



**BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL FOR
BETTER LEARNING 2**

**2015-16 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

August 1, 2016

By Kevin Brennan, Ed.D.

3740 Baychester Ave. – Annex
Bronx, NY 10466
718-655-6660

www.bronxbetterlearning.org

Dr. Kevin Brennan, Executive Director, and Ms. Nysheria Sims, Principal, prepared this 2015-16 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

| Trustee's Name | Board Position |
|-------------------|---|
| Kimberly Kelly | Board Chairperson, Complaint Review Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Strategic Planning Committee |
| Marvin Waldman | Vice-Chairperson, Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee |
| Marilyn Maye | Treasurer, Finance/Audit Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Education Committee |
| William Bernhardt | Secretary, Teacher Employment Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Education Committee |
| Jefferyson Barnes | Fundraising/Development Committee |
| Robert Bata | Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee |
| Maxine D'Oyley | Parent Representative, Complaint Review Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Education Committee |
| Woody Swain | Finance/Audit Committee, Education Committee |
| Gregg Swain | Teacher Employment Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee |
| Charles Kim | Finance/Audit Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee |
| Victor Zimmerman | Complaint Review Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee |

Dr. Kevin B. Brennan has served as the Executive Director since June 2010.

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) on June 4, 2014. BBL 2 opened in the fall of 2015 with an enrollment of 75 students in Kindergarten. BBL 2 will add one grade each year subsequently, with a projected enrollment of 425 students at full capacity in 2020. As of September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) governs both charters, i.e., Bronx Better Learning 1 (BBL 1) and BBL 2.

Prior to the first year of operation, BBL 2 reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which BBL 2 the school received permission to co-locate in the JHS 144 Michelangelo campus, sharing space with two public middle schools: JHS 144 and Pelham Gardens. BBL 2 is located at 2545 Gunther Avenue in CSD 11, approximately two miles from Bronx Better Learning 1. That campus will accommodate its growth up to full enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2015-2016. Beginning September 2015, BBL 2 occupied a total of 16 full or half size classrooms for the 2015-16 school year. BBL 2 will occupy one extra full size classroom for the 2017-2018 school year with plans to eventually occupy the entire 3rd floor at full capacity.

The mission of The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 is as follows:

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning provides its students with a solid foundation for academic success, through achievement that exceeds citywide averages and meets or exceeds New York State standards and national norms in all curriculum areas tested, especially in mathematics and language arts. Our teaching constantly adjusts to the needs of our students, leading to independence, autonomy, responsibility and a sustained love of learning, all of which contribute directly to high academic achievement.

To fulfill its mission, the school's teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons; assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child's high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students' work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students' use of what they know to master new content; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2:

- is not test-prep driven; as noted, the instructional approach is constructivist: we know children "construct" their knowledge, understanding and skills, so our teaching is guided by their learning and does not dominate it;
- does not have extended school days;
- does not incorporate an extended school year;
- backfills at all grade levels; and

- serves all students, including those eligible for free and reduced lunch, eligible for special education services and/or eligible for support as English Language Learners (ELL).

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

| School Year | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Total |
|-------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-------|
| 2015-2016 | 75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 75 |

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

Background

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) maintains a focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

During the 2015-16 school year, BBL 2 maintained its strong commitment, as a replication of Bronx Better Learning 1 (BBL 1), to ensure a quality ELA program for all of its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards by:

- Emphasizing the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*;
- Refining the curriculum to ensure its alignment with the State’s Common Core Standards;
- Incorporating as part of its reading foundation the use Reader’s Workshop and Writer’s Workshop throughout the school;
- Fostering a joy for reading through the Growing Great Readers program;
- Making available to all students access to an extensive classroom library and school library;
- Closely monitoring each student’s progress through the use of regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly “Data Day;”
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Appointing a high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leader assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level;
- Providing professional development through our in-house professional development specialists to both teachers and assistants to enhance each person’s readiness to support the needs of all of our students;
- Utilizing writing rubrics that are aligned with the State’s Common Core Standards; and
- Providing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations and “walkthroughs” by administration.

Goal: Growth Measure

Each Year, 75% of all tested students will demonstrate a minimum growth of one grade level (September to June for Kindergarten; June to June for 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P) assessment, based on a set of strict procedures for norming the scoring, to assure reliability in test administration.

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of kindergarten students from beginning of the year in September to the end of the year in June. The analysis includes only those students who were enrolled in the school at the time of the test administration in September (n=72), and not three students who were backfilled. Teachers trained in administering the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P) used the system to assess students three times formally during the school year to measure growth; September, February and June. Students' growth was measured by level according to the F&P Instructional Levels Expectations for Reading Chart.

Results

Five students demonstrated no growth from September to June totaling 6.9% of the cohort; three students demonstrated one level of growth, totaling 4.1% of the cohort; six students demonstrated two levels of growth totaling 8.3% of the cohort; fifty-eight students demonstrated three or more levels of growth, totaling 80.5% of the cohort.

Sixty-four (64) students of the seventy-two (72) enrolled since September (88.8%) demonstrated a growth of at least one grade level from September to June.

Evaluation

As reflected in the table below, the school met this measure exceeding it by 13.8%.

ELA Student Growth of One or More Grade Levels*

| | No Growth | 1 Level of Growth | 2 Levels of Growth | 3 or more levels of Growth |
|--|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Number of Students Achieving Levels of Growth | 5 | 3 | 6 | 58 |
| Percentage of Total Cohort | 6.9% | 4.1% | 8.3% | 80.5% |

*For a student to show growth of one grade level from September to June, students must have shown an increase in their F&P reading level of two levels by June, per F&P criteria for Kindergarten.

Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

The school met the measure of this goal that is applicable for Kindergarten.

| Type | Measure | Outcome |
|--------|--|----------|
| Growth | Each year, 75% of all tested students will demonstrate a minimum growth of one grade level (September to June for Kindergarten; June to June for 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grades) on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P) assessment, based on a set of strict procedures for norming the scoring, to assure reliability in test administration. | Achieved |

Action Plan

The school exceeded its growth measure goal in the first year of operation. Nevertheless, we intend, not just to sustain, but to bolster our efforts to ensure our students are proficient readers and writings of the English language.

While our ongoing analysis of individual student test results and an analysis of the administration of the F&P will likely lead to additional adjustments in the ELA program as the next school year begins, the following targeted steps are already planned:

1. Daily Reading Programs: We will continue to enhance reading comprehension by focusing on our Growing Great Readers Program to foster a joy for reading. We will allot time in our daily schedule for that program.
2. Instructional Rigor: We will continue to maintain:
 - a. A High Level of Administrative Support: The Principal will make even more frequent classroom visits to ensure instructional rigor and continuity in the instructional program across the two grades. She will review weekly lesson plans; and provide targeted feedback during “walkthroughs”.
 - b. An Academic Leader: An Academic Leader will support the kindergarten and first grade teachers for next school year. Her role, in part, will be to assist with instructional planning, facilitate collaborative planning, provide professional development and support teachers as needed with the instructional program and our approach.
3. Increased adult supervision: An additional assistant will be placed in each of the kindergarten classes to decrease the student to adult ratio. This will allow the teacher the ability to focus more closely on creating smaller groups during instruction.
4. Data Driven Decision Making: Monthly reviews running records will take place during our Data Day time allotment to ensure that students are on target toward making substantial growth throughout the school year.
5. Student Support: Students who are “at-risk” will be identified early on in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed.
 - a. Special Education Instructional Options: Students who are identified as being in need of special education services will continue to receive those services throughout

the school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).

- b. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.
6. Professional Development: The ELA professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction through professional development sessions during lunch and after school hours, along with in-class support.
7. School Library: Students will be engaged in independent and guided reading through the use of our school library. Each class will go to the library a minimum of one time per week.
8. School collaboration: We have partnered with Pelham Gardens Middle School (Pelham Gardens) through a collaborative literacy program. Students from Pelham Gardens volunteer to read with our kindergarten and 1st grade students to promote school collaboration and a culture of literacy throughout the building.

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

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

Background

BBL 2 maintains a focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

BBL 2 demonstrates a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities, as a replication of BBL 1, to ensure the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all of its students by:

- Reviewing the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Common Core Standards;
- Maintaining a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Consistently applying the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, even in the earliest stages, so students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to bolster each person's readiness to meet the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through more frequent classroom visits by the Principal;
- Emphasizing our students' development of two overarching capacities, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in computation skills and increasing their ability to focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills; and
- Ensuring that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time, moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction.

Goal 2: Growth Measure¹

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students in Kindergarten will demonstrate a minimum growth of (8) months (October to June) and 75 percent of all tested students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade will demonstrate a minimum growth of one grade level (June to June) on the Terra Nova Standardized Achievement Test.

Method

This measure examines the change, from October to June, of a consistent cohort of kindergarten students. The analysis includes just those students (n=72) who were enrolled in the school at the time of the first administration of the Terra Nova assessment in October. Students are scored based on their reported Grade Equivalent (GE). To show a growth of eight months, students' GE performance must have increased, from October to June by a minimum .8.

Results

Six students demonstrated no growth from October to June, totaling 8.3% of the cohort; twelve students demonstrated a growth level of .1 to .6, totaling 16.6% of the cohort; five students demonstrated a growth of .7, totaling 6.9% of the cohort; forty-nine students demonstrated a growth of .8 or more, totaling 68.05% of the cohort.

Evaluation

The school fell short of the targeted goal of 75% by 7%.

Math GE Student Growth*

| | No Growth | .1-.6 Growth | .7 Growth | .8 or more Growth |
|--|------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of Students Achieving Growth Level | 6** | 12** | 5** | 49 |
| Percentage of Total Cohort | 8.3% | 16.6% | 6.9% | 68.05% |

*For a student to show growth of eight months from October to June, students must have shown a GE increase on the Terra Nova assessment by a minimum of .8.

**Of the 23 students who did not meet the growth measure, 13 of those students were retained this school-year.

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

The school did not meet the one currently applicable measure for this goal. We came close to meeting the growth measure of 75% percent of students showing eight months growth from October to June; however, we fell short by 7%. Of the 72 students who were tested, 49 showed a growth of .8. We note that there were 5 students who showed a growth of .7. If those 5 students had shown an additional increase of .1 in their assessment results, the total number of students who met the goal would have been 75%, and our growth objective would have been achieved.

| Type | Measure | Outcome |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| Growth | Each year, 75 percent of all tested students in Kindergarten will demonstrate a minimum growth of (8) months (October to June) and 75 percent of all tested students in 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grade will demonstrate a minimum growth of one grade level (June to June) on the Terra Nova Standardized Achievement Test. | Did Not Achieve |

Action Plan

Student performance in mathematics remains one of our highest priorities. This past year's results clearly demand our full attention, and the development of an action plan that will ensure that we meet or exceed our targeted goal next school year.

In response to the challenge, the BBL Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to ensure the improvement of student performance in mathematics, including working with the Executive Director and the school's Principal to provide all needed resources.

While the ongoing analysis of individual student test results and an item analysis of the Terra Nova assessment will likely lead to additional adjustments in our mathematics program as the school year begins, we have already planned the following targeted steps:

1. **Instructional Alignment:** Our mathematics professional development staff, as well as the academic leader and teachers, will carefully review our informal assessments and our in-class assignments to reflect the structure of the assessment questions of the Terra Nova, thereby ensuring students' familiarity of the nature of the assessment when tested.
2. **Instructional Rigor:** The mathematics program will continue to focus on ensuring that students demonstrate competence in their understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving through an academic leader assigned to our kindergarten and first grade teachers next year. She has experience with the mathematics curriculum and has proven to be a highly qualified teacher at the school. Her expertise will aide in professional development, curriculum planning, the facilitation of common planning meetings, one-on-one targeted coaching with the teachers around our approach and the use of manipulatives in the classroom.
3. **Data Driven Decision Making:** Monthly informal Terra Nova-like practice assessments will help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.

4. Increased adult supervision: An additional assistant will be placed in each of the kindergarten classes to decrease the student to adult ratio. This will allow the teacher the ability to focus more closely on creating smaller groups during instruction.
5. Student Support: Students who are “at-risk” will be identified early on in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed.
 - a. Special Education Instructional Options: Students who are identified as being in need of special education services will continue to receive those services throughout the school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).
 - a. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.
 - b. Academic Support: The scheduling of academic support, both during and after school hours, will be reviewed and expanded as needed to better meet the needs of underperforming students.
6. Professional Development: The mathematics professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction through regularly scheduled professional development sessions during lunch and after school hours, as well as in-class support to ensure the application of the school’s pedagogy throughout each class.
7. Administrative Support: The school leader will make more frequent visits into the classrooms to ensure continuity in the instructional program across the grade, as well as to ensure instructional rigor. The school leader will review weekly lesson plans, and provide targeted feedback during “walkthroughs” to improve overall teacher accountability and student learning.