

Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2006-07 School Year

Reader's Guide

SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

As set forth in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees*, the single most important factor that the Charter Schools Institute and the State University Board of Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school's record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, **each charter school that the State University Board of Trustees authorizes is required to enter into an accountability agreement, known as an Accountability Plan**, which ultimately becomes part of its charter.

The Charter Schools Institute closely monitors each school's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in its Accountability Plan.

In addition, as part of its annual reporting requirements, **each SUNY authorized charter school must submit an Accountability Plan Progress Report which, from its vantage point, addresses each of the goals and outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan.**

The information presented in these Progress Reports constitutes important evidence that a school is keeping its promises to its students, parents and community, and is critical to making its case for renewal at the end of its charter period. The most important parts of Progress Reports are student achievement results on state exams and other assessments. However, not all schools will have tested grade levels for a particular state exam. Each year, the state administers English language arts and mathematics tests to 3rd through 8th grade, science tests to the 4th and 8th grades, and social studies tests to the 5th and 8th grades.

Important Note: **The Accountability Plan Progress Report is authored by the charter school.** In reporting school progress toward meeting the outcome measures set forth in the Accountability Plan, schools are encouraged to build a case for the effectiveness of their program, and to lay the groundwork for writing a Renewal Application and ultimately for charter renewal. **The school's evaluation of its own progress does not necessarily reflect the conclusions of the Institute.** Further, the Institute does not affirm the completeness or accuracy of the report's data and may not endorse the school's characterization of the progress it has made toward achieving its Accountability Plan goals. Throughout the life of the school's charter, the Institute will visit each school, generating Institute School Visit Reports, and at the end of each charter period, a Renewal Report (select the <back> button in your browser to return to the school profile to see any/all available reports). These reports include detailed summaries of the Institute's observations of the school, as well as its evaluation of student performance and progress toward meeting the academic subject goals in its Accountability Plan.

ACADEMIC GOALS

English Language Arts Goal:

Excellence Charter School students, enrolled in at least their second year, will meet or exceed New York State Elementary Learning Standards in English Language Arts

Measure III.A

For the 2006-07 school year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the CTB/McGraw Hill TerraNova Assessment, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring.

Results

NCE: 1 st Grade Cohort				
TerraNova Subject	June 06	June 07	Δ	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Reading	59	59	0	+9
Language	68	65	-3	+15
n=43				

NCE: 2 nd Grade Cohort					
TerraNova Subject	June 05	June 06	June 07	Δ (05-07)	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Reading	65	60	59	-6	+9
Language	67	62	76	+9	+16
n=37					

NCE: 3 rd Grade Cohort						
TerraNova Subject	Fall 04 ¹	June 05	June 06	June 07	Δ (04-07)	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Reading	40	56	55	62	+12	+12
Language	45	62	65	65	+20	+15
n=33						

"Proficient" or "Advanced Proficient": 3 rd Grade		
New York State ELA Exam	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
ELA	83.3%	8.3%
n=36		

¹ These data are for Excellence's 3rd Grade Cohort. Included here are only 2006-07 3rd Graders with TerraNova results in Fall 2004, June 2005, June 2006, and June 2007. This differs from the aforementioned "Fall Proxy."

In Excellence's second year with TerraNova cohort data to present, Excellence students exceeded the school's English Language Arts goals. Excellence's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade Cohorts exceeded a mean NCE of 50.

In Excellence's first year with New York State data to present, Excellence 3rd Graders exceeded the school's English Language Arts goals. Ninety-two percent of Excellence's 3rd Graders scored Proficient or Advanced Proficient on the State test.

Summary

The TerraNova assessment data and the DIBELS data indicate that Excellence has made strong headway in moving students toward Reading and Language fluency. While select cohorts' value-added gains are not what we would want them to be, we are confident that Excellence, as evidenced by all three cohorts performing above the 50 NCE level and the 3rd Grade ELA Test scores, is providing a firm foundation for even greater Reading and Language achievement for our boys in the upcoming school year.

Action Plan

Results from the TerraNova and the DIBELS, as well as observational evidence of academic progress from teachers, continued to be a source of great pride for the Excellence community in its English Language Arts curriculum. In the coming year, Excellence will continue to deploy two teachers in each classroom in K-2, divide classrooms into three, differentiated small reading groups, deliver over three hours of daily literacy instruction, and utilize the Waterford computer reading program as a supplement to instruction in Kindergarten and 1st Grade.

In 2007-08, Excellence will continue to build on students' successful acquisition of literacy skills:

- As they did in preparation for the 2006-07 school year, Excellence teachers will participate in two days of Reading Mastery training. This training will be supplemented by a series of multi-day visits throughout the fall by a nationally recognized Reading Mastery professional developer who will observe teachers, provide feedback, and deliver model lessons.
- Excellence will continue its partnership with the Urban Education Exchange to provide support to teachers in implementing Reading Comprehension. Teachers will continue to use the Urban Education Exchange anchor lessons to support student acquisition of reading comprehension skills.
- Excellence teachers again convened during July to develop K-4 Curriculum Alignment Templates (CATs) for Writing using the Lucy Calkins Writers' Workshop Model. Several teacher pairs also integrated their grade-level Reading Comprehension lesson plans with their Writing and Read Aloud. For Grades 2-4, Excellence will adopt the *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* curriculum for its Read Aloud program.
- Excellence will again administer bimonthly compositions for all students to assess writing progress and provide data to drive improvements in writing instruction.
- Excellence's Reading Specialist and Special Education Coordinator will continue to provide literacy intervention for those students in K-4 who need additional help in developing their print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. For this intervention work, Excellence will continue to employ the Wilson Foundations Program Wilson. The Special Education Coordinator/Teacher will continue to receive on-going training and support from the Uncommon Schools Director of Special Education.

Math Goal:

Excellence Charter School students, enrolled in at least their second year, will meet or exceed New York State Elementary Learning Standards in Mathematics.

Measure II.A.

For the 2006-07 school year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the CTB/McGraw-Hill TerraNova Assessment, a nationally-normed test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring.

Results

NCE: 1 st Grade Cohort				
TerraNova Subject	June 06	June 07	Δ	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Math	47	67	+20	+17
n=43				

NCE: 2 nd Grade Cohort					
TerraNova Subject	June 05	June 06	June 07	Δ (05-07)	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Math	66	68	76	+10	+26
n=37					

NCE: 3 rd Grade Cohort						
TerraNova Subject	Fall 04 ²	June 05	June 06	June 07	Δ (04-07)	'07 Above/Below 50 NCE
Math	34	63	69	71	+37	+21
n=33						

"Proficient" or "Advanced Proficient": 3 rd Grade		
New York State Math Exam	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
Math	55.6%	44.4%
n=36		

In Excellence's second year with TerraNova cohort data to present, Excellence students exceeded the school's Math goals. Excellence's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade Cohorts exceeded a mean NCE of 50.

² These data are for Excellence's 3rd Grade Cohort. Included here are only 2006-07 3rd Graders with TerraNova results in Fall 2004, June 2005, June 2006, and June 2007. This differs from the aforementioned "Fall Proxy."

In Excellence's first year with New York State data to present, Excellence 3rd Graders exceeded the school's Math goals. One-hundred percent of Excellence's 3rd Graders scored Proficient or Advanced Proficient on the State test.

Summary

Excellence Charter School students continued to make incredible strides in mathematics in the 2006-07 school year. With a majority of students at or above grade level on the standardized assessments (including 95% of 2nd Graders and 94% of 3rd Graders at or above grade level in math) and a majority demonstrating proficiency on the school's Saxon Math curriculum, Excellence is confident in its ability to achieve even greater gains for the next school year.

Action Plan

Based on evidence from the New York State Math Test, TerraNova Second Edition, and Saxon Mathematics assessment data, Excellence students have performed well and have validated the school's curriculum implementation.

Excellence again benefited from its "Math Meeting" concept, in which twenty minutes each day is dedicated to reviewing essential background concepts related to math, such as counting, knowing the days of the week, and writing the date. Excellence's math curriculum was further supplemented with exercises in mental computation, graphing, pattern recognition, and money.

Excellence introduced in the 2005-06 school year a Math Specialist, who lead school-wide math curriculum development and provided targeted professional development. Excellence believes that the addition of its Math Specialist, through his individual support of teachers, enhanced Math teaching and reduced variability of Mathematics teaching styles across classrooms and cohorts in the 2006-07 school year. Excellence will continue to offer weekly Math Inquiry Group sessions for professional development for teachers.

- In preparation for the 2007-08 school year, each Excellence grade-level team will participate in a half day of Saxon training. This training will incorporate video tape of effective math instruction at Excellence and team teaching by Lead Teachers.
- For the 2007-08 school year, Excellence will continue to fund a half-time position responsible for coordinating after school tutoring by teachers and volunteers. Students who are identified as at-risk of under-performance will be assigned to after school tutoring for up to two days a week.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Parent/Family Satisfaction Goal:

Parents/families will be satisfied with Excellence Charter School's rigorous educational program.

Measure I.A.

Each year, parents/families will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent/Family Survey in which at least two-thirds of all parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.

Excellence Charter School administered an anonymous family survey during the school's Spring Report Card Nights. The 2006-07 Parent Survey asked parents to assess their satisfaction with 25 different elements of the school's program. The following scale was utilized: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Somewhat

Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied. A full half of the school's parent population responded to the survey.

Results

Families provided an overwhelmingly positive response to the past school year.

- 99% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the school's overall academic program.
- 99% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their child's engagement in academics.
- 99% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the quality of the school's teachers.
- 98% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their school's mission.
- 99% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the school's Reading and Math instruction, while 100% were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the school's Writing instruction.

Overall parent/family satisfaction with the school was very high. It is particularly rewarding to note that the school received such broad, high support in its core academic program.

Action Plan

Excellence aspires to 100% satisfaction in every aspect of school life. In the 2006-07 school year, Excellence will continue to improve upon the Family Involvement Committee (FIC) model introduced in the 2006-07 school year.

The FIC will again meet regularly to discuss important topics critical to the success of the Excellence community, such as literacy, math, social development, health and nutrition, and summer activities planning. The FIC also will serve as a vehicle for parents to sponsor family potlucks, manage fundraisers, and become active and involved stakeholders in the Excellence community.

In the 2006-07 school year, Excellence again utilized special events such as Friday Community Meetings, the annual Kwanzaa celebration, and the end-of-year Stepping Up Ceremony to foster strong ties between families and the school. In 2007-08, the Library will again drive events celebrating literacy (e.g., book clubs, author events, etc.).

Measure I.B.

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

Result

Six students who were enrolled in Excellence during the 2005-06 school year did not return for the 2006-07 school year (four students moved out of state and two found placement at schools closer to their homes). Excellence boasted a 97% re-enrollment rate from the 2005-06 school year to the 2006-07 school year.

Measure I.A.

Each year, Excellence Charter School will have a daily attendance rate of at least 95 percent.

Method

Excellence calculated the year's daily attendance rate using the following method:

$$(Total\ students\ present\ for\ each\ school\ day) / (Total\ daily\ enrollment\ for\ each\ school\ day) \times 100$$

Result

Excellence Charter School met the goal with a 97% daily attendance rate for the year. Comparatively, the attendance rate for Community School District 16 in 2005 was 90.2%.

Legal Compliance Goal:***Excellence Charter School will demonstrate sound school management and school governance.*****Measure I.A.**

Excellence Charter School will have generally and substantially complied 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, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the provisions of its bylaws and charter.

Measure I.B.

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.

Measure I.C.

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

Result

Excellence Charter School has complied with the aforementioned requirements.

Fiscal Soundness Goal:***Excellence Charter School will demonstrate sound fiscal management and coherent fiscal policies.*****Measure I.A.**

Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget, meaning actual revenues will equal or exceed actual expenses.

Result

Excellence Charter School achieved this goal, maintaining a positive cash flow for the entire school year and ending the 2007 fiscal year with a positive fund balance as well as a positive cash balance.

The school is particularly proud of its success because the fiscal goal was attained while:

- Maintaining a staffing model that included two adults in each K-2 classroom
- Staffing a teacher designated solely for math instruction and one solely for reading instruction;
- Providing a class in fitness and music/art on a daily basis
- Providing a school day more than 25% longer than the district and a longer school year

Excellence Charter School ended the year with an annual fund balance of more than \$37,000. Excellence is in strong financial shape.

Measure I.B.

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.

Result

Excellence ended the school year with unrestricted net cash assets of more than \$37,000 and the total net assets of the school are more than \$200,000 (unaudited), which is over 6% of the budget for the 2006-07 school year (\$3,092,366). This puts Excellence in a strong financial position.

Measure II.A.

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.

Result

Excellence Charter School has not identified any internal control or compliance issue. On the 2005-06 school audit, the auditors made no recommendations nor cited any need for a corrective action plan.