

Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2007-08 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.

**HARLEM LINK
CHARTER SCHOOL**

2007-08

**ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

August 1, 2008

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Steven Evangelista, Co-Director for Operations, prepared this 2007-08 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Bernard R. Adams	Treasurer, Member: Education, Executive, Finance Committees
Jonathan Barrett	Chair, Member: Development, Executive, Finance Committees
David W. Brown	Secretary, Member: Development, Executive Committees
Steven Evangelista	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Rachel K. Field	Member: Development, Executive Committees
Karen C. Hyland	Member: Education, Executive Committees
Joshua Lamstein	Member: Finance Committee
John Reddick	<i>Nonvoting member</i>
Margaret Ryan	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Deirdre Simon	Member: Education, Executive Committees
Kesha Young	Member: Education Committee

INTRODUCTION

Harlem Link is an independent charter school initially chartered to serve grades K-4 in Central Harlem. The school opened with grades K-1 in September 2005 with the mission of graduating articulate scholars who meet or exceed state performance standards and active citizens who learn and serve in their communities, and the aim of eventually expanding to grades K-8 and gaining admission for graduates to high performing, competitive public and private high schools. The school design is distinguished by an emphasis on teaching students critical thinking skills – as the mission explicitly mentions students taken an active role in their own learning and being empowered to develop good character – as well as an emphasis on collaboration, embodied in the Co-Director and co-teaching model as well as the numerous community institutional partnerships for programming.

The charter anticipates 54 students per grade, and the school has generally held to this number. Each year, the school has attracted an increasing number of families eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a federal indicator of poverty level. In 2007-2008, approximately 84% of Harlem Link students fell into this category. Throughout the three years of the school’s existence, the ethnic and neighborhood demographics have held fairly constant, approximately 80% of the students being African-American, non-Hispanic (and all of the rest Hispanic) and approximately 80% from Upper Manhattan (with all the rest from the South Bronx, excepting one student from Lower Manhattan and one who moved to Brooklyn in 2008).

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2003-04														
2004-05	PLANNING YEAR													
2005-06	54	54												108
2006-07	54	54	54											162
2007-08	51	52	54	53										210

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Students will become proficient readers and writers of the English Language.

Background

Harlem Link uses a balanced literacy approach to teaching English Language Arts. Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, and Independent Reading with teacher conferencing are all elements of the Reader’s Workshop instruction. Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Guided Writing, and Independent Writing are all elements of the Writer’s Workshop instruction. Teachers use individual conferences and written interim assessments to gauge student achievement and to plan differentiated instruction based on individual student needs. The Development Reading Assessment is used as a school-wide reading level benchmarking tool. Harlem Link also employed a reading specialist and an academic intervention specialist to provide support to struggling readers and writers.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of third through fourth 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 (ELA) examination

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to students in 3rd grade in January 2008. 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.

2007-08 State English Language Arts Exam Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	50	0	0	0	50
All	50	0	0	0	50

¹ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

Results

Harlem Link had 58.3% of the 36 students in at least their second year performing at Levels 3 & 4. The remaining 15 students in at least their second year all scored at Level 2, including five who fell one point short of scoring a Level 3, earning a scale score of 649 while the cut score was 650. No students tested at Harlem Link performed at a Level 1.

Harlem Link Charter School Performance on 2007-08 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	0.0%	40.0%	58.0%	2.0%	60.0%	50
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	41.7%	55.6%	2.8%	58.3%	36
All	All Students	0.0%	40.0%	58.0%	2.0%	60.0%	50
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	41.7%	55.6%	2.8%	58.3%	36

Evaluation

As noted above, Harlem Link did not meet the goal of 75% of students in at least their 2nd year performing at a Level 3 or 4, falling short of this goal by 16.7%. Those students who did not perform at Level 3 were generally very close; five students, or 13.9%, scored only one point below the Level 3 cut score. No students at Harlem Link scored in Level 1.

This level of achievement partly reflects strategic decisions and unpredictable events at the school during the year. Some of the factors are discussed below.

Predictive data.

As the past year was the first of the school’s state testing program, the teachers and leadership lacked true predictive data with which to plan and modify instructional practices and curriculum.

The teachers and administration attempted to use the data available, but had no experience in using the in-school assessments (Developmental Reading Assessment, or DRA, and Terra Nova) to prepare for the state ELA exam.

The Terra Nova, administered in June 2007, painted a picture of a student body headed for success on the state exam, specifically predicting that 80.0% of those tested who would then go on to take the ELA in January 2008 would achieve a Level 3 or higher. The school purchased Terra Nova partly because its publisher, McGraw Hill, also issues the state ELA exam, and correlation to the state test is a selling point. However, only 19 of the 28 students expected to pass (or 67.9%) did so in January 2008, while one of the seven students expected not to pass did so.

The DRA continues to confirm teacher perception of student reading level and correlates with informal classroom assessments and observation. However, its ability to correlate with the state

ELA exam is similar to that of the Terra Nova. Only 76.5% of the 34 students who scored in the appropriate grade level DRA range in January 2008 scored at Level 3 or higher on the state test. Of the 16 students who scored below grade level on the DRA, four passed the ELA.

Staffing Assignments and Changes

Through a combination of strategic decision-making and unforeseen events, the third grade at Harlem Link in 2007-2008 was not provided with strong human resources as compared to other grades. A major staffing change in September affected student performance across the grade for months, and wasn't resolved until the week before the ELA exam was administered.

On the leadership level, instructional leadership was challenged by the addition of a second site in the summer of 2007, as the New York City Department of Education (DOE) offered the school an annex site for a Lower School one mile away from the Upper School as the only way to expand within the DOE. Concerned that the Co-Director for Instruction would be taken away from the Upper School a great deal during this transition year, the Co-Directors decided to assign the supervision and evaluation of one of the three grade teams at the Upper School to the Co-Director for Operations, who had teaching but no prior instructional leadership experience. Since his teaching experience rested primarily in upper elementary grades, it made sense to assign the third grade teachers to the Co-Director for Operations. The school made this decision with the best overall interests of the school and its students in mind, weighing but ultimately not accommodating the need to have the most experienced leader – and one whose attention was not diverted by operational, business and fundraising needs – in the one testing grade. As a result, the third grade teachers and students experienced the weakest instructional leadership among the grade teams.

Perhaps most importantly, the teaching team was ultimately the most inexperienced among the grade teams as well. Third grade was a new grade in 2007-2008 at Harlem Link, as fourth grade will be in the coming year. Seeking consistency, the school kept most of its more experienced teachers in the kindergarten through second grade level.

The school took one second grade co-teaching team from 2006-2007 and split them, anchoring each new third grade classroom with a returning teacher. The school hired a brand new teacher to pair with one, and moved the Science Specialty Teacher into the classroom to pair with the other.

As the school year began, the four third grade teachers had the fewest average years of teaching experience among the grade teams at Harlem Link, 2.0 years per teacher as compared to 3.6 for the rest of the grade teams, and given the Science Specialty Teacher's out-of-classroom role for two years, this figure drops to 1.5 years of *classroom* teaching experience. While this disparity between lower and upper grades bodes well comparatively for later cohorts, it was exacerbated at the end of September when the school leadership made a necessary, mission-driven decision to terminate the most experienced teacher in the third grade, leaving her brand new co-teacher by herself for three months, until a permanent replacement was hired one week before the ELA exam. Due to this unforeseen staffing change and the consequent hiring of a series of substitute co-teaching, the third grade team experienced an unanticipated high level of inconsistency in the months prior to the state ELA exam, and spent almost all of the year with only one of four

teachers having prior experience as a classroom teacher. While the Leadership Team interviewed a bevy of candidates, and hosted eight demonstration lessons (further disrupting learning in the grade), no candidate was deemed suitable until three months had passed.

The impact of this human resources gap on student achievement is clear. Lacking experience, third grade teachers did not consistently execute effective instructional strategies described in the school's charter, for example devoting the majority of effort in Reading Workshop to differentiated reading groups from the beginning of the school year, to bring students to the next level.

Program Resource Allocation

The school's balanced literacy model is designed to meet the needs of all learners and this includes an ample amount of time spent on intervention for struggling readers and writers. None of the students tested at Harlem Link in 2007-2008 performed at a Level 1, and the school attributes that datum to the dedication of the teachers and staff to meeting the needs of students requiring intervention services. In 2007-2008, the Upper School was served by two separate full-time out-of-classroom intervention teachers, who worked with classroom teachers to provide small group instruction in classroom material, as well as additional remediation when necessary.

Issues within Subgroups

Each year, Harlem Link's percentage of students in poverty has risen, up to 84.0% in the third grade by the time of the ELA exam and up to over 88% schoolwide by June 2008. The population of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch proved to be a significant challenge – while six of eight students (75.%) not eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch scored at Level 3 or higher, only 24 of the 42 students (57.1%) below the poverty line did so.

Also, while the small sample size makes drawing conclusions problematic, only one of the four Hispanic students in the grade passed the test. None of the students have been eligible for English as a Second Language services through the Language Assessment Battery, but Spanish is spoken in the home of two of the three students who scored a Level 2, putting them in the language minority category.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered state tests for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year. For this reason, there are no year to year trends.

However, an analysis of scale scores reveals that while students who attended the school for longer periods of time do not outperform more recent enrollees with regard to percentage of students passing the test, they do so on another absolute measure of performance, with a higher average scale score.

**2007-08 English Language Arts Performance
by Grade Level and Years Attending the School**

Grade	Enrolled 2+ years			Enrolled <2 years		
	Percent Passing	Average Scale Score	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Average Scale Score	Number Tested
3	58.3%	660.3	36	64.3%	656.5	14
All	58.3%	660.3	36	64.3%	656.5	14

Harlem Link’s curriculum is based on individual differentiation of instruction. While student goals aim toward meeting set standards-based criteria, emphasis is placed on improvement regardless of standing in relation to performance standards. Hence, as the above data shows students who have been at Harlem Link two or more years are on average either closer to achieving the benchmark (on below) or have moved farther above it (if at or above it) than their more recent enrollee counterparts.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure
Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state’s No Child Left Behind (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 2007-08 is 133. 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

Harlem Link’s aggregate Performance Index value is 160. This value exceeds this year’s English language arts Annual Measurable Objective, 122.

Calculation of 2007-08 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	0	40.0%	58.0%	2.0%	50

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 40 \quad + \quad 58 \quad + \quad 2 \quad = \quad 100 \\
 & & \quad \quad + \quad 58 \quad + \quad 2 \quad = \quad 60 \\
 & & & & \text{PI} & = & \text{160}
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

The Performance Index measure was met. Harlem Link's PI value is 160. This exceeds this year's English language arts AMO of 133. Based on this information, Harlem Link is 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.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered state tests for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, thus there is no comparative data from years past.

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 ELA exam will be greater than that of 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

Of the 36 students enrolled in at least their second year at Harlem Link, 58.3% performed at Levels 3 and 4. The performance of these students fell below the performance of the 1,394 District 3 students tested, 64.9% of whom scored at Level 3 or 4. Harlem Link's Upper School, where its third graders are housed, is located in District 3.

For its internal data analysis, the school compares school performance to Harlem public schools rather than District 3 (as only 10% of third graders at the time of the ELA exam resided in District 3, and 80% of them passed the test), as will be discussed in more detail in the Additional Evidence section below. Of the 1609 students tested in Harlem District 3 schools and all Manhattan District 5 schools, in other words all of Central Harlem, 46.1% performed at Levels 3 and 4. From this measure, Harlem Link is outperforming students in Harlem district public schools, overall by 13.9% and within the cohort of students enrolled for two or more years by 12.2%.

**2007-08 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 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	58.3%	36	64.9%	1394
All	58.3%	36	64.9%	1394

Evaluation

Harlem Link Charter School did not exceed the aggregate District 3 performance in ELA. As will be discussed in more detail below, the school did exceed the performance of the District 3 schools located in Harlem, in which only 52.1% of third graders passed the ELA exam. These are the schools that would be attended by the five Harlem Link students who resided in District 3 at the time of the exam.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered the state ELA exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, hence no comparison to previous years’ district performance is available.

While the school did not surpass District 3’s overall performance level on the ELA exam, the school did achieve stronger results than the District 3 schools that are actually located in Harlem, as well as in all possible breakdowns the performance of each of the other districts in which Harlem Link students reside.

Harlem Link’s Upper School, which includes third grade, is technically located in Community School District 3, but the majority of the student body hails from District 5. In fact, Harlem Link’s Upper School sits on the northernmost border of District 3, and students living across the street from the school along with those living in the vast majority of the catchment area identified in the school’s charter are zoned for District 5 schools. 60% of the students who took the ELA exam in 2008 lived in District 5, compared to the 10% living in District 3.

District 3 elementary schools include all those on the Upper West Side as well as nine schools in Central Harlem: Public Schools 76, 145, 149, 163, 165, 180, 206, 208, 241 and 242. Generally, the performance of these schools is drastically different from their counterparts on the Upper West Side, along with their average poverty level, which is generally and sometimes drastically higher than the downtown District 3 schools. In 2008, 52.1% of third graders in those nine northernmost schools passed the state ELA exam, compared to 75.5% of students in the remainder of the District.

Harlem Link’s third grade students in 2008 actually resided in nine different Community School Districts – Districts 3 through 10 in Manhattan and the Bronx, and District 23 in Brooklyn. The tables below summarize the number and portion of students attending Harlem Link living in each

of those districts (at the time of the respective examinations), those districts’ performance on the ELA exam in 2008, as well as a weighted composite average performance.

**2007-08 State English Language Arts Exam
Composition of Student Body by Districts of Residence**

District	District Passing Rate	All Harlem Link Students		Students Enrolled 2+ Years	
		No. students	Pct. of HL population	No. students	Pct. of HL population
Dist. 3	64.9%	5	10.0%	4	11.1%
Dist. 4	53.9%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 5	43.1%	30	60.0%	21	58.3%
Dist. 6	43.0%	4	10.0%	4	11.1%
Dist. 7	37.7%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 8	56.4%	4	6.0%	2	5.6%
Dist. 9	40.9%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 10	48.1%	3	6.0%	2	5.6%
Dist. 23	46.3%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Composite District Passing Rate		46.8%		46.7%	

**2007-08 State English Language Arts Exam
Harlem Link Charter School Comparison to Composite Student Districts of Residence**

All Harlem Link Students		Students Enrolled 2+ Years	
Harlem Link Pct. Passing	Composite Districts	Harlem Link Pct. Passing	Composite Districts
60.0%	46.8%	58.3%	46.7%

As the tables show, both in sum and considering only students with two or more years at the school, Harlem Link outperformed the composite of the districts from which its students came.

Further, five students enrolled at Harlem Link during the ELA exam live in District 3. Of those five, four are enrolled in at least their second year at Harlem Link. Of these four students, three (or 75.0%) performed at Levels 3 and 4. District 3 Harlem schools had 51.4% of their enrolled students performing at Levels 3 and 4, and all district 3 schools had 64.9% of students performing at Levels 3 and 4. Therefore, Harlem Link students living in District 3 outperformed both the Harlem subset and the full set of District 3 schools’ students on the ELA exam.

While a full listing of the performance of students (enrolled two years or more in Harlem Link) by district of residence compared to that district’s performance would be pedantic given the small sample sizes, such students at Harlem Link outperformed the district schools in each district save District 8 (which had an achievement level of 56.4%, and had one of two, or 50.0% of, Harlem Link students pass).

Finally, the school compares in the next table its performance with the third grade students at two comparative schools – the two schools with which it shares space. P.S. 129, along with

Harlem Link’s Lower School (which will include kindergarteners and first graders in 2008-09) is located in District 5.

**2007-08 English Language Arts Performance of
Charter School and Comparison Schools by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year and All Students in Comparison Schools					
	Harlem Link		P.S. 242		P.S. 129	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	58.3%	36	40.9%	44	51.6%	61
4			34.0%	50	69.4%	62
5			44.0%	50	56.1%	49
6					56.1%	57
All	58.3%	36	39.6%	144	52.8%	229

As the table shows, the percentage of Harlem Link students in at least their second year passing the state ELA exam compares favorably with both schools’ percentages, both schoolwide and within the third grade.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

Method/Results/Evaluation

These data are not available at the time of submission. Harlem Link administered the State ELA exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, thus no 2007 data exist.

Goal 1: Growth Measure

For the 2008-2009 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State ELA exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the 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 2007-08 and also have a state exam score in 2006-07. It includes students who repeated the grade. 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 2007-08.

If a cohort had already achieved 75 percent proficient in 2006-07, 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/Evaluation

Harlem Link administered the State ELA exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year. Therefore, no cohort analysis can be performed.

Additional Evidence

While Harlem Link has administered the Terra Nova in English Language Arts in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, comparative data that would show growth are not yet available. Below are the only spring data available (please note that the cohorts include students who were retained as well as one student who was moved to a higher grade in their *new* grades):

Cohort Growth on Terra Nova Reading & Language from Spring 2007 to Spring 2008

07-08 Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08	
K	N/A	N/A	50.0	*	*
1	39	53.6	56.6	*	*
2	47	46.1	49.1	*	*
3	35	50.2	53.2	*	*

* Not yet available at the time of submission

* Not yet available at time of submission.

Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

Harlem Link did not achieve the goal of 75 percent of third graders who are enrolled in at least their second year performing at or above Level 3 on the ELA exam. The school achieved the absolute measure of the Performance Index on the State ELA exam meeting the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system. The school is also outperforming students in the same tested grades in the districts in which its students reside (“Composite” in the chart below), but not in the specific district of location of the Upper School site (District 3).

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of third through fourth 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 (ELA) examination	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state’s No Child Left Behind (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 ELA exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Did Not Achieve (District 3); Achieved (Composite)
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State ELA exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis, performed by the Charter Schools Institute, controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.	Data Not Available at Time of Submission
Growth	For the 2008-09 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State ELA exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	N/A

Action Plan

The school has already taken a number of steps in order to maintain the academic gains demonstrated in the ELA results, and to close the gaps identified above.

Use of Data

In 2007-2008, with the addition of an Assessment Coordinator, Harlem Link further developed and standardized a now robust interim assessment system that will, beginning in fall 2008, be in place from the beginning of the school year. In addition, the school’s pedagogical model is

based on data-driven instruction and differentiation of instruction for individual student needs. Therefore, having both a set of state ELA data for the rising fourth grade cohort, and a year of experience from which to compare Terra Nova and DRA with state assessment, will allow teachers and administrators to prepare students better for the state ELA exam.

Staffing Assignments

The school has responded to the issues presented in the Absolute measure Evaluation section above, beginning by streamlining the Organization Chart. Now that the Lower School has been functional for one year and is operating stably, the Co-Director for Instruction is able to devote more attention to the Upper School, leaving the Lower School Director to oversee her site more autonomously. Therefore, the Co-Director for Instruction, the senior instructional leader on the Leadership Team, will now be supervising and evaluating the teaching teams for both of Harlem Link's testing grades.

Perhaps more importantly, the Co-Director for Operations will no longer be involved with any supervision of instructional staff. In 2007-2008, this school leader supervised the Dean of Students, Families and Community (in addition to the third grade team), and this arrangement contributed to a lack of clarity expressed by teachers regarding Leadership Team roles in coaching and providing support for student behavioral intervention. The Dean is departing the school, and the Leadership Team has taken this opportunity to flatten the Leadership Team, promoting the Lower School Dean to become Dean of Culture across both sites. The school board expects that this year of transition due to expansion to a second site has passed, and the occasion to reduce a necessarily outsized Leadership Team is an opportune one. Without this direct report on the team, the Co-Director for Operations need not interfere with educational matters at all, and roles in the areas that were at times confusing in 2007-2008 will now be explicit and clear: teachers turn to the Dean of Culture for student behavioral coaching, the other Leadership Team members for other specific areas of coaching, and to the instructional Director in their building for student behavioral intervention when needed. (There is also a clear, new chain of command if the director is out of the building.)

With regard to teachers, the school has more than doubled the average experience level of teachers for the third and fourth grade heading into 2008-2009, while keeping the more experienced second grade teaching team intact. In the three classrooms in those grades with co-teaching teams new to Harlem Link (one third grade, two fourth grade), each classroom has two teachers with a total of four years' experience. Both new teachers who were hired for the classrooms were paired with a teacher with four years' experience and direct experience using the school's curricular approach.

Finally, an additional staff member at the Lower School – a new full time Academic Intervention Support position has been created for grades K and 1 – will enable the school to continue its successful ratio of having two AIS teachers for the three grades at the Upper School despite schoolwide student enrollment growth by 25% with the addition of a new grade.

Program Resource Allocation

Each year at Harlem Link, curriculum has taken a major step forward. The charter agreement anticipates teachers building a great deal of the curriculum, and avoiding scripted curriculum

programs in favor of designing curriculum around student data and student needs, selecting from a range of program resources that reflect the school's particular pedagogical and mission-oriented approach. 2008-2009 is no different, as the school is building on past improvements to the curriculum and taking a major step forward. The major changes each year include:

- 2006-2007: Scope and Sequence introduced in each grade and subject area
- 2007-2008: Units of Study planned in major subjects documented in advance
- 2008-2009: Curriculum Mapping introduced and executed

In mid July 2008, Leadership Team members along with approximately 12 teachers spent one week at the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence engaged in a school-specific intensive curriculum mapping program that created, for the first time, a coordinated and comprehensive stepwise Scope and Sequence with detailed Units of Study in grades K-4, in each subject area. Prior Scope and Sequence documents were comprehensive within their subjects and grades, but did not reflect coordination along a year's timeline or multiple years' timelines across different subject areas. This curriculum mapping allowed new and returning teachers to study gaps in the prior year's curriculum execution and address them for the coming year, as well as to ensure that instruction is consistent both horizontally across classrooms and vertically across grades, as well as across subject areas. During this curriculum mapping session, teachers also organized around Power Standards, determining which standards need to be addressed prior to the ELA exam, created more monthly predictive assessments in ELA, and wove test preparation evenly into the curriculum plans.

The Leadership Team is also at work creating brief, practical instructional manuals detailing the school's approach in each curriculum area, in recognition of the lack of experience still present among members of the staff and in response to teacher feedback requesting more explicit, top-down direction to make clearer the decidedly unscripted curriculum approach.

The school also spent over \$13,000 in response to teacher requests to centralize the Word Study program by purchasing Wilson Foundations to use in grades K-3, a sequential, multisensory phonics program such as described in the school's charter. Previously, the school had purchased resources from a variety of phonics programs including Recipe for Reading, Fountas & Pinnell Phonics and Word Study, and Explode the Code but had not committed to using one program daily in each classroom. Having a more robust and tighter phonics program in place in classrooms may allow the AIS and Title I Reading Teacher to shift intervention attention to providing comprehension support for students struggling in this area, a need identified by internal assessments that contributed to students not performing well on the state ELA exam.

All of these changes are resulting in the school becoming tighter and more explicit about what data driven instruction looks like at Harlem Link. The school is supporting these changes by budgeting approximately 30% more funding than spent in 2007-2008 on Professional Development. Finally, for 2008-2009 the school Board of Trustees has for the first time set aside funding for after-school, targeted tutoring. Armed with data about which students are failing to meet the state performance standard, and a clearer idea of how DRA and Terra Nova can be used to predict and inform state test preparedness, teachers will be able to target students and student needs that would most benefit with regard to the ELA exam with this tutoring time.

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will demonstrate competency in understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem-solving.

Background

In the three years of its existence, Harlem Link has built a math curriculum that is standards-based, philosophically aligned with the school's mission, and comprehensive in its approach.

Harlem Link teachers implement the TERC math program in the classrooms, along with direct skills instruction through assessment-driven, teacher designed instruction, and the Contexts for Learning program, which supplements conceptual gaps in TERC such as measurement of time and money and basic number sense but uses the same pedagogical philosophy. This combination of programs ensures students have the number sense and basic number fact recall to wrestle with and master conceptual problems. It also allows students to learn to understand and apply mathematical computation and problem solving to situations that arise in everyday life.

As a constructivist math program, the TERC and Contexts for Learning programs foster mathematical thinking. Teachers also create individualized math stations and lead Guided Math groups to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students. Harlem Link sends teachers to a one-time week-long course in constructivist philosophy through the Mathematics in the City (MITC) program and contracts a staff developer through the program, who meets with teachers weekly to support them in the implementation of these programs.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of third through fourth graders 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 3rd grade in January 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.

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.

**2007-08 State Mathematics Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ²			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	53	0	0	0	53
All	53	0	0	0	53

Results

Harlem Link had 94.4% of 36 students in at least their second year performing at Levels 3 & 4, with 5 of those students performing at Level 4. Of students in at least their second year, Harlem Link had 5.6% performing at Level 2. No students tested at Harlem Link performed at a Level 1.

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 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	0.0%	5.8%	79.2%	15.1%	94.3%	53
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	5.6%	80.6%	13.9%	94.4%	36
All	All Students	0.0%	5.8%	79.2%	15.1%	94.3%	53
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	5.6%	80.6%	13.9%	94.4%	36

Evaluation

Harlem Link exceeded the goal of 75% of students in at least their 2nd year performing at a Level 3 or 4. The school exceeded this goal by 19.4%. Of the 36 students in at least their 2nd year, 94.4% performed at Levels 3 and 4. The school’s constructivist TERC math program is designed to meet the needs of all learners and to develop students as mathematical thinkers. Only two of the students enrolled in at least their second year at Harlem Link performed on a Level 2 and none of the students tested performed at a Level 1. We attribute these results to the dedication of the teachers and staff in following the curriculum and to the school’s philosophy of differentiating instruction, meeting the individual needs of students requiring intervention services and challenging the students excelling in math.

The results can also be attributed to a greater emphasis on Professional Development. Over time the school made strategic decisions to tighten the implementation of the MITC professional development suite. In the school’s first year, only one classroom teacher from each class was sent to the MITC Summer Institute, and the school could only budget for five days of onsite professional development. With an inconsistent presence and a priority placed on her own classroom instruction, the staff developer chosen by MITC did not achieve the success expected by the school administration, as measured by both teacher surveys and leadership observation. In response, the administration requested a more experienced staff developer for the following year, and contracted for the services of Joan Backer, a founding teacher of the well-regarded

² Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam

public Manhattan New School and a 30-year veteran of public education. The school also greatly boosted the number of days.

These changes took time to bear fruit, however, as June 2007 Terra Nova data pointed to mathematics as a weak point of the school's performance and led to devotion of even more professional development resources as well as an effort to re-design the math Scope and Sequence for 2007-2008. In June 2007, the then-second grade scored an average NCE of only 38.8 on the Math component of the Terra Nova assessment. In addition, only 23.1% of tested students scored in the third or fourth quartiles in Math (i.e., above the national norm), while the majority of students (51.9%) actually scored in the lowest quartile. During August 2007 and in the Executive and Education committees leading up to its monthly meeting, the school board examined Terra Nova data and set the expectation that the school take steps to dramatically improve math achievement. These steps, some of which are noted above, included not a change in curriculum or staff developers but the devotion of more resources and a great refinement.

Among the other changes, the school also sent nearly all of the teachers who had not attended the MITC institute in the past to its August 2007 Summer Institute, ensuring the vast majority of the faculty had the philosophical grounding to successfully implement a constructivist, partly home-grown curriculum, and invested money from the school's operating budget in purchasing the newly revised and issued TERC program, which is more accessible and explicit for teachers to follow after years of refinement.

Finally, by the time the March 2008 math testing window occurred, the third grade had achieved a level of stability it had lacked for the first five months of the year. As noted in the English Language Arts Absolute Measure Evaluation section above, a permanent replacement had not been hired to fill the September third grade termination until the December, and she did not begin until the first week of January. In the weeks following her hiring, the third grade students experienced a restoration to calm and order that portended the success on the math exam.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered state tests for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year. For this reason, there are no year to year trends.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State math exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective 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

2007-08 is 102. 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

Harlem Link’s aggregate Performance Index value is 194. This value exceeds this year’s Mathematics Annual Measurable Objective, 102.

Calculation of 2007-08 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3rd	0.0%	5.8%	79.2%	15.1%	53

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 5.8 & + & 79.2 & + & 15.1 & = & 100.1 \\
 & & & + & 79.2 & + & 15.1 & = & 94.3 \\
 & & & & & & \text{PI} & = & \mathbf{194}
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

The Performance Index measure was met. Harlem Link’s PI value is 194. This exceeds this year’s Mathematics AMO of 102. Based on this information, Harlem Link is making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state’s learning standards in Mathematics.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered state tests for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year. For this reason, there are no year to year trends.

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 Math exam will be greater than that of 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

Of the 36 students enrolled in at least their second year at Harlem Link, 94.4% performed at Levels 3 and 4. The performance of these students exceeded that of the 1,402 District 3 students

tested, 87.6% of whom scored at Level 3 or 4. Harlem Link’s Upper School, where its third graders are housed, is located in District 3.

For its internal data analysis, the school compares school performance to Harlem public schools rather than District 3 (as only 11.3% of third graders at the time of the math exam resided in District 3, and all of them passed the test), as will be discussed in more detail in the Additional Evidence section below. Of the 1653 students tested in Harlem district 3 schools and all Manhattan district 5 schools, 78.5% performed at Levels 3 and 4. From this measure, Harlem Link is outperforming students in Harlem district 3 schools and all Manhattan district 5 schools in mathematics.

**2007-08 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 nd Year		All District 3 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	94.4%	36	87.6%	1402
All	94.4%	36	87.6%	1402

Evaluation

Harlem Link Charter School exceeded the district performance by 6.8%.

Additional Evidence

Harlem Link administered the state math exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, hence no comparison to previous years’ district performance is available.

The school performed an analysis of the performance of the District 3 schools located in Harlem, those schools that its District 3 students are zoned to attend, as well as the performance of the other Districts in which its students reside. While the Upper School is technically located in District 3, as noted above in the ELA section, Harlem Link’s student catchment falls far outside of District 3. In fact, 58.5% of students enrolled during the math exam resided in District 5, compared to the 11.3% enrolled in District 3.

Harlem Link has 31 students enrolled that live in district 5. Of those 31, 20 are enrolled in at least their second year. Of these 20 students, 19 performed at Levels 3 and 4 on the math exam, 95%. This year, 76.1% of students from district 5 schools performed at Levels 3 and 4. Harlem Link students living in district 5 outperformed district 5 school’s students on the math exam by 18.9%.

**2007-08 State Mathematics Exam
Composition of Student Body by Districts of Residence**

District	District Passing Rate	All Harlem Link Students		Students Enrolled 2+ Years	
		No. students	Pct. of HL population	No. students	Pct. of HL population
Dist. 3	87.6%	6	10.0%	4	11.1%
Dist. 4	84.2%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 5	76.1%	31	60.0%	21	58.3%
Dist. 6	80.5%	6	10.0%	4	11.1%
Dist. 7	77.0%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 8	85.1%	3	6.0%	2	5.6%
Dist. 9	80.9%	1	2.0%	1	2.8%
Dist. 10	83.4%	3	6.0%	2	5.6%
Dist. 23	74.1%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Composite District Passing Rate		78.9%		79.2%	

**2007-08 State Mathematics Exam
Harlem Link Charter School Comparison to Composite Student Districts of Residence**

All Harlem Link Students		Students Enrolled 2+ Years	
Harlem Link Pct. Passing	Composite Districts	Harlem Link Pct. Passing	Composite Districts
94.3%	78.9%	94.4%	79.2%

As the tables show, both in sum and considering only students with two or more years at the school, Harlem Link outperformed the composite of the districts from which its students came.

Further, six students enrolled at Harlem Link during the state math exam live in District 3. Of those six, four are enrolled in at least their second year at Harlem Link. All of these students performed at Levels 3 and 4. The nine District 3 Harlem schools identified in the ELA section above had 82.9% of their enrolled students performing at Levels 3 and 4 in math, meaning the Harlem Link students living in District 3 outperformed their local subset of district schools by 17.1%.

Finally, the school compares below its performance with the third grade students at two comparative schools – the two schools with which it shares space. P.S. 129, along with Harlem Link’s Lower School (which will include kindergarteners and first graders in 2008-09) is located in District 5.

**2007-08 Math Performance of
Charter School and Comparison Schools by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year and All Students in Comparison Schools					
	Harlem Link		P.S. 242		P.S. 129	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	94.4%	36	78.7%	47	68.7%	67
4			60.0%	50	69.4%	62
5			54.9%	51	72.5%	51
6					75.8%	58
All	94.4%	36	64.2%	148	71.4%	238

As the table shows, the percentage of Harlem Link students in at least their second year passing the state math exam compares favorably with both schools' percentages, both schoolwide and within the third grade.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

Method/Results/Evaluation

These data are not available at the time of submission. Harlem Link administered the State math exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, thus no 2007 data exist.

Goal 2: Growth Measure

For the 2008-09 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State Math exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in a previous year, the 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 2007-08 and also have a state exam score in 2006-07. It includes students who repeated the grade. 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 2007-08. If a cohort had already achieved 75 percent proficient in 2006-07, 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/Evaluation

Harlem Link administered the State Mathematics exam for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year. Therefore, no cohort analysis can be performed.

Additional Evidence

While Harlem Link has administered the Terra Nova in Math in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, comparative data that would show growth are not yet available. Below are the only spring data available (please note that the cohorts include students who were retained as well as one student who was moved to a higher grade in their *new* grades):

Cohort Growth on Terra Nova Math from Spring 2007 to Spring 2008

07-08 Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08	
K	N/A	N/A	50.0	*	*
1	39	37.1	40.1	*	*
2	47	44.4	47.4	*	*
3	35	43.0	46.0	*	*

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

Harlem Link achieved their goal of 75 percent of third graders who are enrolled in at least their second year performing at or above Level 3 on the Mathematics exam with 94.4% of 3rd graders performing at or above Level 3. Harlem Link achieved the absolute measure of the Performance Index on the State Mathematics exam meeting the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system. The school is also outperforming students in the same tested grades in the local school districts.

* Not yet available at time of submission.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of third through fourth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.	Achieved
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State math exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective 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 Math exam will be greater than that of student in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its expected level of performance on the State Math exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis, performed by the Charter Schools Institute, controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.	Data Not Available at Time of Submission
Growth	For the 2008-09 school year, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State Math exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	N/A

Action Plan

The school leadership has already taken a number of steps to maintain and improve upon the math performance of 2007-2008, many of them noted above in the Action Plan of the ELA summary.

Firstly, with regard to allocation of resources, the school is maintaining the successful approach of dedicating significant funds from the operating budget to professional development through MITC. Joan Backer will return for the same number of days in 2008-2009, and all new teachers being hired for the expansion to fourth grade and to replace any teacher attrition are being sent to the MITC Summer Institute. The administration recognizes that it took severe action in the face of disappointing Terra Nova scores in June 2007, and understands that while the simplest course would be to divert resources to improving ELA performance and to rest on the math success experienced this year, persistence in these strategic Math interventions is necessary if the school is not to fall backward.

The administration and lead teachers are also busily studying the Terra Nova, anxiously awaiting results from the June 2008 administration, to determine whether the same gains shown on the state test are evident through this assessment (meaning it will be all the more useful as a guide for student intervention for future cohorts).

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

Background

Harlem Link uses the FOSS (Full Option Science System) program, an inquiry-driven set of units that align to New York State Learning and Performance Standards. The school teaches Science through a Specialty Teacher, one located at each of the Upper School and Lower School. Students receive science instruction for an average of 2.5 periods per week – either Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, in addition to every other Friday. In the Lower School, the school has the resources to dedicated a classroom to science instruction. The school also seeks and sets aside funding for external enrichment programs related to its Fieldwork project that support science units. For example, in 2005-2006, schoolwide trips took students to Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx to observe environments. In 2007-2008, the Upper School Science teacher planned grade-specific trips to curriculum-related environments (most notably, a nature center at the Meadowlands in New Jersey), funded by the federal United States Forest Service. Science assessment is done primarily through the use of curriculum-based measures provided with the FOSS kits.

For the past two years, the school has hired an independent contractor, Garo Tekeyan, with extensive experience in FOSS instruction, to provide professional development. As 2008-2009 will be the school's first state testing year, and the school will have two teachers new to the school teaching Science, Harlem Link has effectively doubled the number of days Garo will visit to work with teachers, from approximately 18 to 36.

When the 2008-2009 school year begins, Harlem Link will have had a total of five different science teachers over the years. The changes have been necessary for the following reasons: two teachers have left the position to take other roles within the organization (the school's first Science Specialty Teacher went on to teach third grade at the school, and the first Lower School science teacher was a part-time role for the Lower School Dean, who is now the full time Dean of Culture, as noted above in the ELA section); and one teacher, who was the Upper School Science Specialty Teacher in 2007-2008, left the school after her first year of teaching. Since she also received training through Garo in 2007-2008, the Lower School Dean is available as a resource to teachers at both sites.

Both teachers hired anew for the Science positions have teaching experience – two years for the Upper School teacher and nearly ten for the Lower School.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of fourth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of 4th grade 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 4th grade students in the local school district.

Method / Results / Evaluation / Summary

Harlem Link did not administer the state Science exam in 2007-2008.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Goal 4: Social Studies

Goal: Students will demonstrate competency in content and conceptual knowledge in Social Studies.

Background

At Harlem Link, Social Studies is integrated with literacy and the other subject areas but is also taught as a separate part of the school day when appropriate for a given Unit of Study. The school utilizes the Backward Design protocol, and has now built a stock of Units of Study taught in the past, that serve as resources for teachers planning around state Learning and Performance Standards. The Social Studies curriculum, which is entirely home-grown, is driven by the mission mandate to graduate active citizens who learn and serve in their communities, and articulate scholars who take an active role and learning. It therefore emphasizes experiential learning through Fieldwork and classroom projects, and deep conceptual understanding at the expense of broad coverage of facts. This framework is grounded in the work of Jean Piaget and other researchers who developed the notion of schema, or anchor knowledge in a developing child's mind around concepts, categories and experiences, that fosters greater longer-term retention of facts and data than rote memorization or broad study.

The school also integrates social skills building into Social Studies curriculum, particularly in the first month of the school year. To this end, the school's two full time Social Workers will be taking an active role in instruction in 2008-2009, utilizing the Second Step program, which the school is purchasing for the first time.

To build the academic portions of Social Studies curricula, the school has used as resources successful Units taught at other schools with a similar philosophy (such as Midtown West and Community Roots Charter School), and the extensive set of resources available through the thesis program at the Bank Street College of Education library. The four Social Studies units per year, the first of which is Our Classroom Community in September in each grade and the others of which last approximately three months each, build in complexity from grade to grade and form a central cog of the Curriculum Mapping the school undertook in May and June 2008.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

Goal 4: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of 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 the local school district.

Method / Results / Evaluation / Summary

Harlem Link did not administer the state Social Studies exam in 2007-2008.

NCLB

Goal 5: NCLB

Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year.

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

Harlem Link was deemed "In Good Standing" for 2006-2007.

Evaluation

Given incomplete data due to a lack of state testing in 2005-2007, the school does not have an extensive record of improvement or changes over time.

Additional Evidence

The State Education Department utilized the nationally norm-referenced Brigance assessment administered by the school in 2005-2006 to judge the school “In Good Standing,” and Terra Nova to make the same judgment in 2006-2007.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2004-05	Planning Year
2005-06	Good Standing
2006-07	Good Standing
2007-08	Good Standing (expected)