

Self Evaluation: Essential Question 2 - Effectiveness & Ops

Please refer to the OSDCP Accountability Framework strands for potential indicators and evidence.

Summarize the current state of your organization and any changes or developments since the school's previous self-evaluation or renewal application.

Is the school effective and well run?

A. Supportive Environment

- What progress is the school making academically this year compared to its goals?
- What data supports that assessment?
- Specific indicators:
 - Describe the school's philosophy on Special Education, English Language Learners, and students eligible for the Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Program and how these services support students.
 - How does your school differentiate instruction for SWD and ELLs?
 - How do your school schedule and program offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration?
 - List interim assessment systems used and describe the school's approach to data-driven instruction.
 - Based on the data your school collected or received in the 2019-2019 school year, how did your school change your academic program?
 - List any curriculum changes and/or adjustments made for the 2019-2019 school year (especially in relation to Common Core Learning Standards).
 - Do parent, staff, and student responses on the NYC DOE School Survey exceed Citywide averages?
 - Do student attendance rates exceed CSD and Citywide averages?
 - Has the student retention rate improved?
 - Has the student suspension rate decreased?

B. Operational Stability

- Does the school have an operations manual?
- Did the school meet all DOE deadlines for annual reporting requirements and the Annual NYC DOE Charter School Survey?
- Does the school document teacher evaluation procedures and professional development opportunities?
- Does the school have a formal process for evaluating progress against charter school goals?
- Does the board have a formalized governance structure including lines of accountability for the board, school leadership, and all staff?
- Has the board developed a success plan for the board and school leadership?
- Does the board have access to legal counsel?
- Do board meetings consistently meet quorum?

C. Compliance (with all applicable laws & regulations)

- Is the school meeting NYSED enrollment and retention targets for ELLs, SWD, and students eligible for the Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Program?
- Is the school in compliance with its charter and its charter agreement?
- Is the school in good standing with its authorizer?
- Does the school have a discipline policy that is consistent with due process and with state and federal laws and regulations governing the placement of SWD?
- Is the school in compliance with teacher certification requirements proscribed in N.Y. Educ. Law § 2854(3)(a-1)?
- Is the school in compliance with employee fingerprinting requirements?
- Does the school have an appropriate safety plan?
- Does the school have appropriate insurance documentation?
- Is the school meeting Department of Health immunization requirements?
- Has the school submitted its Annual Report to NYSED and posted it online?
- Has the school followed all applicable lottery and enrollment regulations?
- Has the school board held the required number of meetings?
- Do the school and board follow the posting and procedural requirements of NYS Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Laws (FOIL)?

A. Supportive Environment - SCHOOL RESPONSE

Describe the school's philosophy on Special Education and English Language Learner service provision and how these services support students.

Wildcat differentiates instruction to address the needs of SWDs and ELLs. Regarding SWDs, student information for all students is input into the Special Education Student Information System to identify students who have received and/or are currently receiving special education services. We assess our students to determine their respective levels of academic performance and appropriate special education services are provided. We employ four full-time certified special education teachers who provide consultation and support to classroom teachers, work in general education classrooms with special education students individually and in small groups and serve as special education consultants to the overall school community. SETSS is provided via push-in/pull-out services by Wildcat's special education teachers. Both Special Education and Regular education teachers regularly review students' progress and tailor instruction to address specific academic needs. Also, prior to each student's Annual Review, all classroom teachers assess progress towards IEP goals and current functioning level and make appropriate changes in the student's instructional plan. Students mandated for counseling receive services from the school psychologist, social worker or counselors, and students mandated for speech or hearing-related services are instructed by the school's DOE-provided speech teacher. Throughout the charter term, general and special education teachers have been provided with extensive professional development to help them identify SWD needs, implement each student's program and make necessary modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with students' IEPs. Regarding differentiation for ELLs, in addition to the differentiated instruction and professional development initiatives discussed earlier, we have a fulltime ESL/ELL teacher supporting ELL students individually, in small groups and in the classroom. In addition, as permitted by the NYS Board of Regents, we make foreign language to English translation available for ELL students who need them during the Regents exams. Wildcat has also made modifications in students' schedules and academic programming where necessary to support SWDs, ELLs and other students with special needs. For instance, in 2017-18, Wildcat changed the schedules of several Bronx campus students, several of whom had IEPs, to lessen their classroom workload to four periods, which enabled them to spend two periods in an individual learning plan.

Also, we established initiatives to provide extra support for SWDs, ELLs and students with other difficulties, including: a) a Peer Support Model that matches students for peer-mentoring; b) tutoring in ELA, math and science provided by certified teaching staff; and c) use of Outreach Specialists who make home visits (e.g. 180 such home visits in 2017-18 alone) to support students, identify and help the school address family and other issues that may be affecting students' attendance or performance in school and help prevent students from dropping out. Also, in 2012, we initiated a "support group" for ELLs to provide them with the support they need to pass Regents exams. We have dedicated staff to address students' psychological, social and emotional needs. As noted in DOE's 2017-18 ACR Report:

"The school has an effective School Psychologist on staff to counsel students who may have behavioral issues. Through a Federal grant, the school brought in two mental health counselors to also help counsel students. These mental health counselors document their findings for every student."

How do your school schedule and program offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration?

Wildcat is an ungraded charter school divided into small student learning teams. Students in the teams are grouped heterogeneously. Small group sizes facilitate the learning process. The majority of classes are built on an AIS model with 11 to 14 students in each class allowing teachers to instruct on a multi-skill level, using techniques that ensure that teaching is differentiated among different levels of learners. Since all of our students have failed in other high schools and are considered "at-risk of academic failure," remediation is a critical element of Wildcat's academic program. Accordingly, the entire academic program is based on strategies, models, and best practices for addressing the needs of at risk learners. Chief among these are a commitment to differentiation based on analysis of a variety of student data and collaboration among teachers and academic administrators to support differentiated instruction targeted to individual student needs. Wildcat utilizes the Student Information and Tracking System and the Jupiter Grading System (On-line Grading System) to help set goals for Wildcat students and to track student progress on a real time basis. As discussed above, we use assessment data and other student data to differentiate instruction for all students. This data includes:

- A record review of each incoming student and placement of students in appropriate classes.
- The Scantron Diagnostic Performance Series which is administered to all students as a baseline assessment.
- Common (classroom and teacher-developed) Assessments administered frequently in all core subject classes. Common assessments are aligned with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the school's curricula through a collaborative and ongoing planning and curriculum mapping process. During the current charter term, Wildcat increased the frequency of interim classroom assessments to help teachers and students gauge student performance and growth and to encourage students to excel in school.
- Portfolio Assessments for all students in the Bronx to determine growth and placement through writing and other projects.
- READ-180 Assessments administered to students assigned to the READ-180 classroom because of low proficiency in reading.
- State, PSAT and SAT Assessments.
- Teacher examination of student work.
- Data from internship reports, portfolios and assessments.

Our General and Special Education teachers and instructional administrators work collaboratively to analyze data and review and modify instruction in meetings with one another, with Academic Specialists, with instructional administrators and in professional learning communities (PLCs). During the current charter term, we identified a need to increase opportunities for teachers to work together and expanded its efforts to support teacher communication and collaboration. The primary strategy that Wildcat has used to promote and support teacher collaboration is the use of PLCs. Wildcat first instituted PLCs during the prior charter term as part of its involvement in the federally-funded Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS) and has continued to use PLCs as a vehicle for collaboration, planning, curriculum development/mapping and professional development. PLCs enable teachers to analyze data together and engage in protocol-driven dialogues about student data, instructional practice and tailoring instruction to address student needs. Among the activities of Wildcat PLCs is "Peer Review of School-Wide Assessments," in which teachers evaluate assessments developed by their colleagues based on a well-defined set of guidelines and engage in protocol-guided discussions to improve them. Another PLC is devoted to strengthening teachers' use of TERC to support data-informed instruction and differentiation. Our internship program has always been a core part of its school programming. Wildcat established as a charter goal that at least 80% of students will participate in internships and, as demonstrated earlier in this narrative, it has exceeded the goal each year of the current charter term. Our internship program is designed to provide students with exposure to professional business environments and entry-level work experience in their choice of various industries and fields. It is also designed to help students develop career "soft skills" such as dressing professionally, communicating effectively, being punctual, etc. Each of our students is encouraged to complete an Internship Portfolio (including writings, research and a record of internship activities) which, along with an evaluation by the employer and satisfactory attendance at

How does your school differentiate instruction?

Wildcat teachers have consistently differentiated instruction for all students based on analysis of a variety of data, including state and classroom assessment data, Scantron Performance Series data, student presentations and portfolio data, attendance data, internship employer evaluation reports, review of student writing and other data. Throughout the current charter term, we have implemented an integrated series of professional development initiatives to improve teachers' ability to analyze student data and differentiate instruction to address individual student needs. Teachers have participated in intense whole group professional development as well as mentoring that focused on implementing common core state standards, developing unit and lesson plans, implementing instructional and literacy strategies, developing common assessments to reflect curricula, and questioning/critical thinking.

List interim assessment used.

Wildcat teachers have consistently differentiated instruction for all students based on analysis of a variety of data, including state and classroom assessment data, Scantron Performance Series data, student presentations and portfolio data, attendance data, internship employer evaluation reports, review of student writing and other data.

Describe the school's approach towards data-driven instruction.

There is a commitment to differentiation based on analysis of a variety of student data and collaboration among teachers and academic administrators to support differentiated instruction targeted to individual student needs. Wildcat utilizes the Student Information and Tracking System and the Jupiter Grading System (On-line Grading System) to help set goals for Wildcat students and to track student progress on a real time basis. As discussed above, we use assessment data and other student data to differentiate instruction for all students. This data includes a record review of each incoming student and placement of students in appropriate classes, the Scantron Diagnostic Performance Series which is administered to all students as a baseline assessment, Common (classroom and teacher-developed) Assessments administered frequently in all core subject classes. Common assessments are aligned with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the school's curricula through a collaborative and ongoing planning and curriculum mapping process. During the current charter term, Wildcat increased the frequency of interim classroom assessments to help teachers and students gauge student performance and growth and to encourage students to excel in school, Portfolio Assessments for all students in the Bronx to determine growth and placement through writing and other projects.

Based on the data your school collected and/or received in the 2019-2019 school year, how did your school change and/or adjust its academic program for the 2019-2019 school year?

There is a commitment to differentiation based on analysis of a variety of student data and collaboration among teachers and academic administrators to support differentiated instruction targeted to individual student needs. Wildcat continues to utilize the Student Information and Tracking System and the Jupiter Grading System (On-line Grading System) to help set goals for Wildcat students and to track student progress on a real time basis. As discussed above, we use assessment data and other student data to differentiate instruction for all students. This data includes a record review of each incoming student and placement of students in appropriate classes, Common (classroom and teacher-developed) Assessments administered frequently in all core subject classes. Common assessments are aligned with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the school's curricula through a collaborative and ongoing planning and curriculum mapping process. During the current charter term, Wildcat increased the frequency of interim classroom assessments to help teachers and students gauge student performance and growth and to encourage students to excel in school, Portfolio Assessments for all students in the Bronx to determine growth and placement through writing and other projects, READ-180 Assessments administered to students assigned to the READ-180 classroom because of low proficiency in reading and Teacher examination of student work

List any curriculum changes and/or adjustments made for the 2019-2019 school year (especially in relation to Common Core Learning Standards).

Common (classroom and teacher-developed) Assessments administered frequently in all core subject classes. Common assessments are aligned with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the school's curricula through a collaborative and ongoing planning and curriculum mapping process. During the current charter term, Wildcat increased the frequency of interim classroom assessments to help teachers and students gauge student performance and growth and to encourage students to excel in school.

Describe how teachers are evaluated.

JVL Wildcat uses the Danielson Model to evaluate teachers. Informal and formal observations by the Principal and Assistant Principals are also tool used to evaluate teachers' instructional effectiveness.

B. Operational Stability - SCHOOL RESPONSE

Wildcat is an operationally stable school as measured against the standards for Operational Stability delineated in the 2017-18 DOE Performance Framework. Wildcat has codified all its operational procedures in an Operations Guidebook., which it distributes widely to school stakeholders each year and which it will make available to DOE upon request and during the renewal visit. Wildcat's Operations Guidebook is provided to parents and other stakeholders at the beginning of each year and is posted on the Wildcat website. The Operations Guidebook contains the current year's School Year Calendar, a school overview (with description of the school leadership and Board of Trustees), the school's admission and enrollment policy, the curriculum and instructional design, the high school program, the internship program, personnel policies, policies and procedures related to special education, policies and procedures related to ELLs, student life (including internet policy, student government, dress code, etc.), attendance, student conduct, parent involvement and communications, health and physical education, safety, food services and transportation services. Throughout the charter term, Wildcat has met all DOE deadlines for annual reporting requirements and the annual DOE Charter School Survey.

C. Compliance - SCHOOL RESPONSE

Wildcat has been in compliance with the Charter School Act and all other applicable laws and regulations over the course of the charter term, and it is in good standing with its authorizer. Wildcat is in compliance with teacher certification requirements, and all of its current teachers are "highly qualified." Wildcat is also in compliance with all employee fingerprinting requirements. Wildcat has submitted its Annual Review on a timely basis each year and has posted the Reviews on its website.

We have a comprehensive Safety Plan and an Emergency Response Plan, which have been submitted to DOE. Wildcat is in compliance with Special Education and 504 Plan requirements and has submitted Special Education and 504 Plan Compliance Checklists to the DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships. Wildcat is also in compliance with NYS laws regarding reporting of data regarding its special education program to SED's Strategic Evaluation Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting unit.

We have been in full compliance with the requirements of the federal Title I program, which is supplemental to the regular School program. Consolidated applications for Title I and other entitlement grant funding have been submitted to the NYS Education Department on a timely basis each year. Allocation of Title I funds has been made in accordance with Title I regulations, and all reporting requirements have been met. Wildcat has also complied with all requirements regarding the Parent Involvement Policy and other mandatory policies and procedures. Evidence of compliance in Title I reporting and appropriate allocation of funding and resources are available for inspection at the School.

Wildcat has been effective in meeting its enrollment targets for students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch (i.e. Wildcat exceeded its enrollment target by more than 17 percentage points in 2016-17 and 2017-18) and SWDs . Wildcat has been close to reaching its enrollment targets for ELLs (i.e. Wildcat missed its target by roughly 3 percentage points in 2016-17 and 2017-18). Wildcat has generally missed its retention targets for each special population. Wildcat's efforts to improve retention were discussed earlier in this narrative. Currently Wildcat is categorized as a focus school. We are focused to return to a status as a school in good standing. Every effort is being made by leadership, staff and teachers to make this certain.

Regarding our Board's compliance, our 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 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). 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.

Wildcat has been in compliance with all applicable lottery and enrollment regulations. Wildcat's application, lottery and enrollment policies and procedures are described in its student marketing materials and on its website, as well as being made available upon request. Wildcat has been and is now compliant with health regulations including immunization requirements, and records substantiating this are available for review. Wildcat has not made any material changes in its charter during the current term. Also, as noted in Section 3: Is the School Financially Viable, Wildcat has also had consistently clean financial audits which are posted on its website. Wildcat is also in compliance with all applicable insurance requirements.

As reported in the 2018 ACR Report, our discipline policy contains written rules and procedures with "language of compliance evident" for disciplining students, removing (suspending) students, providing notice and opportunities to be heard for short-term and long-term removals, providing alternative education to students when they are removed, having a discipline policy for SWDs and distributing the discipline policy to parents and students.