

**AMBER  
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**2008-09**

**ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

August 3, 2009

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Dr. Vasthi R. Acosta, Head of School prepared this 2008-09 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school’s board of trustees:

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**INTRODUCTION**

Founded in 2000, Amber’s mission is to *provide comprehensive learning experiences that will enable all students to become fully educated, creative adults, prepared to play leadership roles in New York City and in our global society.*

Amber served 350 students in 2008-2009 in grades K-5. Our students were 58% African American, 37 % Latino, and 4% White/Asian/Multi-racial with 87% eligible for free and reduced lunch.

This year we had 20 classes in grades K-5. A charter amendment shifted the grades served by Amber from K-6 to K-5. This amendment was ratified on January 26, 2009. The need for this amendment arose because the New York City Department of Education began to offer middle school at 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Therefore it became a better option for families to transition after 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Amber continues to offer its students instruction in literacy through Success for All, math through TERC Investigations, science through K12 and Scott Foresman and social studies through an internally created curriculum aligned with the NYS Standards. In addition, Amber offers specialty classes in reading intervention, technology, Spanish, visual arts, and physical education. Through a grant from Music in the Brain Amber was able to add music to the specials offered.

This year Amber experienced a change in leadership with the appointment of Dr. Vasthi R. Acosta as Head of School in August, 2008. As a result many new initiatives were introduced and implemented which resulted in Amber’s first successful year in meeting its accountability scores in student achievement.

**School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year (As of 06/06/09)**

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Enrollment
<b>2008-09</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	*	<b>351</b>
2007-08	83	92	64	50	28	24	23	364
2006-07	83	83	54	33	29	27	24	333
2005-06	86	77	40	38	29	46	13	329
2004-05	78	50	40	42	49	14	0	273
2003-04	42	44	48	50	19	0	0	203

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### **Goal 1: English Language Arts**

All students at Amber Charter School will be proficient readers and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of English-language reading skills.

### **Background**

#### ELA Reforms

While the use of Success for All (SFA) was a commitment in the current charter the expanded use of SFA as a reading curriculum from the upper grades to all the grades has helped support the Amber faculty. SFA is a prescriptive curriculum that clearly outlines how to teach reading. Novice teachers were more confident in their teaching of reading with the support of this curriculum. In addition, the use of SFA helped ensure that the reading instruction in every classroom was of the same high quality.

Two consultants from SFA were hired to support the expanded implementation of the curriculum. These consultants visited often helping to ensure Amber's high level of implementation. They met with instructional leadership, teachers and staff developers to analyze scores, review progress of implementation, problem solve, and provide resources and guidance. SFA has a built-in interim assessment component that helps measure student progress as well as drive the regrouping of reading groups. Amber fully implemented these assessments this year.

Every eight weeks the students are assessed to determine reading progress then regrouped according to ability. This continual assessment helped teachers and administration target at-risk students, identifying student's precise academic needs. The interim assessments further allowed administrators and teachers to strategize how to meet student needs and to match students to teacher's strengths as well as identify high achieving students and provide challenging material for them.

#### Curriculum Alignment

To ensure alignment of Amber's core curriculum areas with the NYS state standards a consultant was hired in the summer of 2008 to review and construct a stronger alignment document for Amber. The document took every state standard and aligned it with the unit and activities of the SFA and TERC (math) curricula for every grade. In addition, the alignment document offered methods for differentiation, assessment and suggestions for addressing students with special needs. A gap analysis was also produced. The consultant who authored the document then presented at Amber's Summer Institute and shared with the instructional staff how this document could be used for their weekly planning. This document is now available on Amber's public drive.

#### Small class size

Amber has always believed that small class size was an important strategy to ensure student success. In the past year, all classes in third to fifth grades were no larger than 19 students. In fifth grade, where the cohort of students whose drop in scores was most prominent, the class size

shrunk to ten students per class. In fourth grade there was a class as small as 13 students, and in third grade the smallest class had 14 students.

#### Academic Intervention and Instructional Improvements

Clearly, the ELA scores of 2007-08 showed Amber students had suffered a setback which needed to be regained. Intense intervention was required. **Sylvan Learning Center** was brought in to work with grades 3- 5 for six weeks. During these weeks the teacher to student ratio shrunk even more, providing opportunity for more one on one instruction. This helped prepare the students with testing strategies, but more importantly provided the teacher with the opportunity to intensely work with high risk students.

Amber has hired **Part-time Tutors** to work with upper grades students (3-5) since 2006-07. This past year, tutors were better utilized. For example, tutors now pushed into the classroom and served as teacher assistants instead of pulling out. Teachers assigned students to work with the tutors and dictated the skills that needed to be addressed. Teachers monitored closely the progress made and directed change in instruction when needed. These tutors were an integral part of the Strategy Groups initiative that was implemented in 2008-09.

After contract negotiations with our teacher's union, Amber was able to extend two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday) for instruction from 3:10 to 3:45 pm. On these extended days which were named **seamless days** (Tuesday and Thursday) all classes from 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade conducted **Strategy Groups**. Every Friday a period was also designated for strategy groups and the focus of intervention (ELA or Math) alternated weekly. Based on assessments (Terra Nova, NYS exams, teacher assessments, DRA, NYS ELA/Math simulation tests) the administration and teacher identified skill gaps and created three small strategy groups within her class, i.e. high level, mid-level, and low level groups. The teacher worked with the low-level group, the tutor with the mid-level group, and the high level group was given high interest, high engagement projects to complete with minimal teacher direction. Benchmarks were set for each student and checked periodically. From these strategy groups, individual student goals emerged and were posted by students' desks as reminders of what they were working toward. A consultant from the Center for Educational Options worked closely with the teachers, instructional leadership, and the staff developers to help implement the strategy groups, review planning for this remediation, and focus the teachers on increasing the academic rigor of the assignments created.

In addition to the SFA interim assessments, **simulation tests** (old NYS exams) were given to help teachers identify areas of academic weakness. After each NYS ELA/Math simulation test, an **item analysis** was conducted by teachers, instructional leadership and staff developers. This item analysis identified the skills in need of intervention. The results were shared with the director of the After-school program and coordinator of the Saturday Academy to guide the instruction in their programs. The item analysis also helped identify skills that were weak throughout the grade and teachers were able to respond by preparing mini-lessons. Homework and strategy group assignments were also given to remedy these gaps.

Not only was individual remediation a goal, whole-school skill needs were also identified. For example, an item analysis indicated a need for teachers to ask more higher-order questions, since the students were having difficulty answering these questions. A workshop was designed on this

topic and delivered to the whole faculty. As a result of this workshop, each teacher identified higher-order question starters that they posted in their rooms as a reminder to them and the students to ask these types of questions. In addition, teachers were required to include higher-order questions in their weekly lesson plans.

As a result of the assessments both from SFA and the simulation tests, **homework assignments** were **differentiated** to address individual or small group student needs. For example, if four students were found to have a skill gap in identifying the main idea then the teacher prepared homework assignments for those students that addressed this skill. These differentiated homework assignments were especially helpful during the holiday, and winter break since the additional time allowed for expanded assignments.

As in the past years, **Saturday Academy** as well as **After-school** intervention was offered to students. In this past year both programs were aligned with the instruction of the day school, and closely monitored by administration. Teachers and tutors that worked in the day school also worked in these programs affording continuity, as well as knowledge of the students' skills and familiarity with students.

Over time, and like most schools. Amber has struggled with the best methods of supporting the strongest learning for students using the inclusion model (and to have enough professional development for classroom teachers in this area). Amber has had a **Special Education Teacher (SETTS)** since 2007. Last year the SETTS teacher was hired from an agency. Although the consultant was very good and worked with all the students requiring special services, any other functions needed by Amber cost additional funds. This past year the SETTS teacher was hired as an Amber employee. Now not only were our IEP students receiving the required services, but teachers had an additional resource person. The SETTS teacher conducted professional development on intervention strategies. He also observed students, provided teachers with new intervention strategies to use, and he helped plan activities with teachers that would engage struggling students.

In addition, the staff of both programs were trained in The Amber Way (the school culture and discipline method) and expected to enforce these expectations. They were also given the documented routines and procedures expected of the students, and required to reinforce them. In After-school, a tutor who worked in the day school implemented a character education program with select male students. This program supported The Amber Way by teaching eight winning practices, such as "I am responsible for myself"; "Be a Goal setter"; "Work hard!"; "Be thankful", which directly related to the character traits of The Amber Way. This renewed focus on high expectations helped academic rigor.

#### Clarity in Promotion

A clear **promotion policy** was updated and approved by the board. This promotion policy made it clear to teachers and parents the high academic expectations for students. This also allowed the faculty to better pinpoint if a student is achieving or requiring support.

### Higher Expectations

After years of mixed teacher commitment to a single discipline policy and method, the school culture at Amber was more clearly defined in 2008-09 through the introduction of “**The Amber Way**”. The Amber Way outlines five character traits: **A**chievement, **coM**munity, **responsiB**ility, **honE**sty, and **R**espect that are expected of every Amber student. All teachers were given lesson plans that addressed these character traits from *The Master Teacher: Character Education* curriculum, and teachers were required to conduct these lessons. Five whole-school **assemblies** were planned where each of these character traits were celebrated through music, dance, drama, and poetry. In the past, whole school gatherings were left to the largest events only such as the annual Stepping Up ceremony. The Amber Way clarified the high expectations required of students as well as faculty and staff. The bar was set high by leadership for the whole Amber community and expected of all.

Part of The Amber Way was the introduction of the Amber STAR. STAR is an acronym that is used for classroom management. It stands for Sit up straight, Track the speaker, Ask and answer questions, and Respect each other by waiting your turn. The teachers use this acronym as a short-cut to remind students the behaviors expected of them. It has been very effective. In addition, SFA has a series of lessons at the start of the year that supported The Amber Way. These lessons focused on cooperative learning and provided the teachers with strong, scripted, step by step methods to implement in their classrooms that established a learning environment of high expectations.

Clearly defined and detailed **routines and procedures** were drafted by teachers that eliminated low-level misbehavior at Amber. These routines and procedures made it clear to students the expectations for behavior both inside and outside the classroom, and were then reinforced throughout the year by staff.

### Enhanced Instructional Leadership

This year, The Board of Trustees changed the administrative structure of the school from an Executive Director model to an instructional leader at the head of the organization. Believing that leadership is key to better results, the board also dedicated more financial resource to the school’s academic focus by adding more academic administrative staff. The Board of Trustees’ appointment of an instructional leader as the Head of School in 2008-09 brought long overdue attention to the need for a strong academic team. The new Head of School created the assistant principal position and another staff developer position. These positions offered more resources in the area of instructional leadership, along with greatly enhanced supervision and support for the faculty. The staff developers were assigned specific grade levels to work with and novice teachers received additional support. The assistant principal also provided more supervision and administrative support to all faculty and staff.

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of third through fifth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State English language arts examination.

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to students in third through fifth grade in January 2009. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have been enrolled for less than one year.

**2008-09 State English Language Arts Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	51	0	0	0	51
4	45	0	0	0	45
5	20	0	0	0	20
6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	116	0	0	0	116

**Results**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders scored above the accountability goal with 88 percent at the proficiency level. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored above the accountability goal with 82 percent at the proficiency level, and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders also scored above the accountability goal with 95 percent at proficiency level. Amber’s students met this measure.

**Charter School Performance on 2008-09 State English Language Arts Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
3	All Students	0.00%	11.76%	86.27%	2.00%	88.27%	51
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	11.76%	86.27%	2.00%	88.27%	51
4	All Students	0.00%	17.78%	82.22%	0.00%	82.22%	45
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	17.78%	82.22%	0.00%	82.22%	45
5	All Students	0.00%	5.00%	90.00%	5.00%	95.00%	20
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	5.00%	90.00%	5.00%	95.00%	20
6	All Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	All Students	0.00%	11.51%	86.17%	2.33%	88.50%	116
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	11.51%	86.17%	2.33%	88.50%	116

**Evaluation**

For the first year in Amber history all the students taking the test had been enrolled in the school for two years or more. The results surpassed the accountability goal. In 2008-09, 88 percent of third graders scored at or above level 3; 82 percent of fourth graders scored at or above level 3; and 95 percent of fifth graders scored at or above level 3. These are wonderful scores. Especially since the year before Amber’s scores had dipped.

For the third year in a row no students scored at Level 1; this trend bodes well for continued success.

The measure was met and surpassed by Amber students. The new initiatives positively impacted student performance resulting in strong results.

**Additional Evidence**

Amber students have shown steady improvement with 53 percent of students’ proficient on the state ELA exam in 2005-06, and 64 percent in 2006-07. In 2007-08, there was a 10 percent drop in scores that can be attributed to staff turnover and the hiring of inexperienced teachers. All but one of the teachers teaching in grades 3-5 that year were new to teaching. Of the 13 new teachers hired in 2007-08, eight were in their first year of teaching. They had no experience in the grade, or the curriculum. Therefore, Amber believes that the scores of 2007-08 are an anomaly and not reflective of what Amber students were capable of as refuted by their higher scores in 2008-09, where the scores jumped by over 30%.

**English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4											
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3					79.30%	29	69.00%	29	61.40%	44	88.27%	51
4	35.30%	17	50.00%	54	50.00%	26	80.00%	30	51.90%	27	82.20%	45
5					50.00%	28	61.50%	26	47.80%	23	95.00%	20
6					33.30%	12	48.00%	25	54.50%	22	n/a	n/a
All	35.30%	17	50.00%	54	56.80%	95	65.50%	110	53.90%	116	88.47%	116

Source: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/AmberFinalVisitReport-8Yr-9.12.08.pdf>  
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/Amber7thYrRpt.pdf>

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State English language arts exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.

**Method**

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards all students being proficient by the year 2013-14. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state’s learning standards in English Language Arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds this year’s English language arts AMO, which for 2008-09 is 144. The PI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at

Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 200.

**Results**

**Calculation of 2008-09 English Language Arts Performance Index (PI)**

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3-5	0	11.5	86.17	2.33	116

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 11.5 + 86.17 + 2.33 = 100 \\
 &+ 86.17 + 2.33 = 88.5 \\
 \text{PI} &= 188.5
 \end{aligned}$$

**Evaluation**

Amber has consistently met its AMO each year and often surpassed the state’s required measure. This year the trend continues.

**English Language Arts Performance Index (PI) and Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year**

Year	Grades	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2008-09	3-5	116	0.00%	11.50%	86.17%	2.33%	188	144
2007-08	3-6	125	0.0%	45.9%	52.1%	2.0%	154	133
2006-07	3-6	119	0.0%	35.0%	63.0%	2.0%	166	122
2005-06	3-6	125	7.3%	44.2%	47.3%	1.2%	144	122
2004-05	4-5	54	4.0%	46.0%	43.0%	7.0%	147	131
2003-04	4	64					124	123

Source: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/AmberFinalVisitReport-8Yr-9.12.08.pdf>  
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/Amber7thYrRpt.pdf>

**Goal 1: Comparative Measure**

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

**Method**

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students and the results for the respective grades in the local school district, as well as between the total result of students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.

**Results**

In comparing Amber students’ performance with the students in Community School District (CSD) 5 Amber surpassed. Fifty six percent of CSD 5 third graders performed proficiently in the ELA where 88 percent of Amber’s third graders performed proficiently. CSD 5 fourth graders who scored proficient were 53.5 percent but 82 percent of Amber’s fourth graders scored proficient. And finally, 95 percent of Ambers fifth graders scored proficient where only 62.8 percent of CSD 5 fifth grade students did.

**2008-09 State English Language Arts Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District 5 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	88.30	51	56.00	1045
4	82.20	45	53.50	1046
5	95.00	20	62.80	868
6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	88.50	116	57.43	2959

Source: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/YearlyTesting/TestResults/default.htm>

**Evaluation**

The measure was met. Amber students surpassed CSD 5 students by 30 percent at all grade levels.

**Additional Evidence**

Amber Charter School draws students from both Community School District (CSD) 4 and 5. Therefore our comparison is with both community school districts. Table 4 demonstrates that in 2005-06 and 2006-07, Amber students scored higher than both CSD 4 and 5. In 2007-08, Amber students scored 4 percent higher than CSD 5, but less than 1 percent lower than CSD 4. Yet in 2008-09, Amber students surpassed CSD 4 students by 20 percent. Sixty seven percent of CSD 4 students scored at or above level 3 compared to 88.5 percent of Amber students. Finally in 2008-09, Amber students once again scored higher than both CSD 4 and CSD 5 by over 20 percent.

**English Language Performance of Charter School and Local District  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4											
	2005-06			2006-07			2007-08			2008-09		
	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5
3	79.30%	59.00%	37.10%	69.00%	49.80%	40.10%	61.40%	53.90%	43.00%	88.30%	66.60%	56.00%
4	50.00%	47.00%	43.40%	80.00%	46.60%	40.80%	51.90%	54.00%	45.60%	82.20%	64.20%	53.50%
5	50.00%	51.00%	34.70%	61.50%	49.00%	38.90%	47.80%	66.70%	55.20%	95.00%	72.10%	62.80%
6	33.30%	43.00%	34.90%	48.00%	35.00%	38.40%	54.50%	44.00%	47.80%	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	53.15%	50.00%	37.53%	64.63%	45.10%	39.55%	53.90%	54.65%	47.90%	88.50%	67.63%	57.43%

Source <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/ela-math/2009/Press/PublicCharterELADistrict-and-BuildingAggregates-media.pdf>

**Goal 1: Comparative Measure**

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

**Method**

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school’s actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure.

**Results**

Given the timing of the state’s release of poverty data, the 2008-09 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2007-08 results, the most recent ones available.

**2007-08 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Free Lunch Eligible Students	Number of Students Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3		50	64.00	57.61	6.39	0.49
4		28	50.00	58.63	-8.63	-0.60
5		24	45.80	67.07	-21.27	-1.56
6		22	54.50	50.13	4.37	0.26
All	<b>71.12</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>55.63</b>	<b>58.34</b>	<b>-2.17</b>	<b>-0.19</b>
<b>School's Overall Comparative Performance:</b>						
About the same as expected						

**Evaluation**

Amber did about the same as expected in the comparative performance in 2007-08. This is not the desired result for Amber. With the strong ELA test results in 2008-09, it is expected that Amber will do better in the comparative performance measure.

**English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2005-06	4	69.70	58	50.00	59.50	-0.54
2006-07	3-6	73.90	119	66.40	50.70	1.06
2007-08	3-6	71.12	124	55.63	58.34	-0.19
2008-09	3-5	*	*	*	*	*

\* Given the timing of the state's release of poverty data, the 2008-09 analysis is not yet available.

**Goal 1: Growth Measure**

Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's state English language arts exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's state English language arts exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent proficient. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 2008-09 and also have a state exam score in 2007-08. It includes students who repeated the grade. Students who repeated the

grade should be included in their current grade level cohort, not the cohort to which they previously belonged. The criterion for achieving this measure is for each grade-level cohort to halve the difference between the percentage of students proficient in 2006-07 and 75 percent proficient in 2008-09. If a cohort had already achieved 75 percent proficient in 2007-08, it is expected to show some positive growth in the subsequent year. In addition, the aggregate of all cohorts is examined to determine the growth of all students who took a state exam in both years.

**Results**

**Cohort Growth on State English Language Arts Exam from 2007-08 to 2008-09**

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Target Achieved
		2007-08	Target	2008-09	
4	45	61.40	68.20	82.20	<b>Y</b>
5	20	51.90	63.45	95.00	<b>Y</b>
6	*	*	*	*	*
All	65	56.65	65.83	88.60	<b>Y</b>

**Evaluation**

Every cohort met their target.

**Additional Evidence**

**Cohort Performance on State English Language Arts Exam Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2008-09	3-6	2	2
2007-08	3-6	0	3
2006-07	3-6	1	3

**Goal 1: Optional Measure: Terra Nova**

Each year, grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous Spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e. grade level) in the current Spring. If a grade level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

As per Charter Schools Institute: “If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the

difference between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the first year’s average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (As per CSI guidelines, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)” The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

Threshold = spring 2007 NCE + [(NCE 50 minus spring 2007 NCE)/2] (CSI Accountability Report, 2007)

**Results**

**Growth on Terra Nova Reading NCE Test from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009**

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Target Achieved
		2007-08	Target	2008-09	
K	77	61	*	62	Yes
1	63	55.7	*	53.33	Yes
2	73	57.7	*	58.17	Yes
3	49	46.3	48.15	51.5	Yes
4	45	46	48	60.76	Yes
5	20	46	48	54.5	Yes
All	327	51.5	*	56.71	Yes

\*NCE above 50 is target.

**Evaluation**

In 2008-09, every grade at Amber was able to reach and surpass the NCE of 50 which is the target. The upper grades which the previous year had not reached the NCE of 50 not only met the target but surpassed the target. Since the Terra Nova exam was given in late April/ beginning of May these scores help to demonstrate the continued growth of Amber’s students in reading that is not reflected in the NYS ELA scores which was administered in January. Yet, both scores indicate the huge growth of Amber students. All of the new initiatives contributed to the rise in these scores.

**Additional Evidence**

**Growth on Terra Nova Reading GE Test from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009**

Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
2-3	2.4	2.6	5.6	3.6	4.3
3-4	2.9	4.1	5.9	3.9	6
4-5	3.5	4.8	6.9	5.5	7.6
5-6	5.7	5.3	6.8	5.8	*

A steady progression can be seen in how each grade performs on the Terra Nova reading test. Each year the grade scores at or above the grade level. The only year where the progression dipped was in 2007-08, an anomaly year.

**Summary of the English Language Arts Goal**

Amber met all of its accountability measures in 2008-09. It achieved its absolute measure of 75 percent of all tested students performing at or above level 3 by reaching 88 percent. Amber’s performance index of 188 met the Annual Measurable Objective of 144. In the comparative measure Amber’s students surpassed both CSD 4 and CSD 5 students by more than 20 percent. In both growth measures Amber met its goals. Each cohort met the target and often surpassed it. The comparative measure for effect size is not known yet. Overall Amber did very well this year in reaching its goals.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Not known
Growth	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State exam.	Achieved
Growth	Each year, grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e. grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	Achieved

**Action Plan**

Amber plans to continue to implement the strategies it initiated as well as use SFA as its reading curriculum. Reading will continue to be taught through ability groupings that are regroup every eight weeks. Academic Intervention will continue to be provided through Title One reading Specialist, the SETTTS teacher, strategy groups, differentiated homework, simulation tests and item analysis. Part-time tutors will again be used in the upper grades to assist with strategy groups and lower teacher student ratio. Sylvan Learning Center will be hired to conduct a six week test prep course with the third graders because it is their first experience taking the state exam.

Continued work on The Amber Way (a school-wide expectations program) will be conducted so as to

institutionalize it. The assemblies, STAR, and community service components will be conducted.

Special attention will be given to the writing curriculum in the coming year. An integration of the writing curriculum with the social studies content areas will be conducted so that the publishable writing pieces will be connected to the social studies curriculum. This process will be conducted throughout the year with each grade team.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **Goal 2: Mathematics**

All students at Amber Charter School will become proficient in math and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of mathematical skills.

#### **Background**

The mathematics program at Amber continues to be the TERC Investigations series for grades K to 5. Key professional development was planned and executed this past year in support of our mathematics goal. These include the use of staff developers, and engaging again the consulting group from Lehman College Math Center for training in teaching all elements of the NYS math program. The consultant met with teachers and instructional leadership at least twice monthly.

#### Saxon Math

As a result of the curriculum alignment and gap analysis, conducted in summer of 2008, the need to provide a method for students to review number sense and order arose. The Saxon Math morning meeting was identified as the tool to supplement Amber's math curriculum (TERC) to address this need. The Saxon Math morning meeting has the students review and repeat math facts daily in a fun and engaging manner. The students review days of the week, months, counting to 100, skip counting by 2's, 5's, etc. and the problem of the day, where students exercise problem solving strategies. The teachers implemented the Saxon Math morning meeting every day and students gained much needed confidence in their math skills.

### **Goal 2: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination.

#### **Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in third through fifth grade in March 2009. Each student's raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year's test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have been enrolled for less than one year.

**2008-09 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	51	0	0	0	51
4	45	0	0	0	45
5	20	0	0	0	20
6					
All	116	0	0	0	116

**Results**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders scored above the accountability goal with 98 percent at the proficiency level. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored above the accountability goal with 96 percent at the proficiency level, and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders also scored above the accountability goal with 100 percent at proficiency level. Amber's students met this measure.

**Charter School Performance on 2008-09 State Mathematics Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
3	All Students	0.00%	1.96%	72.55%	25.49%	98.04%	51
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	1.96%	72.55%	25.49%	98.04%	51
4	All Students	0.00%	4.44%	57.78%	37.78%	95.56%	45
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	4.44%	57.78%	37.78%	95.56%	45
5	All Students	0.00%	0.00%	95.00%	5.00%	100.00%	20
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	0.00%	95.00%	5.00%	100.00%	20
6	All Students	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	All Students	0.00%	2.14%	75.11%	22.76%	97.86%	116
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00%	2.14%	75.11%	22.76%	97.86%	116

**Evaluation**

The goal was met. Amber students did very well on the NYS Math exam. These results are attributed to the solid foundation the students receive in the lower grades and the new initiatives put in place this past year. It is wonderful that the 100 percent of the fifth graders scored proficient on the math test, and 95 percent of the fourth graders and 98 percent of the third graders.

**Additional Evidence**

As the chart below demonstrates, Amber students made a large leap in Math scores between 2005-06 and 2006-07, from 40 percent to 64 percent, an increase of 24 percent. In 2007-08, there was no increase; instead the math scores remained flat. In 2008-09, another large leap in scores was experienced. The percent of proficient students jumped from 64 percent to 97 percent, an increase of 33 percent.

Amber’s third graders consistently performed well on the NYS Math exam from 2006 to the present. The fourth and fifth graders didn’t do as well in the past years until 2008-2009 when all the grades met and surpassed the 75 percent accountability goal. The gains were large. Fourth graders increased from 59 percent to 96 percent, a 43 percent gain. Fifth graders increased from 56 percent to 100 percent, a 54 percent gain.

These extraordinary gains can be attributed to the new initiatives put in place, such as the supplement of the Saxon Math morning meeting piece, strategy groups, and seamless days.

**Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4											
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3					61.30	31	93.10	29	84.10	44	98.04	51
4	70.60	17	64.80	54	57.70	26	60.70	28	59.30	27	95.56	45
5					35.70	28	44.80	29	56.50	23	100.00	20
6					7.70	13	60.00	25	59.10	22	n/a	n/a
All	70.60	17	64.80	54	40.60	98	64.65	111	64.75	116	97.86	116

Source: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/AmberFinalVisitReport-8Yr-9.12.08.pdf>  
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/Amber7thYrRpt.pdf>

**Goal 2: Absolute Measure**

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State mathematics exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.

**Method**

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards all students being proficient by the year 2013-14. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state’s learning standards in Mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds this year’s Mathematics AMO, which for 2008-09 is 119.

The PI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 200.

**Results**

**Calculation of 2008-09 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)**

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3-5	0	2.14	75.11	22.76	116

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 2.14 + 75.11 + 22.76 = 100 \\
 &+ 75.11 + 22.76 = 97.87 \\
 \text{PI} &= \mathbf{197}
 \end{aligned}$$

**Evaluation**

Amber has consistently met its AMO each year. This year with a PI of 197 Amber came very close to the highest possible PI which is 200.

**Additional Evidence**

**Mathematics Performance Index (PI) and Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year**

Year	Grades	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2008-09	3-5	116	0.00%	2.14%	75.11%	22.76%	197	119
2007-08	3-6	125	5.60%	31.00%	62.10%	2.60%	125	133
2006-07	3-6	119	4%	32%	54%	9%	163	122
2005-06	3-6	123	18%	37%	39%	5%	144	122
2004-05	3-5	59					164	142
2003-04	3-4	17	15%	44%	33%	7%	165	136

Source: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/AmberFinalVisitReport-8Yr-9.12.08.pdf>  
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/Amber7thYrRpt.pdf>

Amber met the Annual Measurable Objective every year except last year 2007-08.

**Goal 2: Comparative Measure**

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

**Method**

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students and the results for the respective grades in the local school district, as

well as between the total result of students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for the corresponding grades in the school district.

**Results**

Ninety-eight percent of Amber’s third graders scored proficient in the math NYS exam where only 81 percent did in CSD 5. Ninety-five percent of Amber’s fourth graders scored proficient where 68.6 percent of CDS 5 students did. An Amber is excited to report that 100 percent of the fifth graders scored proficient in this test compared to 75.6 percent in CSD 5.

**2008-09 State Mathematics Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District 5 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	98.04%	51	81.60%	1076
4	95.56%	45	68.60%	1058
5	100.00%	20	75.60%	888
6				
All	97.86%	116	75.27%	3022

**Evaluation**

Amber out performed CSD 5 in every grade this year. In the third grade Amber outperformed CSD 5 by 16 percent. In fourth grade Amber outperformed CSD 5 by 27 percent and in fifth grade by 25 percent. Overall, Amber outperformed CSD 5 by 22 percent.

**Additional Evidence**

As the table below clearly demonstrates the percent of proficient Amber students, as always, is greater than those in CSD 5 for the third grade. In grades 4 and 5, Amber has lagged behind both CSD 4 and CSD 5 by a few percentage points. In 2005-06, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades were even with CSD 5 (4<sup>th</sup> grade: 58%; 5<sup>th</sup> grade: 36%). In 2006-07, Amber’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade (61%) did better than CSD 5 (58%), but in 2007-08 Amber lagged behind CSD 5 by 5.6 percent. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade also lagged behind CSD 5 in both 2006-07 and 2007-08. Finally, in 2008-09 Amber’s students surpassed both CSD 4 and 5 in all the grades.

**Mathematics Performance of Charter School and Local District  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4											
	2005-06			2006-07			2007-08			2008-09		
	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5	Amber	CSD4	CSD5
3	61.30%	69.10%	58.40%	92.90%	77.90%	69.30%	84.10%	84.18%	76.13%	98.00%	92.4%	81.6%
4	57.70%	67.10%	58.20%	60.70%	64.50%	58.40%	59.30%	74.68%	66.94%	95.60%	92.4%	68.6%
5	35.70%	55.20%	36.70%	44.40%	64.80%	58.10%	56.50%	73.65%	61.05%	100.00%	83.1%	75.5%
6	7.70%	52.40%	45.10%	58.30%	49.30%	55.30%	59.10%	62.86%	65.62%			
All	40.60%	60.95%	49.60%	64.08%	64.13%	60.28%	64.75%	73.84%	67.44%	97.87%	89.30%	75.23%

Source <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/ela-math/2009/math/PublicCharterMathDistrict-and-BuildingAggregatesMedia.pdf>  
[http://schools.nyc.gov/accountability/Reports/Data/TestResults/2009/ELA/ELA\\_2006-2009\\_AllStudents\\_byDistrict\\_FINAL.xls](http://schools.nyc.gov/accountability/Reports/Data/TestResults/2009/ELA/ELA_2006-2009_AllStudents_byDistrict_FINAL.xls)

**Goal 2: Comparative Measure**  
 Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

**Method**

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school’s actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure.

**Results**

Given the timing of the state’s release of poverty data, the 2008-09 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2007-08 results, the most recent ones available.

**2007-08 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Free Lunch Eligible Students	Number of Students Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	0	50	82.00	84.65	-2.65	-0.23
4	0	28	57.20	76.19	-18.99	-1.34
5	0	24	54.20	74.84	-20.64	-1.30
6		23	56.50	67.14	-10.64	-0.58
All	71.12	125	66.42	77.65	-11.23	-0.75
School's Overall Comparative Performance:						
Lower than expected to a medium degree						

**Evaluation**

In 2007-08 the school's aggregate Effect Size was lower than expected to a medium degree. It is expected that with the high math results in 2008-09 Amber will exceed the Effect Size.

**Additional Evidence**

**Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2005-06	4	69.70%	59	62.80%	79.10%	-1.23
2006-07	3-6	73.90%	119	64.70%	67.60%	-0.12
2007-08	3-6	71.12%	125	66.42%	77.65%	-0.75
2008-09	3-5	*	116	97.86%	*	*

Given the timing of the state's release of poverty data, the 2008-09 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2007-08 results, the most recent ones available.

In math Amber has struggled to meet or exceed the Effect Size. Yet, every year we got closer to the goal. It is expected that in 2008-09 Amber meets this goal.

**Goal 2: Growth Measure**

Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's state mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's state mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent proficient. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 2008-09 and also have a state exam score in 2007-08. It includes students who repeated the grade. Students who repeated the grade should be included in their current grade level cohort, not the cohort to which they previously belonged. The criterion for achieving this measure is for each grade-level cohort to halve the difference between the percentage of students proficient in 2007-08 and 75 percent proficient in 2008-09. If a cohort had already achieved 75 percent proficient in 2007-08, it is expected to show some positive growth in the subsequent year. In addition, the aggregate of all cohorts is examined to determine the growth of all students who took a state exam in both years.

**Results**

**Cohort Growth on State Mathematics Exam from 2007-08 to 2008-09**

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Target Achieved
		2007-08	Target	2008-09	
4	45	59.30	67.15	95.56	Y
5	20	56.50	65.75	100.00	Y
6	*	*	*	*	*
All	65	57.90	66.45	97.78	Y

**Evaluation**

Each cohort met and surpassed the target.

**Additional Evidence**

**Cohort Performance on Mathematics Exam  
Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2008-09	3-5	2	2
2007-08	3-6	0	3
2006-07	3-6	1	3

**Goal 1: Optional Measure**

Each year, grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed math test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e. grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

As per Charter Schools Institute: “If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the difference between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the first year’s average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (As per CSI guidelines, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)” The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

Threshold = spring 2007 NCE + [NCE 50 minus spring 2007 NCE)/2] (CSI Accountability Report, 2007)

**Results**

**Table 11: Growth on Terra Nova Math NCE Test from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009**

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Target
		2007-08	Target	2008-09	Achieved
K	77	65.1	*	56.5	Yes
1	77	53.5	*	57	Yes
2	73	60.5	*	56.91	Yes
3	49	45.4	47.7	54.2	Yes
4	45	43.3	46.65	60.24	Yes
5	20	45.8	47.9	54.7	Yes
All	327	51.1	*	56.59	Yes

- NCE above 50 is target.

**Evaluation**

In 2008-09, every grade at Amber was able to reach and surpass the NCE of 50 which is the target. The upper grades which, the previous year, had not reached the NCE of 50 not only met the target but surpassed the target. Since the Terra Nova exam was given in late April/ beginning of May these scores demonstrate the continued growth of Amber’s students in math that is not reflected in the NYS Math scores which was administered in early March. Yet, both scores indicate the huge growth of Amber students. All of the new initiatives contributed to the rise in these scores.

**Additional Evidence**

**Growth on Terra Nova Mathematics GE Test from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009**

Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
2-3	2.2	3.2	4.9	3.5	4.1
3-4	2.6	3.9	6.8	4	6.4
4-5	3.6	4.6	5.7	5.4	6.5
5-6	4.8	5.3	7	6.3	*

A steady progression can be seen in how each grade performs on the Terra Nova math test. Each year the grade scores at or above the grade level. The only year where the progression dipped was in 2007-08, an anomaly year.

**Summary of the Mathematics Goal**

Amber met all of its accountability measures in 2008-09. It achieved its absolute measure of 75 percent of all tested students performing at or above level 3 by reaching 97 percent. Amber’s performance index of 197 met the Annual Measurable Objective of 119. In the comparative measure Amber’s students surpassed both CSD 4 and CSD 5 students by more than 30 percent. In both growth measures Amber met its goals. Each cohort met the target and often surpassed it. The comparative measure for effect size is not known yet. Overall Amber did very well this year in reaching its goals.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Achieved
Growth	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s state exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State exam.	Achieved
Growth	Each year, grade level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed math test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e. grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	Achieved

## **Action Plan**

Amber plans to continue to implement the strategies it initiated as well as use TERC Investigations as its math curriculum. Academic Intervention will continue to be provided through the SETTS teacher, strategy groups, differentiated homework, simulation tests and item analysis. Part-time tutors will again be used in the upper grades to assist with strategy groups and lower teacher student ratio. The consultant from Lehman College will continue to provide professional development to the teachers in their execution of lessons and differentiation of instruction.

Special attention will be given to the math assessment component. The quizzes, unit test and a trimester test will be used to monitor student progress through the use of Pearson's INFORM and Web Grade book. These assessments will be linked to the grades on the report cards.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Goal 3: Science**

All students at Amber Charter will become proficient in science and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of scientific skills.

### **Background**

Amber's science curriculum is focused on Scott Foresman since 2004, and K12 Solutions ( K-3) since 2006. Our instructional staff organized a school wide science fair that engaged students in the scientific method over several weeks followed by hands-on exploration and presentations to a standing room audience of parents and local visitors helping to focus our students on vital science skills. Students who participated in the science fair showed gains in their science exam scores.

### **Goal 3: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State science examination.

### **Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in spring 2009. Each student's raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

### **Results**

The science results this year were exciting because the percent of Amber 4<sup>th</sup> graders scoring at level 4 (62%) was higher than those at level 3(27%). This is a good indicator that the students are progressing well in science. We are also encouraged that for a third year in a row Amber did not have any Level 1 students.

**Charter School Performance on 2008-09 State Science Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
4	All Students	0.00	11.11	26.67	62.22	88.89	45
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	0.00	11.11	26.67	62.22	88.89	45

**Evaluation**

Amber students have showed steady progress in science. For the first time in Amber’s history all the students tested have been at Amber for two years or more. The strong results are encouraging and good indicators that the instruction, curriculum and strategies used are effective.

**Additional Evidence**

Amber students have shown steady improvement in the NYS Science test. In 2005-06, 71 percent of the fourth graders were proficient in the state science exam and Amber students came close to meeting the accountability goal. The following year there was a large gain with 85 percent of fourth graders proficient. Then in Amber’s anomaly year (2007-08), there was a drop to 70% of the fourth graders meeting the standard. But this past year in 2008-09, reflective of all the other scores, Amber’s fourth graders made a huge gain with 88% of the fourth graders meeting the standard. Most exciting was that 62% of the fourth graders scored at level four, the highest result in Amber’s history.

**Science Performance  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4											
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4			75.90	54	70.80	24	85.20	27	70.40	27	88.89	44

**Goal 3: Comparative Measure**

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

**Method**

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

**Results**

The results of the state science exam in the local public school district are not available to us therefore it is difficult to compare Amber to the district.

**2008-09 State Science Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	88.89	45	*	*

**Evaluation**

No evaluation is possible given the lack of district scores for this measure.

**Summary**

The percentage of students attaining level proficiency was 88 percent, above the required 75% benchmark, thus we achieved our goal for the 2008-09 school year. The lack of reported scores for the local public school district prevent us from comparing the school to the local district.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Not able to determine

**Action Plan**

In-house staff developers will continue to provide guidance on the implementation of the science curriculum and instruction strategies. Training in the science test administration and scoring will continue to be provided.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**Goal 4: Social Studies**  
 All students at Amber Charter School will become proficient in social studies and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of social studies skills.

**Background**

Amber Charter School’s curriculum for social studies is apparent throughout each grade level and aligned with the New York State standards. The social studies curriculum integrates the language arts and provides students the opportunity to learn about the world through simulating and investigating real-world problems and situations. In the social studies units, students investigate important themes and topics, connecting what they learn about the past with their own lives, and present their findings in various forms including writing.

**Goal 4: Absolute Measure**  
 Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State social studies examination.

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program social studies assessment to students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in November 2008. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

**Results**

Amber’s fifth graders scored at a 90 percent proficiency level in 2008-09. This is the highest results in Amber’s history for the social studies test.

**Charter School Performance on 2008-09 State Social Studies Exam  
 By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
	All Students	5.00	5.00	55.00	35.00	90.00	20
5	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	5.00	5.00	55.00	35.00	90.00	20

**Evaluation**

Since the social studies test is administered early in the school year, November, we felt that these results would be an early indicator of the effectiveness of all the initiatives that had been

implemented. The fifth graders strong results were a huge encouragement to the school community to continue to press forward.

**Additional Evidence**

Amber students’ scored above 70 percent every year of the second renewal charter period. In 2005-06, 80 percent scored at or above level three. In 2006-07 and 2007-08, Amber’s fifth graders scored 71 percent and 70 percent respectively. Clearly we were close to our accountability goal but not quite there. Then in 2008-09, Amber’s fifth graders soared with 90 percent scored proficient on the state exam surpassing our accountability goal. Since the NYS Social Studies test is administered early in the school year (November) these scores were an early indicator of the impact the new initiatives put in place in 2008-09 would have.

**Social Studies Performance  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4											
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5			66.70%	12	80.50%	41	71.00%	31	70.40%	24	90.00%	20

**Goal 4: Comparative Measure**  
 Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State social studies exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

**Method**

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

**Results**

The results of the state social studies exam in the local public school district are not available to us therefore it is difficult to compare Amber to the district.

**2008-09 State Social Studies Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	90.00	20	*	*

**Evaluation**

No evaluation is possible given the lack of district scores for this measure.

**Summary**

Amber achieved the absolute measure for social studies with 90% of students reaching level proficiency 3. Due to a lack of reported results for the local community school district, we cannot determine whether we achieved or did not achieve the comparative measure.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Not able to determine

**Action Plan**

Further work is planned on the social studies curriculum. Integrating the social studies content areas with the writing curriculum is one project planned for the coming year. Through this process teachers will identify the content area where students will develop a publishable writing piece. Teachers will identify the writing genre of the published pieces, the connection to the social studies content area, and writing skills to be taught. Through this work teachers will examine the social studies curriculum and identify areas in need of revision or additional resources.

**NCLB**

**Goal 5: NCLB**

**Goal 5: Absolute Measure**  
Under the state’s NCLB accountability system, the school’s Accountability Status will be “Good Standing” each year.

**Method**

Since *all* students are expected to meet the state's learning standards, the federal No Child Left Behind legislation stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students

among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards which indicate each school’s status under the state’s NCLB accountability system. For a school’s status to be “Good Standing” it must not have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years.

**Results**

Amber Charter School is a "School In Good Standing" as per the New York State Department of Education for the school year 2008-09. Amber has held this designation since its inception in 2000. This is in compliance with NYSED/Title 1 requirements to make public our status.

**Evaluation**

Amber has held this designation since its inception in 2000. We make certain to publicize this message on our school’s web site and written communication is in compliance with the New York State Education Department/Title 1 requirements to make public our status.

**Additional Evidence**

Amber Charter School has been designated a **school in good standing** since its inception in the year 2000.

**NCLB Status by Year**

Year	Status
2005-06	Good Standing
2006-07	Good Standing
2007-08	Good Standing
2008-09	Good Standing

**APPENDIX B: OPTIONAL GOALS**

**Goal 6: Parent Satisfaction**  
Amber will maintain strong enrollment and strong parent interest.

**Goal 6: Absolute Measure**  
Each year two-thirds of parents will demonstrate satisfaction with the school’s program based on a parent satisfaction survey.

**Method**

In the spring of 2009 a parent survey was distributed to all parents at Amber. This survey was redrafted to include an opportunity for parents to evaluate some of the new initiatives that had been implemented throughout the year namely, extended day and the music curriculum.

**Results**

More than two-thirds of the parents responded to the in-house survey with a total of 85 percent.

**2008-09 Parent Satisfaction Survey Responses**

Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
298	351	84.9%

**2008-09 Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results**

Item		Great & Good
Q1	Communication with my child's teacher is:	99.7%
Q2	Communication with administration is:	95.1%
Q3	My child's academic progress has been	98.0%
Q4	My child's homework is	98.0%
Q5	How the school keeps parents informed is	98.6%
Q6	How my child feels about the school is	95.7%
Q7	How the school has supported my child's academic progress is	98.9%
Q8	The Spanish Curriculum is	91.8%
Q9	The Art Curriculum is	98.9%
Q10	The Technology Curriculum is	96.3%
Q11	The Physical Education Curriculum is	96.7%
Q12	The Music Curriculum is	96.8%
Q13	The After-school program is	89.4%
Q14	The Saturday Academy is	100.0%
Q15	The school's website is	93.3%
Q16	The school's special activities (Book Fair, Olympic Day, Assemblies, Spelling Bee, Trips, Wacky Week, Student Council, Science Fair, Basketball, Concerts, etc.) are:	99.3%
Q17	Extending the school day was	96.8%
Q18	My child's safety at Amber	97.1%

**Evaluation**

The results of the parent survey were overwhelmingly positive. Every area was above 90 percent in satisfaction except for the after-school program. Yet, even the response for that item was only 0.6 points away from the 90 percent.

The response to the music program, a new initiative for 2008-09, was extremely positive with 96 percent of parents expressing satisfaction. The response for the extended day, another new initiative for 2008-09, was also positive, with 97 percent of parents expressing satisfaction.

The areas with the highest satisfaction were the Saturday Academy where 100 percent of parents expressed satisfaction and communication with teachers, where 99 percent of parents expressed satisfaction. Another area where 99 percent of parents expressed satisfaction was in the enrichment activities Amber offered, e.g. Olympic Day, Science Fair, Spring Concert, etc.

**Additional Evidence**

In 2007-2008, the NYC DOE Learning Survey was administered to Amber parents for the first time. It was again administered in 2008-09. Below are the results of these parent surveys.

**Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results of DOE Learning Survey**

Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied 2007-08	Percent of Respondents Satisfied 2008-09
Academic Expectations	92	97
Communication	92	95
Engagement	95	98
Safety and Respect	97	98

The above Table indicates continued satisfaction by parents with Amber in the 2008-09 survey results. All areas increased in satisfaction between 2007-08 and 2008-09. In 2007-08, 66 percent of the parents responded to the DOE learning survey. This rate of response increased to 79 percent in 2008-09. Compared to the city’s average of 45 percent Amber has a very high response rate.

**Goal 6: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 90 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.

**Method**

All Amber parents receive the “Intent to Return Form” in January, that they complete informing us of their plans for the coming school year as it relates to their child. These forms are collected and tabulated to ascertain the projected number of students per class and per grade. Based on these numbers the data for the chart below was determined.

**Results**

**2008-09 Student Retention Rate**

2007-08 Enrollment	Number of Students Who Graduated in 2007-08	Number of Students Who Returned in 2008-09	Retention Rate 2008-09 Re-enrollment ÷ (2007-08 Enrollment – Graduates)
364	23	293	86%

**Evaluation**

In 2008-2009, the retention rate from one year to the next dipped because of extenuating circumstances. The NYC DOE established the entrance grade for middle schools to be 6<sup>th</sup> grade. For parents to optimize the best choices for their children they needed to apply for middle school after fifth grade. Therefore, Amber lost its sixth grade class. Amber wants to help students get

into the best middle schools and not hinder that transition by keeping them an extra year and therefore limit their choices. Consequently, Amber applied for an amendment to the charter to change from a K-6 school to a K-5 school.

**Additional Evidence**

Year	Retention Rate
2005-06	86%
2006-07	80%
2007-08	91%
2008-09	86%

Amber’s goal continues to be to maintain a 90% student retention rate. Based in this year’s “Intent to Return Form” we anticipate meeting this goal in 2009-10.

**Goal 6: Absolute Measure**  
 Each year the school will have a daily attendance rate of at least 95 percent.

**Method**

In 2008-09, with the implementation of PowerSchool, data management software, the teachers were able to record attendance directly into the data system within the first 30 minutes of instructional time. No longer is the attendance taken manually by the teacher then brought to the pupil accounting person for input into the data system.

For every unexcused absence a call is made to the parents to investigate the reason for the absence and troubleshoot with the parents if necessary to help them bring their child to school regularly. In addition, we continue to send a letter home to parents when more than three unexcused absences are noted. This letter warns the parents that promotion is threatened is attendance reaches a certain limit.

The clarification of the promotion policy this year as also assisted in ensuring greater attendance since parents are now clear on the fact that unexcused absences as well as tardiness can impact the promotion of their child.

**Results**

**2008-09 Attendance**

Grade	Average Daily Attendance Rate
1	93%
2	94%
3	95%
4	94%
5	94%
Overall	94%

**Evaluation**

All the strategies implemented this year have helped to ensure that a good percentage of the students are in attendance in school regularly. With an average of 94% Amber is very close to its goal of 85% attendance rate.

**Additional Evidence**

Year	Average Daily Attendance Rate
2005-06	90%
2006-07	89%
2007-08	92%
2008-09	94%

Meeting the goal of 95 percent attendance rate has eluded Amber, although this year we came very close. Many strategies have been implemented, policies enforced, and efforts made to encourage student attendance. It is our hope that with continued effort in this manner Amber will soon reach its goal.

**Legal Compliance**

**Goal: Amber will be in legal compliance**

**1. Measure:**

**Each year, the school will generally and substantially comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the provisions of its by-laws and charter.**

Amber has complied with all federal, state, and municipal rules and regulations. Amber has posted meeting dates, time, and location on its web site, in mailings to parents, and staff have participated in appropriate workshops (e.g., Individuals with Disability Education Act training) to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. We received one request under the New York Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

**Measure:**

**Each year, the school will have in place and maintain effective systems, policies, procedures and other controls for ensuring that legal and charter requirements are met.**

Amber has established, and refined effective systems, policies, and procedures ensuring that all legal and charter requirements are met. Amber board members meet bi-months or monthly as needed, document all board meetings, and take an active role in creating and enforcing policies.

**Measure:**

**Each year the school will maintain a relationship with independent legal counsel that reviews relevant policies, documents, incidents and makes recommendations as needed, and in proportion to the legal expertise on the board of trustees, if any.**

Amber has maintained for five years a relationship with independent legal counsel Michael Stolper, Esq., a partner in Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe. Mr. Stolper and his firm have contributed hundreds of hours *pro bono* in reviewing relevant policies, documents, incidents and have designed and made recommendations as needed. In addition to serving as counsel to Amber, Mr. Stolper also serves as the board vice chairman. In the rare absence of Amber's board chair, Mr. Stolper takes a leadership role at board meetings, works closely with the school's leadership team, and negotiates contracts on the school's behalf.

**Fiscal Soundness**

**Goal:** Amber will make sound decisions, effective, and responsible use of financial resources to maximize student learning.

**Measure—Budgeting:** Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget meaning actual revenues will equal or exceed actual expenses.

On a monthly basis, Amber's fiscal office produces a balance sheet for the current fiscal year. The balance sheet is reviewed by the board treasurer and additional members of the board who serve on the finance committee. The balance sheet is filed quarterly with the Charter Schools Institute as well as additional agencies that oversee Amber's fiscal matters, including La Raza Development Fund, which holds the mortgage for Amber's building. In the year ending June 30, 2009 representing the 2008-09 fiscal and school year, Amber demonstrates a balance between resources and expenses. Total revenue for 2008-2009 was \$5,195,497.37, with total expenses at \$5,619,783.36. The resulting (\$424,286) was subtracted from our net assets. Net assets include revenue that will support operations in the subsequent fiscal year. The detailed results are attached in the appendices. Amber continues to abide by GAAP, engages an external auditing firm to review its books, materials, resources, and procedures. An audit was conducted, completed and approved in 2008. This audit was delivered to the Charter School Institute.

**Measure—Financial Condition:**

**Beginning with the school's first operating year, at the end of each fiscal year, unrestricted net assets will be equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.**

Amber's unrestricted net assets were equal to two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.

**Measure—Internal Controls and Compliance**

**Each year the school will take corrective action, if needed, in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, SED, or the Institute.**

Amber took corrective action to address an internal control or compliance deficiency identified by state comptroller's auditors, but no other measures for major change were requested by SED, or the Charter Schools Institute.