Renewal Inspection Report

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
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About the Renewal Process and Site Visit Report

Beginning in the spring of the third year of its charter (and ending August 1st following its fourth year), a school may apply for renewal of its charter for another five-year term. Following guidelines set forth in the *Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter*, an application for renewal should be an articulate, affirmative response, based on clear, credible evidence, to the questions that guide charter school accountability. It must also offer compelling answers to questions about the school's plans for the future. The application should be a sound, well-supported explanation of why the Board of Education should renew a school's charter.

Once this application has met a minimal review of its clarity and coherence, the Department of Education (DOE) will appoint an evaluation team to conduct a three- to four-day visit of the school to corroborate and augment the school's application for renewal. This report is the result of one such evaluation.

The renewal site visit process and report provide a detailed and current portrait of a public charter school at the time of its application for renewal. While the renewal site visit report itself is a vital source of information within the renewal process, it is most effective when used in conjunction with the longitudinal school performance data available to the Department of Education. The combination of more general long-term data with the detailed information gathered by the renewal visit constitutes an evidence base rigorous enough to inform decisions about the future of public charter schools responsible for the education of students in the Commonwealth. In keeping with Massachusetts Board of Education's commitment to a public charter school accountability system that is based on robust and diverse performance data, the renewal site visit report does not make recommendations about whether or not a school's charter should be renewed. It presents a detailed picture of the present state of the school as one of several key sources of information to be considered by the Board of Education in its renewal decision.

How to Read This Report

The first section of this report describes the school's setting. Included in this section are information on the origin and history of the charter, student demographics, staffing, and the school's educational program. This section also includes information on the school's organizational history, such as changes in the board and leadership or challenges the school has faced and its response to those challenges.

The core of the report is the Renewal Inspection Team's findings. The findings represent the team's assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement that, in the team's judgment, have the greatest bearing on the school's achievement of its defined goals. Findings are organized under each of the four renewal questions:

1. *Is the academic program a success?*
2. *Is the school a viable organization?*
3. *Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?*
4. *If the school is renewed, what are its plans for the next five years?*

The team's comments on the fourth question reflect its judgment of the quality of the school's proposed new goals and its assessment of the school's capacity to fulfill those goals. Each finding is a bolded statement followed by explanatory paragraphs reporting the evidence supporting the team's judgments. Finally, Appendix A provides biographies of the inspection team members (with names given below), and Appendix B provides the team's schedule during the renewal visit.

Renewal Inspection Team

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Setting

Smith Leadership Academy (SLA) Charter School was founded in Dorchester in 2003 with the mission "to develop high-achieving students of good character who use problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills to inspire others and to catalyze educational, economic, and political advancement within their communities."

With an enrollment cap of 216, the school enrolls students in grades 6-8 who live in the city of Boston. In the 2003-2004 school year, SLA enrolled grade 6 students; in 2004-2005, SLA enrolled grades 6-7; and in 2005-2006, SLA reached its full grade span of grades 6-8. Throughout its charter, the school has enrolled a majority African-American and low-income student population. In 2006-2007, 86.0 percent of SLA students were African-American, more than twice the percentage of African-American students in Boston Public Schools (40.9 percent). The percentage of low-income students was 73.1 percent, slightly higher than Boston Public Schools (72.7 percent). The school enrolled no Asian, Native American, White or multi-race students, unlike the Boston Public Schools (with respective enrollments of 8.5, 0.5, 13.5, and 1.3 percent). SLA had lower percentages of Hispanic students (14.0 percent), first language not English students (3.1 percent), and limited English proficient students (0.5 percent) compared to Boston (with respective percentages of 35.2, 38.9, and 18.3 percent). SLA had a special education population of 11.9 percent, lower than the Boston average of 19.7 percent. See Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Composition, 2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Student Subgroup	Percentage of Students		
	Smith	Boston	State
African-American	86.0	40.9	8.2
Asian	0.0	8.5	4.8
Hispanic	14.0	35.2	13.3
Native American	0.0	0.5	0.3
White	0.0	13.5	71.5
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.2
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic	0.0	1.3	1.7
First Language Not English	3.1	38.9	14.9
Limited English Proficient	0.5	18.3	5.6
Low Income	73.1	72.7	28.9
Special Education	11.9	19.7	16.9
Source: Department of Education			

The school is governed by an eight-member Board of Trustees, two who have been on the board since the school's first year. The board oversees the Head of School, who oversees the instructional staff and the Assistant Head of School, who is responsible for school operations. The school's instructional leadership team consists of the principal, a special education director, a student support services coordinator, a part-time math/science coordinator, and a part-time school improvement coach with some ELA coordinator responsibilities. In each grade of 60 to 70 students, five core subject area teachers provide instruction in English, Math Principles, Math Literacy, Social Studies, and Science. Three specialist teachers provide instruction in Visual Arts, Spanish I and II, and Health and Wellness. Other staff members include support service

staff, two part-time grant development staff members, a lunch coordinator, and an after-school and a part-time Saturday program coordinator. The school also has contracts with an instructional technology coordinator, a maintenance worker, and a human resource specialist.

On Monday through Thursday, the school day begins with breakfast and Community Circle from 8:00-8:15 a.m., continues with three 65-minute instructional blocks, and is followed by a lunch break and three more 65-minute instructional blocks, with a 4:00 p.m. dismissal. On Friday, students have four 45-minute classes and the school day ends at noon, allowing teachers to attend staff meetings and professional development workshops until 4:00 p.m. SLA has after-school programs from 4:00-6:00 p.m., three days per week. After-school programs include Chess Club and Independent Schools Entrance Exam test preparation courses, as well as Homework Help and detention. An optional Saturday school program provides math enrichment in the morning.

In a clean and newly painted school building owned by the Archdiocese of Boston, visitors are welcomed to see students in collared shirts with SLA logos and khakis, or SLA t-shirts with grey sweatpants, quietly walking through hallways to enter their classrooms. Twelve to 18 students enter, sit around tables, and begin the Black Board Configuration (BBC) activity as up to three teachers begin setting the stage for the day's lesson. The visitor may notice that while Humanities classrooms (English and Social Studies) are mixed-gender, math and science classes are single-sex classrooms.

Findings

Renewal Question 1: Is the academic program a success?

Finding 1. Smith Leadership Academy outperformed Boston Public Schools in English language arts (ELA). The school met its accountability plan for performance but not for improvement, with flat performance on the ELA MCAS tests from 2006 to 2007.

SLA's accountability plan goal for MCAS test performance is "Academy Goal #2: The MCAS will demonstrate that SLA students are continuing to improve and becoming proficient in the core academic subjects of Mathematics and Language Arts."

The preliminary 2007 MCAS test results provided by the school indicate that SLA did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the aggregate student population or for subgroups in ELA. This is the first year that SLA did not make AYP for the aggregate and the second year the school did not make AYP for all subgroups, putting the school in the category "Improvement Year 1."

Because the school grew to include grade 7 in its second year of operation, only three years of trend data are available for the grade 7 ELA test. Only two years of MCAS tests are available for grades 6 and 8 because 2006 was the first year the state administered the ELA test at those grade levels. The results demonstrate that the school's performance in ELA was relatively flat, but the school outperformed Boston Public Schools (BPS) in terms of the percentage of students at or above the 'Proficient' level, and the percentage of students above 'Warning/Failing' and the composite performance index (CPI) on the ELA tests in grades 7 and 8, but not grade 6.

Between 2006 and 2007, grade 6 proficiency in ELA declined from 38 to 25 percent and the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category increased from eight to 12 percent. As a result of this decline, SLA performed below Boston Public Schools in terms of proficiency, although the school continued to have a higher percentage of students performing above the 'Warning/Failing' level. See Table 2.

Table 2. Grade 6 English Language Arts MCAS Results, 2006-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	71	4	34	**38**	54	8
	Boston	3,785	4	32	**36**	42	22
	State		10	54	**64**	28	8
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	68	1	24	**25**	63	12
	Boston	3,612	4	35	**39**	42	20
	State		9	58	**67**	25	7

Source: Department of Education. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing. Note: the state did not administer this test prior to 2006.

On the grade 7 ELA MCAS test, proficiency was flat, with 59 percent of students achieving proficiency in 2007, although percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 12 to four percent. In 2007, SLA continued to outperform BPS in terms of proficiency and the percentage of students achieving above the 'Warning/Failing' level, as the school had done in 2005 and 2006. See Table 3.

Table 3. Grade 7 English Language Arts MCAS Results, 2005-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		N	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2005	Smith Leadership Academy	74	5	53	**58**	41	1
	Boston	4,406	4	40	**44**	40	17
	State		10	56	**66**	27	7
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	66	8	52	**60**	29	12
	Boston	4,308	4	39	**43**	36	20
	State		10	55	**65**	26	9
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	68	3	56	**59**	37	4
	Boston	4,072	3	46	**49**	33	18
	State		9	60	**69**	23	8

Source: Department of Education. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing. Note: the school did not serve grade 7 in 2004.

On the grade 8 ELA MCAS test, proficiency was flat, with 76 percent of the students in 2007 achieving proficiency. In 2007, SLA continued to outperform BPS in terms of proficiency and the percentage of students achieving above the 'Warning/Failing' level, as the school had done in 2005 and 2006. See Table 4.

Table 4. Grade 8 English Language Arts MCAS Results, 2006-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	59	3	75	**78**	22	0
	Boston	4,337	5	49	**54**	30	16
	State		12	62	**74**	19	7
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	54	7	69	**76**	22	2
	Boston	4,208	4	51	**55**	30	14
	State		12	63	**75**	18	6

Source: Department of Education. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing. Note: the state did not administer this test prior to 2006.

Smith Leadership Academy has three objectives to measure its progress toward accountability plan goal 2.

The first objective is "Objective 2.1: 100% of 8th grade students will pass the MCAS Math and English [test], no less than 60% will score proficient or advanced." In ELA, SLA met this goal in 2006, with 78 percent of the students attaining proficiency and 100 percent scoring above the

'Warning/Failing' level, and the school fell only slightly short of this goal in 2007, with 76 percent proficiency and 98 percent above 'Warning/Failing.' See Table 4.

The second objective is "Objective 2.2: 100% of grade 6 students entering SLA performing at proficient on the math or English [test] will improve to Advanced by grade 8." This objective cannot be measured using 2007 grade 8 results because 2006 was the first year the ELA test was administered at grade 6.

The third objective is "Objective 2.3: SLA's 7th and 8th grade Math and ELA aggregate MCAS scores, as measured by the Composite Performance Index (CPI) will be higher than the Boston Public Schools 7th and 8th grade aggregate." A comparison of CPI data demonstrates that SLA met this objective in ELA in both 2006 and 2007. See Table 5.

Table 5. English Language Arts CPI, 2005-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year	Grade	Composite Performance Index (CPI)		
		SLA	Boston	State
2005	Grade 7	84.3	74.6	86.3
2006	Grade 6	72.5	67.7	84.9
	Grade 7	79.5	72.1	84.6
	Grade 8	92.4	77.7	88.3
2007	Grade 6	67.3	70.9	86.4
	Grade 7	83.5	74.6	86.9
	Grade 8	91.2	79.5	89.5
Source: Department of Education				

SLA's Accountability Plan Goal #3 also addresses the school's expectations for student performance and improvement: "the Stanford 9 will demonstrate that SLA students are continuing to improve and becoming proficient in the core academic subjects of Mathematics and Language Arts." The school's objective (the only objective is 3.1) is that 100 percent of SLA students will improve one or more grade equivalencies on the Stanford 9 test annually. The school did not meet this improvement goal in ELA. While SLA reported in the renewal application that "In the aggregate, our students have improved more than one grade equivalency in all subjects from 2004 to 2005 and from 2005 to 2006," the school also reported that only 72 percent of students improved by one or more grade equivalencies in reading and 67 percent improved by one or more grade equivalencies in language.

Improving by more than one grade level equivalency indicates progress in learning, but since Stanford 9 tests are norm-referenced rather than standards-based or criterion-referenced, the test itself makes it difficult to measure whether "students are …becoming proficient." In the 2006-2007 school year, the school has moved from using Stanford 9 to using GMADE and GRADE, and it has developed a Diagnostic Assessment Profile that includes these tests and multiple other measures of student performance, including the school's writing prompt scores.

Finding 2. Smith Leadership Academy's performance on the MCAS math tests improved notably in 2007 and the school made AYP for the aggregate population and for subgroups, although SLA did not meet its accountability plan targets and the school's overall NCLB performance rating remained 'Low.'

In math, SLA is working toward Academy Goal #2, that "the MCAS will demonstrate that SLA students are continuing to improve and becoming proficient," although proficiency levels in math remain below 40 percent on each grade-level test.

The school made adequate yearly progress in math for the aggregate population and for subgroups for the first time in 2007, with a 12.4 CPI point aggregate gain. Each grade level improved in 2007 in terms of proficiency and percentage of students above the 'Warning/Failing' level.

On the grade 6 test, proficiency in math increased steadily from 2004 to 2007, from 13 to 15 to 21 to 39 percent. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category declined from 2005 to 2007, from 45 to 44 to 36 percent, after having increased by four percentage points from 2004 to 2005. The percentage of students in the 'Advanced' category increased steadily from 2004 to 2007, from zero to three to seven to nine percent. While the school performed below BPS in 2004 and 2005, proficiency increased over the period, and SLA outperformed BPS in 2006 and 2007 both in terms of proficiency and moving students out of the 'Warning/Failing' category. See Table 6.

Table 6. Grade 6 Math MCAS Results, 2004-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2004	Smith Leadership Academy	86	0	13	13	47	41
	Boston	4,166	6	12	18	29	54
	State		17	25	42	32	25
2005	Smith Leadership Academy	86	3	12	15	40	45
	Boston	3,958	8	15	23	28	49
	State		17	29	46	30	23
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	72	7	14	21	35	44
	Boston	3,789	6	14	20	30	50
	State		17	29	46	29	25
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	67	9	30	39	25	36
	Boston	3,636	9	20	29	31	41
	State		20	32	52	28	20

Source: Department of Education. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing.

On the grade 7 math test, proficiency dramatically improved from five percent in 2006 to 35 percent in 2007. The percentage of students at the 'Warning/Failing' level decreased from 42 to 16 percent. While SLA significantly performed below the BPS proficiency rate of 22 percent in 2006—a 17 percentage point difference—SLA outperformed BPS in 2007 by nine percentage points. Significantly, the school had a much lower percentage of students in the

'Warning/Failing' category than BPS (a difference of 28 percentage points) and the state (a difference of eight percentage points). See Table 7.

Table 7. Grade 7 Math MCAS Results, 2006-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	66	0	5	5	53	42
	Boston	4,318	6	16	22	33	45
	State		12	28	40	33	28
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	68	4	31	35	49	16
	Boston	4,095	6	20	26	30	44
	State		15	31	46	30	24

Source: Department of Education. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing. Note: the state did not administer this test prior to 2006.

On the grade 8 math test, proficiency increased from 22 percent in 2006 to 28 percent in 2007; the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category remained flat over the period. See Table 8.

Table 8. Grade 8 Math MCAS Results, 2006-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2006	Smith Leadership Academy	59	3	19	22	47	31
	Boston	4,331	7	16	23	29	48
	State		12	28	40	31	29
2007	Smith Leadership Academy	54	4	24	28	43	30
	Boston	4,211	7	20	27	31	42
	State		17	28	45	30	25

Source: DOE. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing. Note: the school did not serve grade 8 in 2004 and 2005.

The three objectives of accountability plan goal 2 address performance in math as well as ELA.

The first objective is "Objective 2.1: 100% of 8th grade students will pass the MCAS Math and English [test], no less than 60% will score proficient or advanced." In math, SLA fell far short of this objective both years the test was administered, with 22 and 28 percent proficiency in 2006 and 2007, respectively, and 69 and 70 percent above 'Warning/Failing' in the same years. See Table 8.

The second objective is "Objective 2.2: 100% of grade 6 students entering SLA performing at proficient on the math or English [test] will improve to Advanced by grade 8." SLA fell far short of this objective in math. In 2004, 13 percent of grade 6 students performed at the 'Proficient' level; in 2006, only three percent of grade 8 students scored in the 'Advanced' category. In 2005, 15 percent of grade 6 students performed at the 'Proficient' level; in 2007, only four percent of grade 8 students scored in the 'Advanced' category.

The third objective is "Objective 2.3: "SLA's 7th and 8th grade Math and ELA aggregate MCAS scores, as measured by the Composite Performance Index (CPI) will be higher than the Boston Public Schools 7th and 8th grade aggregate." A comparison of CPI data demonstrates that SLA met this objective in math at all grades in 2007 for the first time. See Table 9.

Table 9. Math CPI, 2004-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Year	Grade	Composite Performance Index (CPI)		
		SLA	Boston	State
2004	Grade 6	50.9	47.5	68.6
2005	Grade 6	49.1	51.8	71.1
2006	Grade 6	52.1	50.2	70.5
	Grade 7	44.7	52.4	66.6
	Grade 8	58.1	51.7	66.3
2007	Grade 6	61.9	57.4	75.5
	Grade 7	66.2	54.2	70.4
	Grade 8	63.0	56.4	70.2
Source: Department of Education				

As indicated in the previous finding, SLA's Accountability Plan Goal #3 also addresses the school's expectations for student performance and improvement in math, with the objective that 100 percent of SLA students will improve one or more grade equivalencies on the Stanford 9 test annually. The school almost met this improvement goal in math. SLA reported in the renewal application that 92 percent of students improved by one or more grade equivalencies in math. Further, it reported that "In the aggregate, our students have improved more than one grade equivalency in all subjects from 2004 to 2005 and from 2005 to 2006."

Finding 3. African-American and low-income students at SLA consistently outpaced their peers in the Boston Public Schools and the state in ELA.

The CPI by subgroup data below demonstrate that in ELA, the school's African-American students outperformed their peers in Boston Public Schools by approximately 15 CPI points in 2005 (82.8 v. 65.0) and 2006 (80.2 v. 65.4). In 2007, African-American students at SLA outperformed their BPS peers by 10.7 CPI points (79.7 v. 69.0). The SLA African-American students also outperformed their peers across the state by approximately 10 CPI points in 2005 (82.8 v. 71.1) and 2006 (80.2 v. 71.3). See Table 10. (The EQA team did not have access to 2007 statewide subgroup data across all tested grades at the time of the report).

**Table 10. English Language Arts CPI by Subgroup, 2005-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State**

Population		Composite Performance Index (CPI)		
		2005	2006	2007
All Students	Smith Leadership Academy	84.3	82.1	79.9
	Boston	68.4	68.8	72.4
	State	83.7	83.6	
Limited English Proficient	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–
	Boston	59.0	58.5	61.7
	State	60.9	60.9	
Special Education	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	63.5
	Boston	49.2	49.1	51.8
	State	65.0	64.9	
Low Income	Smith Leadership Academy	85.2	84.4	78.9
	Boston	65.6	65.8	69.6
	State	70.6	70.6	
African-American	Smith Leadership Academy	82.8	80.2	79.7
	Boston	65.0	65.4	69.0
	State	71.1	71.3	
Asian	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–
	Boston	82.5	82.5	84.8
	State	84.8	85.1	
Hispanic	Smith Leadership Academy	–	92.5	80.8
	Boston	62.4	62.9	68.0
	State	66.1	66.3	
White	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–
	Boston	83.7	84.1	85.7
	State	87.9	87.7	
Source: DOE AYP data. 2005 data are Mid-Cycle IV data (2005); 2006 data are Cycle IV data (2005 and 2006 combined); 2007 data are Mid-Cycle IV data (2007). Data for subgroups with populations too small to be reportable are not included. Boston and state data include all tested grades 3-10; Smith Leadership Academy data include all tested grades 6-8 (grade 7 in 2005, grades 6-8 in 2006 and 2007). Note: the state did not administer the grade 6 ELA test in 2004.				

In ELA, the school's low-income students outperformed their peers in Boston Public Schools by approximately 20 CPI points in 2005 (85.2 v. 65.6) and 2006 (84.4 v. 65.8) and by 9.3 points in 2007 (78.9 v. 69.6). The low-income students at SLA also outperformed their peers across the state by approximately 15 CPI points in 2005 (85.2 v. 70.6) and 2006 (84.4 v. 70.6).

Finding 4. Low-income students and African-American students at SLA outperformed their peers in BPS and across the state in math.

In math, SLA low-income students outperformed their BPS peers in 2007 by 5.7 CPI points (64.7 v. 59.0). This was an improvement over previous years; SLA low-income students performed between 2.1 and 5.5 CPI points lower than their BPS peers from 2004 through 2006. In 2007, SLA African-American students outperformed BPS peers by 8.4 CPI points (63.7 v. 55.3 index points). This also was an improvement over previous years. From 2004 through 2006, African-American students at SLA performed approximately at or slightly above BPS levels,

with differences of one point below the district in 2005 to 2.6 points above the district in 2006. See Table 11.

Table 11. Math CPI by Subgroup, 2004-2007
Smith Leadership Academy Compared to Boston and the State

Population		Composite Performance Index (CPI)			
		2004	2005	2006	2007
All Students	Smith Leadership Academy	50.9	49.1	52.5	63.8
	Boston	54.6	57.0	58.2	61.9
	State	70.4	72.4	72.8	
Limited English Proficient	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–	–
	Boston	52.1	51.3	52.5	59.0
	State	49.5	50.7	51.3	
Special Education	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	25.0	37.5
	Boston	35.6	38.8	39.3	43.0
	State	47.0	49.6	50.5	
Low Income	Smith Leadership Academy	49.6	48.4	51.1	64.7
	Boston	51.7	53.9	55.1	59.0
	State	53.0	55.6	56.3	
African-American	Smith Leadership Academy	49.3	48.3	53.4	63.7
	Boston	47.5	49.3	50.8	55.3
	State	51.0	53.4	54.6	
Asian	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–	–
	Boston	82.7	85.3	85.4	87.0
	State	78.9	81.0	81.8	
Hispanic	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	45.0	63.9
	Boston	49.7	51.9	53.1	57.5
	State	48.5	51.2	52.1	
White	Smith Leadership Academy	–	–	–	–
	Boston	71.6	74.3	75.5	77.0
	State	75.4	77.3	77.6	

Source: DOE AYP data. 2004 data are Cycle III data (2004); 2005 data are Mid-Cycle IV data (2005); 2006 data are Cycle IV data (2005 and 2006 combined); 2007 data are Mid-Cycle IV data (2007). Data for subgroups with populations too small to be reportable are not included. Boston and state data include all tested grades 3-10; Smith Leadership Academy data include all tested grades 6-8 (grade 6 in 2004 and 2005, grades 6-8 in 2006 and 2007).

Finding 5. Over a four-year interval, Smith Leadership Academy increased the scope and redefined the purposes of its student assessment program, trained teachers to interpret and use the results, and made the data accessible. Teachers were able to use summative measures to determine student progress and needs, and some were beginning to use formative measures for instructional planning.

The SLA assessment battery increased from the Stanford Achievement Series, Ninth Edition (Stanford 9), and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) in 2003-2004 to a range of commercially and locally developed criteria and norm referenced instruments in 2007-2008. The current battery consists of the Stanford 9 administered in October and June; the Visual-Aural-Read/Write-Kinesthetic (VARK) learning style inventory administered in August, replacing the

MBTI; the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) administered in September, January and April; writing prompts administered in August, December, and April; and final examinations administered in June.

Administrators told the EQA team that the school developed benchmarks and exit standards for each grade in all core subjects. The GRADE and GMADE tests helped to determine the degree of student mastery of the benchmarks and provided intermediate measures of student performance prior to and following administrations of the MCAS and Stanford 9 tests. When an analysis of MCAS test results showed that many SLA students did not compose complete responses to open-response questions using appropriate conventions, the school revised the curriculum to provide directed practice. Grade-level teachers created prompts with scoring rubrics to measure progress in written language skill acquisition. Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that students had made continuous improvement in constructing written responses, and there was evidence of improvement in a review of school data by the EQA team.

Administrators told the team that SLA final examinations were designed to assess mastery of the exit standards at each grade level. The passing score was set at 70 percent. More than one exit standard was covered in the final examination although students received one overall score. The team asked how an overall score measured the degree of mastery of each exit standard. Administrators stated that the tests contained items based on the exit standards, but they were not specific benchmarks to indicate mastery of each individual standard. They went on to say that they were working toward making final examinations more standards based and criteria referenced. One administrator summed up, "We're not there yet, but that's where we want to be."

The school replaced the MBTI with the VARK because the VARK questionnaire had greater implications for teaching and learning. Differentiation of instruction was a school priority, and SLA conducted a number of workshops for teachers on this topic over the last two years. School leaders defined differentiation as implementing the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of students under special educational management and offering choices for all students based on their modality strengths. The VARK results were used to identify students' learning style preferences and to create multiple options for expressing understanding and demonstrating mastery of content standards. For example, in some mathematics classes observed by the EQA team, students solved problems with their choice of pictures, manipulatives, numbers, or words.

SLA compiles assessment results for individual students in a Diagnostic Assessment Profile (DAP). These profiles are available to administrators and teachers both electronically on the shared drive and in hard copy. SLA engages Community Partner Initiative (CPI) as a consultant to help teachers interpret and use student performance data. CPI conducts workshops at least three times annually and provides item analyses of MCAS, Stanford 9, GRADE, and GMADE results. The EQA team reviewed binders of aggregated and disaggregated test data prepared by CPI. Teachers review DAPs at least three times annually in workshops. Teachers told the EQA examiners that they have easy access to assessment data and are able to interpret the results for their grade and classes.

SLA administrators and teachers use student assessment data to identify students in need of remedial programs, and to compose classes in mathematics and science. Administrators told the EQA examiners that MCAS and Stanford 9 test results are used to identify skill deficient students. These students receive supplemental and supportive instruction after school and during the summer. Performance results are also used to assign students at each grade level to one of two broadly homogeneous groups or cohorts in mathematics and science. Administrators stated that the cohort of lower-performing students received more targeted instruction and increased support. For example, while two teachers are assigned to each mathematics class, there are sometimes three teachers in classes comprised of lower-performing students.

Administrators told the EQA team that teachers are at different stages in interpreting achievement data and using formative assessment to plan instruction. Some of the more highly experienced and trained teachers compose fluid groups based on formative assessment results, but this practice is not widespread. The EQA team observed fluid grouping in some mathematics classes. In these classes, pre- and post-testing were used to form and disband learning center groups, and instruction addressed common needs. Administrators stated that because the GRADE and GMADE were first administered in January 2007, training for teachers was incomplete and is ongoing.

Finding 6: Smith Leadership Academy prioritizes the differentiation of instruction and the collection of data on individual students, but these two activities are not systematically tied to ensure that all classrooms regularly deliver targeted instruction on specific areas of student weakness. Because the school doesn't have a system to assist teachers in using data to differentiate, only some teachers have developed methods and regular intervals for providing targeted skill-building learning activities for students.

According to school policy, all teachers use learning stations in their classrooms to differentiate instruction within their 65-minute classes. The team observed this format in the majority of classrooms visited. Differentiation strategies within learning stations include compacting, independent study, and flexible grouping, mentioned by administrators and teachers, but not readily observed in all visited classrooms.

Teachers stated that they often refer to the Diagnostic Assessment Profiles when reconfiguring groups or seeking an explanation as to why an individual student is having problems comprehending the lesson objectives. Another method mentioned by teachers and observed in two classrooms was the "Diner Menu" strategy of differentiating, which includes students selecting different components of three or four activities that suit their interest, learning style, or ability. This example of differentiation within learning stations allows students numerous opportunities for success within the classroom.

Teachers use information culled from student DAPs and information provided by CPI to inform instruction in their classrooms. DAPs include MCAS scores, Stanford 9 scores, writing prompts, VARK learning style indicators, and the GMADE and GRADE scores. This information, compiled by the student support services coordinator, is distributed to teachers in August. In interviews, teachers stated that they use this information to determine strengths and weaknesses

of students and to inform instruction. The DAP is adjusted yearly to reflect student growth and recent test results.

CPI does item analyses of MCAS and Stanford 9 test results and creates individual reports on each student which are then disseminated to classroom teachers. CPI provides professional development to the staff on the use of this information and assists staff members in revising their curriculum maps to reflect areas of need. CPI also analyzes data from mock MCAS tests given throughout the year in math and ELA.

Using learning stations to differentiate tasks for the purpose of strengthening the specific skill weaknesses of individual students is not occurring in every classroom, according to teachers and administrators interviewed. Teachers stated that this is an evolving process and that they have come a long way in the last three years. They see this happening as the staff gains experience, a greater knowledge base, and comfort level dealing with DAPs and CPI information. Math teachers stated that with two or three teachers in each math class, more differentiation within learning stations is taking place.

Finding 7. Classroom instruction uses a range of strategies that address students with different learning styles.

The 2005-2006 site visit report indicated that classrooms at Smith Leadership Academy were primarily teacher centered. The 2007 site visit team found that most classrooms observed were student centered and used learning stations to great advantage. In order to achieve this, school administrators referred to one of its seven core beliefs that stated students have diverse learning styles and favor different modalities for learning. In the past, the school had administered the Myers-Briggs personality test to all incoming students to assist in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. The school has recently adopted the VARK questionnaire, a tool specifically designed for adolescents that identifies four types of learners: the visual learner who benefits from diagrams, illustrations, overheads transparencies, and handouts; the auditory learner who learns better with class-wide discussions and cooperative learning opportunities; the read/write learner who benefits from material presented in a written form; and the tactile/kinesthetic learner who thrives on project-based learning and hands on opportunities.

The Head of School stated that instructional strategies have evolved over the past five years. Learning stations enable teachers to take advantage of the students' individual learning styles by offering different activities. Administrators and staff members identified and developed four strategies through extensive professional development and implemented these strategies in the classroom. They are the Socratic seminar, differentiated instruction, cooperative grouping, and interdisciplinary projects. Classes are 65 minutes in length to facilitate learning stations.

The Socratic seminar asks students to read and think for themselves by asking questions with no right or wrong answer that are thought provoking and lead students back to the text for clarification and further discussion. The process encourages students to think out loud and openly exchange ideas through shared inquiry. In interviews with administrators and teachers, the importance and relevance of the Socratic seminar was addressed as a teaching strategy, but

team members did not observe a Socratic seminar during the visit. Teachers gave an example of one seminar that discussed global warming.

The team observed differentiated instruction in 12 of the 16 classrooms visited. Classrooms were set up as four or five learning stations with each station completing a different activity based on the day's essential question and unit of study. Students were engaged and focused on the activity. Team members noted that only a few classes differentiated within each station, leveled tasks, or targeted student-specific skill deficiencies.

Cooperative learning is an instructional priority of SLA, and as indicated, the school has embedded the regular practice of using learning stations in every classroom. The apparent operational definition of cooperative learning was students working together in a learning station, with the expectations articulated in the core values. The school does not have formal expectations for learning practices within cooperative groups, although some traditional cooperative group practices were observed within some learning stations. For example, although students may have had assigned roles, only in some instances did teachers refer to the timer or the facilitator of the group during a classroom visit.

Interdisciplinary projects were discussed by teachers and administrators, but with the site visit occurring early in the school year, none were observed by the team. Examples given by staff members included the grade 6 science fair, where the research was coordinated by both the science and ELA teachers. Timelines were worked on by both the math and social studies teachers. Math and ELA teachers worked on strategies for the math open-response questions.

Finding 8. SLA uses a variety of instructional materials to support students with different learning needs and has improved upon its instructional programs to improve student performance.

Administrator and teacher interviewees indicated that changes made in math to increase MCAS scores included classes focusing on computational skills titled math principles, and math literacy classes focusing on math vocabulary and basic computation. Students in grades 6-7 receive math literacy instruction three times a week. Grade 8 students have math literacy once a week. Math principles classes are scheduled four times a week for all grades. Every Friday students take an MCAS math class that focuses on MCAS-style questions and math vocabulary. Saturday math classes are held a minimum of 16 times during the school year. Although all students may attend these classes, grade 8 students who did not pass the MCAS math test or who are struggling with grade 8 math are required to attend. Two or three staff members facilitate instruction in each math class.

Textbooks and materials supported teaching students with different learning styles. Examples of materials used to inform classroom instruction include (but are not limited to) the following. In ELA, grade 6 teachers use the trade books *The Diary of Latoya Hunter* by Latoya Hunter, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Trade books used in grade 7 include *Bad Boy* by Walter Dean Myers, *Seed Folks* by Paul Fleishman, and *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi Leonard Irving Wortis. Grade 8 materials include *Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley, *Rite of Passage* by Richard Wright, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, and

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison. These materials address a wide range of reading levels. All grades use the software programs Study Island, Writer's Workshop, and Reader's Workshop.

In math, grade 6 uses *Math on Call* from Prentice Hall and half of *Bridge Algebra* from Prentice Hall, plus software from Carnegie Learning Institute and Study Island. In grade 7 teachers use *Bridge Algebra*, Carnegies Learning Institute, and Study Island. Grade uses *Course Three* from Prentice Hall, Carnegie Learning Institute, and Study Island.

Science teachers use texts from the Prentice Hall Science Explorer series in each grade. Grade 6 uses *Chemical Interactions* and *Chemical Building Blocks*. Grade 7 uses *Motion Force* and *Energy*, *Weather and Climate, Earth's Changing Surface,* and *Inside Earth*. Grade 8 uses *Chemical Interaction*, *Astronomy*, and *Cells and Heredity*. All grades use the software program Study Island. The use of hands on materials and equipment were observed in science labs.

In social studies, grade 6 uses *World History* by MacMillan/McGraw Hill. In grade 7 teachers use *A Message of Ancient Day* from Houghton Mifflin, plus world almanacs and world atlases. Grade 8 uses *Creating America* and *African Americans and Their Impact on United States History*.

Finding 9. Instruction follows a consistent format that requires teachers to identify critical components of the lesson plan in advance and to submit plans to administrators who oversee the instruction.

The team observed the consistent implementation of the BlackBoard Configuration (BBC), which comprised a systematic approach to instruction in the classroom and provided a common language among teachers and administrators. The BBC is a one-page template that teachers complete for each day of the week, based on curriculum maps. Lesson plans are submitted to the office every Friday for the following week. Administrators can then discuss these lesson plans with the faculty at their weekly meetings.

To complete their individual BBCs, teachers refer to their subject area curriculum maps that include in-depth curriculum material including teaching methodologies, Massachusetts framework subject area content strands, essential questions, skills, assessments, resources, and successful activities.

The BBC includes the following components: a "do now" activity, which begins the lesson and can assess prior knowledge or engage student interest; an "essential question," which frames the lesson of the day; and an aim or objective of the lesson. The culmination of the lesson is the "learning log," used to assess mastery of the lesson by having students write out responses to several prompts. A posted agenda in the classroom with the listed activities and homework assignment cues students on the day's "happenings." Each student receives a copy of the BBC for his or her notebook and sees it prominently posted in the classroom.

Administrators stated that this proactive approach to instruction gave structure to a young faculty implementing the curriculum in accordance with the Massachusetts framework documents.

Finding 10. Smith Leadership Academy has curriculum maps in ELA, math, and science that are aligned to the school curriculum and the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and are adjusted each trimester to reflect needed changes as identified through data analyses. Between trimesters, teachers adjust the maps to meet student needs.

SLA developed curriculum maps in all core subjects consisting of essential questions correlated with the content standards in the Massachusetts frameworks, skills, assessments, and resources. In lieu of a separate pacing guide, the maps indicate the week when each essential question would be addressed. Administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that the curriculum maps are living documents. That is, the maps are under continuous review and frequently customized to meet the needs of the learners, based on an analysis of student performance data. Since the maps reside on the school's shared drive, revisions are made immediately and the updated maps are available to all staff.

Administrators and teachers described the process used to revise the maps. Each trimester teachers meet by grade level and content area to review the results of student assessments. Depending on the time of year, the assessments include the MCAS tests, the Stanford 9, writing prompts, and since the spring of 2007 the GRADE and GMADE tests. The CPI consultants and certain building administrators facilitate interpretation of the test results and guide the discussion. Following these sessions, teachers meet by grade level or content area to review and make any necessary changes in the curriculum maps.

Since the maps are aligned with the frameworks, there were few changes in content. Most often, the revisions were in sequencing and emphasis. For example, one topic was moved to a point earlier in the year to ensure that it was introduced prior to the administration of the MCAS tests, and another was repositioned to create a more developmentally rational order. In another case, the time allocated for a skill was extended both because of its critical importance and to give students more practice. Teachers and administrators stated that the maps are also revised during the weekly grade-level and content area meetings. These changes were usually in pacing based on students' rates of learning. Teachers gave several examples of these minor changes.

Finding 11. The school lacks operational definitions and direct measures of most of the attributes in its mission statement and core values in order to show growth over time.

According to its mission statement, SLA intends to develop high-achieving students of good character who use problem solving, communication, and interpersonal skills to catalyze educational, economic, and political advancement within their communities and the broader nation. SLA students are also expected to demonstrate the core values of *thought leadership, personal excellence, respect, intellectual curiosity, integrity, compassion* and *community citizenship*. In the goals for the success of its academic program, SLA defined high achievement as demonstrating proficiency in ELA and mathematics as measured by the MCAS tests, scoring above grade level on the Stanford 9, and applying to and being accepted at selective or specially designed high school programs.

Except for high achievement, however, SLA did not provide measurable definitions of the attributes in its mission statement and core values. Consequently, there were few direct measures

of these attributes to demonstrate growth. The EQA team found that while administrators, teachers, and students could recite the SLA mission and core values, there was not always a common understanding of the meaning of the terms. For example, one administrator defined *thought leadership* as making connections and constructing new ideas, while a teacher said that it was doing your own work thoroughly and becoming a model for other students.

In class visits, the EQA team heard references to the mission and core values, but the terms were usually not exemplified. In one observation, a teacher defined *empathy* as the ability to see something from another's point of view, while a student said it was feeling sorry for someone. An administrator told the EQA team that while SLA had developed ways of defining and measuring achievement goals, defining and measuring character traits and habits of mind was "a weakness we need to work on to focus on the other part of our mission."

Without operational definitions and measures for growth for the key attributes, the school does not have a mechanism other than compliance to school rules and anecdote to meet Accountability Plan Goal #5: SLA students will become proficient in and continue to improve in modeling SLA's seven core values. Objective 5.1 is a compliance goal rather than a measure of growth in the school's key attributes: 100 percent of SLA students will sign a student contract that sets forth the Academy's academic and behavioral expectations. Objective 5.2 is also a compliance goal: 100 percent of students will be able to recite and explains SLA's seven core values. As indicated, the explanations varied. The same applies to Objective 5.3: 100 percent of SLA students will be able to explain the ways in which they demonstrate these core values on a regular basis. Further, they will be able to evaluate their fellow students' proficiency in demonstrating these core values. Lacking measures for these objectives other than compliance, the school cited 100 percent compliance of students (in signing the contract, etc.), noted improvements in discipline data, and noted the percentage (56 percent) of students who were able to participate in the token economy system because they earned tokens by accumulating more "merits" than "demerits." The discipline and token economy data cited by the school in its renewal application, as well as rubrics for student responses, are two examples of ways in which the school could establish measures for its progress in instilling the core values into students.

In interviews with administrators and teachers the team found that in the absence of operational definitions, measurement of the attributes in the SLA mission statement and core values was mostly indirect and based on anecdotal evidence. For example, the SLA writing prompts often asked students to state the meaning of a core value and to show how they had modeled it in their lives, but these prompts were scored only as writing. Administrators stated that the increasing rate of student participation in the auctions associated with the token economy indicated that they were demonstrating core values, since students accumulating too many demerits could not participate. The 2008-2013 SLA Strategic Plan, however, recommends orienting the token economy more "toward rewarding demonstration of values than inhibiting demonstration of non-values." Several administrators commented that the token economy was a better measure of what students didn't do than what they did.

Administrators went on to say that students signed a contract setting forth the school's academic and behavioral expectations, recited the core values in class and during Community Circle, and stated that they knew the meaning of and practiced the values in student surveys administered by

the school. One administrator said these were "soft signs, markers, and indicators rather than hard evidence," and the school needed to "dig deeper in this area."

Finding 12. SLA heavily invests in time on learning. The primacy of time is demonstrated through the extended academic day and year; additional academic programs after school, on Saturday and in the summer; the school schedule; and the attention to time and pacing in the classroom.

SLA conserved and extended instructional time, and the school's administrators and teachers conveyed a sense of urgency about learning. In interviews with the EQA team, SLA staff members often stated the school's intent to identify and remediate students' skill deficiencies within a three-year span. Since most students entered SLA with skills below grade level, especially in mathematics, there was much to do and little time.

SLA provides intensive instruction within a highly structured environment. In classrooms visited by the EQA team, the message to students was that there was no time to waste. In most classrooms observed, teachers had reduced management to routine in order to maintain a focus on instruction. Students were observed to be abiding by classroom rules with little prompting or explicit teacher direction. Teachers issued frequent cues to students about the time remaining for an activity in order to increase productivity, and regulated the rotation from one learning station to another with a countdown from 10. Teacher comments such as "You need to move more quickly" and "You have three minutes left for this activity before we rotate " were frequently heard in classrooms and in the hallways. Making use of passing time, teachers addressed students about the classroom agenda while they were still in line, preparing to enter the room.

SLA offers an extended school day, averaging more than seven hours, an extended year of 190 days, and a range of supplemental and support programs after school, on Saturdays and during the summer. These programs include after-school homework club, math tutoring, MCAS Saturday math, and summer math for entering grade 6 and other students. Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that student subscription to these programs was high, and the examiners confirmed this both in observations and through a review of summer program attendance data. Teachers remained after school on designated days to offer students support. Moreover, the EQA examiners found that most SLA teachers remained long after school every day, and students were often with them, even until early evening.

Administrators and teachers stated that SLA is committed to providing a rich and full curriculum. Unlike many urban schools, SLA provides a second mathematics class, Mathematics Literacy, for students without eliminating social studies or science. In fact, SLA added classes in Spanish and the visual arts to the curriculum. These courses also satisfied private and selective high school expectations. Teachers told the EQA team that the SLA philosophy is to add time for remediation in ELA and mathematics without affecting other disciplines, and to pace teaching and learning to enable students to meet grade-level standards.

Finding 13. Anecdotal and test data suggest that the school improves cohort performance, although the team could not determine this conclusively because the school does not have a process to evaluate baseline data on entering students or longitudinal data to measure the value and effectiveness of an SLA education over time.

SLA expects its students to exceed the performance of students in the Boston Public Schools on the grade 7 and 8 MCAS tests, and phrased this expectation as a goal in its 2008 Accountability Plan. Administrators told the EQA that SLA assesses the skills of entering grade 6 students with internal measures, including the Stanford 9 and writing prompts, to determine placement in mathematics and science classes and eligibility for supplemental and remedial programs. When asked, they went on to say that while the previous MCAS test scores of entering students were available, SLA did not routinely collect and analyze these data. Specifically, SLA does not compare the prior MCAS results of entering students with the BPS average to examine the relationship. One administrator stated that such a comparison would make the "SLA story more complete," and continued that if students entered SLA with scores below the BPS average and graduated with scores above, "our story would be even more compelling."

Similarly, SLA tracks attendance and disciplinary data for its grade 6-8 students, but does not collect and analyze data on their attendance and behavior records from their schools of previous attendance to establish a baseline. Administrators told the EQA team that they planned to collect and analyze these data, but given the press of other matters, especially the need to address students' math skill deficiencies, they lacked time and personnel to devote to this task.

SLA relies upon incidental contacts with its graduates and the administrators of receiving high schools to follow up on the performance of its students. The evidence from these contacts was anecdotal. Administrators and teachers stated that they talked to former SLA students now attending high school who returned to SLA to tutor after school or during the summer. They learned about their experiences since graduating from SLA in these conversations, but did not record the data.

In addition, administrators told the examiners that their colleagues usually updated them on the progress of SLA students attending their schools when they encountered them at charter school meetings. These meetings, however, were not planned for that purpose. Administrators commented that that they learned from their colleagues that SLA students were known for making eye contact, addressing a group with confidence, standing to speak in class, and displaying self control and seriousness of purpose. Administrators said that while this feedback was encouraging, the school needed to develop better survey methods and tools.

SLA maintains data on the high school placements of it graduates, but does not have a plan and procedure to conduct formal surveys at one-, three-, and five-year intervals to determine whether SLA students remained in the high school of initial enrollment, achieved the competency determination, and earned a diploma. SLA also does not survey its graduates to determine how well the school prepared them for high school, what components of the SLA program helped them most and least, and how the program could be improved.

Board of Trustees members told the EQA team that the vision of SLA would "come full cycle" once SLA students returned to the school as teachers and volunteers, and became sustaining financial donors. They spoke of the need to track the accomplishments of SLA students to celebrate the success of the school and increase its visibility and viability. SLA administrators told the EQA team that they would be developing a procedure for using baseline data and following up on their graduates. One said, "We know we're making a difference, but we have to prove it."

Finding 14. SLA is successful in placing its graduates in college preparatory schools.

The school has prioritized this objective as the first of its accountability plan goals. Academy Goal #1 is that 80 percent of SLA students will be selected and placed in private schools, public charter schools, BPS exam schools, BPS pilot schools, or METCO program schools subsequent to graduation. In the renewal application, the school reported that 86 percent of the Class of 2006 (SLA's first graduating class) and 91 percent of the Class of 2007 were placed in these selected schools. The school reported that of the 56 students in grade 8, 50 have been placed, four are moving to other states or districts, and two are not graduating. To assist the school in achieving its goal to place students in the schools identified as "college preparatory," the school has the objective (1.1) that 100 percent of SLA grade 8 students will take the BPS exam school test. SLA reported that 90 percent of students in the Class of 2006 and 97 percent of the Class of 2007 took the Independent Schools Entrance Examination, which is required for entry into the BPS exam schools and many independent schools. The school also promotes its placement goal with the objective (1.2) that 100 percent of SLA grade 8 students will apply to at least one exam school, private school, charter school, or the METCO program. One hundred percent of grade 8 students in the Classes of 2006 and 2007 applied to at least one of the selected types of schools.

Renewal Question 2: Is the school a viable organization?

Finding 1. The Board of Trustees has a broad base of expertise in education, finances, organizational development, management, and law, which it uses to provide clear and effective direction for the school.

Members of the Board of Trustees came from professions in law, finance, organizational management, and school administration, and include a parent representative. They reported that they made an effort to fill slots on the board with persons who could bring particular needed skills to the board, most recently a school administrator, an organizational management consultant, and a parent. According to board members and administrators of the school, board members' expertise was helpful in preparing effective by-laws for the school, in establishing templates and expectations for monthly reports to the board, in fundraising, in revising the processes for evaluating staff, in long-range planning, and in developing a strategic plan. Their discussions and planning also helped keep a focus on the original priorities of the school in areas of academic achievement, community service learning, and structure for students.

Members of the board reported that they have made efforts to be informed about their roles and responsibilities. After the school was cited by the DOE in 2005 for the involvement of members in the day to day running of the school and lack of input from the staff and parents, two members

of the board along with the former director attended a seminar at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government on charter school governance. New members of the board receive packets of information such as the school charter, handbooks, and other publications, and new members meet with the chairman over lunch to learn more about the school. Members also meet individually with the Head of School from time to time to learn more about particular issues.

At their monthly meetings, board members have kept informed about the status of the school through regular reports on school finances and audits, grants, fundraising, enrollment, discipline and retention, attendance, student achievement and MCAS results, awards, and publicity received by the school such as newspaper articles and an award winning essay. These reports have helped keep the board members and administrators focused on the priorities of the school. They responded to concerns about achievement in mathematics by approving supplemental funding for math leadership, Saturday and summer additional instruction, and new mathematics materials. MCAS results for 2007 show a dramatic improvement in mathematics scores. They have also made efforts to improve the quality of schools accepting grade 8 graduates by adding art and Spanish instruction to meet the expectations of those schools.

Members of the board reported that their challenges for the future include continued improvement in academic achievement, improving service learning, fundraising, expanding the school by adding grades and classroom space, increasing parent involvement, partnerships with local agencies and businesses, and getting the word out about the school. They have begun developing a strategic plan to help them take steps over the next five years to accomplish these goals.

"Goal #10: The SLA Board will demonstrate effective governance" was partially met. According to the application for renewal, the board met its goals of maintaining minutes and evaluating the school leader at mid-year and year-end intervals, but did not meet its goal for attendance at meetings, failing to have a quorum for one of its seven meetings in 2006.

Finding 2. The Board of Trustees and school leadership have a clear vision for the school, operate transparently, are welcoming, and understand their roles.

The school mission statement and core values have been widely disseminated on the school's website and in documents and handbooks, and have been posted in all classrooms; the mission is recited daily in the school's opening Community Circle exercises. Administrators, parents, and students all reported that students could recite the mission statement and were aware of which core values had been violated when they were disciplined. Since its inception, the school emphasized academic achievement and community service. In response to MCAS and other assessment data, the school redirected its attention to mathematics, and the board and school leadership made funds available to add a math coach/leader, mathematics teachers, new mathematics materials, and Saturday and summer instruction; 2007 MCAS results show improved mathematics achievement. Concerns of staff members about discipline and the identification of their frustration in the 2005 DOE site visit report led the board and school leadership to an increased emphasis on discipline and structure. Similarly, the board and school leadership responded to their goal to better prepare students for exam and private high schools by

adding instruction in art and Spanish. The board and school leadership share a vision to promote community service learning and have included it in the instructional program.

In its 2005 site visit, the DOE cited the school for inadequate transparency and limited participation of parents and teachers in decision-making. According to members of the board, they took steps to become more transparent and to reach out to parents and teachers by encouraging them to attend their meetings. A Teachers' Advisory Council and Parent Leadership Team were organized to better communicate with school leadership. Board members reported they felt welcome in the school, attended Community Circle and school events, and visited classrooms, making themselves visible to the school community. Administrators reported that they have surveyed parents, students, and teachers and used the results to prepare the Title I action plan, to improve parent communications, and to set goals. Teachers reported that they now feel comfortable attending board meetings, that they can communicate their concerns to the Head of School and the board through the new Teachers' Advisory Council, and that the Head has an open door policy making them feel comfortable discussing issues and offering suggestions. Teachers and the Head of School reported that staff suggestions about lunch room behavior, discipline and structure, and the evaluation process are examples of issues that have been addressed in a collaborative fashion with administration and the board. The board and administration also listened to individual concerns about inequities in salaries and adopted a salary schedule to make them more fair and competitive. Teachers expressed concerns to administrators about computerized record keeping, and the school purchased a new server and software to alleviate the situation. Parents provided input through the Parent Leadership Team and a parent representative on the board. They reported a new program in tennis and the dissemination of information about outside programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Cathedral High School as examples of school administrators' acceptance of their suggestions, and they reported frequent feedback from the school about their children through phone calls about their performance and behavior, bimonthly progress reports from teachers, night meetings, mailings, and online information about the school and class assignments. Parents reported that they felt welcome in the school, and were able to attend Community Circle and classes if they wished.

After a transition in leadership, school leaders changed the leadership model in 2006 by changing the role of Head of School to include instructional oversight and in 2007 by eliminating the instructional leader and replacing the position with a team approach to supervision. Subject area leaders as well as the Head observe teachers regularly and have input into their evaluations. Subject area leaders also lead curriculum revision and discussion of teaching strategies, working together and with the Head in order to make curriculum and instruction consistent. Teachers meet together and with their leaders on Fridays and after school in grade-level and content area subgroups. Examiners observed widespread use of some of these strategies, especially the use of learning stations to provide varied instructional strategies and cooperative learning.

As noted above, the board members have made efforts to be informed about their roles and responsibilities, as has the Head of School. Members of the board and the former director received formal training, and new members obtain information about the school and their roles. Members also meet individually with the Head of School from time to time to learn more about particular issues. Board members and the Head reported that the Head feels comfortable with the

board, and the Head felt board members have been helpful in putting new ideas and programs in place. The 2006-2007 DOE site visit report noted good communication between the board and administration. The Head also reported she tries to improve her own knowledge of instruction and of her roles and responsibilities by regularly attending meetings of charter school leaders. The Assistant Head reported getting additional training in school administration, and she has received certification from the state on regulations for purchasing goods and services.

Finding 3: The school has created an instructional leadership team with roles, procedures, and tools to standardize and improve supervision and the academic program.

The school has a distributive instructional leadership model that has evolved and clarified over time. The school has developed and implemented an organizational chart in which the Head of School oversees the instructional leadership team. Besides the Head of School, the team consists of the special education director who directly supervises support staff, a math/science coordinator who directly supervises math and science teachers, and a school improvement coach/ELA coordinator who supervises ELA and social studies teachers along with the principal. The Head of School directly supervises the specialist teachers as well. The team uses a 10-minute walkthrough tool to document weekly classroom visits. The classroom visit schedule is posted in the main office, and teachers corroborated the frequency of the process and that they received oral and written feedback following the visits.

Finding 4: The school is working to improve the evaluation documents, but has not yet identified a clear model for its evaluation process.

The Head of School is the official evaluator of all the teachers, and the leadership team described a team approach regarding evaluation. They all provide feedback, support, and coaching to teachers in specific areas of leadership team strengths. For example, the Head of School provides greater supervision to new teachers and teachers struggling with behavior management, and the special education coordinator supports all teachers in providing modifications to students. The evaluation process is based on criteria organized by academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. Currently, all teachers receive a mid-point and end of the year evaluation. At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, the evaluation document was changed to a narrative. The school is now working on a draft of the third document.

The school has invested considerable thought in revising the evaluation system. The first evaluation tool was a seven-page checklist that provided little useful feedback on the quality of instruction, according to the Head of School. When the Head of School became the school leader, she simplified the evaluation document to make the instructional and work priorities clearer to teachers. According to the Head and written teacher feedback collected by the school, teachers felt that the tool was not informative or instructive enough to guide them in their instruction or to be used well in the evaluation process. The EQA team reviewed a sample evaluation using the tool, and a summative using no tool, and determined that the tool and the feedback did not inform or instruct the teacher in a way that was conducive to growth. Teachers suggested, and the Head of School agreed, that teachers form a Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC) to revamp the evaluation tool and process. In the interim, the Head of School wrote narrative evaluations for teachers at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. These summative

evaluations did not appear to include rich data from classroom observation, or follow a model such as one devised by Ribas Associates or Research for Better Teaching (RBT). It was unclear how the narrative would inform a teacher of strengths and guide him or her in improving. The Head of School and human resource consultant shared with the team the beginning drafts of the new tool, which has been formed with input from the TAC and the administrative team. As it was still an evolving document, the team could not make a judgment on its utility.

The team questioned the school's current model for evaluating teachers. The team could not determine whether the school had clear definitions for evaluation as a distinct process from supervision. The administrative team described a team approach to evaluation, with the Head of School responsible for the final document. Yet, the administrative staff lacked a common training or approach to evaluation, and the team could not find evidence of a common language understood by teachers that would help administrators and teachers communicate about specific teacher weaknesses or strengths. The Head of School was trained in the Saphier model, and one of the administrators was trained in the Independent School model, and while the team shared materials, the school did not use a particular language or approach to evaluation to ensure that the different evaluators would use the same approach. Administrators described the evaluation system as a work in progress.

Finding 5. The school met its accountability plan goal for administrators to be highly qualified, but not to have all teachers highly qualified after a year of employment. It is not clear how individual professional plans support staff attainment of credentials, including licensure, but the school provides funding for courses for individual teachers.

Smith Leadership Academy made progress toward its Accountability Plan Goal #12 that "teachers will model professional excellence in education"; however, the Head of School addressed how teachers not meeting the 'highly qualified' standards would not be rehired. The only related objective that the school met was Objective 12.2, that "100 percent of SLA teachers will develop a professional development plan within one month of hire." SLA did not meet Objective 12.1, that all teachers would be highly qualified within one year of employment. Last year, 89 percent of the core teachers were highly qualified. In 2007-2008, all math, ELA, and science teachers were highly qualified to teach in their content area.

SLA met its Accountability Plan Goal #13, that "SLA administrators will model professional excellence." The school met all three of its related objectives: "100% of SLA administrators will meet the Massachusetts State guidelines for being designated 'highly qualified' within one year of employment"; "100% of SLA administrators will develop a professional development plan with their direct supervisor within one month of hire"; and "100% of administrator evaluations will indicate that they are making progress against the development needs in their professional development plans."

The connection between individual professional development plans (IPDPs) to help administrators and teachers meet the stated goal to "model professional excellence" was not clear. IPDPs were not explicitly linked to meeting requirements for being highly qualified, and certification was not an explicit goal of professional development plans either. While the assistant principal had gained licensure to support her work at the school, including the

Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCCPO) credential, other administrators were not certified in administration. Administrator and teacher licensure are not required for charter schools.

Administrators stated that teachers are required to work toward meeting requirements to attain the highly qualified credential, and the school provides unlimited and unspecified funds, by request, to pay for outside teacher training.

Finding 6: SLA fosters teacher leadership to promote school improvement.

SLA teachers have ample opportunity for leadership and growth at the school. All teachers participate in one of six Teacher Advisory Committees that feed information back to the administrative team through their teacher leaders. The school has TACs for evaluation, norms, discipline, and community outreach, for example. Teachers take turns in having roles in leading and recording team meetings by grade and content level. Teachers also volunteer to have responsibility for starting clubs and activities after school. Teacher creativity and ingenuity was evident in the classroom and throughout the school through the artifacts generated by teachers and teacher teams, such as rubrics and curriculum maps, as the school worked to refine its systems using teacher input, feedback, and formal leadership structures.

Originally, the TACs were created to provide vehicles for teachers to provide input on issues important to them that they identified. Teacher surveys from the prior year indicated that some teachers felt that administrative monitoring of the TACs was insufficient and some were dissatisfied with the high level of management tasks expected of teachers. One teacher referred to TACs as performing the function of "middle management."

At the time of the renewal inspection visit, teachers indicated in interviews that the TACs' function of serving some middle management responsibilities was a positive aspect of working at the school. They appreciated the opportunity for input, feedback, and decision-making. The time for the TACs was manageable and built into the schedule. Administrators agreed that the TACs added value to teachers and to the school. The EQA team saw several examples of ways in which TACs contributed to the growth of the school's structures, including a well functioning rotating lunch duty schedule for teachers, and an increased attention to the evaluation procedure.

Finding 7: SLA has selected and retained a racially diverse and gender-balanced staff that is overwhelmingly committed to working hard to educate and serve the students. In doing so, SLA met its accountability plan goal to achieve high teacher retention rates.

SLA's recruitment strategies and hiring practices have resulted in the school's ability to attract, hire, and retain a committed and diverse staff. The school contracts with a human resource professional with extensive experience in the Boston area to help attract and screen applicants. Candidates are initially screened by the human resource contractor, and are then interviewed by the Head of School and teachers. The Head of School makes the final hiring decision, and stated that she mainly looks for teachers with a strong work ethic who are committed to teaching urban students. The team found substantial evidence that the school has been highly successful at retaining the type of teacher the Head of School described.

In 2006-2007, 61 percent of the staff was African-American, 23 percent White, 10 percent Hispanic, and six percent Asian. The school also had a relatively large number of male teachers, with 39 percent of the staff members being male, and 29 percent of the staff being African-American and male.

Parents in focus groups mentioned that the school's large percentage of African-American staff members provided role models for their children, which is one reason some parents chose the school. Students and parents alike indicated that teachers seemed personally invested in each student's success.

Many staff members worked long hours, beyond the extended day and on weekends, and also engaged in voluntary activities with the children. In an interview with the Head of School, the team learned that teachers volunteer to coach after-school sports and organize other enrichment activities for the students since there are no stipends available for these positions. The school saved money on substitutes because teachers cover classes during free periods in the event of an absence; this decision was made to ensure continuity of expectations in the absence of a teacher.

SLA met its Accountability Plan Goal #14 to achieve high teacher retention rates, specifically, retaining a "minimum of 80% of teachers who are not moving out of state, retiring from teaching, or rated unsatisfactory." In 2006, 14 of the 19 teachers were retained, with only one choosing not to return for personal reasons. In 2007, 16 of 22 teachers were retained, with three moving or attending graduate school, and three not asked to return.

SLA has an environment that encourages staff retention. SLA has a strong and positive staff climate that teachers described as one of the reasons they stayed at SLA and worked so hard at the school. Teachers and administrators reported that teachers who left SLA often wanted to return. The Head of School described the ways in which she worked to inspire and motivate her staff, within an inclusive "family like" environment. At the same time, teachers who were not performing up to standard were not invited to return.

Finding 8. Professional development, collegial sharing, and supervision practices have encouraged staff creativity, reflection, and growth in practice, but some staff members still lack knowledge of how to implement specific strategies that can refine instructional practices.

Administrative staff identified and developed four strategies for professional development: Socratic seminars, differentiated instruction, cooperative groups, and interdisciplinary instruction. The professional development occurs formally in weekly faculty meetings, periodically (such as through the CPI curriculum mapping process), and through the regular content and grade-level meetings in which practices are shared.

The team found evidence that through professional development, coaching, collegial support, and supervision practices, SLA supports teacher growth in five instructional areas, some aligned with and some that assist teachers in their general practice. The areas in which the school successfully fosters teacher growth are classroom management, lesson planning, Socratic

seminars, the use of stations in the classroom, and the knowledge of multiple intelligences. Teachers mentioned that the combination of these supports and the school-wide emphasis on these techniques improved the quality of their instruction. The team did not find substantial evidence of the same degree of support for teacher growth in providing differentiated instruction, cooperative groups, and interdisciplinary instruction.

The team found that standards and expectations for teacher growth are not clear. For example, less experienced teachers lacked explicit professional development in improving instructional practice. However, the school had developed some clear strategies that were helpful to new teachers, although they were not comprehensive. The BlackBoard Configuration and the expectations for learning stations both provided new teachers with clear, common structures that led to well planned instruction with key instructional components (such as a "do now," homework, and "essential question"). The collegial environment, the administration's encouragement of teachers to visit each other's classroom, and the administrative team approach to supervision gave teachers many staff members to learn from. The administrative team identified who should support teachers in developing new skills, even from an administrative staff member who was not a direct supervisor. The Head of School supported all new teachers in developing classroom management skills. The team questioned why the school did not make the set of skills expected for new teachers more explicit and linked to a clear professional development program, rather than based primarily on a set of goals chosen by the teacher with an administrator, when the school did not have a common language to form the basis for these performance goals.

Not all the priority instructional goals were well defined with expectations for instruction clarified in the professional development sessions. In professional development materials, the team found little evidence of professional development in specific strategies or best practices to implement the identified strategies. Instead, much of the professional development materials reviewed provided evidence of the exploration of theory, broad understanding, or examples of a lesson.

For example, although SLA provided ample school-based professional development, the school did not provide sufficient professional development in specific strategies for differentiating instruction, a school focus. Administrators acknowledged that the school lacked a clearly defined model of differentiated instruction. Although the school collected student data and recorded them in the DAPs, which teachers stated they used to inform instruction, there were no formal expectations or training on the use of data to assess, reassess, and differentiate instruction to students on an ongoing basis based on their strengths and weaknesses. Instead, professional development workshops presented a broad array of general ideas that teachers can remember when seeking to provide multiple tasks to different types of learners (such as visual, aural, reading, and kinesthetic), which the team observed in some classrooms.

Classroom observations revealed that some teachers did use grouping stations to diversify strategies in the attempt to meet student needs, and in focus groups teachers demonstrated an awareness of student differences and their intent to provide accessible learning opportunities for all their students. Some teachers used stations to offer greater student choice or extended time on

a task in order to allow learners to pace themselves. Teachers also mentioned, and the team observed some evidence of, leveled assignments, although this was not a school practice.

The idea of differentiation articulated by some interviewees at the school also included the idea of providing opportunities for higher order thinking. However, classroom observations also revealed little use of strategies to engage students in higher order thinking tasks. In classroom observations, examiners saw evidence in 69 percent of the classrooms that the teacher uses a variety of questions that encourage elaboration, thought, and involvement, but evidence of higher order questioning was observed in 25 percent of the classrooms.

As another example, the team did not find examples of professional development that reinforced cooperative group strategies, another school focus. The team did not see explicit training on common strategies that teachers use for grouping to meet different instructional purposes. The team did not see evidence in professional development materials, interviews, and observations that teachers were trained in the use of various types of roles for students in cooperative group assignments, or for creating heterogeneous and homogenous groups tasks within a classroom containing a range of performance levels.

Interdisciplinary planning, a school focus, was discussed, promoted by the teaming environment, encouraged by the administration, and teachers shared ideas, but specific strategies for integrating interdisciplinary connections, creating interdisciplinary projects, and co-teaching were not an explicit focus of the professional development program. The team did not observe interdisciplinary instruction during the site visit; administrators and teachers cited a few instances where it occurred.

School documents and interviews indicated that teachers did have training in the use of specific strategies for using Socratic seminars in the classroom, but the team did not observe any during the site visit. Interviewees indicated that these were used as an occasional practice.

Finding 9. SLA has a safe and supportive school culture that communicates that all students, parents, and staff members belong and are valued.

The school emphasizes a structured, safe, and secure environment for children. Students and staff members reported many supports for students, including the support services staff which team teaches, after-school help from teachers, a Homework Club, and Saturday and summer remediation classes. Students, parents, board members and staff members all reported that students felt nurtured, safe, and secure in the school, and staff members reported that alumni of the school had stated that this was one of the things they recalled most fondly about the school. Parents reported that they felt welcome when visiting the school.

According to the Head of School, the education of the whole child was important, including the family atmosphere and the environment of the school; draperies and furniture such as sofas were evident in classrooms. The culture of the student body was affirmed in the school through the use of Swahili and other African phrases, posters of African-American and Hispanic historical figures, and the inclusion of African-American history in the curriculum. Students and parents noted that the affirmation of their culture was one of the things they liked about the school. The

daily Community Circle provided students an opportunity to lead their classmates in recitations and to stand up and speak.

The discipline code is clearly outlined in the family handbook, and the mission and core values are published and posted everywhere. Staff members and students reported that infractions were linked to the core values of the school; students were able to identify which core value was violated when they committed an infraction. Examiners observed respectful behavior by students and adults alike, and shoving, fighting, abusive language, and swearing were not allowed. Weapons were strictly prohibited.

The school has a detailed crisis management plan with procedures for fire drills, evacuations, hazardous materials, suspicious mail, lost children and kidnappings, suicides and homicides, and weapons. According to administrators, staff members and students report strangers in the building to the office immediately. Staff members reported that doors are locked and visitors have to ring a bell, sign in, and wear a badge to visit the school.

The fire department, health department, and building inspector all made regular inspections of the school, and certificates were on file. Examiners found the building safe, secure, clean, and well maintained. Board members reported that the building has gotten cleaner every year, and administrators reported that they had invested in a major painting project in 2005.

Finding 10: Smith Leadership Academy holds the staff, students, and parents accountable for its high expectations concerning work, conduct, and participation.

The school reinforces shared expectations every morning with all students and staff in Community Circle with the recitation of the school mission, emphasizing together "one school, one mission." Interviews revealed a shared understanding of the importance of the school's core values in realizing its mission. SLA core values are thought leadership, personal excellence, intellectual curiosity, integrity, compassion, community citizenship, and respect. When asked how students and staff members demonstrate these values, stakeholders articulated that the school holds high expectations for behavior, interaction with each other, and full engagement. The Head of School described how teachers who did not meet these expectations were not offered continued contracts for the upcoming school year.

SLA expectations for teachers are high in terms of the workday hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m., plus additional after-school time to provide extra help or assist with an activity), conduct (teachers are expected to model core values), work (teachers must turn in BBCs a week in advance), and participation (for example, all teachers participate on TACs). Teachers expect at least one classroom visit per week, and express that administrators are constantly aware of their work in the classroom. Teachers are expected to help students after school who do not understand material and plan lessons that work for students with various learning styles. Teachers are also expected to contact parents frequently. For example, most teachers had students call parents immediately from their classrooms if students did not complete their homework.

The SLA family handbook and code of conduct makes performance expectations clear for families. Starting with the Academy's purpose and values, the handbook explains the code of

conduct, academic guidelines, services, and policies. The school has a detailed code of conduct, including a dress code explaining how students should wear the uniform and dress for gym. The school has a token economy system to reward students for good behavior, and fines and discipline procedures for students who earn demerits, leading to detentions and other punishments. Students are given academic planners at the beginning of the year and can access the homework hotline when absent. In 2007-2008 a website will be available to access homework.

Classroom observations and a student focus group revealed that teachers are consistent in setting school expectations, although skill levels varied and teachers implement the discipline policy differently. Students and parents expressed that the school holds students accountable for their behavior. Students expressed that teachers do not allow students to fail or to be off task.

According to the annual report and the Head of School, some parents remove children from the school because they disagree with the discipline policy. Parents in a focus group indicated that most parents who left felt that the school contacted them too frequently if they had a misbehaving child. In 2007, SLA lost 15 students, 10 due to discipline issues. In 2006, 18 of 22 students left to attend other Boston public schools, with most reportedly leaving due to discipline issues. The school does not have an exit interview, so the data are anecdotal but were agreed upon by several staff members and parents. The Head of School stated that she explains the school's approach during the school acceptance period, so parents should be prepared for the enforcement of this policy. Administrators, teachers, and parents interviewed agreed that the school's approach to discipline should be maintained and that it creates a safe environment at SLA.

In its accountability plan goals 4 and 9, SLA holds itself accountable to addressing expectations for parents and students.

Academy Goal #4 is "SLA will develop a school environment that sets forth the Academy's academic and behavioral expectations." Three objectives provide evidence: 100 percent of parents sign a behavior contract each year, and 100 percent of parents receive progress reports twice per month. The school also sets the objective that 80 percent of SLA guardians attend an end of the year parent-teacher conference and pick up their child's report cards; 60 percent meet this goal, according to the school.

Academy Goal #9 is that SLA students will come to school daily and on time. The first objective is to achieve an average attendance rate of 95 percent. DOE and school data indicate that in 2007, the average daily attendance dropped below the goal to 93.9 percent, down from the 96.7 percent attendance rate in 2006. The second objective is that each grade level will maintain an average attendance rate of at least 90 percent. The school reported in the renewal application that this goal was exceeded at grades 6-8 in 2006 (with rates of 97.6, 96.5, and 95.7, respectively) and in 2007 (with rates of 95.6, 92.3, and 93.6, respectively.

The school attributed this success to daily phone calls home to confirm absences (unless the parent leaves a message on voicemail), and adherence to the policy of a written note upon the student's return to school. Staff members attributed high attendance to the fact that students

whose attendance rate is below 95 percent for a trimester must attend a meeting with parent, teacher, and school principal, with quarterly meetings scheduled for the remainder of the school year. Students with an attendance rate of below 85 percent are put on probation, have an immediate parent-teacher in-school conference, mandatory attendance each trimester at parent-teacher conferences for the next school year, and after-school detention. The Head of School stated that that good attendance is indicative of student commitment to their learning environment.

Finding 11. SLA effectively manages its finances around identified outcomes and initiatives to meet the school's mission.

The school has made several adjustments in order to better accomplish its mission and supported those adjustments financially. According to board members, they tied initiatives and financial commitments to measurable outcomes and each year re-evaluated results before determining whether to continue an initiative or not. For example, board members were concerned about mathematics achievement and the school not meeting AYP expectations, and their minutes and annual reports showed that they approved budget and reserve funds in 2004, 2005, and 2006 to support enhancements of the mathematics program. Grant funds were also used. The enhancements included hiring a person to pull the math program together, purchasing new math instructional materials, the expanded use of technology, hiring two mathematics teachers, and providing additional instruction in math during the school day, on Saturdays, after school, and during summer. Board members noted that the school has achieved its desired outcome: 2007 MCAS scores in mathematics have shown an improvement. They described similar concerns about the qualifications of graduates for preparatory and exam schools, so they approved the addition of art and Spanish classes financed through regular and supplemental budgets, with the expected outcome of more students admitted to those schools. Board members also described future plans to enhance service learning, add a library, expand to grades 5-8 or K-8, and create a "green" building. They and the administrators reported they are working on funding for these initiatives from grants, better fundraising, increased enrollment and per pupil payments, and a capital campaign.

The school has redirected expenses into instruction in order to improve achievement. Organizational charts show the restructuring of the administration in 2006 saved a position, and these savings along with reserve and grant funds helped provide the additional mathematics and special education teachers hired to improve student achievement.

The school's mission to improve academic achievement has been enhanced by the administration's efforts to improve teaching strategies. The Head of School reported that a major financial and time commitment in professional development in teaching strategies has been made, specifically in the analysis and use of assessment data to improve instruction, using Socratic seminars, cooperative learning, and differentiated instruction. The financial report to DOE for FY06 showed an expenditure of $59,819 on professional development, and the financial report for June 2007 showed $52,917 through May, over $2,500 per teacher.

The June financial report to the board also included additional funding for service learning in the FY07 supplemental budget in order to enhance this aspect of the school program, a priority articulated by board members.

"Goal #11: The SLA Board will ensure financial viability" was partially met. The application for renewal noted that the board achieved its goals for personal contributions and for unqualified audits, but failed to meet its fundraising goal and did not meet its goal of a balanced budget for 2006-2007. However, its $500,000 fundraising goal was ambitious, and the school succeeded in raising more in FY07 ($351,086) than previously in spite of declining grants available from the state.

Finding 12. The school is financially viable, although its reserves declined for the first time in the 2006-2007 school year.

The expenditures by the school have increased from $1,140,198 in FY04 to an estimated $2,823,660 in FY07, according to audits and financial reports. The increase was due to the increase in average enrollment from 81 to 195 as the school grew from grade 6 to grades 6-8, based on DOE figures. For the first three years of operation (2003-2006), audits showed a net surplus in income increasing the school's reserves to $552,754 in 2006. The board passed supplemental budgets in FY06 and FY07 tapping into these reserves for additional academic and service learning programs. In FY07, administrators reported a loss of 16 students and an estimated $125,042 in funding. As a result, they projected in May a net loss of $147,327, which reduced the reserves for the first time. While the reserves continued to exceed the board's goal of five percent of budget, board members and administrators stressed the importance of putting the new programs into the regular budget by reducing costs elsewhere and increasing outside revenues. In order to be realistic, they based the FY08 budget on less than the maximum allowable enrollment of 216.

The board and administrators also stressed the need for grants and fundraising. A part-time grant writer helped write grant applications, and the annual report showed private grants and contributions totaling $127,682 in addition to government grants of $223,404 in FY07. These grants and contributions have enabled the school to purchase technology, fund art, speech and elocution instruction, and a chairlift, as well as some regular education services. The board expressed plans to do more fundraising in order to further improve the school and its programs, including a library and an improved building. It has not yet achieved its goal of raising at least 90 percent of its fundraising goal of $500,000, raising $351,086 in FY06, according to the annual report.

The board approved budgets annually, according to the minutes, and voted supplemental budgets for some needed enhanced programs. Administrators reported that budgets were developed after input from the staff and the Parent Leadership Team as well as from board members and administrators; for example, math teachers proposed and received "Study Islands" of computers for their classrooms.

According to board members and administrators, the board receives financial reports monthly, beginning in January, to keep up to date on the status of expenditures and the budget. The board

also appointed a finance subcommittee which meets frequently with administrators. Financial reports show actual against budgeted amounts for each expenditure and revenue line, and expected expenditures and revenues for the year, showing where surpluses and deficits were anticipated; the status of grants is included. The Assistant Head also makes reports on grants and end of year finances to the DOE as required.

The 2006 audit reported "no material weaknesses" in internal controls, and "no instances of noncompliance." Previous audits cited Title I reporting errors for 2004 and 2005, and they were subsequently corrected. The Assistant Head received MCPPO certification, as suggested by the DOE after a site visit. Administrators reported that purchases have to go through the Assistant Head's office, and signed purchase orders are required for purchases over $500; board approval is required for expenses exceeding $10,000, with a $5,000 requirement for consultants. Clerical staff check shipments against orders and invoices, which the Assistant Head then approves for payment; the Head of School or board treasurer signs checks, as required by the by-laws. The Head makes personnel appointments, based on budgeted staffing approved by the board, and the board approves salaries. Grant reports reveal that these funds were spent completely and as required. Administrators reported that when an expenditure was questionable, as in the purchasing of food from the food director's company, approval was sought from the school auditor.

"Goal #8: SLA will create a high demand for seats in the school" was partially met. The application for renewal noted that the school enrolled up to its cap of 216 in 2006-2007, but its peak enrollment was 210 due to some students who did not show up; an additional 16 students left because they moved or did not fit the school's expectations, resulting in an average membership of 195. The waiting list was 82, nearly equal to the goal of 88. The loss in enrollment was a contributing factor in the school's operating deficit, as noted above.

Renewal Question 3: Is the school faithful to the terms of the charter?

Finding 1: The school has established some components that enable its ambitious mission "to develop high-achieving students of good character who use problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills to inspire others and to catalyze educational, economic, and political advancement within their communities." This is still a work in progress.

"Faithfulness to the charter" goals in the school's accountability plan are SLA's sixth and seventh goals.

Accountability goal 6 describing the graduation portfolio, rubrics, and exhibition has not been completely implemented. As part of the leadership and service learning curriculum, Smith Leadership Academy has developed a rubric and implementation plan for graduation portfolios. In 2006-2007, students were required to complete projects developed by grade level. Grade 6 students participated in a Science Fair. Grade 7 students recycled household products and turned them into art projects Through a collaboration with local agencies, grade 7 students also created a PowerPoint presentation on distinct categories of media techniques that are used to influence society. Grade 8 students participated in the first annual Blacks in Wax Museum, in celebration

of Black History Month. The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, located in Baltimore, Maryland, served as a model for this project. Students posed as life size figures, highlighting historical and contemporary personalities of African ancestry.

The portfolio concept has evolved over the last two years, and in 2007-2008 the goal is that each graduating grade 8 student will have developed a portfolio of work in all core areas in accordance with the developed rubrics. These portfolios would be "showcased" on Portfolio Day at school as well as used during high school interviews as a snapshot of students' diverse talents.

In interviews, teachers stated that students participated in a "Rite of Passage" during the second week of school. The Rite of Passage is an African transition to adulthood. Activities during the week modeled core values and related to the school mission of "developing students of good character," and mirrored the philosophy of giving back to the community. Students memorized the mission and core values, participated in team building activities, learned to count from one to 10 in an African dialect, and chose past and present leaders and reflected on why these people became leaders. During the school year, students participate in a Service Learning class once a week. Some projects take students out into the local community where they volunteer their time at various agencies. Each fall students attend a Service Fair to choose volunteer opportunities for the coming school year. Examples of locations include St. Ambrose Family Inn and the Dorchester House Multiservice Community Center. The Board of Trustees indicated that it would like to see a sustained relationship develop between the school and these organizations, rather than a one-time event.

As part of the Rite of Passage, grade 8 students participate in a scavenger hunt in the neighborhood where, for example, they have located the statue of St. Francis, and have been directed to purchase specific items at local stores. Students during this week will learn phrases such as Habari Gani (Swahili greeting used as a sign of respect) and Akwaaba (welcome). Expectations for the year, both behavioral and academic, are reviewed and reinforced. Posters displayed in the hallways reiterate the school's mission, core values, and the particular virtue of the month.

Parents stated that older children in the family who did not attend SLA "don't know about helping others, sharing, or compassion." Board members stated that service learning is a focus and that they would like to see more of it in the next five years. They also mentioned that there are many opportunities for service learning on Dorchester Avenue. A section of the Strategic Plan states, "a goal is to strengthen and deepen our service learning and leadership curriculum."

To successfully implement, assess, and change the academic program and operation of the school and to conform to dictates of the school's mission and philosophy, the following goals were proposed and implemented.

During Community Circle every morning, students stand and recite the school's mission statement to reaffirm their commitment to the school's ideals. Accountability goal 7.1 states that all students will pass the United States Citizenship Exam before graduating. The Head of School indicated that a grade 6 teacher pre-tests students, works with them throughout the year, and monitors test results. Students who do not pass in grade 6 are assigned to a grade 7 teacher who

monitors their progress and works with students to pass the United States Citizenship Exam the following year. All students have passed the test by grade 8.

Accountability goal 7.3 states that 100 percent of female and male students will receive mathematics and science instruction in single-sex classes. According to interviews with administrators, the math and science coordinator, and classroom teachers, single-sex classrooms in math and science allow students to soar, without distraction inherent within this age group. Girls have the advantage of a safe environment to showcase their abilities without embarrassment, and boys can focus on academics. It is a belief and part of the school's charter.

Accountability goal 7.6 indicates that SLA will have an extended day and an extended year. The extended school year at SLA allows for a full week of diagnostic testing and a full week of Rite of Passage at the beginning of the school year. Students are dismissed at noon on Fridays so that teachers can meet for curriculum and grade-level planning as well as participate in professional development workshops. The extended school day (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) allows for 65-minute classes where the four main modes of instruction are the Socratic seminar, cooperative learning, interdisciplinary instruction, and differentiated instruction. The team observed classrooms using two of these four techniques, and administrators and teachers who were interviewed gave examples of the other two techniques.

Accountability goal 7.7 states that SLA will offer conflict resolution, ethics, and service learning courses as well as a Community Circle as integral aspects of its program. The team took part in two whole school Community Circles, held each morning in the school's cafeteria. Conflict resolution, ethics, and service learning classes are held weekly at all grade levels.

Finding 2: In general, the school is making continuous progress toward its accountability plan goals.

The school is making progress toward its academic success goals and its organizational viability goals. In general, the school is making significant progress in working toward its faithfulness to the charter goal to "organize, implement, assess, and change the academic program and the operation of the school based primarily on the dictates of the school mission." As indicated in the findings, some of the school's operational definitions and measurements could be refined to better reflect and measure the school's work.

The school has been continuing to work toward its accountability goals, and to refine its work as articulated in its mission, even though administrators described the 2005-2006 school year as a year of tremendous transformation and change because of the turnover in leadership. This was also the first year the school enrolled students in grade 8. In 2006-2007 and in 2007-2008, the school has enjoyed a greater degree of stability. "In many ways," the Head of School explained, "we are really in our third year as a school."

Renewal Question 4: If the school's charter is renewed, what are its plans for the next five years?

Finding 1. The Board of Trustees is working on a Strategic Plan.

The board reported that a new member is an organizational management consultant, and she has been leading an effort to prepare a five-year strategic plan for the school. The board voted in March to develop the plan, and a draft was available in September. The Head of School contributed her own priorities to the plan along with those contributed by board members.

The plan began with five- and 10-year visions of the school, emphasizing service learning and leadership, increased funding, partnerships with local universities and businesses, a recycling program, dissemination of the school's best practices, an added grade 5, and at least 30 percent of a capital fund for expansion of the school. Components of the plan to achieve these visions include a focus on academic achievement, the structure and scope of the school, the cultivation of students' character and leadership ability, strong parent involvement, partnerships with community organizations and other schools, and the Board of Trustees. Board members further described their goals to create a green building, enhance service learning and to integrate it into the curriculum, expand the school to grades 5-8 or even K-8, continued improvement in academic achievement, and the placement of more graduates in exam and private schools. They felt the board's biggest challenges were fundraising and telling the school's story. Longitudinal data on academic improvement, the success of graduates, discipline and attendance, and surveys of parents, students, staff, and graduates would help tell the story (see Finding 10 under Renewal Question 1).

Finding 2. The leadership is focused on improvement.

Teachers reported that the school has improved since its inception in many ways, primarily by tweaking things as they went along; they felt the school is quite a different place now than it was when it began. They cited discipline and their input into decision-making as examples, and the administrators cited the qualifications of the staff and the use of achievement data. The 2005 DOE site visit report cited frustrations among teachers about discipline, the roles of administrators, and input into decision-making, cited blurred roles of the Board of Trustees as governors/managers, and noted concerns of parents about student behavior. Interviews of board members, staff, and parents as well as the 2007 DOE site visit indicate that the leadership has taken steps to improve the school in all those areas. Administrators and teachers noted that frequent classroom observations and regular meetings of the staff have provided a structure for them to focus on improvement in curriculum and instruction, resulting in improved mathematics achievement, the use of achievement data to improve instruction, and clear behavior expectations for students.

The board and administration described plans for continued improvement. The leadership team described several areas for improvement, including the building, fundraising, teaching strategies, a library, continued improvement in mathematics and ELA achievement, and expansion to add grade 5. They stressed the use of assessment results, especially item analyses, in improving curriculum maps and instruction. Professional focus and dialogue on differentiated instruction, Socratic seminars, cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary instruction have led to improved teaching in the classroom, and supervisors followed up with frequent classroom visits. According to board members, the board redirected its efforts to improve academic achievement, and it stressed the need to continue the school's academic improvement.

Appendix A: Renewal Inspection Team Members

Eva Mitchell, Coordinator. Eva Mitchell has 17 years of experience in urban education. She was a founding member of a Boston public pilot school and her administrative roles have included Assistant Principal and Director of Student Support. Eva has taught in Boston and in Brockton public schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as a school social studies teacher, a lead teacher in an alternative school for students with behavioral disabilities, and an after-school program leader for a 21st Century grant-funded enrichment initiative. Eva has also worked on public school construction compliance teams, having led city-community urban development processes for a decade. For educational and community development organizations, she has served as a program developer, grant writer, and board chair. Eva received her B.A. from Harvard University, and received her teacher certification through Harvard's UTEP program. She received her Master's in Education from Boston University under a Martin Luther King Fellowship, and her doctoral studies have focused on effective schooling in urban environments.

George Gearhart, Examiner. Dr. Gearhart has worked in education for over 40 years. He has a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University, and has taught mathematics in all grades from kindergarten through college in schools in Ohio, Alaska, Ghana, Oregon, and Massachusetts. He has been a teacher and administrator in Massachusetts since 1969, including 27 years in Marblehead as Program Administrator for Mathematics, High School Principal, and Assistant Superintendent. As Assistant Superintendent, his primary responsibilities were in the areas of budgeting, payroll, procurement, facilities, and technology.

James McAuliffe, Examiner. Dr. McAuliffe has worked in public education for 36 years. Prior to his 19 years of service as Student Services Director and Elementary School Principal in the Harvard Public Schools, he served as Administrator of Special Education in the Wachusett Regional and Uxbridge school districts. He has extensive experience in curriculum and staff development, grant writing, budget preparation, and facilities design and management. In addition, he has been practicum supervisor for administrative interns, and has taught graduate level courses in educational leadership.

Josephine Napolitano, Examiner. Josephine Napolitano taught seventh grade geography for 36 years in the Methuen Public Schools. Mrs. Napolitano is active in the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies and the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance. She was selected as their 1997 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Napolitano was on the staff of the National Geographic Society in Washington D.C., training teachers on strategies and techniques in geographic education, and has presented at state, regional, and national social studies and geography conferences. Mrs. Napolitano chaired the committee that integrated the Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework into the Methuen grades 5-8 social studies curriculum. She is serving her fifth year on the seventh grade MCAS Assessment Committee for the Department of Education. Mrs. Napolitano earned a Bachelor of Arts in History at Lowell State College and master's degrees in Non-Western History, Geography, and School Administration from Salem State College. She serves on the board of directors and is secretary of the Methuen Municipal Employees Federal Credit Union, the Board of Trustees and is secretary of the Nevins Memorial Library, and the Massachusetts State Advisory Council on Libraries.

Appendix B: Schedule of the Renewal Inspection Visit

Day 1: September 24, 2007

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D
7:30-8:00	Team Arrival			
8:00-9:30	Orientation to the Five-Year Renewal Process: Charter school leader/principal and members of the leadership team			
9:30-10:00	School Tour			
10:00-11:30	Document Review or Random Classroom Observations			
11:30-12:30	Working Lunch			
12:30-3:00	Document Review or Random Classroom Observations			
3:00-4:00	Team Corporate			
4:00-5:00	Note Writing; Evidence Sorting			

Day 2: September 25, 2007

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D
8:00-9:00	Parent Focus Group		Community Circle Math Principles Gr. 7	Community Circle Lit. & Comp. III Gr. 8
9:00-10:00	Lit. & Comp. I Gr. 6	Math Principles III Gr. 8	Asst. Head- Financial Management	
10:15-11:15	Teacher Focus Group A		Head of School, Human Resources	
11:30-12:00	Corporate Meeting Time			
12:00-12:30	Team Lunch			
12:30-1:30	Science Invest. II Gr. 7	Math Principles I Gr. 6	Support Services for Students	
1:30-2:30	Special Education/Support Team		Lit. & Comp. III Gr. 8	World Studies III Gr. 8
2:30-3:00	Team Corporate			
3:00-3:30	Note Writing; Evidence Sorting			
3:30-4:00	Meeting with the Head of School			

Day 3: September 26, 2007

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D
8:00-9:30	Board of Trustees			
9:30-10:30	Science Invest. Gr. 7	Science Invest. Gr. 8	Math Literacy Gr. 6r	Lit. & Comp. III Gr. 8
10:30-11:30	Math Principles II Gr. 7	World Studies II Gr. 7	World Studies I Gr. 6	Science Invest. Gr. 6
11:30-12:30	Team Meeting and Lunch			
12:30-1:30	Instructional Leadership Team		Student Focus Group A	Teacher Focus Group B
1:30-2:30	Math/Science Teacher Focus Group		Spanish/Culture	Visual Arts
2:30-3:00			Student Focus Group B	Student Focus Group C
3:00-3:30	Note Writing; Evidence Sorting			
3:30-4:00	Meeting with the Head of School			

Day 4: September 27, 2007

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D
8:00-8:30	Community Circle			
8:30-9:35	Instructional Leadership Team			
9:40-10:45	Document Review; Evidence Sorting			Follow-up Meeting
10:50-2:30	Team Meeting and Lunch			
2:30-3:00	Check-in with Principal			
3:00-3:30	Team Moderation Session			

Appendix C: Classroom Observations

The team observed 16 classrooms in grades 6-8. Classrooms included four math, three ELA, three social studies, four science, one art, and one Spanish. The sizes of the classes observed ranged from 12 to 18 students. Math and science classes were single sex and ELA and social studies classes included boys and girls.

The team rated five areas of focus: classroom management; instructional practice; expectations; student activity, work, and behavior; and classroom climate for learning. The team noted if each of the 33 indicators addressed in the five areas had been "observed", "not observed", or "not applicable" in the classes visited.

The five indicators in the *classroom management* category were consistently rated "observed" by the team. Observations in previous site visits had shown inconsistent classroom management. The EQA team observed that students were polite and respectful to each other and their teacher. Students stood when asking or answering questions. The team observed examples of positive techniques used to manage behaviors. Signals used by teachers included ritual statements and choral responses to focus students and a count-down mechanism to get students on task or signal how much time remained before moving to the next station. The team observed established classroom routines such as class openings and dismissal procedures. Students were observed to be "on task" working with varying degrees of independence. Some minor distractions were observed, but quickly handled by the classroom teacher.

The *instructional practice* category, comprised of 11 indicators, focused on instruction that engages all students, differentiated and attuned to many learning modalities. Many of the indicators were rated "observed" by the team, including the effective use of instructional time and clear and explicit directions understood by students. It was also noted in most of the classrooms that the teacher was observed implementing instructional strategies that reflected the school's priorities. Two indicators stood out as "not observed." Most of the classrooms observed used learning stations as an instructional technique. The team noted that in more than half the classrooms observed, instruction was not differentiated within the learning station itself. Also noted was the lack of variety in questioning techniques requiring analysis, prediction, or interpretation.

In the *expectations* category, five indicators were rated. The team noted that in all classrooms observed, classroom rules were posted and teachers offered prompt and specific feedback to students. Teachers offered appropriate praise and expressed confidence in their ability to do challenging work. Teachers communicated expectations of high quality of work from students, including special education students who have access to the same curriculum as regular education students. A special education teacher is assigned to each of the integrated classes.

In the category *student activity, work and behavior*, seven indicators were rated. In all instances students treated each other in a respectful manner and worked well cooperatively. The team noted a lack of ownership of student learning. Students did not ask their own questions or relate the work to personal experience.

In the category *classroom climate for learning*, five indicators were rated. The team noted that teachers recognized the worth and capability of every student and treated students equally. The team observed that teachers did not appeal to the interests or curiosity of students in order to motivate them.

Smith Leadership Academy Instructional Inventory

Classrooms observed: 16   Average length of observations: 50 minutes
Range of students present: 12-18   Range of teachers present: 1-3

Grade levels observed: five grade 6, six grade 7, five grade 8
Subjects observed: three ELA, four math, four science, two other

Codes: N = Not Observed; A = Not Applicable; O = Observed

N   A   O   **Classroom Management**

4		12	1. Students take responsibility for their work with or without teacher direction.
2	1	13	2. Classroom rules and routines are established and internalized in the service of learning.
		16	3. Transitions from one activity to another maximize instructional time.
		16	4. The teacher models and promotes respectful behavior and maintains safety.
4	7	5	5. Additional teachers, aides, and assistants have an instructional role in the classroom and are actively involved.
10	8	62	**TOTAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT INDICATORS**

N   A   O   **Instructional Practice**

5		11	6. The teacher uses a variety of questions including those that encourage elaboration, thought, and involvement.
1		15	7. The teacher allocates and uses instructional time effectively.
4		12	8. The teacher matches the pace of instruction to students' rates of learning and benchmark expectations.
7	1	8	9. The teacher incorporates ELA language acquisition and ELA language development in subject area instruction.
		16	10. The teacher provides clear and explicit directions that are understood by students.
4		12	11. The teacher checks for understanding and corrects misunderstandings.
2		14	12. The teacher makes learning goals clear to the students and students understand their relevance.
8		8	13. The teacher increases the level of learning by using a variety of instructional techniques.
1		15	14. The teacher implements instructional strategies that reflect school priorities (SLA stations).
6		10	15. The teacher elicits student contributions and questions.
8	3	5	16. The teacher uses technology appropriately to deliver instruction.
46	4	126	**TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE INDICATORS**

N   A   O   Expectations

N	A	O	
		16	17. The teacher communicates and enforces standards, expectations, and guidelines for work and behavior.
5		11	18. Instructional time is focused on helping students produce high quality work based state curriculum standards.
4		12	19. The teacher provides models and/or rubrics to exemplify high quality student work.
5		11	20. The teacher encourages students and expresses confidence in their ability to do challenging work.
9	1	6	21. High quality student work is valued through celebration, citation, exhibition, publication, and/or collection.
23	1	56	**TOTAL EXPECTATIONS INDICATORS**

N   A   O   Student Activity, Work, and Behavior

N	A	O	
		16	22. The students show an understanding of the learning goals.
1		15	23. Students are actively engaged in learning and observed to be purposeful and productive.
5		11	24. Students recall important items or learning and use this information to increase understanding.
10		6	25. Students demonstrate ownership of learning by asking their own questions.
		16	26. The interaction between students is respectful and productive.
9	3	4	27. Students appropriately use available technology.
7		9	28. Students' work reflects quality, complexity, and care.
32	3	77	**TOTAL STUDENT ACTIVITY INDICATORS**

N   A   O   Classroom Climate for Learning

N	A	O	
		16	29. The teacher creates an inclusive environment in which all students belong.
1		15	30. Space is used flexibly to accommodate a range of learning activities.
6		10	31. The teacher uses positive reinforcement to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence.
5		11	32. The classroom is well provisioned and includes multiple resources that address diverse learning styles.
11		5	33. The teacher appeals to interests or curiosity of students in order to motivate them.
23		57	**TOTAL CLIMATE INDICATORS**