



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report *2017-2018*

Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School

Visit Date: October 25-26, 2017
Date of Report: June 13, 2018

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School
Board Chair	Brooks Tanner
District of Location	NYC CSD 15
Opening Date	08/26/2013
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 08/26/2013 - 06/30/2018
Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 6-8/300 students
Management Company	None
Educational Partners	None
Facilities	500 19 th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of BUGS is to provide a hands-on, interdisciplinary education to young adolescents of all abilities and backgrounds, with a focus on real-world problem solving and the exploration of environmental sustainability. BUGS students will excel in the core academic subjects and become engaged community members who are critical thinkers prepared to achieve excellence in high school and beyond.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry-Based Study of the Science of Sustainability • Extended Time for Learning • A Positive and Inclusive School Climate • A Professional Learning Community • Authentic Assessments and Individualization • Use of Technology
Requested Revisions	None

Renewal Outcomes

The following renewal outcomes are possible:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.
- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal, which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the

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

quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:

(a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school’s being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**

(b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1, but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Non-Renewal:** A school’s charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school’s charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office’s Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

Please Note: The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school’s Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success, but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective action.

School Characteristics

Enrollment for the Current Charter Term

	Year 1 2013 to 2014	Year 2 2014 to 2015	Year 3 2015 to 2016	Year 4 2016 to 2017	Year 5 2017 to 2018
Grade Configuration	Grade 6	Grades 6-7	Grades 6-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 6-8
Total Approved Enrollment	110	205	300	300	300
Actual Enrollment	140	202	290	284	279 ²

² Self-reported at time of Renewal Site Visit

Proposed Enrollment for the Renewal Charter Term

	Year 1 2018 to 2019	Year 2 2019 to 2020	Year 3 2020 to 2021	Year 4 2021 to 2022	Year 5 2022 to 2023
Grade Configuration	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 6 - 8
Total Approved Enrollment	300	300	300	300	300

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School (BUGS) on October 25-26, 2017. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees; school leadership team, including instructional, operational, and school culture staff members; and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the NYSED Charter School Office (CSO) administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 11 classroom observations in Grades 6 - 8. The observations were approximately 15 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal or one of the two assistant principals.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- **Renewal Application**
- **Academic data**
- **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**
- **Current organizational chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- **Board materials (roster and minutes)**
- **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Teacher and administrator evaluation processes**
- **Interventions offered at the school**
- **NYC DOE surveys of teachers, parents, and students**
- **NYSED-administered teacher survey**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets**
- **School submitted Annual Reports**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will be presented in alignment with the [Performance Framework](#) Benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below, although not all indicators will necessarily be assessed on every site visit. A brief summary of the school's strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; however, the report narrative will highlight those indicators not fully met by the school.

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

For the site visit conducted from October 25, 2017 to October 26, 2017 at BUGS, see the following Performance Framework benchmark scores and discussion.

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

Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Approaches
	Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students’ well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	Meets
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students’ social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school’s academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	Meets
Organizational Soundness	Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Approaches
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

The CSO renewal site visit team found that BUGS' performance meets most of the Benchmarks of the Performance Framework for the current charter term. The school's overall academic performance falls below the community school district (CSD) of location and state averages, in math. In ELA, BUGS' overall performance is below the CSD and has come close to or met the state average, depending on the year. In both ELA and math, but BUGS academic performance in the students with disabilities (SWDs) subgroup exceeds both the CSD and the state. Curriculum content is reported by school leadership to be strategic and aligned to the NYSL.

According to school leaders, systems are in place to define and reinforce a school culture based on community and inclusion. Organizationally, the school has a stable board and leadership team. The board provides oversight and is the financial steward of the school.

The school meets enrollment and retention targets for SWDs and economically disadvantaged (ED) students, enrolling comparable percentages to its district of location, and exhibits good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain English Language Learners (ELLs), although the school enrolls fewer ELLs than the district of location.

The school appears compliant with most laws, regulations, and provisions of its charter.

Please see additional summative evidence for each Benchmark of the Performance Framework below.

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

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

Finding: Approaches

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

The analysis provided below is based primarily on 3-8 assessment data for ELA and math. It should be noted, however, that BUGS offers its eighth graders the opportunity to take the Algebra I Common Core Regents exam. Those results are shared in Indicator 3, an area typically reserved for high schools.

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:

BUGS ESEA Accountability Designation was in Good Standing for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:

BUGS reported in its renewal application on the comparison to its Similar Schools, as determined by the CSO. The school's comparison group changed from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, which was due to a data reporting error that had the school with a lower percentage of ED students than it did in the 2015-2016 school year.

In the renewal application, the school reported that in 2016-2017, BUGS had higher proficiency in both ELA and math than its Similar Schools group of 96 schools. BUGS reported that it outperformed its cohort by 12 percentage points in ELA and four percentage points in math.

Indicator 2: Middle School Outcomes

2.a.i. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:

In its renewal application, BUGS reported that the percent of students maintaining a proficient testing level or trending toward proficiency from one year's test administration to the next in ELA increased by 18 percentage points from 27% in the 2014-2015 school year to 45% in the 2015-2016 school year. The positive trend continued, albeit slightly, in the 2016-2017 school year, with an increase to 1%. In math, BUGS percentage of students maintaining a proficient testing level, or trending toward proficiency, slightly increased from 19% in 2014-2015 school year to 20% in the 2015-2016 school year, and to 25% of students in the 2016-2017 school year. Both ELA and math exhibited an overall positive trend.

2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency - Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:

According to the school's renewal application, in ELA, the SWD subgroup trended positively towards proficiency with a 35-percentage point increase from 2014-2015 to the 2015-2016. There appeared to be a significant drop, however, between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school year where proficiency rates

fell from 48% to 16%, respectively, a 32-percentage point drop. In math, there has been a slight decline year-over-year in the percentage of students trending toward proficiency from 20% in 2014-2015, to 15% in 2015-2016, to 14% in 2016-2017.

The school’s renewal application shows a positive trend for students in the ED subgroup for both ELA and math. In ELA from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017, there was an overall increase of 19 percentage points, with the biggest jump occurring from the 2014-2015 school year to the 2015-2016 school year where proficiency went from 27% to 45%. Scores then climbed one percentage point thereafter. In math, the percent trending towards proficiency or maintain proficiency trended generally positively with 19% in 2014-2015 to 20% in 2015-2016 to 25% in 2016-2017.

The ELL students’ subgroup, as reported in the school’s renewal application, while exhibiting positive trends in both ELA and math from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 where ELA scores improved by 19 percentage points and math scores improved by 4 percentage points, experienced significant drops from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. In both subject areas, no ELL students were proficient in 2016-2017, a drop of 44 percentage points in ELA and 29 percentage points in math.

2.b.i. Proficiency - Aggregate School Level Proficiency for All Students: See Table 1 below.

BUGS enrolled students in Grades 6 and 7 in the 2014-2015 school year, and grew to its full middle school grade span of Grades 6 – 8 in the 2015-2016 school year.

When compared to the state, BUGS has essentially matched proficiency rates in ELA in the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years, but is below, and has been below, in math. Aggregate proficiency at BUGS has been below the district of location in both ELA and math for the past three years, although there has been an increase in proficiency rates year over year. Of note, 65.8% of BUGS students reside in districts other than their district of location, NYC CSD 15. NYC CSD 15 is a high performing CSD where proficiency rates exceed the state average in both ELA and math.

**Table 1: Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students:
School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

All Students	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	26%	43%	-17	30%	-4	22%	48%	-26	37%	-15
2015-2016	36%	49%	-13	37%	-1	23%	45%	-22	34%	-11
2016-2017	40%	53%	-13	40%	0	24%	45%	-21	34%	-10

* State and District data are grade specific. Grades 6-7 for 2014-15 and Grades 6-8 for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

2.b.ii. Proficiency – Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Tables 2-4 below.

Subgroup proficiency rates for SWDs, in both ELA and math, show that BUGS is either equal to or above the district of location and is exceeding the state.

For the ELL population subgroup, ELA proficiency rates have consistently been at 0% for the last three years of the charter term, which is below both the district of location and the state. No ELL students have achieved proficiency in ELA in the past three years. In math, ELL students had been above both the district of location and the state in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, however, the proficiency rate fell 11 percentage points to 0% in 2016-2017.

For the ED student population subgroup, students in ELA have experienced increasing levels of proficiency over the past three academic years. In 2016-2017, EDs performed three percentage points below the district of location but performed two percentage points above the state. In math, ED performance has been generally flat, with the students performing below both the district of location and the state in for the past three academic years.

Table 2: Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup –
SWDs: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

SWDs	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	10%	10%	0	4%	+6	18%	15%	+3	8%	+10
2015-2016	21%	15%	+6	7%	+14	17%	14%	+3	7%	+10
2016-2017	16%	16%	0	8%	+8	13%	13%	+0	7%	+6

* State and district data are grade specific. Grades 6-7 for 2014-15 and Grades 6-8 for 2015-2017.

Table 3: Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup –
ELLs: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

ELLs	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	0%	1%	-1	2%	-2	14%	12%	+2	10%	+4
2015-2016	0%	3%	-3	2%	-2	11%	10%	+1	8%	+3
2016-2017	0%	2%	-2	2%	-2	0%	7%	-7	9%	-2

* State and district data are grade specific. Grades 6-7 for 2014-15 and Grades 6-8 for 2015-2017.

Table 4: Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup –
ED Students: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates

EDs	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	21%	25%	-4	20%	+1	16%	33%	-17	25%	-9
2015-2016	26%	32%	-6	27%	-1	18%	29%	-11	24%	-6
2016-2017	32%	35%	-3	30%	+2	16%	29%	-13	24%	-8

* State and district data are grade specific. Grades 6-7 for 2014-15 and Grades 6-8 for 2015-2017.

2.b.iii. Proficiency – Grade Level Proficiency: See Tables 5 - 7 below.

Grade level proficiency at BUGS in ELA has consistently been below the district of location in ELA across all grade levels over the past three academic years. The results when compared to the state have been mixed, depending on the grade level and year. Math grade level proficiency has been consistently below both the district of location and the state for all grade levels and for all of the previous three academic years.

Table 5: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2014-2015

2014-2015	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
Grade 6	19%	44%	-25	31%	-12	16%	51%	-35	39%	-23
Grade 7	30%	43%	-13	29%	+1	25%	45%	-20	35%	-10

Table 6: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2015-2016

2015-2016	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
Grade 6	39%	47%	-8	34%	+5	35%	53%	-18	40%	-5
Grade 7	19%	53%	-34	35%	-16	25%	53%	-28	36%	-11
Grade 8	45%	48%	-3	41%	+4	7%	19%	-12	24%	-17

Table 7: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2016-2017

2016-2017	ELA					Math				
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance to NYC CSD 15	NYS	Variance to NYS
Grade 6	26%	45%	-19	32%	-6	25%	51%	-26	40%	-15
Grade 7	51%	58%	-7	42%	+9	33%	53%	-20	38%	-5
Grade 8	41%	58%	-17	45%	-4	7%	22%	-15	22%	-15

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

3.a.i. Regents Testing Outcomes – Aggregate Annual Regents Outcomes: See Table 8.

Eighth graders at BUGS outperformed the state in the aggregate and across all subgroups in 2015-2016 on both the Common Core Algebra I Regents exam and the Living Environment Regents exam. In 2016-2017, BUGS outperformed the state in the aggregate and across all subgroups for the same exams, the only exception being BUGS matched the state in the aggregate for the Living Environment Regents exam.

Table 8: Annual Regents Outcomes – Aggregate

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	BUGS	NYS	Variance	BUGS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	100%	72%	+28	100%	74%	+26
Living Environment (>65)	100%	78%	+22	74%	74%	0

3.a.ii. Regents Testing Outcomes – Subgroup Annual Regents Outcomes: See Tables 9-11.

In 2016 and 2017, BUGS outperformed the state in both Algebra I and Living Environment, in each of the student subgroups.

Table 9: Annual Regents Outcomes – SWDs

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	BUGS	NYS	Variance	BUGS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	*	41%	*	*	45%	*
Living Environment (>65)	*	48%	*	50%	44%	+4

*Data suppressed in accordance with the business rules at data.nysed.gov.

Table 10: Annual Regents Outcomes – ELLs

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	BUGS	NYS	Variance	BUGS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	N/A	44%	N/A	*	46%	*
Living Environment (>65)	N/A	42%	N/A	40%	34%	+6

N/A no students sat for the assessment.

*Data suppressed in accordance with the business rules at data.nysed.gov.

Table 11: Annual Regents Outcomes – EDs

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	BUGS	NYS	Variance	BUGS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	100%	62%	+38	100%	67%	+33
Living Environment (>65)	100%	69%	+31	72%	64%	+8

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSL) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSL. b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.
3. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.
4. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

Curriculum

The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSL. The curriculum is revised on a monthly basis during department meetings and annually, by the assistant principals and department chairs who ensure there is both vertical and horizontal alignment. The school reported that they have a Curriculum Development Week in August led by department chairs, and that teachers are trained on changes to curriculum in their areas of focus for the upcoming year.

The school reported that key changes made over the charter term to the curriculum included a focus on alignment to the Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) with NYSLS for ELA, and a change in math curriculum for 7th and 8th grades from *Connected Math Projects 3* (CMP3) to EngageNY’s *Math in Focus* in 2015-2016. In 2016-2017, the school added a new science scope and sequence for the Living Environment Regents exam. The school also added a second assistant principal position in 2015-2016 for ELA. The person in this position ensures that ELA curriculum units are aligned to the NYSLS and allows the other assistant principal position to focus on math curriculum.

All teachers use a lesson plan template and the *Understanding by Design* backwards planning method. During the instructional leader focus group, the instructional leads discussed how department chairs reviewed lesson plans. Department chairs also lead weekly department meetings, review student work, ensure unit alignment, and analyze data.

Instruction

The school utilizes a co-teaching model. Integrated co-teaching (ICT) settings are used in two out of four classes in 6th grade and three out of four classes in 7th and 8th grades. During classroom observations, CSO team members primarily saw examples of parallel teaching, with some classrooms following a single lead, whole group instruction model. The school reported that lessons should include checks for understanding, project-based learning, and accountable talk. The school also reported that differentiated activities should follow a school-wide leveling system of below grade-level or “mild,” at grade-level or “medium,” and above grade-level challenges or “spicy.” While on site, the CSO team saw the system employed only in a couple of classrooms, and few examples of the accountable talk or checks for understanding. CSO team members mostly observed independent and small-group work. Differentiation mostly occurred through the groupings. CSO team members did not observe consistent student engagement across all of the classrooms visited.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

BUGS utilizes formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments. The instructional leaders discussed the diagnostic assessments that they administer at the beginning of the school year to establish a baseline for each student for that year. For the 2017-2018 school year, they aimed to administer the diagnostic assessments earlier in August and as soon as possible for transfer students. The school reported that they also administer formative assessments between November and April, and summative assessments, including the New York State exams, at the end of the year.

As reported in the school’s renewal application, BUGS administers the following formative and summative assessments: *STAR* reading, *Brigance*, *Fountas & Pinnell*, mock NYS tests, Teacher’s College Running Records, DBQ Argumentative Essay, and teacher-created classroom and unit assessments. The school reported that changes to assessments in 2016-2017 included: improving the alignment of interim assessments, administering new math comprehensive exams designed by the assistant principal for math, and administering more on-demand writing assessments. The school reported that they use the TCRWP rubric to review writing. The school reported that qualitative assessments include teachers monitoring and observing students’ oral responses and classwork.

The school has shown evidence of using data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program. For example, the instructional leaders shared that they began implementing argumentative writing and reading comprehension for qualitative assessments because they saw students’ struggling with explaining their thinking and textual analysis.

Supports for Diverse Learners

BUGS employs an ICT classroom model, an inclusion coordinator, an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, and two guidance counselors to meet the needs of diverse learners. The ICT classrooms are the primary support for SWDs. Grade-level teams meet at the beginning of the year to review students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) and interventionists meet with grade-level teams at least once a semester to ensure alignment. The ENL teacher provides ELLs with pull-out support in ELA, math, and science. The instructional leaders discussed in the focus group that the ENL teacher puts more supports in place for general education classroom teachers, sharing strategies to use with specific students, and has worked closely with the science department to align science curriculum. The ENL teacher also serves as the ELL coordinator and provides professional development for the staff.

The school utilizes Response to Intervention (RtI) to support all students. The Student Support Team (SST) comprised of the special education teachers, related service providers, and administration, meets weekly to discuss students who are in need of intervention. The school also has a Child Study Team (CST) comprised of many of the same members of the SST and may become involved if a student needs a Tier 3 intervention. The school also has scheduled a daily 45-minute Advancement Group, where all students are grouped based on their performance on interim assessments and receive targeted instruction either to address areas where they are below proficiency or to provide enrichment for those above proficiency.

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement

The school has systems in place to support students’ social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school’s academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy. b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment. c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students’ strengths and needs. b. The school assesses family and student satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions. c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns. d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students. b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students’ social and emotional health.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

Behavior Management and Safety

BUGS has a consistent approach to behavioral management, which is focused on positive behavioral interactions and supports. The school reported in its renewal application that it does this by utilizing approaches such as incorporating character education into the school day, providing meditation, and using peer mediation. This along with its discipline policy and school-wide behavior expectations provide the groundwork for BUGS’ behavior management system. In response to the NYSED CSO assessment at the mid-term site visit that student behavior was an area for improvement, the school hired new school culture personnel, created a Quiet Time Culture Team, formed the Junior Dean Team, and started using an online behavior tracking system called DeansList. During the school climate focus group, staff members were aware of and clear on the systems and protocols for the new initiatives.

A review of the 2017-2018 Family Handbook showed that it includes the code of conduct; behavioral expectations; consequences for infractions; and the definition of the school's core values of community, awareness, reach, exploration, and student voice (CARES). The handbook also describes the advisory program, which includes a weekly character education class with lesson plans created by the guidance counselor, curriculum created by PowerTools, and the teachers as advisors.

The school has a School Climate Team (SCT), comprised of the deans, an inclusion coordinator, grade-level leaders, and the principal, that meets weekly and conducts classroom walkthroughs to ensure the behavioral expectations are being clearly and consistently implemented by teachers across classrooms. School leadership reported in the focus group that there is a school-wide noise level system and use of nonverbal cues as shared classroom routines. During the site visit, one of the classrooms observed had a dean present, coaching a teacher in real time. The SCT are also responsible for creating student events to incentivize positive behavior and overseeing the Junior Dean Team. The Learning Environment Checklist is a tool used to set school-wide behavior expectations. For example, all classrooms are supposed to have an Essential Question and objective for each lesson. During the site visit, only a couple of classrooms observed had the Essential Question or objective clearly posted or outlined.

The school appears to have a safe environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. However, in the NYSED teacher survey administered by the school, only one out of 22 respondents to the survey knew there was a DASA coordinator. During the CSO site visit, the review team noted some disruptions by students in classrooms or hallways.

Family Engagement and Communication

The school reported that they have multiple forms of communications with families, and that they share students' academic data through TeacherEase, an online grading system that students and families have access to. School leadership reported that staff have annual training on any policy updates in the school's handbook, and they review them with families during the annual Curriculum Night. Parents in the parent focus group shared that they felt there was constant, positive interaction between teachers and parents through the TeacherEase system, weekly CARES reports, weekly digest from teachers, and regular reminders through emails and phone calls. The parents also discussed that the school environment was inclusive, transparent, and fostered a sense of community, with engagement between teachers, students, families, and administration.

The school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and the co-presidents of the PTA sit on the BUGS Board of Trustees. Parents at the parent focus group stated that they found the PTA to be open and welcoming. The school utilizes the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) School Survey to gauge student and parent satisfaction and gather feedback. For the 2016-2017 school year, 65% of parents completed the survey. Of those who responded, 93% of parents/guardians agreed or strongly agreed that they feel well informed by the communications they receive from the school. School leadership reported in a focus group that 91% of students returned for the 2017-2018 school year from the previous year, and that on average for the charter term they have a 90% student retention rate.

Social-Emotional Supports

BUGS offers an advisory program and Quiet Time (twice per day meditation program) to provide social and emotional learning opportunities. The school utilizes an RtI system for students identified with social-emotional and/or behavioral challenges, following a three-tier escalation process that involves the CST. If

a student is moved to Tier 3, he or she may be placed on a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan. The SST and the CST track the progress of the success of Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions for students who are receiving them.

The school reported in the renewal application that it tracks data, including attendance, discipline, and progress of students in RtI. The school recently began using an online, school-wide system called DeansList that tracks additions on deductions based on students’ behavior. Students and their parents receive weekly reports on their DeansList points. Other discipline data the school tracks and is reviewed by the school leadership team includes referrals, reflections, suspensions (after school, in-school, and out-of-school), and expulsions. Discipline data is included in the monthly board dashboard. The school’s two guidance counselors provided social-emotional supports for mandated services, as well as student referrals. The guidance counselor also visits all advisories at least three times a year to give feedback to each advisor.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition
The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.

Finding: Meets

Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school’s performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and also provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school’s annual independently audited financial statements.

1. Near-Term Indicators:	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
2. Sustainability Indicators:	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

Financial Condition

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

The CSO reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are

measures of liquidity and of the charter school’s capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to asset ratio, are measures of the charter school’s capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department’s Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. BUGS’ composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.8. The table below shows the school’s composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**BUGS’ Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.8
2014-2015	2.7
2013-2014	2.3

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Near-Term Indicators

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

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2015-2016, BUGS had a current ratio of 3.5.

Unrestricted cash measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Charter schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2015-2016, BUGS operated with 104 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment maximization measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent is considered reasonable. BUGS’ enrollment maximization for 2015-2016 was at 97 percent.

Long-Term Indicators

A charter school’s *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2015-2016, BUGS’ debt to asset ratio was 0.3.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2015-2016, BUGS' total margin was 6% percent.

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

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

Finding: Meets

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
2. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget in relation to those objectives.
3. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
4. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
5. The school has complied with state and federal financial reporting requirements.
6. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
7. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

The CSO reviewed BUGS' 2015-16 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

However, the auditor made the following observation:

- The school's policies require two signatures for checks of \$10,000 or more, but actual checks had one signature and only check copies had two signatures. Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School should adhere to its policy, which is intended to provide an additional layer of review and approval of substantial expenditures.

School leadership reported in a focus group on site that this has since been rectified.

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

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

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school.b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy.c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals.d. The board regularly updates school policies.e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers.f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

BUGS has had a generally consistent and stable board of trustees over the charter term. It is currently comprised of ten board members. Two of the founding board members have remained on the board. Board turnover over the course of the charter term was primarily attributed to board members whose term expired or had career changes that did not allow for the time commitment.

The board members have a diverse set of skills and expertise, meeting the needs of the school. When board members leave, the board ensures that any skill or expertise gap that may be created is filled. In the board focus group, areas of need that the board identified were currently education, finance, and law. Aside from professional expertise diversity, the board seeks to have a membership that is diverse in age, gender, socio-economic background, and race. The board has in place recruitment practices that include network referrals, board recruitment fairs, and professional nonprofit board recruiters. The application process for prospective board members includes being interviewed by current board members and sitting in on at least one board meeting. The board added two new members, a faculty member of the Relay School of Education and a BUGS parent, for the 2017-2018 school year.

During the board focus group, board members spoke about strategic planning as a continuous process, and that they review surveys at an annual retreat and go through SWOT analysis to determine long-term vision, along with school-wide goals for upcoming school year. Board members evaluate themselves through an annual self-evaluation survey. The results of the survey are reviewed and reflected upon at the annual board retreat, and inform the goals for the upcoming school year. The board also reviews and approves goals and action plans that align with the school-wide goals, submitted by the executive director. The board utilizes outside consultants to guide the reflection process and to ensure that they are following

governance best practices. The school reported that the board uses targets within the NYSED Performance Framework to guide the school's priorities.

The board utilizes a committee structure, with an Executive Committee, an Education and Accountability Committee, a Finance Committee, and a Governance and Nominating Committee, for ongoing oversight of the school's academic, operational, and fiscal goals. Board committees have to create goals for themselves and evaluate performance against goals at end of year. The board members at the board focus group discussed the school's improvements since the mid-term site visit. They spoke about an improved school culture with an additional dean role created (two deans total in 2017-2018) and expanded student Junior Dean Team and that the culture goal for the 2017-2018 school year is more time on-task in classrooms with increased student engagement and participation. Since the mid-term site visit, the board members approved an increase to the salary matrix to make teachers' salaries more competitive with the NYC DOE to retain more high quality teachers. The board also reported that they increased the headcount for both instructional and support staff.

The board reported in the focus group that it evaluates the executive director annually, using an evaluation tool created by the school. The executive director is the only school staff who reports to the board. At the beginning of the school year, the executive director presents goals aligned to the school's goals, including goals tied to student performance and supervision of staff. Progress towards goals is monitored throughout the year at monthly board meetings. At the end of the year, the executive director completes a self-evaluation, along with board members' evaluations that are then compiled into a formal narrative evaluation by the Governance and Nominating Committee.

The board appears to demonstrate awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders, and regularly updates school policies, after the executive director reviews and proposes any modifications or updates, although there was one issue cited regarding a change made to the school calendar that was not authorizer approved. The school, once made aware, took immediate steps to correct the error. The board reported that it retains legal counsel to ensure adherence to all applicable laws.

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

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

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<p>1. <i>School Leadership</i></p>	<p>a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning.</p> <p>b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.</p> <p>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</p>
<p>2. <i>Professional Climate</i></p>	<p>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</p> <p>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</p> <p>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students’ needs.</p> <p>d. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality—which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation geared toward improving instructional practice.</p> <p>e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.</p>
<p>3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<p>a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.</p> <p>b. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p> <p>c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

School Leadership

The school has a defined leadership team, with each member having clear roles and responsibilities. The executive director is the sole leader who reports directly to the board, with the principal and director of operations reporting to the executive director. The executive director also oversees the financial consultant, ASNY, and is responsible for oversight for the instructional and operational functions of the

school. In addition, the executive director handles external relations, with a current focus on student recruitment and fundraising. The principal supervises the academic leadership team, comprised of two assistant principals, two deans of school culture. The inclusion coordinator reports to one of the assistant principals. At the time of the site visit, the inclusion coordinator position was vacant, but the principal anticipated the role would be filled by the end of the month and had been handling the tasks during the vacancy.

The school has clear and well-established communication systems across the school. The school reported in its renewal application that new staff receive an orientation that is presented by the school leadership team. All staff attend an annual summer orientation where the executive director and principal share the goals set for the school year. Throughout the school year, the school leaders communicate with the staff and the school community through newsletters, social media, meetings, and surveys.

In its renewal application, the school reported that BUGS primarily recruits teachers through attending job fairs, posting on their website and other job sites, and by word of mouth. BUGS promotes the staff networking through referral incentives and events, such as a semester celebration, where staff can invite potential candidates to mingle with the BUGS community. The school leadership team reported that the director of operations is focusing on recruitment and looking for more experienced teachers.

The school reported that the hiring process for teachers includes an application requiring written essays, an on-site interview with a demo lesson, meets with potential colleagues, a one-on-one interview, and reference checks. The candidate receives feedback from an instructional leader after the demo lesson aligned to the Danielson Framework and writes a reflection of the lesson. The school leadership team reported in the focus group that they are being more strategic about onboarding new hires and making placement decisions for teachers with varying levels of experience.

BUGS staff retention efforts include staff leadership pathways and professional development, and benefits, such as recently added maternity/paternity leave and tuition-reimbursement program for teachers who work towards special education certification. The school reported in the Renewal Site Visit Workbook that the teacher attrition from the 2016-2017 school year to the 2017-2018 school year was 35%, and of the teachers who left the school only one was due to a contract not being renewed. According to the NYSED Teacher Survey in 2017, 86% of BUGS teachers see the school as a long-term, sustainable option for them as a place to work. The school leadership team discussed reasons for teachers leaving, such as going to graduate school, changing professions, and personal situations. The school leadership team analyzes responses and looks for any trends in exit interviews and uses that data to make adjustments.

Professional Climate

The school reported in its renewal application that teachers have opportunities to meet and collaborate. Teachers meet weekly in department-level and interdisciplinary sustainability teams, and bi-weekly in grade-level teams. Teachers are also allocated meeting times to meet as co-teachers, individually with supervisors, and with critical friends. Teachers, an assistant principal, and the inclusion coordinator have inclusion meetings weekly to write IEPs, conduct Functional Behavior Assessments, Behavior Improvement Plans, and modify general education lesson plans to support students with IEPs.

BUGS provides professional development to ensure staff are supported and maintain instructional quality. The school reported that professional development is done monthly in-house and through partnerships.

Teachers also get half-day and full-day professional development sessions, five of which are used as data days, and a Summer Institute. The other form of professional development BUGS provides to its teachers is coaching. Teachers set individual goals at the beginning of the school year, which they share with their department chair and supervising assistant principal. Teachers are both formally and informally observed and receive ongoing feedback through real-time comments, modeling, or a written summary. The instructional leaders mentioned that department chairs will coach teachers in the classroom, conduct informal observations, and check lesson plans. The school leadership team reported that they collect feedback from teachers on professional development and have made changes based on the feedback.

The school has systems in place to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality, which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation that is aligned to the Danielson framework. The school reported as part of the accompanying documentation submitted with the site visit, that teachers are formally observed two times a year, for a mid-year evaluation and an end-of-year evaluation. The principal or assistant principal will support teachers in any areas of improvement found at the mid-year evaluation, and assess if growth has occurred by the end-of-year evaluation.

The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction, including teacher representatives, teacher surveys, and exit surveys. The school reported that they also hold bi-weekly all-staff omnibus meetings that cover school-wide topics through collaborative agendas. BUGS utilizes the NYC DOE survey as their staff survey to assess teacher satisfaction. In the 2016-2017 NYSED CSO teacher survey for BUGS, 91% of teachers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that they have the resources and support to do their job well.

Contractual Relationships

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

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

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

Finding: Meets

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Mission and Key Design Elements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter.b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

As observed during the site visit, and by the NYSED CSO team, the board, school leaders, and staff share a common and consistent understanding of BUGS' mission, which is to: *provide a hands-on, interdisciplinary education to young adolescents of all abilities and backgrounds, with a focus on real-world problem solving and the exploration of environmental sustainability. BUGS students will excel in the core academic subjects and become engaged community members who are critical thinkers prepared to achieve excellence in high school and beyond.* The school reported in the renewal application that the mission is communicated to students and families from initial contact during recruitment and carried through to school's curriculum and school-community events, and evident in their stated educational outcomes.

The school implements the key design elements outlined in the charter. In focus groups during the CSO site visit and in the renewal application, the school's stakeholders discussed all key design elements and their integration throughout the school. The most prominent key design elements that were observed on the site visit included extended time for learning and a positive, inclusive school climate.

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.

Finding: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets.</p> <p>b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.</p> <p>c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

BUGS meets the enrollment plan outlined in its revised charter. The school enrolls a similar percentage of SWDs and in the 2016-2017 school year, a slightly higher percentage of ED students, as compared to its district of location, NYC CSD 15. The school had a data reporting error in the 2015-2016 school year resulting in an underreported ED number.

The school continues to enroll a lower percentage of ELLs as compared to CSD 15. In order to address the ELL percentage discrepancy, the school started a weighted lottery for ELL students in the 6th and 7th grades for the 2016-2017 school year. Since the 2016-2017 school year was the first one that the weighted lottery for ELLs was used, the enrollment can be used as a baseline to allow the school to better understand which recruitment strategies are more effective in increasing their ELL population. During the board focus group, the board members present discussed their efforts through having bilingual representatives to conduct outreach and identifying feeder schools. The board members also mentioned how the school is targeting recruitment efforts in neighborhoods where there are a significant population of Chinese students.

The school reports that it continues to make good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain SWD, ELL, and ED subgroup student populations. For example, the school continues to refine its recruitment and outreach strategies for these subgroups, including, but not limited to:

- Translating recruitment flyers and postcards in multiple languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic, and holding information sessions in Spanish;
- Engaging bilingual parents of current BUGS students and multilingual staff in conducting outreach;
- Hiring a full-time parent coordinator, who grew up and lives in the school’s neighborhood, connecting the school to more Spanish-speaking communities;
- Attending the district’s middle school fairs, middle school principal forum, and superintendent forum; and
- Ongoing relationship-building with elementary schools that have subgroup populations comparable to the district.

Table 12: Student Demographics – Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School Compared to District of Location

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance
SWDs	28%	26%	+2	27%	25%	+2
ELLs	6%	15%	-9	5%	11%	-6
EDs	36%	58%	-22	62%	54%	+8

BUGS overall student retention from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 school year was 80%. The school outperformed its district of location in retention for all students, as well as the three special subgroup populations. In particular, they retained more ELLs than NYC CSD 15 by 6 percentage points.

Table 13: Student Retention– 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 (% of Students who remained enrolled in the school)

	2015-2016		
	BUGS	NYC CSD 15	Variance
All Students	80%	79%	+1
SWDs	86%	80%	+6
ELLs	82%	76%	+6
EDs	80%	78%	+2

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

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

Finding: Meets

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to: those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health and safety requirements.b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

BUGS appears to have generally complied with the legal obligations and applicable state and federal laws, governance and reporting, as well as the provisions of its charter. The two exceptions of note include the data reporting error of the ED population to SIRS in the 2015-2016 school year, and a revision the school put into place without obtaining authorizer approval regarding the number of calendar days in the 2017-2018 school year. In the latter, the school changed its school calendar from 190 to 184 days, which had not gone through the non-material request process. BUGS has since begun working with the CSO to obtain approval through the revision process.