- TRCS modified its **Spanish** curriculum and schedule, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels during the current charter term. Students in grades K-8 now take classes four times per week. At the K-5 level, TRCS has replaced the "homegrown" curriculum it used during the prior charter terms with the Calico Spanish language curriculum. Spanish language instruction has been expanded to the 12th grade, and TRCS is working with a consultant to further modify the Spanish instructional program at all grades. The consultant is working directly with TRCS teachers to support alignment of the Spanish curriculum with standards, integrating best practices and designing scaffolded units of study. In addition, TRCS offers Advanced Placement courses in Spanish language and Spanish literature.
- A key objective in the TRCS CEP Plan is to "Ensure all **special education** students make strong academic progress toward TRCS academic performance measures and assess the impact of the school's special education program." TRCS accommodates children with a wide range of disabilities, including autism, dyslexia, visual impairment and emotional and physical handicaps. Students with special needs are fully integrated into general education classrooms, many of which have two teachers. Over the course of the current charter term, TRCS has reviewed and modified its Special Education programs to react to changes in its student population. The demographic profile of TRCS' student body changed significantly over the current charter term, and the school's special education population grew from roughly 10% at the beginning of the term to roughly 16% school-wide and 21% in high school grades in the current year. In addition, the needs of TRCS students with IEPs have grown increasingly more serious, including a group of autistic students from District 75 who share the TRCS space and are fully mainstreamed and integrated into TRCS' general education program beginning in kindergarten. These changes have required TRCS to make changes in its professional development initiatives and re-structure elements of its special education program. Through a collaborative decision-making process that included input from the SMT, the CSGC and PLCs, TRCS identified the need to better support all teachers in differentiating instruction and addressing the needs of at-risk students and students with disabilities as a priority issue and modified its professional development programming accordingly. Greater attention in professional development is given to supporting teachers in identifying student needs and differentiating instruction and in having special education and general education teachers work together to implement effective practices and co-teaching strategies in the classroom. TRCS also expanded the number of Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes. These modifications in its special education programs have improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities and contributed to TRCS' recognition as an Inside Schools "pick for special education." (<http://insideschools.org/component/schools/school/1318>)

b) *Preparing students to be educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders and global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment and sustainable development*—TRCS is committed to providing progressive and humanistic instruction that builds students' capacities for leadership and problem-solving, critical thinking skills, abilities to collaborate effectively and capacities to view events, circumstances and challenges from a lens of understanding, tolerance and empathy. As Principal Stacey Gauthier said in an interview when she received the 2013 Blackboard Award for Outstanding Principal:

"We know that graduates are more likely to be successful if their education is well-rounded and provides them with the desire to be life-long learners and leaders. The education we

provide must also enable our children to meet the demands of the global environment they are inheriting. Keeping pace with these changes is not an easy task, but it is one we fully embrace.”

TRCS has a “three-tiered curriculum” consisting of core studies (discussed above), project-based and experiential learning and community involvement. Each tier is valued as a significant pathway for student learning. While community involvement will be discussed later in this application narrative, TRCS’ project-based, experiential and related learning initiatives are discussed below.

- *Project-based and Experiential Learning*—TRCS has embedded project-based and experiential learning throughout its curriculum. Multidisciplinary project-based learning is emphasized at all grade levels. Many of the multi-disciplinary projects implemented during the current charter term have used art to help students learn about important topics in Science, Social Studies and other subjects, such as the 1st grade Our Planet Art Project, a 3rd grade project in which students made sculptures based on rain forest animals and the 5th grade Women History Art Project in which students made banners to illustrate great accomplishments and contributions made by women throughout American history. Many of the school’s most innovative and effective project-based learning experiences have occurred in Global Labs in which students created videos, music videos, original musical compositions and other artistic works about topics in history, ELA and other core subjects. Among the Global Lab projects developed during the current charter term are the 10th grade Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece Global Labs, the 10th grade “Hunger Game” Global Lab (in which students explored the change from the Paleolithic Era to the Neolithic Revolution, the Industrial Revolution Global Lab and Who’s to Blame (in which 10th grade students and 2nd grade students worked together to explore issues related to child labor and slavery in the cocoa industry). Experiential learning at TRCS is implemented through a variety of methods, including community service learning experiences and curriculum-embedded trips and special events, including field trips to museums, theaters, art galleries and films; school organized college visits; art, music, dance and drama exhibitions; talent shows and Open Mic nights; and multicultural celebrations. Experiential learning at TRCS is best exemplified by its groundbreaking Rensizzle Week program—i.e. one week each year in which regular classes are suspended and students engage in non-traditional learning experiences based on the educational philosophy of Joseph Renzulli, an American educational psychologist who touted the immersion experience. Since its introduction more than a decade ago, it has grown to an average of 20 groups of 7th-12th grade students who spend the week engaged in in-depth exploration of one subject, with an emphasis on its’ relation to New York. Students work in mixed-grade groupings and engage in authentic, hands-on learning experiences. Topics of exploration during the current charter term have included Asian Potpourri, Culinary Arts, Cultures and Cuisines, Dance NYC, Drama NYC, Geology & Astronomy, Graphic Novel, Lego Robotics, Media in the New Age, Museum NYC, Music Studio, NYCeums (i.e. museums across NYC), Museum Week (focusing on Art & Science), NYC Landmarks, Nutrition and Fitness, Sights and Sounds for Change, Survival NYC, Urban Farming (Permaculture), and Water in Nature. In keeping with TRCS’ belief that the City of New York and its environs are among the world’s greatest educational laboratories, most Rensizzle Week activities take students out of the building and into the city, around the neighborhood, into the woods, along waterways, down into mines and caves, and on all kinds of experiential adventures. Most Rensizzle Week classes result in individual or collective presentations by students reflecting not only what they’ve learned but also their feelings, opinions and deeper understandings about what they’ve learned. Following Rensizzle Week each year, students post their presentations, photos and projects on the TRCS web page and make Rensizzle wiki pages to showcase their work.

During the current charter term, TRCS confronted the challenge of making the Rensizzle Week program more engaging and academically rigorous for its middle and high school students. Initially, Rensizzle Week was perceived as a student-driven initiative in which most decisions regarding programming would be recommended by students and then implemented by students working with

guidance and direction from teachers. A review of the Rensizzle program occurred at the beginning of 2012-13 and included interviews and discussions with teachers who had had strong experiences with students during Rensizzle Week and with teachers who had struggled in their Rensizzle Week experiences. This teacher input—along with input from other stakeholders—was obtained through the use of a protocol called “Hopes and Fears,” which allowed people to express their feelings about the Rensizzle experience anonymously. A collaborative team of teachers and administrators then created a concept map that showed that there were far more areas and questions around staff buy-in and delivery than around student, parent and community support for the program, which has been and continues to be strong. Among these questions around staff buy-in and delivery were: a) teacher buy-in for Rensizzle’s authentic learning experience was inconsistent; with some faculty members valuing it highly as an integral part of TRCS’ program and others feeling that it just took time away from their teaching plans or was a week where real learning did not take place; b) some faculty—and especially faculty members who were new to TRCS—did not fully understand the purpose and desired outcomes of Rensizzle Week; and c) many faculty members expressed concern over their ability to lead a successful learning experience that was often outside of their area of expertise and/or with student they do not regularly teach. TRCS’ review of and discussions focused on these findings resulted in a re-thinking of the school’s approach that aimed to provide for stronger faculty understanding of and leadership in Rensizzle Week.

A core group of school stakeholders including the SMT and teacher leaders then developed an action plan that included expanding opportunities for collaboration and planning as well as expanding resources and support. Each core group member had a specific focus - 1) logistical support; 2) curriculum planning and guidance; 3) collaboration; and 4) student engagement. Group members worked independently and collaboratively—including a full-day Election Day meeting focused on Rensizzle. These areas obviously had a lot of overlap and came together in a comprehensive professional development plan which included a full Election day devoted to Rensizzle and time allocated for discussions about reforming Rensizzle during TRCS’ weekly afternoon professional development sessions. Throughout the planning process, teachers throughout the school were kept apprised of developments in restructuring Rensizzle and were provided opportunities for input. To build teacher awareness of the purpose, objectives and process of Rensizzle, teachers received communications several times per week with descriptions of progress in restructuring Rensizzle along with Rensizzle Week timelines, activities, outcomes, etc. These communications were effective in building “teacher buy-in.” The Action Plan ultimately resulted in several changes in the implementation of Rensizzle in the later years of the charter term.

The new approach to Rensizzle Week programming has proven to be effective—i.e. faculty and student surveys were very encouraging and indicative that the school’s efforts are serving to strengthen this signature TRCS program. Specifically, following the first modified Rensizzle, students and staff were surveyed regarding its successes and challenges. Survey results and informal discussions with teachers indicated clearly that both teacher and student support of Rensizzle had improved. For instance, teachers were asked, “Do you think your students learned something valuable during the week?” and 83.3% of teachers answered “yes, definitely,” “16.7% answered “hopefully, but not sure” and no one answered “no, I don't think so.” Importantly, the modifications increasing the teachers role in planning Rensizzle programming did not seem to lessen student engagement in or enjoyment of Rensizzle. In the post-Rensizzle Day survey, students were asked to rate their overall experience and 16.7% said it was “awesome,” “83.3 % said it was “pretty good” and no one said it was “not so good.”⁶

⁶ The review and improvement of the Rensizzle Week program was featured in a 2012-13 Cahn Fellows Program (Columbia University Teacher’s College) Inquiry Project Reflection Report co-authored by TRCS Principal and Cahn Fellow Stacey Gauthier, Teacher Leader Dan Fanelli and Cahn Ally.

- College Preparation*—TRCS has always been committed to preparing its students for entry into and success in college, which it views as an important step in becoming self-sufficient adults, leaders and committed global citizens. From its early years, it has integrated college preparatory programming and supports for students and their families into its academic programs, and it has long-standing College Office with staff dedicated to supporting TRCS students in gaining entry into and succeeding in college. During the current charter term, TRCS enhanced and expanded its college preparation programs for high school students at all grade levels, with a focus on literacy. Specifically, TRCS has provided college skills-specific courses to twice per week in 9th grade, with a focus on helping students become aware of post-secondary school options, building awareness of high school work and graduation requirements and preparing students to take the PSAT, SAT/ACT and other tests required by colleges. Ninth grade students also begin to build academic and career portfolios that they will use when they apply to college. At the 10th grade level, students engage in college preparatory courses once per week, with a focus on preparation for the PSAT and SAT. At the 11th grade level, students engage in college preparation programs twice per week, with a focus on SAT/ACT preparation, developing a college-bound resume, establishing and updating a 4-year college/career plan, participation in a Leadership Program, understanding college entrance requirements and completion of a first draft to the 150-word essay required by the Common Application. At the 12th grade level, students engage in college preparation programs 5 times per week, with a focus on helping seniors complete their college, scholarship and financial aid applications and building understanding of the transition process from high school to college, including topics ranging from selecting a roommate to creating a successful study environment in a dormitory room. At the senior level, TRCS’ college preparation program provides extensive support to students and families in areas ranging from applying to college to securing financial aid. In addition, the 12th grade college preparation program continues to build college-specific literacy skills, including a requirement that students prepare a 10-page research paper that meets college standards. In addition, TRCS students now complete leadership and internship programs during each year of high school. In the current charter term, TRCS introduced an “Introduction to College Reading and Writing” course. TRCS’ college preparation program also provides extensive information and support to parents at all grade levels.⁷ Given that many of its students are or will be the first in their families to go to college—and that many families of TRCS students do not speak English and are unfamiliar with the college admissions process—TRCS’ support and information to students’ parents and families is especially important. TRCS’ college preparation program also utilizes the resources offered by organizations such as New Visions and the College Access Consortium of New York (CACNY), along with other programs and institutions that offer academic, volunteer and internship opportunities to TRCS students beginning in the 9th grade. Also, through its “College Now” program, TRCS students can take college courses and earn college credit at Queens College, Hunter College, Baruch College and other 4-year colleges, as well as at community colleges such as La Guardia and Queensborough Colleges. TRCS’ college preparation programs have been very successful—i.e. this year, 100% of TRCS graduates were accepted into college. TRCS’ graduates this year include a Gates Millennium Scholar, a Posse Scholar, and National and Spanish Honor Society members. TRCS graduates this year have been accepted to attend a variety of colleges, including Cornell University, NYU, Dickinson College, Penn State, University of New Haven, SUNY Fashion Institute of Technology, LaGuardia CC, LIU Brooklyn Campus, Hunter College, NYC College of Technology, Borough of Manhattan CC, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Baruch College, City, Buffalo State University, York College, Queens College, SUNY Albany, SUNY Binghamton, John Jay College, Adelphi University, Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Queensborough CC, and Brooklyn College.

TRCS’ academic program is flexible in addressing the needs of all students. As discussed above, TRCS has established a school-wide data culture that empowers all teachers to use a variety of student data to

⁷ http://trcscollegeoffice.blogspot.com/p/parents_26.html

differentiate instruction to address individual student needs. Teachers work in PLCs to analyze student data and establish student-specific learning experiences and interventions. Over the course of the current charter term, TRCS reviewed and modified its approach to differentiated instruction. As a member of the initial PICCS consortium, TRCS explored the possibility of establishing Individual Achievement Plans (IAPs) for each student but ultimately determined that differentiation of instruction and provision of personalized student support could occur most effectively through PLCs and the advisory program. Consequently, TRCS has dramatically increased its use and support of PLCs to analyze student data and differentiate instruction and has eliminated use of IAPs. In addition, TRCS has refined its advisory program to become more data-driven so that it can provide personalized support to each TRCS student.

Over the course of the current charter term, TRCS has continued to provide opportunities for remediation and acceleration to its students, including ELL students and students with disabilities. The primary vehicle for remediation and acceleration support has been The Learning Center (TLC), i.e. a "managed care" program for students who either need remedial help or who wish to accelerate or enrich their studies. Part-time teachers and two full-time paraprofessionals manage the TLC study center. The TLC includes NovaNET and Brigham Young University distance learning. The TLC has been successful in providing a way for students to make-up needed credits, and it has helped to improve the course passing rates of all participating students, especially those with IEPs.

TRCS has used a coherent and effective interim assessment system throughout the current charter term. As discussed earlier, TRCS is now using the Fountas and Pinnell assessments instead of E-CLAS, which was used in the prior charter terms. Apart from this change (and the use of interim assessments connected directly to new academic curricula), TRCS' assessment program has been consistent with that of the prior charter terms. Assessment data is assessed and used by teachers working independently and in PLCs to identify and address student needs. TRCS uses NYS ELA, Math, Science and Regents Exams, along with Fountas and Pinnell, curriculum-related assessments and local CCLS-aligned assessments, along with student portfolios and case studies to monitor progress, identify student needs, predict performance and adjust instruction.

TRCS' approach to supporting all of its students was recently recognized by Chancellor Carmen Farina during her tour of NYC schools. In a letter dated June 16, 2014, Dr. Farina wrote "I was particularly impressed by your school's thoughtful and creative approach to individualized student support. The assessment-based personalized instruction provided at TRCS builds on students' academic strengths, interests and creativity, which allows them to gain knowledge and understanding through critical thinking, academic and social engagement, and experiential learning." She added that "It is clear from the classrooms and hallway environments I observed that your students love attending school, that your teachers work as a team and that your leadership is truly serving our students."

TRCS has established a teacher evaluation process that includes observations and feedback and that supports improved classroom instruction. Evaluations are part of an ongoing, year-round process in which a teacher discusses performance with his or her administrator, including discussion about progress made since the last review and goals for the next evaluation. The evaluation process is designed to ensure that both the teacher and his/her administrator understand their respective roles in assisting and supporting the teacher to achieve his/her career goals. TRCS views evaluation as an opportunity for professional growth and development. Accordingly, TRCS' evaluation process is one that engages teachers in goal-setting and dialogue around areas of professional practice, and the results of teacher evaluation are used to guide TRCS in decision-making regarding professional development, mentoring, coaching and other initiatives to support teachers in their professional growth. Since 2012, TRCS has been engaged in a collaboration with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) to modify its teacher evaluation system to align with recent changes in New York State education law (to the extent such law applies to TRCS, as a public charter school) and the recent Determination and Order of the Commissioner of Education, dated June 1, 2013 (to the extent such Decision and Order applies to TRCS). The challenge for TRCS has been to establish a teacher evaluation process that is robust and substantially in alignment with the above while still reflecting the unique mission, history and collaborative culture and of TRCS. In order to ensure that the process of modifying the teacher

evaluation system benefits from input and feedback from a diverse group of school stakeholders, TRCS has designed the process to be uniquely teacher-driven. The intention is to craft a plan that blends statewide measurements with other indicators of authentic learning. TRCS' belief is that a plan that is largely teacher-generated will foster strong individual accountability while at the same time promoting the core TRCS values of collaboration and cooperation. Throughout the last two years, a group of teachers comprising the UFT Chapter leader and delegate have met regularly with members of the SMT to develop a plan and to negotiate with the TRCS administration. As the plan has been developed, it has been shared with teachers throughout the school. Among the teachers who have been involved in this effort is Dan Fanelli, a 7th grade science teacher who was interviewed about the experience by Schoolbook.org (from WYNC NPR). Mr. Fanelli said that the process of modifying the teacher evaluation system is wholly consistent with TRCS' "philosophy that the best ideas come from the bottom up, rather than from administrators, policymakers or politicians" and that teachers from across the school are "willing to put in time after school to be in that meeting and make decisions about what's coming up in the future." Through this collaborative, teacher-driven process—and with the enthusiastic participation described by Mr. Fanelli—TRCS expects that the plan will have a high degree of "buy-in" by teachers across the school. As Century Foundation fellow Halley Potter has written, such an approach "is a really important way to make good teachers who want to stay at a school."

While the new evaluation plan is in the process of being negotiated, core elements of the plan are presently in place and were enacted at TRCS during the current charter term. Among the core elements of TRCS' current teacher evaluation system that will remain in effect throughout the current charter term are:

- Teacher evaluation at TRCS is based largely on observations using rubrics based on Charlotte Danielson's Danielson Framework for Teaching to assess professional practice in four domains: (1) Planning and Preparation; (2) The Classroom Environment; (3) Instruction; and (4) Professional Responsibilities.⁸ Observations that are used in evaluation are done by the Principal or by the appropriate Director of Teaching and Learning. Other administrative staff, including the Director of Data and Accountability and the Director of Development and Partnerships, may do observations for evaluative purposes of teachers for whom they are the direct supervisor by mutual consent of TRCS and the UFT. TRCS considers all components and domains of the Danielson rubric in assigning teachers a HEDI rating (i.e. "Highly Effective," "Effective," "Developing" or "Ineffective"). Danielson ratings for all TRCS teachers are valid and transparent—i.e. all ratings in Danielson domains are based on documented evidence (and any component for which there is no documented evidence is rated) and teachers are provided with copies of observers' notes from observations and other documented evaluative evidence. Teachers are also allowed to provide written comments on evaluation materials and additional documentation, and they may request additional observations beyond those mandated by the TRCS evaluation process. The use of the Danielson Framework was noted positively by the NYCDOE in its 2014 Annual Comprehensive Review Report, which said "TRCS has implemented the Danielson framework and utilizes it for the walk-throughs, formal observations, trend walk-throughs, lesson planning, coaches training and teacher improvement plans as needed. Danielson gives the school a "common language" of what good teaching should look like, and all staff have been provided with extensive training."
- There are two types of observations at TRCS—i.e. Focus Observations and Comprehensive Observations
 - A Focus Observation is an observation that is not mutually scheduled by the teacher and observer and is not preceded by a pre-observation conference. Focus observations used for evaluative purposes must last at least 15 minutes, and Danielson rubric components to be assessed may be selected by the observer or the teacher. Following each Focus observation, teachers are sent a post-

⁸ TRCS recognizes that the Danielson rubric was not intended by its creator to be an evaluation tool for teachers. Nonetheless, its focus on identifying and measuring improvement in specific and important components of professional teaching practice make it the perfect instrument for framing observations and dialogues in TRCS' collaborative, professional growth-oriented evaluation model.

observation form with low-inference notes and written feedback from the observer. At the end of each Focus observation, the observer provides the teacher with a rating for each domain based on a review of all evidence for that domain and an overall rating for the set of domains.

- A Comprehensive Observation is an observation mutually scheduled by the teacher and the observer which is preceded by a pre-observation conference—i.e. an individual conference between the observer and teacher during which the lesson plan for the observation is reviewed. Following each comprehensive observation, teachers receive a post-observation form with low-inference notes from the observer, and they [participate in a post-observation conference.
- Each year, teachers are evaluated and assigned a **HEDI** designation--i.e. "Highly Effective," "Effective," "Developing" or "Ineffective.". Similarly, teachers who are “Developing” or “Ineffective” are provided with professional development opportunities tailored to their specific needs and performance targets. Teachers who are assigned an “Effective” or “Highly Effective” are also provided with appropriate guidance and professional development opportunities.
 - Any TRCS teacher who receives a rating of “Ineffective” or “Developing” must establish a Teacher Improvement Plan (TIP), which must include at least the following: a) areas of growth, where specific improvement is needed and supporting evidence; b) specific recommendations for improvement; c) resources to be utilized to assist with the improvement; d) the means by which improvement will be measured; and e) a reasonable timeframe for achieving the specified improvement(s). Each TIP is based on the Danielson rubric and specifies areas of growth and improvement in specific Danielson domains. As part of each TIP, TRCS’ Principal is charged with taking proactive and affirmative action to support the teacher in correcting any cited deficiencies and in improving the teacher’s professional practice. Teachers are then supported in achieving the improvements specified in the TIP. Teachers in “Ineffective” or “Developing” status are evaluated through observations the following year.
 - “Highly effective” and “Effective” teachers are required to identify areas in which they can improve and are provided with professional development and other support to enhance their capacity in the identified Danielson domains and components. In addition, they are given opportunities for consideration of alternative measures of professional practice to be integrated into their evaluations, including portfolios and leadership responsibilities such as mentoring teachers.

As described later in this application narrative, teacher evaluation results are used to develop school-wide priorities and professional development objectives and programs each year.

1c. Learning Environment

Schools with successful learning environments have many of the characteristics below:

- *Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student leaning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)*
- *Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school*
- *Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment*
- *Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported*
- *Have formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)*

Schools should describe their progress toward implementing their stated mission and how their mission has been translated into student academic and behavioral expectations. School should also address how these expectations have been communicated to students, families, and the school community. Schools should share

evidence of their successes and discuss any challenges in successfully establishing the desired learning environment and how the school responded to those challenges.

Throughout its prior and current charter terms, TRCS has lived its mission by supporting all students in meeting high academic and behavioral expectations and helping them build the skills and aptitudes necessary to become leaders and committed global citizens. During the current charter term, TRCS introduced new and innovative initiatives to achieve these objectives, including the TRCS Advisory Program. TRCS implemented a student advisory program loosely based on The Origins Program Developmental Designs⁹ approach in the 2012-13 school year, with a revised model implemented in the 2013-14 school year. The advisory program has focused on creating a safe space where advisors can enhance student social-emotional development and work on team building. Their activities worked toward the advisory program’s three major goals:

- Supporting Students in Monitoring Academic Goals—Each advisor is paired with another teacher once a week to conduct academic advisement. Advisors meet with students individually and use the Academic Goals sheet to record student goals and strategies for achieving those goals. Progress toward achieving goals and setting new goals takes place at subsequent conferences. Typically, each advisor conferences with one or two students during a single advisory session.
- Supporting Students’ Social-Emotional Development—The Middle school and high school advisory groups focuses on the same topics and lesson plans each week. Lesson plans, written by TRCS staff members, are intended to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diverse needs of group age, gender, and academic achievement.
- Promoting Community Service through An Advisory-Developed Project Or Initiative. In the community service component, students and advisors brainstorm around various issues, such as the environment, the elderly, etc. and come to consensus about a single issue to focus on or an organization to volunteer for. Students then research a topic and share their presentations or projects at the spring Advisory Community Service Fair.

The following table shows the 2013-14 advisory curriculum overview.

Whole Advisory Curriculum Overview	Year	7th and 8th	9th	10th	11th
2013-2014 Month					
September		*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Guidelines	*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Guidelines	*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Guidelines	Team Building/ Goal Setting/ ILP
October		*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Academic Goal Setting *Personal Goal Setting	*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Academic Goal Setting *Personal Goal Setting	*Exploration of Self *Team Building *Academic Goal Setting *Personal Goal Setting	Team Building / Goal Setting/ ILP
November		Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal Relation	Focus on world relations
December		Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal Relation	Focus on world relations
January (Surveys)		Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Community Building/ state/global

⁹ <http://www.originsonline.org/developmental-designs>

February	*Leadership *Community Building	*Leadership *Community Building	Community Building / Jackson Heights / NYC	Community Building/ state/global
March	*Leadership *Community Building *Service Learning	*Leadership *Community Building *Service Learning	*Leadership *Community Building *Service Learning	Stress/Communicati on/ Conflict Resolution
April	*Leadership *Global Citizenship *Service Learning	*Leadership *Global Citizenship *Service Learning	*Leadership *Global Citizenship *Service Learning	Stress/Communicati on/ Conflict Resolution
May	*Leadership *Service Learning	*Leadership *Service Learning	*Leadership *Service Learning	Community Building
June (Surveys)	Reflection & Celebration	Reflection & Celebration	Reflection & Celebration	Community Building

Source: Renaissance

In 2013-14, Measurement Incorporated was commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of the TRCS advisory program. Its findings were very positive, including:

“In two years the Renaissance Charter School has developed a successful advisory program model run by a competent Advisory Planning Committee and has made admirable progress... During this time, the advisory program’s goals have been defined and the planning committee has developed an annual curriculum with two years of well thought-out lesson plans. Planning and preparation for the advisory program has been standardized into structured monthly advisory meetings, the result of which is a group of advisors who generally agree with the advisory program’s philosophy and goals and who understand what is expected of them. It seems that, in general, the advisory program is well received by students and advisors.”

In addition to its Advisory Program, TRCS has established opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and lifetime capacity for active citizenship and civic engagement. Among these opportunities is **the Leadership Program**. The primary purpose of the Leadership Program is to motivate students to find their own answers to two essential questions directly related to TRCS’ mission—i.e. “how can I make the world a better place?” and “how do I want to contribute to the world when I am older?” All students in grades 9-12 are required to participate in a leadership, volunteer or internship program each semester of high school, with 9th grade students engaging in Leadership Program activities on-site at TRCS, 10th grade students participating in Leadership Program activities either on-site at TRCS or at an outside organization for 16 hours each semester and 11th and 12th grade students participating in Leadership Program activities at an outside organization 16 hours each semester. The Leadership Program is overseen by the school’s College Office, which leverages TRCS’ many partnerships and relationships with nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies and other organizations across NYC to create a wide variety of internship, service learning and related opportunities. The Leadership Program has been expanded significantly during the current charter term. Students are currently offered opportunities to participate in Leadership Program activities in fields ranging from agriculture & animal science to business & marketing to animation, visual arts, dance and theater to architecture and engineering to fashion and event planning to health, nutrition and medicine. Other fields include community service and volunteering, journalism, law and government, environmental science, film and photography, music and work in museums. Among the partner organizations that provide internships and related learning experience to students participating in the Leadership Program are El Museo Del Barrio’s Youth Council; RecYouth: Reel Education for Youth; Tech Kids Unlimited; the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (Ailey School’s Junior Division); the Brooklyn Public Library; NYC Salt

Photography; the Stella Adler Studio of Acting; Maysles Documentary Center; Young Dancemakers Company; and the Possibility Project (dance and theater).

TRCS has established and maintained a safe, respectful and stable academic learning environment throughout the current charter term. In its 2012 Annual Site Visit report, NYC DOE stated that “The student learning environment was observed to be safe, orderly, and respectful...,” that classrooms were clean, safe, well-resourced, and cheerful and students were respectful of the materials and resources,” and that classrooms observed had clear rules and expectations for student behavior posted and on the day of the visit there were few behavioral interruptions to learning.” These observations about safety, cleanliness and respect are consistent with the experiences of TRCS’ teachers and students, as reflected by responses to questions about the learning environment of the NYCDOE School Surveys. For instance, in the 2013-14 School Survey, 100% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am safe,” 87% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “My school is kept clean,” 93% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that “adults treat students with respect” and 95% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that “most students treat adults with respect.” Similarly, 83% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “I am safe in my classes” and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that “I am safe in the hallways, locker rooms and cafeteria.” TRCS has been proactive during the current charter term in helping teachers improve their classroom learning environments and, to this end, TRCS worked with Ramapo for Children to help build teachers’ capacity to improve classroom management and address the needs of students with special needs.

TRCS’ formal discipline policy (Attachment 3 of the revised charter) sets forth the policy of the school regarding how students are expected to behave when participating in school activities, as well as the school’s responses when students fail to behave in accordance with these expectations. The discipline policy has been reviewed and updated annually to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. The policy is shared with students, teachers and parents on the TRCS website. The policy was also amended formally during the current charter term to comply with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), and the school instituted new procedures and practices to address DASA requirements (e.g. TRCS appointed and supported the training of a DASA Coordinator). TRCS is committed to balancing strict student discipline with positive student behavior management within a collaborative school culture. Accordingly, TRCS is seeking to integrate principles and practices of Restorative Justice into its student discipline policies. During the current charter term, the CSGC, SMT and other school stakeholders engaged in a comprehensive study of Restorative Justice with the intention of integrating appropriate elements of Restorative Justice into TRCS’ discipline policies and school culture. As a result of this study, TRCS introduced Youth Court, in which students review the behavior of their peers and, where appropriate, sentence them to community service or other appropriate consequences. TRCS is continuing to explore opportunities to integrate Restorative Justice principles into its discipline policies and culture, and it expects to incorporate additional Restorative Justice practices during the remainder of the current charter term and thereafter.

2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

2a. Mission and Goals

Schools with a successful mission and goals have many of the characteristics below:

- Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace*
- Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals*
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data*

Schools should describe how they monitor progress toward their goals and report on that progress to staff, the Board, and the surrounding community. Schools may want to reflect in this section on whether goals were adequately reflective of school’s mission and were sufficiently clear, ambitious, and realistic for the most recent charter term.

TRCS is based on the conviction that a change in the destiny of a single individual can lead to a change in the destiny of a community, nation, and ultimately humankind. Its mission as a K-12 school is to provide a comprehensive academic program aligned with the New York Common Core learning standards that fosters educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will through their own educational development and personal growth spark a renaissance in New York City and beyond. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development.

All activities at TRCS—from school-wide planning and governance to collaborative leadership and classroom instruction to professional development and academic enrichment—focus on carrying out the mission of the school. As discussed earlier in this application narrative, TRCS’ academic program furthers both the academic and social objectives embedded in the mission statement. In addition TRCS, through its CSGC, has established school-wide goals and objectives directly tied to the school’s mission and it has incorporated these goals and objectives into the school’s CEP, including goals and objectives related to academic success in all core disciplines, academic success for at-risk students, professional development and staff collaboration, school environment and safety, parent involvement, organizational viability, data (as it relates to achieving student academic growth objectives) and school-wide communication and collaboration. In one additional area, the CEP goals and objectives focus clearly on TRCS’ objectives to develop global citizens and leaders in the renaissance in NYC and beyond. Specifically, the CSGC has established goals, objectives and protocols in the area of “Renaissance Person and Global Competencies.” In furtherance of the school’s mission, the goal in this area are to “stimulate an increase sense of a ‘Renaissance Person’ within each student, which is based on shared values, promotes leadership and encourages community, cultural and global literacy and responsibility.”

TRCS’ mission has been shared and embraced across the entire school community. While the typical student or other school stakeholder might not be able to recite the mission word for word, it is clear that they are aware of its substance and embrace the school’s values. Throughout its history, TRCS has been proactive in sharing its mission and philosophy with all school stakeholders. Students, families and the general public are made aware of TRCS’ mission through the school’s student recruitment process, community outreach, extensive community partnerships and public profile. In recruitment materials, presentations and other communications with prospective students and their families, TRCS informs all interested persons about the core beliefs and academic mission of the school. Such awareness-building ensures that any students and families that apply to attend TRCS are in agreement with its mission. In addition, TRCS shares its mission to families and the general public during its extensive community outreach each year for student recruitment, developing internships and other external learning opportunities for students and building community partnerships. The school mission—and ongoing programs and activities that support it—are also shared to all school stakeholders in TRCS’ widely-distributed monthly newsletter and specialized newsletters (e.g. the December 2014 TRCS Health and Wellness Newsletter), which clearly state that TRCS is “Developing leaders for the renaissance of New York” and document activities, programs and milestones related to furthering the mission, along with information about opportunities for parents and other school stakeholders to become more involved in the school. In addition, the school’s mission and values have been shared with school stakeholders and the wider public through the positive and informative press coverage that TRCS has received throughout its operation. In the current term alone, TRCS has been profiled, featured or included in articles and reports in many news outlets including the New York Times (which named it one of the 100 most diverse schools in NYC),¹⁰ U.S. News and World Report (which listed TRCS as one of the best high schools in NYS in its “Best High School” rankings)¹¹ and the NY Daily News (which named TRCS as a top NYC High School¹² and profiled TRCS and Rensizzle in a special U.S. News and World Report supplement

¹⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/05/11/nyregion/segregation-in-new-york-city-public-schools.html?_r=1&

¹¹ <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-york/rankings>

¹² TRCS was the only charter school and the only school with lottery admission on this list.
<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/city-top-high-schools-article-1.1483645>

on the best high schools in Queens and NYC). In addition, school stakeholder groups are informed about the school's mission and philosophy and given opportunities to support the school's mission and values in many ways, including:

- Teachers—Teachers are represented on the TRCS Board of Trustees through a designated Teacher Representative Board position and on the CSGC. Chief among the responsibilities of the Teacher Representatives on the Board and the CSGC are to ensure that teachers have a strong voice in shaping the direction and policies of the school in a manner that supports its mission and values and to share information with teachers throughout the school about the mission, values and policies of the school. Teacher participation in shaping TRCS programs around the mission and values of the school also occurs through involvement in ad-hoc committees and initiatives such as the above-discussed committees that restructured the Rensizzle Week program. In addition, teachers across the school discuss the school's mission and values—and how classroom instruction and school programs support them—in frequent meetings and PLC activities in which they review student data and progress towards meeting the school's goals and furthering its mission.
- Students—Students are made aware of the mission of the school, the school's objective of preparing them to be leaders and the school's values of collaboration, innovation and community service from their first days at TRCS, and they are provided with opportunities to live the school's mission every day. Students are informed about the school's mission and values through assemblies, school publications and a student-developed school newspaper and other student-produced publications, presentations and videos.¹³ Another way in which middle and high school students are informed about the mission and values of the school is through the curriculum and practice of the Advisory Program, which were designed to further the school's mission of promoting academic excellence, social-emotional growth and community service. As described in the 2014 external evaluation of TRCS' Advisory Program, TRCS has worked extensively to develop and support Advisors in “understanding the scope and sequence of advisory and how real needs are being aligned with the mission and vision of TRCS.” In addition, student involvement in the CSGC ensures that student voices are considered in developing school policy, and that students throughout the school are made aware of school policies supportive of its mission and values by the Student Representatives. Student embrace of the leadership aspects of the school's mission—along with commitment to project-based and experiential learning embedded in the academic aspect of the mission—is exemplified by their enthusiastic participation in TRCS' multi-disciplinary and experiential learning projects. This enthusiasm and commitment is most evident during Rensizzle Week, when students engage wholeheartedly in innovative learning experiences tied to their interests and to the important issues of the day.
- Parents—Parents are made aware of TRCS' mission—from even before they enroll their children in the school. At open houses and other recruitment events designed to reach out to parents and recruit students, TRCS representatives speak openly and enthusiastically about the school's mission and values. TRCS' recruitment materials are also designed to build awareness of the school's mission and values to any prospective students' families. Parent representation on the Board and the CSGC ensure that the voices of parents and families are considered in school-wide policymaking, and that parents and families are kept apprised of school policies in support of its mission and values.

TRCS has consistently monitored progress toward goals, and it had established processes for reporting on such progress with staff, the Board and the community. As discussed earlier, TRCS has established a data culture that ensures that student data is collected, analyzed, discussed and used to modify and target instruction at multiple levels and on a very frequent basis. Through this process, TRCS monitors progress towards academic goals and designs appropriate adjustments to its programming. Individual teachers meet regularly in PLCs to analyze and discuss student assessment and other data, to design and modify units of

¹³ Student-developed videos about programs and values at TRCS are posted on the TRCS website, on the website of the NYC Charter Center and elsewhere on the internet.

instruction and to discuss progress being made towards school-wide, classroom and individual student goals. At the senior administrative level, the SMT meets at least weekly to discuss student data, school-wide data and “trend data” to monitor progress toward goals and to design modifications to school programming, professional development and other initiatives to address identified needs and opportunities for improvement. The Principal and the SMT report to the Board at each Board meeting about progress made toward goals and how the school is addressing needs and areas of challenge. TRCS also provides information about progress toward goals to school stakeholders and the wider community by posting all Board minutes, annual reports, school report cards and other relevant documents on its website.

2b. Leadership and Governance Structure

Schools with successful leadership and governance structures have many of the characteristics below:

- *Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff*
- *Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter*
- *Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly, but not limited to, Open-Meeting Law and conflict of interest laws, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)*
- *Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth*
- *Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time*
- *Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school’s mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer*
- *Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel*
- *Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations*

Describe how the Board of Trustees has been involved in the life of the school, how the composition of the Board has changed over time, and how this has impacted Board governance. Be sure to note evidence of the Board’s compliance with applicable laws and regulations as above. Explain how the school’s leadership structure has contributed to improved student achievement, is accountable for student achievement, and how this structure may have changed over time.

TRCS’ governance and leadership model is one that stresses collaboration and the consideration of input from a diverse range of school stakeholders in decision-making and policy development. In this model, TRCS’ Board of Trustees has exclusive responsibility for school governance while delegating responsibility for developing certain educational policies and annual Comprehensive Education Plans to the CSGC (subject to approval by the Board) and while delegating day-to-day management to the Principal. From the outset, the TRCS Board established practices and protocols to support it in governing without assuming management responsibilities that are the role of the Principal, the SMT and school staff. These practices and protocols have included reports from and discussion with the Principal and appropriate staff at Board meetings, as well as annual Board evaluation of the Principal and the implementation of policies and rules to ensure compliance regarding conflict of interest requirements, the Open Meetings Law and other relevant laws and requirements. Board meetings’ agendas and minutes have been posted in timely fashion on the school’s website throughout the charter term, and all Board meetings have been open to the public. The Principal has been and is accountable to the Board and, with Board oversight, all staff is ultimately accountable to the Principal. TRCS’ governance and organizational structure is illustrated in the organizational chart included in the next renewal charter.

The Board of Trustees—The TRCS Board of Trustees has upheld its responsibility to provide effective oversight of the school’s programs and operations in accordance with its charter. The Board has and continues to set educational and operational policies that are implemented by the Principal and school staff, to provide appropriate review and oversight of academic and operational activities and to ensure that the school’s programs and activities are designed and implemented in a manner consistent with its mission and charter. Throughout the current charter term, there has been a healthy working relationship and an open channel of communication between the Board and the Principal that stems from each party’s clear understanding of the distinction between the governance role of the Board and the management role of the Principal. In addition, as provided for in the By-Laws, the TRCS Board has effectively delegated to the CSGC specific policy development and planning responsibilities (subject to Board approval) to the CSGC. Throughout the current charter term, the Board of Trustees has operated in a manner compliant with the charter. The membership of the Board has been stable throughout the current charter term. Indeed, only five Board members left the Board during the charter term (one of whom was a Co-Principal who retired). Most of the Board members, then, have served on the Board since at least the last charter term, and the Board Chair, Sandra Geyer, has served on the Board since 2000. The current Board comprises: a) Chairperson Sandra Geyer, a retired educator; b) Vice Chairperson and Founding Principal Dr. Monte Joffe, a retired educator; c) Secretary Everett Boyd; d) Stacey Gauthier (non-voting member), Principal of TRCS; e) Justin Ginsburgh, a community member and independent strategic planning consultant; f) Parent Representative Chester Hicks; g) Maggie Martinez-DeLuca, a community member and Professor at Bank Street College Graduate School of Education and Sarah Lawrence University; g) Francine Smith, a Founding Parent and School Aide at TRCS; and h) TRCS Teacher Representative Helen Zumeta. Notwithstanding the stability of Board membership that has characterized TRCS over the past charter terms, TRCS recognizes the need to have an effective Board succession process. Accordingly, the TRCS Board and SMT are currently reviewing its current practices and, in consultation with experts, and modifying its new board member recruitment, selection and orientation practices. Throughout the current charter term, the Board has operated in manner consistent with the charter and By-Laws—i.e. its composition has been consistent with the requirements of the By-Laws, it has held the required number of meetings, its committees have met and operated in a manner consistent with that described in the By-Laws, etc. Also, as documented by the NYC DOE in the 2013 ACR report, “there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board and its committees.”

Throughout the charter term, the Board has used data to inform its deliberations and decision-making. At each regular Board meeting, reports are presented by the Principal and other senior administrators to inform the Trustees about the school’s progress towards achieving charter goals and to provide them with academic, operational and financial data to consider as they make decisions. In addition, Board Committees report at most meetings with data and recommendations for Board action. TRCS’ Board Committees have been effective in researching relevant issues and advising the full Board. Over the course of the current charter term, the Board has worked with the SMT to improve its timely access to and effective use of data. This process resulted in the development of a Data Dashboard—i.e. an annual schedule of reports to be delivered to and discussed by the Board. The Data Dashboard ensures that the Board is informed throughout the year on important issues and developments related to new program highlights, staffing changes, significant organizational changes, student admissions, student demographics, student achievement, Title I and other entitlement grant programs (including the status of the Consolidated Application and required reporting), progress toward academic goals, financial reporting and the certified financial audit, fund development and grants, the school’s budget, the impact of the school’s College Bound and internship programs, school partnerships, the Annual Comprehensive Review and School Quality Reports visits and other important matters. The Board’s effectiveness has also been improved through frequent board development activities embedded in Board meetings. For instance, the Board’s attorney has made frequent “q&a” presentations at Board meetings, and other consultants have made presentations and/or participated in discussions during Board and Board committee meetings.

The Board and the school have always had access to effective legal counsel. TRCS has relied on the law firm Shebitz Berman Cohen and Delforte to provide legal counsel and to represent the school in legal matters. During the current charter term, the firm has advised and represented TRCS in matters such as negotiations with the UFT. Partner Matthew Delforte typically attends Board meetings to answer any legal questions the Board members may have and to provide appropriate legal advice. Julia Cohen, Esq., a partner at the firm, has also attended Board meetings and has advised the Board regarding contract matters with the UFT.

The CSGC—In compliance with the By-Laws, the TRCS Board has delegated to the GSGC the task of studying the quality of life in the school, reviewing broad instructional policies at the school and establishing educational priorities each year (subject to Board approval). In addition, the CSGC is responsible for developing and annually reviewing and modifying a Comprehensive Education Plan and for addressing any issues brought to it by other school stakeholders. The CSGC is a key advisor to the Board, and its work ensures that a wide range of school stakeholder voices are considered in school-wide policy development and decision-making. By design, the CSGC comprises representatives of all school constituencies. The CSGC currently includes Chairperson and TRCS Board member Everett Boyd; Stacey Gauthier, TRCS’ Principal; Rebekah Oakes, TRCS’ Director of Development and Partnerships and a representative of the SMT and the school’s staff; Vincent Garelick, the UFT Chapter Chair; Kelly Goodwin, a parent and Co-President of the PTA; Lillian Chen, a parent and Co-President of the PTA; Chester Hicks, a parent and member of the Board of Trustees; Liz DelPozo, a parent; Patricia Poljanic, a School Aide representing non-pedagogical staff; Lisa Liropoulos, Gary Felsher & Kathy Corona, each of whom is a parent representing parents and families of K-5 students; Marta Kowalska, a parent representing parents and families of 6-8 students; Noreen Wortman and Nooshig Misislyan, a parent representing parents and families of 9-10 students; Sandra Wright, a parent representing parents and families of 11-12 students; and James Stonebraker, a parent and representative of Instructional Support Services (ISS). In addition, the CSGC includes one student representative for grades 7-8, one student representative for grades 9-10, one student representative for grades 11-12 and one alumni representative.

During the current charter term, the CSGC members worked collaboratively to identify and prioritize school-wide needs and objectives and to develop “action steps” that the school could take to address the identified needs and objectives. The CSGC decision-making process has been one that considered input from the entire membership and that supported ongoing reflection about how the work of the CSGC would best support the mission and goals of the school. One outcome of this reflective process has been the establishment of an effective committee structure for the CSGC. Initially, the CSGC was expected to meet and conduct its business as a whole body. Over the course of the current charter term, the membership of the CSGC determined that the CEP development and review process would be more efficient and productive if initial work was done by small action research groups that focus on specific topics and ultimately guide the CSGC in its decision-making. The CSGC established three committees that participate regularly in action research around areas that the CSGC has identified as critical. Specifically—

- *Academic Success & Parent Involvement*: This committee was tasked with action research regarding academic issues and improving the quality of parent involvement at TRCS, including helping the CSGC develop a common language around learning and developing strategies for proactive, productive and timely communication about academic programs and outcomes for at-risk students.
- *Renaissance Person and Global Competencies & School Environment and Safety*: This committee was tasked with action research regarding the shared values at TRCS, how TRCS can foster leadership attributes in its students and identification of the necessary global competencies that TRCS students will need to be successful in school and beyond.
- *Technology, Professional Development, Communication, & Collaboration*: This committee was given the responsibility of reviewing, revising and supporting the implementation of a school-wide technology plan that will promote increased technological literacy among TRCS’ K-12 students and to make recommendations to increase TRCS’ building’s ability to support more technology devices and to support teachers in technology-related professional development.

Throughout the charter term, CSGC members participated in consultant-facilitated “framing” meetings to plan, develop, review and make adjustments to the CEP. The first such meetings in this charter term occurred in 2010 and focused on establishing a data-driven process for developing the CEP and ensuring that the CEP is aligned with the charter goals and analyzing student data to help identify school-wide trends and needs. The CSGC has continued to meet regularly throughout the charter term, including a series of “retreats.” Among the CSGC’s accomplishments during the current charter term are: a) the development of a CEP which sets forth goals, objectives and strategies related to Academic Success, Addressing the Needs of At-Risk-Students, School Environment and Safety, Parent Involvement, Organizational Viability, Technology, Data, Communication and Collaboration and Supporting Students in being Renaissance Persons with Global Competencies; and b) reviews at least annually of the CEP to ensure that it addresses current needs, to assess the effectiveness of the strategies designed to address specific goals and objectives and to modify such strategies as necessary. In addition, the CSGC identified two broad priority areas—i.e. Technology and Family Engagement—and, in coordination with the Board and the SMT, established initiatives to address them. In the area of technology, the CSGC helped to plan efforts to increase the capacity for more robust technology in TRCS’ building and to support teachers with targeted professional development to use technology more effectively in the classroom. The CSGC also helped to establish the “I-Pad Initiative,” which offered free I-Pads to teachers if they could demonstrate innovative ways that the I-Pads would be used to improve instruction, administration and/or parent communication. Ultimately, about 25% of TRCS’ teachers were provided with I-Pads, and each made a presentation to the full faculty showcasing how he or she used the I-Pad. In the area of family engagement, the CSGC in coordination with the SMT, expanded the school’s website and e-mail newsletters to improve communication with parents and students and supported parents in accessing the school’s Student Information System (SIS) to learn about their children’s academic progress.

School Leadership—TRCS has a strong, effective and stable school leadership structure consisting of a collaborative SMT led by Principal Stacey Gauthier. The SMT comprises the Principal, the Director of Data and Accountability, the Director of Teaching & Learning (K-5), the Director of Teaching & Learning (6-12), the Director of Development and Partnerships and the Director of Operations and Finance. The SMT meets at least weekly to discuss and make decisions about day-to-day and longer-term instructional matters, including curricula, assessments, evaluation, professional development, progress made towards achieving academic goals, special education and experiential learning projects. Through the SMT, most major instructional matters at TRCS are decided collaboratively and by consensus of the school’s instructional leaders. As described earlier, the SMT expanded its access to input, information and additional perspectives through the creation of an Expanded SMT which includes the Administrator of School Culture and Student Support, the Coordinator of Special Education, the Science Coach/PLC Coach and Facilitator and the CSGC Chairperson and Teacher Member. The Expanded SMT meets frequently and provides opportunities for additional constituencies to provide input into SMT decision-making.

One key challenge that the SMT, in coordination with the Board, had to address was the need to restructure the roles of various members of the SMT following the retirement of Co-Principal Gwen Clinkscales in 2010. At the beginning of the current charter term, the administrative structure of the TRCS called for Co-Principals to serve as the instructional leaders of the school. Upon Ms. Clinkscales’ retirement, the SMT and Board decided to convert to a single-Principal administrative model. With this model, there has been an even greater emphasis on collaborative data-driven decision-making and shared responsibilities by members of the SMT. A key factor in the effectiveness of this shared-responsibility model is the stability of membership of the SMT. Apart from the retirement of Ms. Clinkscales, the SMT has not lost a member during the charter term. This stability has produced a trusting and supportive environment for the SMT that allows members to think freely and speak candidly (but respectfully) as they discuss issues. Over the course of the current charter term, the SMT has worked effectively to support the Principal and improve the quality of teaching and learning at TRCS.

Evaluation of the Principal is done each year by the Education Committee of the Board in a process that reflects TRCS' values of collaboration and professional growth. Throughout the prior and current charter term, the Principal has communicated frequently with the Education Committee, so the committee members have been able to observe informally and discuss the school's instructional program with the Principal several times over the course of each year. The formal evaluation process begins with a reflective report developed by the Principal and presented to the Education Committee. The committee reviews the report and relevant school data—e.g. student achievement and growth data, SMT reports to the Board, etc. The Education Committee meets with the Principal to discuss areas of strength and challenge and, collaboratively, the committee and the Principal develop an Improvement Plan with objectives for growth. This process has been successful in recognizing and promoting the Principal's achievements while also supporting her professional growth. TRCS' Principal, Stacey Gauthier, has also been recognized by prominent educational organizations for her accomplishments as Principal during the current charter term, including being awarded a Blackbaud Award for Excellent Service, being named a Cahn Fellow (Teachers College, Columbia University) and being selected to serve as a mentor for emerging school leaders through the NYC Charter Center's Emerging Leaders' Fellowship Program.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of school programs is a responsibility shared by the SMT, the CSGC and ultimately, the Board. The SMT collects student data and other data on an ongoing basis and reviews and discusses such data at every meeting. Through this process, the SMT assesses progress toward achieving goals and objectives, the effectiveness of program implementation and the impact of specific programs and practices on student achievement and quality of life at the school. In addition, the CSGC reviews and discusses data and assesses the effectiveness of school programs in identifying academic priorities and developing and modifying the strategies set forth in the CEP. The CSGC review and assessment of the effectiveness of school programs is important because it provides for consideration of concerns and ideas from representatives of multiple school stakeholder groups. The involvement of the Principal and the Director of Development and Partnerships as members of the CSGC ensures that the CGSC will have access to relevant data and to the perspective of the SMT as it deliberates and makes decisions. Final responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's programs—and for authorizing changes based on such evaluations—is with the Board. At each Board meeting, presentations are made by the Principal, other SMT members and representatives of the CSGC. As discussed earlier, the Board has developed a Data Dashboard to ensure that it receives sufficient and appropriate information to determine how successful the school has been in meeting its objectives, how effective the school's programs have been and how the school has remained true to its mission and values.

2c. School Climate and Community Engagement

Schools with a sustaining school climate and engaged parent and community support have many of the characteristics below:

- *A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student-centered, and open to parents and community support*
- *Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey*
- *Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children*
- *Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school*
- *Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives*
- *Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer*
- *Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration*
- *Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations*

- *Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives*

Describe the structures in place for teacher collaboration and professional development, and how and why they may have these changed over time. Include descriptions of evidence that the school has developed a positive, professional, student-centered climate. Schools may also want to consider including examples of how they have resolved issues that have arisen to threaten school culture. Please be sure to include a description of how the school measures teacher, student, staff, and family satisfaction, what feedback the school has received from these key constituents, and how the school has reacted to this feedback. In addition, feel free to include any other evidence that documents how the school has successfully engaged parents and community members. Schools should provide evidence of successful collaboration or partnerships with other NYC public schools or school support/community organizations and how these engagements have led to sharing of instructional or operational practices that could benefit the larger school community.

Throughout the current charter term, TRCS established a school culture that is collaborative, student-centered and open to parents and community support. Indeed these characteristics are embedded in TRCS' mission and values. As discussed earlier in this narrative, collaboration and student-centered instruction and support are core values at TRCS. In addition, TRCS is a true "community school" that welcomes, supports and partners with parents and families, representatives of charter and traditional public schools and individuals and organizations from throughout the community, NYC and beyond.

Collaboration: From its first days as a charter school, TRCS established a cultural framework that promotes and supports collaboration among and between all school stakeholder groups. Students collaborate with one another and with their teachers and advisors in project-based and experiential learning experiences, Rensizzle Week activities, leadership and advisory initiatives and student government, the school newspaper, sports and other extra-curricular clubs and activities. TRCS' project-based and experiential, especially, require students to work both independently and interdependently with peers in rich and creative learning experiences, and they also require students to work collaboratively with teachers in the planning and implementation of projects. Ongoing collaboration among teachers is exemplified by the school's use of the PLC model to support professional development, planning, curriculum development and teacher reflection. Teachers and instructional staff also work collaboratively within the classroom, most notably in the ICT classes. Administrators work collaboratively in the SMT and, starting during this charter term, in the Expanded SMT. The SMT works collaboratively with teachers and with the Board. Parents and teachers work collaboratively through TRCS' Parent Teacher Association. TRCS' commitment to school-wide collaboration is further exemplified by its unique governance structure, in which the Board delegates substantial responsibilities for developing academic policy and priority-setting to the CSGC, which provides for deliberation and collaborative decision-making by representatives of a cross-section of school stakeholder groups.

Student-Centered Approach: TRCS' mission is to prepare students to be global citizens and leaders in the renaissance of NYC. In order to do this, TRCS must provide students with instruction and supports that address their respective academic needs, interests and learning styles. As described earlier in this narrative, TRCS has established a school-wide data culture to support teachers and administrators in using data effectively to identify individual student needs and to provide targeted and differentiated instruction to address them. In addition, the school's commitment to project-based and experiential learning that which focuses on student interests while building their content knowledge and academic skills and that requires them to provide substantive input into the design of their projects and experiential learning experiences underscores TRCS' student-centered approach. During the current charter term, TRCS has engaged in several initiatives to review and modify programs to make them more student-centered. One such initiative involved a comprehensive and collaborative review of Rensizzle Week programming. Teachers, working in collaboration with one another and with the SMT, addressed the following key question: "What can we modify in 'Rensizzle' to support and foster inquiry, project, technology-based curriculum connected to the Common Core, to gain a high level of student achievement?" The key challenge was to balance substantial staff involvement in designing rigorous CCLS-aligned Rensizzle programs with

maintaining the student-centered focus of Rensizzle. In other words, TRCS was faced with the challenge of increasing teacher and staff buy-in by increasing their roles in the Rensizzle design process while continuing to secure high levels of student input, buy-in and engagement in Rensizzle. The TRCS community engaged in a series of meetings and workshops to research and discuss these issues. As a result, TRCS restructured Rensizzle to increase student engagement and improve differentiation of student learning experiences and targeting of CCLS-aligned learning experiences to student interests and needs while also increasing staff involvement and buy-in.

Family and Community Support: As discussed later in this narrative, the active participation and involvement of parents and families in the education of their respective children and the life of the school are critical objectives for the school. During the current charter term, TRCS has improved and expanded its efforts to family and community involvement and support.

Throughout the charter term, TRCS has employed effective means of measuring and monitoring the satisfaction of key school stakeholders, most formally through the NYC DOE School Survey, but also through informal methods such as open discussions by the Principal and SMT members with the PTA, the student government, the CSGC and other stakeholder groups. Regarding the NYC DOE School Surveys, TRCS has consistently had a larger percentage of teachers, parents and students completing the survey than the city-wide average—e.g. in 2013-14, 62% of TRCS parents completed the survey as opposed to the 54% city-wide average; 94% of TRCS teachers responded as opposed to the 83% city-wide average and a full 98% of students responded as opposed to the 83% city-wide average.

- Teacher satisfaction with the school and the culture of collaboration is high. For instance, in the most recent (2013-14) NYC DOE School Survey, 91% of teachers reported that they felt supported by other teachers. The prior year, 97% of teachers reported that they felt supported by other teachers, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that school leaders provide time for collaboration among teachers and 97% reported that they “usually look forward to each working day at my school.” Evidence of teacher satisfaction was observed by the NYC DOE during its 2012 site visit. The Site Visit Report states that “morale amongst the teachers appeared to be very high as teachers shared such comments as, ‘Happy to work here’ and ‘Teaching here has been a positive experience.’” The report commented positively about teacher satisfaction with TRCS’ culture of respect, saying “The teachers also appear to appreciate the level of autonomy they have in the classroom as evidenced by such comments as, ‘They trust me, I’m a professional,’ ‘Teachers are delivering which makes the environment good for me and for the students’ and ‘I’m most proud of the academic freedom and the school supports me.’” Other key indicators of teacher satisfaction include a consistently low teacher turnover rate—i.e.. in 2010-11 and 2011-12, the turnover rate for instructional staff was 2% (with 1 person resigning or being terminated out of 42 teachers in 2010-11 and 44 teachers in 2011-12); in 2012-13 the turnover rate was 6% (with 3 people resigning or being terminated out of 50) and in 2013-14, the turnover rate was 8% (with 4 people resigning or being terminated out of 52).
- Parent satisfaction has consistently been high. In the most recent NYC DOE School Survey, 92% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with “the education my child received this year” and 94% were satisfied or very satisfied regarding “the overall quality of my child’s teachers this year.” In the prior year’s survey, 95% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with “the education my child has received this year” and 97% were satisfied or very satisfied with “the overall quality of my child’s teachers this year. Parent survey responses also demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the school’s responsiveness to parent concerns and feedback. In the most recent survey, 93% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “My child’s school is responsive to parent feedback.” In the prior year’s survey, 94% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement. In addition, 95% of parents said that they would recommend the school to other parents in the 2014 survey, and 94% said that they would recommend the school in the prior year’s survey. Parent satisfaction is also evidenced by high levels of participation in the Parent Teacher Association and the school’s parent engagement activities.

- Student satisfaction is high. For instance, 84% of students reported that they agree or strongly agree that their teachers “are teaching me the organizational skills and work habits that I need to succeed in school” in the 2014 NYC DOE survey, while 83% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement on the 2013 survey. A key indicator of student satisfaction is the high percentage of middle school student who remain at TRCS for high school. Each year, some TRCS students leave following middle school to attend specialized schools or high schools with specialized programs. TRCS is proud, of course, of its students who gain admission to competitive high school programs. However, TRCS is also proud that the overwhelming majority of students are sufficiently happy with the education they receive at TRCS and the opportunities for personal growth, creative expression and leadership development provided by TRCS that they elect to remain at TRCS for high school. In the current charter term, TRCS’ efforts to strengthen its College Bound program have also contributed to high levels of student retention after 8th grade. Last year, all but 6 of TRCS’ 8th grade students (apart from those who left the district) elected to attend high school at TRCS.

TRCS has established a variety of formal and less formal strategies, practices and organizations to keep parents informed and involved in their children’s education, to promote parent involvement in school activities and to ensure that parents are critical and welcome participants in the life of the school. As discussed earlier, the Board has a designated Parent Trustee position, and the Parent Trustee is expected to be a key liaison between the Board and parents and to represent and give voice to parents at the Board. The Parent Trustee works closely with the Parent Teacher Association and participates in school-wide parent events to ensure that meaningful and ongoing two-way communication occurs between the Board and the parent community. Parent involvement has been designated a priority by the CSGC, which has established as a goal that “TRCS will review, revise as needed, and implement its Parent Involvement Policy to promote a strong partnership with parents and encourage their involvement in their children’s academic and social/emotional development..” To this end, it established objectives including providing programs and services for parents (including parents of ELLs), increasing participation of parents in school activities and in the PTA and analyzing parent feedback in the NYC DOE Learning Environment Survey and modifying parent engagement programs in response. To support the school’s parent engagement initiatives, the Chairperson of the Board and the Chairperson of the PTA participated in a Parent Engagement workshop at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Among the activities and initiatives that TRCS has engaged in to promote parent engagement are: a) creating a comprehensive parent section on the TRCS website that includes resources to help parents support their children’s education, information about the school’s programs, parent handbooks, information about and opportunities to become involved in the PTA and other programs, “shout outs and updates” regarding student work and other important information and resources; b) creating opportunities for parents to volunteer in a number of ways, including serving on committees (for instance, all hiring committees at TRCS have parent members) and supporting students in the classroom and in field learning experiences; c) supporting parents in accessing student data from the school’s SIS; and d) helping the school engage in advocacy on behalf of its students and of charter schools. TRCS’ parent engagement efforts have been successful, as evidenced by parent responses to questions in the NYC DOE School Survey. In the 2014 survey, 97% of students reported that they attended a parent-teacher conference during the past year, and 45% attended more than 3. In the prior year, 98% of parents attended a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, with 45% attended more than 3. In 2014, 96% of parents reported communicating with school staff about their child’s academic progress, with nearly a third communicating with staff 5 or more times. The prior year, 97% of parents reported communicating with school staff about their child’s academic progress, with more than a third communicating with staff 5 or more times. In the 2014 and 2013 surveys, 95% of parents said that they felt welcome at the school and 95% reported that the school keeps me informed about services for me or my child, such as tutoring, after-school programs or workshops at school. Parent engagement is also evident from parent participation on the CSGC.

Also, as discussed earlier in this narrative, TRCS is committed to working in partnership with community organizations and agencies in furtherance of its mission to help students become leaders and global citizens and to support students in exploring the “learning lab” that is NYC. Throughout the charter term, TRCS has

established or continued and broadened its strong partnerships with organizations and individuals including the Children’s Museum of the Arts (High school Humanities and After-School Media Arts class); the 82nd Street Academics, (after-school programming); Arts for All (which provides free arts programming for Theatre & Dance students); the Metropolitan Opera Guild Teacher Institute (which provides professional development); the Jazz Project at Queens College (7th-12th Stage Band Instrumental Music program); the Isamu Noguchi Museum (Rensizzle Museum group support and a High School Art partnership); Move This World (peace & harmony through movement and a High School Junior Peacemaker Project Internship); Creative Arts Team (Shakespeare Festival supporting 9th Grade Drama/ELA); Theatre For A New Audience (Shakespeare supporting 10th Grade Drama/ELA); American Globe Theatre (Shakespeare supporting 7th & 8th Humanities); React To Film (6th grade and 11th grade ELA Documentary integration); the New York Historical Society (supporting 8th and 11th Grade US History); the Latin American Cultural Center of Queens: (supporting K-4 After-school fine-arts and crafts); Make the Road NY (supporting immigrant community outreach); Patrino Foundation’ College Now (onsite college-level ELA class and on-campus classes for High School students); NY Hall of Science (K-6 Science Support); the New York Geographic Alliance (K-12 Geography Education); CEI-PEA (providing professional development for teachers and supporting the Global Humanities Dissemination Grant); B.R. Guest Restaurants (culinary arts support); the Charter School Athletic Association; the Public School Athletic League; the Long Island City YMCA; Rooftop Garden Support; Con Edison; the Whole Kids Foundation; Grow NYC; NY SunWorks; Burpee Seeds; Garden to School Café; the NYC Compost Project/Queens Botanical Garden; Mr. Benoit Papineau, (a volunteer carpenter); Future Farmers of America (High School Agriculture classes); Queens Community House (fitness programs supported by Emblem Health and cooking and health classes for families); Mr. Aubrey’s ShowKids (providing 5th-12th grade After-school Dance classes) and SPARK (a PEP grant-funded partnership providing K-12 Physical Fitness and Wellness support). Also, Sadie Nash, Move the World and Global Teens are supporting a program that nurtures student volunteerism. In addition, TRCS has established partnerships with more than 40 organizations and agencies across NYC—including museums, government agencies, hospitals, law offices, health and wellness organizations and arts organizations and the United Nations—to provide internships and elective opportunities for students in grades 8-12.

During the charter term, TRCS has been proactive in sharing its instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and beyond, and it has actively engaged in partnerships and collaboration with other schools. For much of the charter term, TRCS was a member of PICCS and, as a partner in this federally-funded project, worked collaboratively with the other charter schools in the PICCS consortium and with CEI-PEA to design and implement professional development, to build capacity of schools and teachers across the consortium to use data effectively, to create and support PLCs, to implement school-wide and consortium-wide peer reviews and to review and improve instruction at each consortium school. Also, as noted earlier in this narrative, TRCS was awarded a \$500,000 NYS Charter School Dissemination Program grant and, through this grant, has partnered with Truman High School, a traditional public school. TRCS is now sharing many of its effective practices with teachers and administrators at Truman High School, a traditional public school. In addition to school-wide initiatives, individuals at TRCS have shared their experiences and effective practices at conferences, through publications, by making videos and other media resources posted on the internet. For instance, Principal Stacey Gauthier has shared information about Rensizzle Week with a national audience of educators as part of her experience as a Cahn Fellow. Middle school math teacher Ramil Buenaventura discussed his experiences and innovative teaching methods in articles and panels, including articles related to his receiving a “Big Apple” award. Also, 11th/12th grade ELA teacher Sandra Fritz participated in the "Somos el Futuro" conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she spoke about TRCS as part of a session on charter schools and the common core, sitting on a panel with legislators, school principals, representatives from the UFT and a speaker from the New York City Charter School Center.

The process by which TRCS promotes and supports its educators in engaging in professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction through PLCs was discussed earlier in this narrative. Teachers engage in professional dialogue with peers, coaches and Teacher Leaders in frequent protocol-

driven PLC meetings. Through PLCs, teachers work together to analyze diagnostic, interim and summative assessment data and design lessons and learning experiences to address identified needs and gaps. Teacher engage in dialogue about differentiating instruction and they conduct peer observations of lessons to support improved instruction, identify effective differentiation strategies and offer constructive feedback. Such feedback is used by the SMT, coaches and Teacher Leaders to help identify professional development needs and design and implement professional development programs.

TRCS regularly assesses the effectiveness of its professional development initiatives and uses the information obtained in this process to identify professional development needs and modify professional development initiatives. The assessment process implemented by the SMT in coordination with teacher coaches and Teacher Leaders and has multiple components. One component is post professional development surveys in which teachers are asked to rate a professional development event in which they have participated. Another component is a broader survey instrument that is provided to teachers periodically. This survey asks teachers to discuss areas in which they would like TRCS to focus its professional development efforts and the best and most appropriate types of professional development to address their needs (e.g. coaching, administrative modeling, workshop, etc.). The responses for each survey are reviewed and discussed at SMT meetings. Another component is the use of PLCs and professional dialogues to support teachers not only in engaging in professional development but in assessing the impact of the professional development (e.g. the supportive professional dialogue with peers, coaches and Teacher leaders) on their professional practice. This information is shared with the Principal and SMT in meetings with coaches and Teacher Leaders. Finally, most of the professional development provided to teachers at TRCS are tied to student outcomes. For instance, teacher training and professional support in FOSS Science is expected to result in changes in classroom instruction and/or teacher practice which is in turn expected to result in improved student performance in Science. Student assessment and related data is thus used to assess the effectiveness of professional development, to identify priority areas for professional development and to modify specific professional development initiatives.

2d. Operational Health

Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- *A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations*
- *Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations*
- *Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents*
- *An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff*
- *A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff*
- *Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by NYSED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010)*
- *Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate*
- *If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees*

Describe the school's operational effectiveness over the last five years. If there has been significant turnover in operations staff, please describe how/if this has impacted the school's development. Describe the internal controls employed by the school, and how the school has codified operational policies and procedures to ensure smooth functioning. If relevant, describe how the school's relationship with a management organization or operations support vendor has benefited the school's operational health during the current charter term and any challenges associate

Throughout the current charter term, TRCS remained in the same NYC DOE-operated facility it occupied during the prior two charter terms. It is a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in its charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations. It is in

compliance with all relevant building and health codes, as evidenced by information and reports on the NYC DOE school web portal. In its 2011-12 Site Visit report, the NYC DOE stated that “The student learning environment was observed to be safe, orderly, and respectful...” TRCS has been operationally sound during the current charter term, as was noted in the 2011-2012 Site Visit report, which noted that “TRCS is operationally viable” and that “The school has been in operation for a number of years and is a stable organization.” As noted in the NYC DOE Data Template, there has been almost no turnover of non-instructional staff during the charter term (one school aide retired). It has at all times maintained the insurance coverages required in its charter. Also, TRCS has communicated appropriately and in timely fashion with the NYC DOE throughout the charter term, including annual reports communication with NYC DOE regarding material and non-material changes.

TRCS made no significant changes in its process for hiring new staff during the current charter term. TRCS’ compensation structure is consistent with bargaining agreements with the UFT, the CSA and DC37. During TRCS’ involvement in the PICCS project, it explored options and made modifications to its compensation system, including the addition of include stipends for teachers who assume leadership responsibilities such as data coach or PLC coach. Following the conclusion of its involvement in PICCS, TRCS has continued to include such stipends in its compensation system and has expanded the categories of leadership positions that provide stipends. The process for evaluating teachers and the Principal were discussed earlier in this narrative.

As discussed in an earlier section of this narrative, TRCS has employed a data-driven approach to designing, implementing, assessing and modifying professional development. Annual school-wide, grade/subject/cohort-level and individual teacher professional development plans are developed by the Principal and the SMT in coordination with the CSGC, coaches, Teacher Leaders and individual teachers. In developing school-wide and grade/subject/cohort-level professional development plans, the SMT considers a variety of data, including student assessment and portfolio data, professional development survey responses from teachers, Board-developed school priorities and the data that the Board considered when developing them, CSGC-developed goals, objectives and strategies and the data that the CSGC considered in developing them, teacher observations, teacher evaluation data, data regarding “trends” in student performance, NYC DOE Annual Report data, NYC DOE Site Visit report data, reports from Teacher Leaders and other instructional leaders, independent evaluators data (e.g. the independent evaluation of the Advisory program has informed the SMT in developing professional development for advisors) and other relevant data. In addition, professional development at TRCS occurs on an individual teacher level. Also, as discussed earlier, TRCS’ teacher evaluation process is designed to support professional growth and, accordingly, a key part of the evaluation process is the development of an Improvement Plan for teachers who are “developing” or “ineffective” and the development of professional growth objectives for teachers who are “effective” or “highly effective.” Professional development initiatives and activities are then targeted to address needs and growth objectives for each teacher. In addition, as described earlier in this narrative, TRCS’ Principal evaluation process is data-driven and results in the development each year of a plan to support the Principal’s professional growth. Professional development activities and resources for the Principal are designed to address specific areas of growth identified in collaboration by the Board and the Principal.

A significant operational change that occurred during the current charter term is TRCS’ shift from using the NYC DOE for its food service to becoming an independent provider of food service for its students. TRCS has hired a full-time chef and installed appropriate equipment to support its independent, NYC DOE-approved food service program. TRCS has a nutrition committee that meets regularly with the food service staff. A key benefit of TRCS’ shift to become a self-sufficient provider of meals and snacks to its students is that TRCS is now better able to provide instruction about nutrition and to provide “hands on” learning experiences regarding nutrition and health.

Throughout the current charter term, TRCS has met its enrollment targets generally and has met or made progress towards meeting its enrollment targets for special populations. In 2013-14, for instance, TRCS enrolled a diverse student body that more economically disadvantaged than the that of district in which it is located than that of NYC—i.e. 73.8% of TRCS students qualified for free and reduced meals, as opposed to

71.1% in the district and 72.7% in the city. In 2013-14, TRCS' student population comprised a greater percentage of students with disabilities than the district—i.e. 14.2% of TRCS students are students with disabilities as opposed to 13.7% in the district. TRCS' percentage of ELL students has consistently been below that of the district. To address this, TRCS has increased its outreach to immigrant families (including partnerships with organization that serve immigrants and ELL families) and has expanded its efforts to engage parents of ELL students in community outreach on behalf of the school and in recruiting students.

TRCS is an independent charter school that has no management company partner.

2e. Financial Sustainability

Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- *Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues*
- *Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making*
- *Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts*
- *If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program*
- *School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finance to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk.*
- *School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making*
- *Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per pupil and space-related cost projections.*

Describe the school's financial health over the last five years. Be sure to include information on the results of audits as well as the school's actual year-end surplus (or deficit) compared to its long-term projections. If there has been significant turnover in finance staff, please describe how/if this has impacted the school's development. Describe the internal controls employed by the school, and how the school has codified fiscal policies and procedures to ensure smooth functioning.

The TRCS Board and school leadership continue to demonstrate responsible stewardship of public funds. TRCS has maintained strong financial health throughout the current charter term. Each of TRCS' four audits thus far during the current charter term resulted in an unqualified opinion, no major findings and no deficiencies in internal controls. The finding of no deficiencies in internal controls reflects the strong financial practices at the school that is codified in the TRCS Financial Policies and Procedures Manual. These practices are vigilantly followed by staff on a daily basis and reviewed and updated (if necessary) annually by the Board of Trustees. The Manual ensures sound internal controls, fiscal responsibility and accountability in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and rules and regulations of the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and delineates the process by which all financial matters at the school will be handled and by whom. The Financial Policies and Procedures Manual provides the guidelines and controls designed to mitigate risk and liability to the School. The HOS and the Director of Operations, supported by an external Certified Public Accountant, are responsible for the School's financial management. The Financial Policies and Procedures Manual is available for review at the school.

TRCS' annual audited financial statements show that in each fiscal year ending 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 TRCS; ended the year with positive unrestricted net assets. The result is a current accumulated surplus totaling \$2,859,913. The following table summarizes this information:

Table 6: Annual and Accumulated Operating Surpluses FY 10-FY 12

Fiscal Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Accumulated Net Assets, End of Year	\$2,353,455	\$2,982,568	\$3,047,374	\$2,859,913

TRCS’ strong financial position attests to the quality of the financial management on the part of the Principal and Director of Operations and Finance and the vigorous oversight of the TRCS Board, particularly its Treasurer and Finance Committee. Importantly, the individuals and the entities which make up TRCS’ financial team have been consistent for a number of years. First and foremost, Stacey Gauthier, the school’s Principal has been the TRCS’ school’s leader since its beginning. There has been also stability in the Finance Committee membership. This stability has supported TRCS’ long term financial viability.

In preparation for each Board meetings, the Finance Committee reviews the financial position of the school. Specifically, the following are reviewed and analyzed: (1) actual monthly revenue and expenses against budget projections; (2) operating monthly cash flow; (3) projected year-end against budgeted year-end; and (4) actual student enrollment against budget. The Finance Committee reports on the school’s financial position in Board meetings.

At all times, budgetary decisions are made to support strong student achievement to ensure attainment of TRCS’ academic goals and our underlying mission. The budgeting process involves the HOS and Director of Operations and Finance working together with the programmatic team, including the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Director of Development and Partnerships and the Director of Data and Accountability. Together, priorities are established for the upcoming academic, operational and fiscal program of the school. These priorities, along with prior years’ financial trends and expected near term capital expenditures, inform a working budget which is reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee and the external CPA. After a review and revision process, the budget is presented to the full Board for approval.

The Finance Committee and school leadership are continually engaged in long term financial planning beyond the development of five-year budget. TRCS has an ongoing practice of annually analyzing and updating 5-year budget projections. This is particularly important for a charter school like TRCS which is unionized and therefore has personnel expenses that will not only increase as per the collective bargaining agreement, but also increases at a significantly higher rate than charter schools which are not unionized. As TRCS has been already at full enrollment, its revenues in the absence of meaningful increases in per pupil funding will remain flat while its largest expense, that of salaries and benefits, are rising at a significant annual rate. Therefore, while TRCS currently has a sizeable accumulated surplus, the reality is that without increases in AOE, it will need to draw down the surplus in the years to come. Thus, TRCS is continually engaged in long term financial planning to ensure it has evaluated a range of options (such as increasing class size) to ensure its revenues will be sufficient to support its increasing personnel expenses over time.

The school’s financial health is linked to attainment of annual student enrollment goals. Stability of enrollment numbers means stability in cash flow. As illustrated on Attachment 1 Progress Towards Charter Goals, TRCS’ enrollment has always been within 15% of contracted enrollment. During the current school year, TRCS’ enrollment is at 557 as of the 2014 BEDS date (including 8 students from District 75) or at 99.8% of its contracted enrollment.

TRCS does not operate under the control of a charter management organization.

3. Is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations?

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- *Implement the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and, if appropriate, as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.*
- *Ensure that up-to-date charter is available on request to staff, parents, and school community*
- *Implement comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision*

In this section, please describe how the school's academic and operational programs have aligned with those set out in its charter. Schools do not need to go into detail about planned charter revisions since this will be covered in answering question 4 but please note specific areas of charter misalignment over the most recent charter term and explain what steps were taken either to re-align with the charter or to revise the charter to reflect the school's new approach during the course of the current charter term.

TRCS has operated its academic and operational programs in compliance with its approved charter and charter agreement. TRCS' academic programs have been and continue to be very much aligned to the mission and core values set forth in the charter, and its governance and operational structure, policies and practices have been and continue to be substantially compliant with those described in the charter. The school's financial management structures, policies and practices are aligned to those set forth in the charter. Indeed, the school that is operating today looks and behaves, to a very significant degree, as was envisioned during the development of TRCS' initial charter in 2000.

Where there have been changes to the school that were not consistent with the charter, whether non-material or material, TRCS has notified the NYCDOE and followed all proper procedures for making such changes. During the current charter term, the following changes were made:

- (1) TRCS changed the length of the TRCS academic school year from 181 to 180 days. The rationale for changing the calendar was to change what was the last day of school from an instructional day to a professional development day for staff in order to provide an additional day of professional development for school faculty to support higher learning standards and improved instruction. The changes was approved by NYC DOE in May 2012
- (2) TRCS amended its Discipline Policy to reflect its obligations under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and applicable regulations. The rationale for amending the School's discipline policy was to ensure compliance with DASA. The change was approved by NYC DOE in January 2013.
- (3) TRCS revised its school calendar to account for lost instructional days due to Super Storm Sandy. This was a change for the specific school year, 2012-13, that was impacted by Super Storm Sandy. Thus, it did not result in a permanent change in the charter. The rationale for amending the calendar was to maintain the full amount of instructional days. The school converted 1 vacation day to instructional, converted 2 half-days to full days and converted 1 professional development day to an instructional day in order to bring the total instructional days to 181 days.. The change was approved by NYC DOE in January 2013.
- (4) TRCS revised its charter goals to reflect the replacement of ECLAS-2 with Fountas & Pinnell benchmarking. The rationale was for the school to focus on literacy which is imperative given the CCLS and college-ready benchmarks. The Fountas & Pinnell has been determined to be a much more rigorous assessment of early literacy than the previous ECLAS 2, which TRCS had been using. The change was approved by NYC DOE in September 2013.

- (5) TRCS revised its CSGC goal to allow for meetings either as a whole group or in committees. Initially, the CSGC was designed to meet as a whole body 9 times per year. The revision provides for greater flexibility—i.e. the CSGC can work effectively as a whole body and in committees. The rationale for this change was that the committee structure will allow the members to address defined priority areas identified by the whole body in smaller, more efficient working groups. The change was approved by the NYC DOE in September 2013.

In addition, as discussed earlier in this narrative, TRCS changed its organizational structure from one having Co-Principals to one having a single Principal when Co-Principal Gwen Clinkscale retired in 2010.

A copy of the approved charter along with information on the modifications that were made is available in the main office of the school and in keeping with the Freedom of Information Law, is made available to any person or entity that requests it.

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- *Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting*
- *Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location⁵ or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention*
- *Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations*
- *Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity*
- *Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all certification requirements*

In this section, please describe the school's record of compliance with applicable federal and state law. In any areas where the school has not fully complied with applicable law over the course of the most recent charter, such as in having a number of uncertified teachers greater than five or 30% of the total teaching staff, please detail the discrepancy and the proactive steps the school took to rectify the issue. Be sure to address the means by which the school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as mandated by charter law [Ed.L. §§2851(4)(e)], and whether the school is planning any changes in its recruitment or other policies to meet these targets.

TRCS has operated in compliance with federal and state law. Throughout the charter term, TRCS has availed itself of appropriate and expert legal assistance and advice to ensure that it remains compliant with all relevant laws and aware of any changes in laws that might impact the school. TRCS' commitment to legal compliance is underscored by the fact that during the entire charter term, it has had full-time access to the legal services of Shebitz Berman Cohen and Delforte. To ensure that TRCS complies with all applicable laws and regulations, attorneys from the firm have attended Board meetings and advised the TRCS Board as needed.

TRCS has been in compliance with all legal and reporting requirements related to Title I and IDEA.. Evidence of TRCS's compliance with Title I and IDEA is available at the school, including its compliance reports, all appropriate student record keeping, confidentiality of Special Education records, etc.

With respect to student discipline, TRCS implements discipline, promotion and retention policies and procedures that adhere to all laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process requirements. TRCS's discipline policies and procedures are shared with parents at the beginning of each year and at various times during the year so that all parents understand how student discipline is handled at TRCS. As discussed earlier in this narrative, TRCS' approach to discipline has evolved over the charter term and the school is now integrating PBIS and restorative justice strategies and practices to make the policy more positive and proactive and less punitive reactive. TRCS' discipline policies have been and continue to be vetted by attorneys to ensure that they comply with all legal requirements.

With respect to the open lottery and enrollment process, TRCS has conducted a public lottery every year in a manner that complies with the Charter School Law and all other relevant laws and regulations. In addition, the school's process for removing students from the waitlist is transparent and complies with all requirements. Documentation of the lottery process and the school's process for and history of offering admission to students on the waitlist in the order that they appear on the waitlist when an appropriate seat becomes available is maintained and made available to the public on request. All appropriate documentation is available at the school to support the integrity of TRCS's lottery, enrollment and waitlist process.

With respect to certified staff with appropriate clearances, TRCS has been in compliance with the laws related to clearances throughout the charter term. Evidence of such compliance, and of compliance with laws related to certifications of staff, can be viewed at the school in its personnel files, which contain documentation of appropriate certification and of each employee's having passed required background checks and received appropriate security clearance.

TRCS' compliance with applicable laws and regulations was noted by NYC DOE in its 2014 ACR report, which said that "The school is in compliance" and that::a) all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance; b) the school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification; c) the school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification; d) the school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization; e) the school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department; f) the school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to NYC DOE; and g) the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 2, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.¹⁴

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have the characteristics below:

- *Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns*
- *Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete all other financial reporting as required*
- *Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members*
- *Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization*
- *Effectively engaged parent associations*

In this section, please describe the school's record of compliance with applicable regulations, including but not limited to those regarding facilities, financial reporting, Board governance, parent associations, and charter revisions

TRCS has been in compliance with applicable regulations over the course of the charter term. With respect to facilities, TRCS is located in a school building owned by NYCDOE. While TRCS is not directly responsible for the building's compliance with ADA and other laws, it has cooperated fully with the NYC DOE to ensure that all relevant laws, regulations and requirements are met. With respect to audits, escrow and financial reporting, TRCS has had consistently clean audits and has ended each year in a strong financial position.

Regarding Board compliance, the TRCS Board of Trustees has operated in compliance with the requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, Open Meeting Law, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest and

¹⁴ The NYC DOE report stated that TRCS was out of compliance in that the school posted a partial 2012-13 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit on its website. However, TRCS posted all of the material sections of the Annual Report and audit on its website and has made the entire documents available on request.

the requirements of its governing by-laws. Evidence of such compliance is reflected in documents such as the Board meeting minutes and copies of public notices regarding Board meetings that are posted (including on the school's website). Also, as discussed earlier in this narrative, the Board has relied on attorneys and other experts to ensure that Board members understand their responsibilities and that the Board complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

Regarding material changes in the charter, TRCS has complied and is currently complying with all requirements regarding authorizer notification and authorization. As discussed earlier in this narrative, the NYC DOE approved changes in TRCS' charter during the current charter term.

Regarding TRCS' Parent Teacher Organization, TRCS has had an effective Parent Teacher Association throughout the current charter term and has created additional opportunities for parents to become engaged in the life of the school. Parent engagement initiatives at TRCS have been discussed earlier in this narrative.

4. If renewed, what are the school's plans for its next charter term?

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments*
 - Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.*
 - Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's proposed growth plans*
 - Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans*
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school's new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)*

In this section, please address the school's future plans for expansion or replication, if any, and describe the school's capacity and progress toward carrying out such plans. If the school does not currently have any plans to expand sections, offer new grades or replicate with an additional charter, you may write "N/A" for this section. If the school is considering replication, we do not need detailed plans about the future school, but please do submit a description of how these plans will be executed in a way that does not threaten the current school's success.

TRCS does not plan to serve additional grades or make substantive alterations of its academic or operational model during the next charter term. TRCS expects that it may increase its enrollment slightly to permit class sizes to expand to 30 students per class. This modest change in enrollment would not alter TRCS' academic or operational programming in any material way.

TRCS has considered replicating its model. While it is not proposing to do so in this charter renewal document, TRCS reserves the right to reconsider and to submit a request for charter revision.

4b. Organizational Sustainability

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- *School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)*
- *School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios*

In this section, please describe the school's capacity to remain a sustainable organization over time. If the school will be expanding to additional sections or grade levels over the next charter term, what plans are in place for leadership development and resource management? If the school is currently operating at scale, how does the school plan to sustain and improve its performance? What evidence is there that the school has the capacity to self-reflect, adapt, and consistently improve over time?

Throughout its history, TRCS has demonstrated its ability to adapt to change, to continue to provide effective programming in the face of new circumstances and to invest in its continuous improvement. Among the keys to TRCS's sustainability through the next charter term and beyond are:

- Financial sustainability—As discussed earlier in this narrative, TRCS is financially sound and has an accumulated surplus that is projected to grow in the next charter term. This enables TRCS to invest in building its capacity, expanding its programming, acquiring new resources, growing its staff and adapting to any new circumstances it may face.
- A proven academic model—TRCS has been a successful charter school since 2000. In its next charter term, TRCS will continue to build on its data-driven instructional model to sustain and improve its educational program.
- A culture of collaboration—A core belief at TRCS is that the best decisions are made through collaborative and reflective processes in which ideas, experiences and opinions are shared and debated in a respectful and productive way. Educators and administrators at TRCS work together in teams, PLCs and in co-teaching classrooms. Such collaboration ensures that TRCS will continue to build programs and address challenges by using the collective talents and perspectives of multiple members of the school community.
- Leveraging of community relationships—TRCS has invested heavily over the years in creating and nurturing community partnerships that have resulted in extraordinary learning experiences programs for its students. These partnerships are essential to the school's success in supporting students in engaging in internships and project-based and experiential learning experiences. These partnerships have been and will continue to be instrumental in helping TRCS create and implement effective instructional and enrichment initiatives. This, in turn, will support TRCS's sustainability.

4c. School or Model Improvements

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- *Review performance carefully and even without major changes through expansion or replication, are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success*
- *Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission*

In this section, please describe changes the school plans to make to its academic or operational program in the upcoming charter term, if granted. Consider any proposed changes to the school's mission, goals, education program (including plans to align with Common Core Learning Standards), learning environment, governance structure, community engagement, services for at-risk subgroups, organizational design, financial management plan, enrollment plan, and compliance efforts. Please review the 2010 Charter Schools Act amendments to make sure that you are in full compliance with all new amendments, such as the requirement for monthly Board meetings.

For the next charter, TRCS has revised its goals to align with the October 2013 Mandated Goals guidance that was published by NYC DOE and to add the following school-specific mission-centered goals:

1) Through qualitative measures, including student engagement in service learning, social activism, leadership development and community-service activities, the school will live its motto, “Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York.”

2) In support of TRCS’ mission to develop leaders and global citizens, students will regularly engage with community and cultural partners through experiential learning opportunities, interdisciplinary units developed in core subjects, and the high school leadership program matching students with internships and outside elective credits.

A key change that TRCS intends to enact in the next charter term is an increase in student enrollment to a maximum of 30 students per class. This increase will enable TRCS to ensure its financial sustainability while continuing to provide rigorous and personalized instruction to all students.

Another change that TRCS is making in the next charter term is to provide that the school schedule will be “at least 180 days” per year. This modification will provide TRCS with flexibility to provide extended year programming.

Also, as discussed earlier, TRCS is currently engaged in negotiations with the UFT regarding its teacher evaluation process. It is expected that these negotiations will result in a formal memorandum of understanding outlining the teacher evaluation process at TRCS during the last year of the current charter term or the first year of the next charter term. The key components of the teacher evaluation system—e.g. use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, use of observations, assessing teachers using the “HEDI” formula—are already in place and are expected to be memorialized in the memorandum of understanding.

TRCS reserves the right to make additional changes in the new charter term regarding issues currently being discussed and negotiated or that may be discussed and negotiated in the future with school stakeholders and the UFT. In accordance with its charter and the Charter Schools Act, TRCS will notify the NYC DOE prior to making any material change, and no such change will take effect until NYC DOE approval is obtained.