



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2018-2019

Mott Hall Charter School

Visit Dates: October 22-23, 2018
Date of Report: April 8, 2019

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Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2019 to 2020	Year 2 2020 to 2021	Year 3 2021 to 2022	Year 4 2022 to 2023	Year 5 2023 to 2024
Grade Configuration	Grades 6 8	Grades 6 8	Grades 6 8	Grades 6 8	Grades 6 8
Total Approved Enrollment	274	274	274	274	274

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Mott Hall Charter School (MHCS) on October 22, 2018 and October 23, 2018. The team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership, school culture team, parents, and students. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted seventeen classroom observations in Grades 6 to 8. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal, assistant principal of guidance, assistant principal of humanities, and assistant principal of math and science.

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, minutes, and strategic plan if applicable)
- 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
- NYSED survey of teachers and NYDOE surveys
- 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:

New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

Performance Benchmark		Level
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).	Meets
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning	School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that result in improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and differentiated curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in effective 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 create a positive and supportive 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. The school has systems in place to ensure the effective management of the school.	Meets
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, 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
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 students.	Approaches
Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance	The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Summary of Findings

- Mott Hall Charter School (MHCS) is in its seventh year of operation and serves students in Grades 6-8. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting 9 benchmarks and approaching 1 benchmark. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.
- Areas of Strengths The school has improved its academic outcomes for both English Language Arts (ELA) and math, outperforming the district of location. The school increased its overall ELA proficiency by 8 percentage points, from the 2014-2015 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. They increased their math scores by 20 percentage points from the 2016-2017 school year to 2017-2018 school year. The school has developed a comprehensive social program, led by an assistant principal of guidance.
- Areas in Need of Improvement School leadership has continued to explore facility options because of the space constraints in its current location. Although the school has made some progress in its enrollment, the school needs to continue its efforts to increase its student recruitment for its English language learners (ELLs), Multi-lingual learners (MLs) and students with disabilities special populations.

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Finding: Meets

- Mott Hall Charter School (MHCS) currently serves Grades 6 through 8.
- MHCS identifies their school as being an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP) model.
- MHCS reports having a strong focus on literacy and has double blocks of instruction for all grade levels.
- There are one to two certified teachers in each classroom.
- MHCS utilizes Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) to support students with disabilities enrolled in the school.
- The learning needs of ELLs are met through an ESL push/pull-out model. The school uses components of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) approach in each classroom.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

According to the 2017-2018 school year ESEA accountability designation, MHCSs

In ELA and math, students did outperform students in schools with similar grade spans and demographics.

Indicator 2: Middle School Outcomes

In 2015-2016, 44% of students attending MHCS were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2017, the rate was 32%, and in 2018, the rate was 57%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 32% of students attending MHCS were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2017, the rate was 15%, and in 2018, the rate was 48%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 20152016, 33% of English language learners/Multi-lingual learners attending MHCS were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 201617, the rate was 17%, and in 201718, the rate was 44%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 20152016, 31% of English language learners/Multi-lingual learners attending MHCS were trending towards proficiency in math. In 201617, the rate was 12%, and in 2017

: See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	ELL/MLL (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2014-2015	5% (+3)	4% (+1)	9% (-4)
	2015-2016	2% (-2)	5% (+0)	15% (-5)
	2016-2017	6% (-1)	7% (+2)	18% (-4)
	2017-2018	19% (+8)	19% (+5)	37% (+8)
Mathematics	2014-2015	6% (+2)	14% (+8)	16% (+1)
	2015-2016	0%		

	<p>assessments.</p> <p>b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction & improve student outcomes.</p> <p>c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingly.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

seemed like a safer option than other middle schools their children could have attended. The staff in the school culture focus group spoke about improved communications and scheduling of the days to coordinate across the school facility ensuring safety. On the 2017-2018 New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) School Survey, 97% of parents said that School Safety Agents promote a safe and respectful environment at their school. The assistant principal of guidance also discussed the internal trauma.

- Indicator c: During the site visit, all observed classrooms appeared safe and well-maintained, providing an environment conducive to learning. In all observed 6th and 7th grade classrooms, as well as present on posters. Observed transitions between classes were smooth and consistently practiced by all teachers, and the process was documented in all observed classrooms on posters.

2. Element: Family Engagement and Communication

- Indicator a: The school utilizes multiple forms of communication with parents and families, including parent/student handbook, monthly newsletters, ongoing informal contact between teachers and families, School Messenger for important information, an online platform called PupilWise. The school also reports that it sends home daily communication logs, which share student progress, and quarterly report cards to parents and guardians.
- Indicator b: MHCS assesses family and student feedback and satisfaction through the NYC DOE School Survey. The school also has a house survey they administer for parent input. On the 2017-2018 NYC DOE School Survey, MHCS had 99% student and 59% parent feedback. The school also has a parent committee that meets with and provides feedback to the principal.
- Indicator c: MHCS has a written complaint policy included in the parent/student handbook that describes the steps to escalate any concern or complaint. The parents at the parent focus group emphasized the fact that it is easy for them to get ahold of any relevant staff member and that they feel comfortable expressing any concerns.
- Indicator d: In addition to the student-level data, MHCS shares school-level academic data through newsletters. The school leadership team discussed the monthly Parent-Teacher dinners it holds, which centers on a social-emotional topic chosen by the parents, but also includes presentations by teachers on curriculum and assessment results.

3. Element: Social/Emotional Supports

- Indicator a: MHCS reports that it utilizes several assessments and surveys to collect data on the social/emotional needs of students, including a pre- and post-evaluation to determine character growth over the course of the year, the Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS) assessment, the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-being assessment, and the Values in Action Inventory (VIA). The BESS assessment results are used to determine any interventions. The school employs two full-time guidance counselors, who track student social/emotional data, and creates the curriculum for and train teachers on the character education program.

- Indicator b

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

Finding: Meets

Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate report. For each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- The school's financial condition is based on 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

MHCS appears to be in very good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators. The school's financial condition is based on audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of schools using various indicators, such as total margin, debt to asset ratio, and debt service coverage ratio. The school's financial condition is based on audited financial statements and its capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. The school's composite score is 3.0.

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Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

- Indicator b The school submitted an organization chart illustrating reporting structure, and staff role descriptions outlining the responsibilities for all school leadership. During the site visit, the interviewed staff and board members confirmed their roles and responsibilities, aligning with the submitted documentation. One specific improvement cited was the instructional leadership team, with the board supporting and providing needed resources.
- Indicator c The school utilizes its organizational reporting structure, in addition to communication systems such as DeaList and routine meetings, shared information through academic and operational data dashboards, and adherence to operational policies established in the parent/student handbook and the employee handbook to ensure effective communication and decisionmaking across the school.
- Indicator d The school has focused its efforts on retention of key personnel, with a self reported 93% retention of administrative staff and 85% retention of teachers for the 2018-2019 school year. In the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 89% of teachers replied that they agreed or strongly agreed that MHCS was a ~~long~~, sustainable workplace. School leadership attributed the improved retention to multiple factors, including a competitive compensation package, external professional development opportunities, and the executive improved retention, the school leadership reported that they are able to be more focused on targeted recruitment, utilizing word of mouth, representatives at job fairs, and partnership with education programs at colleges for new staff hires

2. Element: Professional Climate

- Indicator a In addition to the instructional and school culture leadership team members, the school employs a fulltime director of operations to meet its operational needs. The school also contracts with BoostED and Littlebird for financial and human resources support services, respectively.
- Indicator b The school reported multiple structures for collaboration among teachers following the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model, including weekly grade team meetings, daily common prep periods for teaching planning, and weekly grade team

- Indicator d

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

Finding: Approaches

Element	Indicators
	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter
	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting 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 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 outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed</p>

Table 5: Student Demographics at Mott Hall Charter School Compared to District of Location

	2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Mott Hall Charter School	NYC CSD 9	Variance	Mott Hall Charter School	NYC CSD 9	Variance
Students with Disabilities	19%	26%	-7	20%	26%	-6
ELL/MLL	15%	27%	-12	21%	30%	-9
Economically Disadvantaged	94%	89%	+5	98%	94%	+4

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance