



**Central Brooklyn Ascend
Charter School**

**2017-18 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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By Dylan Schaffer

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Dylan Schaffer, planning and external affairs manager of Ascend, and Daniela Brighenti, planning and external affairs associate of Ascend, prepared this 2017-18 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Stephanie Mauterstock	Chair; member of executive, finance, and nominating committees
Kathleen Quirk	Vice chair; member of executive, academic, finance, and hiring committees
Amanda Craft	Secretary; member of executive, academic, and hiring committees
Shelly Cleary	Treasurer; member of executive and finance committees
Kwaku Andoh	Trustee; member of academic and finance committees
Christine Schlendorf	Trustee; member of finance committee
Nadine Sylvester	Trustee; member of academic and nominating committees
Oral Walcott	Trustee; member of executive, hiring, and nominating committees

Michelle Flowers has served as lower school director since July 2014.

Liza Levine has served as middle school director since July 2018.

The mission of Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is to equip our students with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond. By offering a rich liberal arts education in a supportive environment, we animate children’s natural sense of curiosity and prepare students to think on their own, thrive on their own, and engage the world as informed, responsible citizens.

At Ascend, our mission is to provide an extraordinary education to children of Central Brooklyn, placing them firmly on a path to success in college and beyond. Our model focuses on developing in our students critical thinking skills and a sense of agency and independence. Ascend’s value proposition rests on three pillars.

1. A rich and rigorous liberal arts curriculum that drives student achievement
2. A warm, joyful school culture built on Responsive Classroom and, in the high school, a restorative practices model, both of which foster student independence and agency
3. A commitment to operate truly public schools

Central Brooklyn Ascend opened in September 2014 and has grown to serve students in kindergarten through grade 4 in school year (SY) 2017-18. It will continue to grow by a grade per year to offer at maturity a comprehensive K-12 college-preparatory program. Central Brooklyn Ascend is located in Community School District 22 in Brooklyn. In SY 2017-18, 88 percent of students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch, 97 percent were black or Latino, and 16 percent were special education students.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2013-14														N/A
2014-15	76	75												151
2015-16	76	78	77											231
2016-17	87	79	77	82										325
2017-18	89	91	90	80	77									427

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts
 Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English language arts.

BACKGROUND

Since SY 2014-15, Central Brooklyn Ascend has implemented the Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 2017-18, the components of the English language arts program included:

- *Foundations*, a program for phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension is deployed in grades K-2. The program is based on the Wilson Reading System principles, which is

supported by multiple studies, including one by Massachusetts's Lynn Public Schools, of which the student population is comprised of 66 percent black or Latino students. The study found that the System expedites grade-level reading increases among elementary school students who previously struggled in achieving appropriate reading level growth.

- For writing instruction in SY 2017-18, various writing programs were piloted to inform the curriculum and instruction team's (CIT) development of a new writing program for all Ascend schools in SY 2018-19. Several lower schools used *Units of Study in Opinion, Informational, and Narrative Writing*, by Lucy Calkins, in grades K-2. Ascend's CIT designed and provided units of study for writing in grades 3-4, used at the schools' discretion. Some schools supplemented these materials with *Voyages in English: Grammar and Writing*.
- Ascend's *Literature Circle* program, influenced by a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools and Icahn Charter Schools (which serve student populations not unlike those served by Ascend schools), was adopted to promote student discussion as teachers help students mine the deepest meaning of the finest children's literature (including fiction and non-fiction) and develop the habits of excellent readers, all while building reading comprehension and seminar-style discussion skills. In addition, Literature Circle builds students' core background and cultural knowledge by following the Core Knowledge History and Geography Sequence.
- Interactive *Read Aloud* sessions with students in grades K-1 occur three times per week and provide a model of fluent, expressive reading and help children recognize the value of reading for pleasure. Read Aloud promotes vocabulary acquisition and supports deep discussion around excellent texts.
- In the *Shared Text* component, modeled after a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools, the teacher models the habits of a skilled reader, and leads students briskly to assess and then write about the deeper meaning of a short, complex text. Students are guided in answering Common Core-style comprehension questions and short response questions. In the lower school, texts are often selected to align with the content in Literature Circle, and in the middle school grades with the Humanities Program. Texts are selected in a range of genres including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, and often provide historical context to the anchor textbook under discussion.
- *Guided Reading* is taught in small groups of students who are on the same reading level, as determined by University of Chicago Impact STEP one-on-one formative assessments. Teachers serve as skilled facilitators, guiding students through prompts, and questioning student strategies as they read a book together. Each guided reading session addresses skill gaps identified through the previous session, whether in the area of decoding, fluency, or comprehension. Data collected from STEP formative assessments are used to inform instruction for each Guided Reading lesson.
- Ascend's *Humanities Program*, which begins in grade five, is the natural successor to the lower school's Literature Circle and Guided Reading programs. Modeled closely on the practices of the city's finest private and selective public schools, and with an ambitious syllabus that includes a cross-cultural selection of classic literature, key primary texts, and art gallery lessons, this interdisciplinary great books course was designed to develop students' individual voices, reading and writing sensibilities, art appreciation, and public speaking skills.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data (RTI) to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, STEP assessments, norm-referenced NWEA MAP assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allows staff to monitor progress and assess student comprehension, and supports data-driven teacher training and evaluation through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students. Recognizing the impact of feedback on student access of knowledge and academic achievement, Ascend in SY 2016-17 implemented its the Continuous Monitoring and Response to Student Work initiative. The initiative, which has remained a network-wide focus since SY 2016-17, focuses on frequent review and analysis of student data to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure that students receive effective feedback in order to improve their understanding.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development (TPD), a network-wide program begun in SY 2015-16 aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling. The TPD program complements the Continuous Monitoring initiative by providing dedicated time in teachers' and leaders' schedules for analysis of student work, tracking data, and developing teacher strategies for improving their response to student performance during lessons.

In SY 2017-18, the Ascend network initiatives were (1) Strengthening Early Literacy in grades K-2, (2) Continuous Monitoring of Student Work and (3) Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom in grades K-8, and restorative practices in the high school.

Strengthening Early Literacy was designed to have every Ascend lower school focus on the rapid development of early literacy skills in grades K-2, in order to deliver more students to upper elementary and middle schools as confident and capable readers. By improving the effectiveness of literacy instruction with an emphasis on phonics and guided reading, we aim to bring additional students to grade level in reading by the end of second grade.

The intended outcomes of the Continuous Monitoring initiative in grades K-8 were to improve the ability of teachers and leaders to accurately evaluate student work to assess mastery; improve the ability of teachers to identify misconceptions evidenced in student work; plan and deliver effective student feedback; improve student mastery through application of frequent, targeted teacher feedback; improve the efficacy and efficiency of instruction through analysis of regularly collected student work; and improve the mechanisms for monitoring student progress daily and weekly.

By strengthening implementation of Responsive Classroom in grades K-8 and restorative practices in the high school, Ascend's third initiative was aimed at establishing more consistent implementation of cultural practices that foster increased cognitive engagement, student autonomy, and a heightened sense of community, and in turn improve academic performance. The intended outcomes of this initiative in grades K-8 were to improve the intentional use of teacher language components that

develop students’ academic and social skills, implement data-driven advisory and morning meetings, and improve teachers’ use of interactive modeling. In the high school, the initiative’s aim was to encourage members of the school community to understand the impact of their actions and take responsibility for them; build and expand personal relationships; and learn to make positive, productive, and effective choices in response to challenging situations.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State English language arts examination for grades 3-8.

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts (“ELA”) assessment to students in third through fourth grade in April 2018. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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 not enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year).

2017-18 State English Language Arts Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	78	1	0	0	0	79
4	77	0	0	0	0	77
All	155	1	0	0	0	156

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Fifty-one-point-three percent of Central Brooklyn Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency on the NYS English language arts exam in SY 2017-18, slightly less than the 52.3 percent of all students in the tested grade who achieved proficiency. Central Brooklyn Ascend thus did not meet this absolute measure. We are pleased by the achievements of students in grade 3, more than 60 percent of whom achieved proficiency this year. (Sixty-three percent of students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency.) Students in grade 4, though, did not meet the school’s standards and aspirations for their performance. This past year’s grade 4 cohort was especially challenged by weak teacher staffing. Teachers in the ICT class in particular struggled, and were ultimately replaced by members of the leadership team—further diluting leadership support for the balance of the teaching staff, and taking time away from leadership’s necessary planning and management activities. We are urgently addressing these challenges in an

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.

effort to raise achievement, and have made concerted efforts to re-staff grade 4 with strong teachers in SY 2018-19.

**Performance on 2017-18 State English Language Arts Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	60.3%	78	62.9%	62
4	44.2%	77	38.6%	57
All	52.3%	155	51.3%	119

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Student performance at Central Brooklyn Ascend in ELA improved by nearly 14 percentage points overall from 37.5 percent proficient in SY 2016-17 to 51.3 percent in SY 2017-18, for students enrolled in at least their second year. Particularly notable was the growth in grade 3 performance by more than 25 points from the school’s first year administering the grade 3 exam to its second. Performance in grade 4 was disappointing this year, though the grade 4 cohort did modestly improve over its grade 3 performance in SY 2017-18 (by one percentage point).

ELA Performance by Grade Level and Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	n/a	n/a	37.5%	56	62.9%	62
4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38.6%	57
All	n/a	n/a	37.5%	56	51.3%	119

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (“PI”) on the State English language arts exam will meet that year’s state Measure of Interim Progress (“MIP”) set forth in the state’s ESSA accountability system.

METHOD

In New York State, ESSA school performance goals are met by showing that an absolute proportion of a school's students who have taken the English language arts test have scored at the partially proficient, or proficient and advanced performance levels (Levels 2 or 3 & 4). The percentage of students at each of these three levels is used to calculate a PI and determine if the school has met the MIP set each year by the state’s ESSA accountability system. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PI value that equals or exceeds the state’s 2017-18 English language arts MIP for all students. The state plans to calculate and disseminate the MIP in summer 2018. The PI is the

sum of the percent of students in all tested grades combined scoring at Level 2, plus two times the percent of students scoring at Level 3, plus two-and-a-half times the percent of students scoring at Level 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 250.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In English language arts, Central Brooklyn Ascend achieved a PI of 142.3. MIP values were unavailable at the time of submission.

English Language Arts 2017-18 Performance Index				
Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	14.2%	33.5%	43.9%	8.4%

PI	=	33.5	+	43.9	+	8.4	=	85.8
				43.9	+	8.4	=	52.3
					+	(.5)*8.4	=	4.2
						PI	=	142.3

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested 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.²

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The proficiency rate for students in grade 3 at Central Brooklyn Ascend did exceed that of their district peers, by 11 percentage points. Students in grade 4 did not achieve proficiency at the same rate as their district peers, scoring 16.9 percentage points below their district peers. Overall, Central Brooklyn Ascend’s aggregate performance on the NYS English language arts exam did not outpace Community School District 22, the school’s home district, in SY 2017-18; therefore, Central Brooklyn Ascend did not meet this measure. The district achieved 53.7 percent proficiency in grades 3 and 4, while Central Brooklyn Ascend students attained 51.3 percent proficiency.

2017-18 State English Language Arts Exam

² Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	62.9%	62	51.9%	2,682
4	38.6%	57	55.5%	2,688
All	51.3%	119	53.7%	5,370

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

In SY 2017-18 Central Brooklyn Ascend narrowed the gap between its performance and that of its host district, from a 9.1-percentage point difference to a 2.4 percentage point difference. CSD 22 is a large district with a diverse demographic composition, only 49 percent of whose students tested in ELA in grades 3 and 4 identified as black or Latino in SY 2017-18. Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolls an almost entirely black or Latino student population. The table below shows proficiency levels by ethnicity for CSD 22, compared to Central Brooklyn Ascend's proficiency. When compared to the performance of black and Latino students in CSD 22, Central Brooklyn Ascend outperformed their district peers by 9.2 percentage points. Our aim is to close the achievement gap by race, with Ascend black and Latino students outperforming white students in CSD 22.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Scoring at or Above Proficiency Compared to District Students					
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	n/a	n/a	37.5%	46.6%	62.9%	51.9%
4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38.6%	55.5%
All	n/a	n/a	37.5%	46.6%	51.3%	53.7%

English Language Arts Performance of Charter School and Local District by Grade Level and Subgroup

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency – SY 2017-18					
	Charter School	Black District Students	Latino District Students	Asian District Students	White District Students	Black and Latino District Students
3	62.9%	40.4%	36.2%	63.0%	64.8%	38.9%
4	38.6%	46.2%	42.9%	64.1%	67.6%	45.1%
All	51.3%	43.4%	39.5%	63.6%	66.1%	42.1%

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

METHOD

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (“Institute”) conducts a comparative performance analysis, which compares the school’s performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school’s actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar concentration of economically disadvantaged students. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3, or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree, is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2017-18 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2016-17 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In SY 2016-17, Central Brooklyn Ascend’s first year with a tested grade, the school performed 11.5 percentage points better than expected when controlling for the number of economically disadvantaged students taking the exam. This resulted in an Effect Size of 0.64, thereby meeting the measure for performing better than expected to a meaningful degree.

2016-17 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	91.5%	82	40.0%	28.4%	11.6	0.65
All	91.5%	82	40.0%	28.4%	11.6	0.65

School’s Overall Comparative Performance:

Central Brooklyn Ascend students performed better than expected to a meaningful degree.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 2016-17 was the first year that Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled a tested grade. Therefore, no additional evidence is available for this measure.

Goal 1: Growth Measure³

Each year, under the state's Growth Model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.

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 in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2016-17 and also have a state exam score from 2015-16 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2015-16 score are ranked by their 2016-17 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the target for this measure, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2017-18 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2016-17 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁴

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

SY 2016-17 was the first year that Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled a tested grade. Therefore, this measure is not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

³ See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

⁴ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's Business Portal: portal.nysed.gov.

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75 percent proficiency or the comparative measure for outperforming its home district, Central Brooklyn Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in ELA.

The impressive performance of grade 3 students represents the strength of Ascend’s Common Core curriculum and educational program. Students in grade 3 outperformed their district peers and achieved levels of proficiency significantly higher than in the previous year. While overall Central Brooklyn Ascend students in both tested grades did not outperform CSD 22 students, they did outperform their black and Latino peers in the district, and performed better than expected to a meaningful degree. We are further encouraged by the percentage of students on the cusp of proficiency, signaling the potential for additional growth in future years.

In grade 4 in particular, work remains to increase proficiency and place more students on the path to success in college and beyond. The school will enact targeted improvements to the educational program as described below, enhance successful practices, and continue developing its staff in order to improve performance.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did not meet
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate PI on the state’s English language arts exam will meet that year’s state MIP as set forth in the state’s ESSA accountability system.	Data not available
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	Did not meet
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2016-17 results.)	Met
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50. (Using 2016-17 results.)	Not applicable

ACTION PLAN

Central Brooklyn Ascend will continue to build on its successful practices in ELA, while addressing areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Every Ascend lower school will focus more acutely on the rapid development of early literacy skills in grades K-2, in order to deliver more students to upper elementary and middle schools as confident and capable readers. Ascend will establish a network-wide vision of excellent guided reading instruction and provide guided reading training and oversight throughout the year; increase Read Aloud instruction to take place every day in grades K, 1, and the first term of grade 2 to ensure

that students listen to and discuss great books and see models of the thinking readers do; and establish Readers Workshop to ensure teachers strategically introduce to all students the skills and strategies needed to tackle grade level texts. Additionally, Ascend has developed a unique writing program based loosely on the work of Lucy Calkins and The Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University's Teachers College. Ascend's writing curriculum is genre-based and rooted in the belief that students need to write frequently and produce a high volume of writing. Grammar is strategically embedded in the units of study so that students learn grammar skills explicitly and then apply them immediately to the writing they do in class. The program requires teachers to provide frequent feedback to small groups of students in writing conferences while other students work independently. Ascend's writing program teaches students that writing is powerful, fun, beautiful, and purposeful.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work Initiative begun in SY 2015-16 will again be implemented to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure effective feedback in order to improve student understanding. Continuous Monitoring will continue to inform the Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) program, as well as teacher evaluations and coaching.

The network's Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom initiative will continue in SY 2018-19, representing a redoubling of the effort to create a sense of community, increase cognitive engagement and student autonomy, and improve academic performance.

This past summer Central Brooklyn Ascend operated its first summer school, for students rising to grades 4 and 5 in SY 2018-19, to remediate specific areas of weakness. The intensive summer program ran for six weeks from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm daily, and served approximately 70 students. Top performing teachers from across the Ascend network, recommended by their school directors, taught the program. An ambitious curriculum developed by school leaders and Ascend curriculum team members targeted specifically the attending students' most recent academic data, and followed the previous school year's scope and sequence.

For SY 2018-19, along with significant assistance from the newly strengthened network talent team and a dedicated managing director of lower schools, Central Brooklyn Ascend is in its strongest staffing position since inception. A robust leadership team is in place, with a dean of instruction staffed for each of the school's five grades, as well as two returning deans of students.

A top priority for the school next year is strengthening systems and structures. The network schools and curriculum teams, together with school leadership, have drawn action plans to tackle these challenges and build on improvements of this past year.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in mathematics.

BACKGROUND

Since SY 2014-15, Central Brooklyn Ascend has implemented the Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 2017-18, the components of the mathematics program included the following:

- In kindergarten through grade 4, our math program is built on the fundamentals of *Singapore Math*. In the Singapore approach, students build enduring conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills by progressing through three stages of learning: concrete (manipulatives), pictorial (visual representations and models), and abstract (equations). Math lessons in kindergarten through grade 4 draw on the curricular materials of Singapore, as well as on other resources—provided by the curriculum and instruction team (CIT)—that embody this methodology.
- In *Number Stories*, which is founded on the tenets of cognitively-guided instruction (CGI), students spend an entire period studying a single, Common Core-style story-problem that they might encounter in a real-world context. Students construct their own solutions, defend their thinking, and compare their approaches. Math fluency is also reinforced in the routines that open each Number Stories lesson, when for approximately 10-20 minutes a day, students practice Math Routines to build automaticity and fluency in computation.
- In the middle school, the 90-minute daily math period focuses on the EngageNY curriculum.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data (RTI) to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, STEP assessments, norm-referenced NWEA MAP assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allows staff to monitor progress and assess student comprehension, and supports data-driven teacher training and evaluation through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students. Recognizing the impact of feedback on student access of knowledge and academic achievement, Ascend in SY 2016-17 implemented its the Continuous Monitoring and Response to Student Work initiative. The initiative, which has remained a network-wide focus since SY 2016-17, focuses on frequent review and analysis of student data to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure that students receive effective feedback in order to improve their understanding.

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collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling. The TPD program complements the Continuous Monitoring initiative by providing dedicated time in teachers' and leaders' schedules for analysis of student work, tracking data, and developing teacher strategies for improving their response to student performance during lessons.

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The intended outcomes of the Continuous Monitoring initiative in grades K-8 were to improve the ability of teachers and leaders to accurately evaluate student work to assess mastery; improve the ability of teachers to identify misconceptions evidenced in student work; plan and deliver effective student feedback; improve student mastery through application of frequent, targeted teacher feedback; improve the efficacy and efficiency of instruction through analysis of regularly collected student work; and improve the mechanisms for monitoring student progress daily and weekly.

By strengthening implementation of Responsive Classroom in grades K-8 and restorative practices in the high school, Ascend's third initiative was aimed at establishing more consistent implementation of cultural practices that foster increased cognitive engagement, student autonomy, and a heightened sense of community, and in turn improve academic performance. The intended outcomes of this initiative in grades K-8 were to improve the intentional use of teacher language components that develop students' academic and social skills, implement data-driven advisory and morning meetings, and improve teachers' use of interactive modeling. In the high school, the initiative's aim was to encourage members of the school community to understand the impact of their actions and take responsibility for them; build and expand personal relationships; and learn to make positive, productive, and effective choices in response to challenging situations.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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METHOD

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breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year.

2017-18 State Mathematics Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁵				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	78	1	0	0	0	79
4	76	0	0	0	0	76
All	154	1	0	0	0	155

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Forty-five-point-eight percent of Central Brooklyn Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency on the NYS mathematics exam in SY 2017-18, a slightly lower percentage than the overall 47.4 percentage of students in tested grades who achieved proficiency. Central Brooklyn Ascend thus did not meet this absolute measure. We are pleased by the achievements of students in grade 3, more than 61 percent of whom achieved proficiency this year. Students in grade 4 did not meet the school’s standards and aspirations for their performance. This past year’s grade 4 cohort was especially challenged by weak teacher staffing. Teachers in the ICT class in particular struggled, and were ultimately replaced by members of the leadership team—further diluting leadership support for the balance of the teaching staff, and taking time away from leadership’s necessary planning and management activities. We are urgently addressing these challenges in an effort to raise achievement, and have made concerted efforts to re-staff grade 4 with strong teachers in SY 2018-19.

Performance on 2017-18 State Mathematics Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	61.5%	78	61.3%	62
4	32.9%	76	28.6%	56
All	47.4%	154	45.8%	118

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Central Brooklyn Ascend’s overall student performance in math declined, from 49.1 percent proficient in SY 2016-17 to 45.8 percent proficient in SY 2017-18. In grade 3, however, performance improved by more than 12 percentage points from SY 2016-17 to SY 2017-18, from 49.1 percent proficient to 61.3 percent proficient. We are deeply disappointed by the significant decline in the

⁵ 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.

performance of the grade 4 cohort in SY 2017-18 compared to their performance in grade 3 the previous year, and we are working urgently to address the challenges that contributed to that cohort's lower performance.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	n/a	n/a	49.1%	57	61.3%	62
4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.6%	56
All	n/a	n/a	49.1%	57	45.8%	118

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index ("PI") on the state mathematics exam will meet that year's state Measure of Interim Progress ("MIP") set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.

METHOD

In New York State, ESSA school performance goals are met by showing that an absolute proportion of a school's students who have taken the mathematics test have scored at the partially proficient, or proficient and advanced performance levels (Levels 2 or 3 & 4). The percentage of students at each of these three levels is used to calculate a PI and determine if the school has met the MIP set each year by the state's ESSA accountability system. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PI value that equals or exceeds the state's 2017-18 mathematics MIP for all students. The state plans to calculate and disseminate the MIP in summer 2018. The PI is the sum of the percent of students in all tested grades combined scoring at Level 2, plus two times the percent of students scoring at Level 3, plus two-and-a-half times the percent of students scoring at Level 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 250.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In mathematics, Central Brooklyn Ascend achieved a PI of 139.9. MIP values were unavailable at the time of submission.

Mathematics 2017-18 Performance Level Index (PI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
154	18.2%	34.4%	26.0%	21.4%

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{PI} = 34.3 + 26.0 + 21.4 + 21.4 + 5 \times 21.4 \\
 \text{PI} = 139.8
 \end{array}$$

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

A school compares the performance of tested students enrolled in at least their second year to that of all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested 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.⁶

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Central Brooklyn Ascend’s aggregate performance on the NYS mathematics exam did not outpace Community School District 22, the school’s home district, in SY 2017-18. Therefore, Central Brooklyn Ascend did not meet the measure. The district achieved 54.1 percent proficiency in grades 3 and 4, while Central Brooklyn Ascend students attained 45.8 percent proficiency. The proficiency rate for students in grade 3 at Central Brooklyn Ascend did exceed that of their district peers—by 5 percentage points—with 61.3 percent of Central Brooklyn Ascend students reaching proficiency compared with 56.3 percent of district students. Students in grade 4 achieved at a rate significantly below their district peers.

2017-18 State Mathematics Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	61.3%	62	56.3%	2,743
4	28.6%	56	51.9%	2,729
All	45.8%	118	54.1%	5,472

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Grade 3 students at Central Brooklyn Ascend did not achieve proficiency at the rate of their district peers in SY 2016-17, but did surpass the grade 3 district proficiency rate in SY 2017-18. Central Brooklyn Ascend student proficiency in grade 3 increased by more than 12 points while district grade 3 proficiency increased by 4.5 percentage points over the previous year.

We are deeply disappointed by the Central Brooklyn Ascend grade 4 cohort’s decline in proficiency from the previous year, which drove the school’s overall proficiency rate to decline from SY 2016-17 to SY 2017-18.

⁶ Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

CSD 22 is a large district with a diverse demographic composition and significant achievement gaps by race. While Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolls an almost entirely a black or Latino student population, only 48 percent of CSD 22 students tested in math in grades 3 and 4 identified as black or Latino in SY 2017-18. The table below shows proficiency levels by ethnicity for CSD 22 compared to Central Brooklyn Ascend's. Central Brooklyn Ascend's black and Latino students outperformed their CSD district peers by 6.9 percentage points, and in grade 3 alone, by 21.8 percentage points. . Our aim is to close the achievement gap by race, with Ascend black and Latino students outperforming white students in CSD 22.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	n/a	n/a	49.1%	51.8%	61.3%	56.3%
4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.6%	51.9%
All	n/a	n/a	49.1%	51.8%	45.8%	54.1%

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

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency					
	Charter School	Black District Students	Latino District Students	Asian District Students	White District Students	Black and Latino District Students
3	61.3%	39.9%	38.6%	68.0%	73.8%	39.5%
4	28.6%	38.9%	37.4%	63.2%	66.2%	38.4%
All	45.8%	39.4%	38.0%	65.5%	70.3%	38.9%

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

METHOD

The Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school's actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar concentration of economically

disadvantaged students. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3, or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree, is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2017-18 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2016-17 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In SY 2016-17, Central Brooklyn Ascend’s first year with a tested grade, the school performed 16.3 percentage points better than expected when controlling for the number of economically disadvantaged students taking the exam. This resulted in an Effect Size of 0.78, thereby meeting the measure for performing better than expected to a meaningful degree.

2016-17 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	91.5%	82	50.0%	33.5%	16.5	0.79
All	91.5%	82	50.0%	33.5%	16.5	0.79

School’s Overall Comparative Performance:

Central Brooklyn Ascend students performed better than expected to a meaningful degree.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 2016-17 was the first year that Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled a tested grade. Therefore, no additional evidence is available for this measure.

Goal 2: Growth Measure⁷

Each year, under the state’s Growth Model, the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.

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 in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2016-17 and also

⁷ See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

have a state exam score in 2015-16 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2015-16 scores are ranked by their 2016-17 scores and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to meet the measure, the school would have to achieve a mean growth percentile above the target of 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2017-18 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2016-17 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁸

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

SY 2016-17 was the first year that Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled a tested grade. Therefore, this measure is not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan's first absolute measure of 75 percent proficiency or the comparative measure for outperforming its home district, Central Brooklyn Ascend students in grade 3 made significant progress in mathematics while the performance of students in grade 4 declined.

The impressive performance of grade 3 students represents the strength of Ascend's Common Core curriculum and educational program. Students in grade 3 outperformed their district peers and achieved levels of proficiency significantly higher than in the previous year. Grade 4's performance was poor, reflecting deep challenges with teaching in that grade last year. While Central Brooklyn Ascend students did not outperform CSD 22 students overall, they did outperform their black and Latino peers in the district, and last year Ascend students performed better than expected to a meaningful degree. We are further encouraged by the percentage of students on the cusp of proficiency, signaling the potential for additional growth in future years.

In grade 4 in particular, significant work remains to increase proficiency and place more students on the path to success in college and beyond. The school will enact targeted improvements to the educational program as described below, enhance successful practices, and continue developing its staff in order to improve performance.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did not meet
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate PI on the state's English language arts exam will meet that year's state MIP as set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.	Data not available

⁸ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's business portal: portal.nysed.gov.

Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	Did not meet
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2016-17 results.)	Met
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50. (Using the 2016-17 results.)	Not applicable

ACTION PLAN

Central Brooklyn Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practice in mathematics, while improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work Initiative begun in SY 2015-16 will again be implemented to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure effective feedback in order to improve student understanding. Continuous Monitoring will continue to inform the Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) program, as well as teacher evaluations and coaching.

The network's Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom initiative will continue in SY 2018-19, representing a redoubling of the effort to create a sense of community, increase cognitive engagement and student autonomy, and improve academic performance.

This past summer Central Brooklyn Ascend operated its first summer school, for students rising to grades 4 and 5 in SY 2018-19, to remediate specific areas of weakness. The intensive summer program ran for six weeks from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm daily, and served approximately 70 students. Top performing teachers from across the Ascend network, recommended by their school directors, taught the program. An ambitious curriculum developed by school leaders and Ascend curriculum team members targeted specifically the attending students' most recent academic data, and followed the previous school year's scope and sequence.

Network supports have been tapped to support Central Brooklyn Ascend, with network leaders focusing their work on targeting specific areas of instruction and culture for improvement. Ascend's managing director of lower schools, managing director of leadership development and other network staff have worked alongside the school's staff. In SY 2018-19 Ascend's curriculum and instruction team (CIT) will continue to devote extensive time to coaching the school's DOIs to both strengthen their content knowledge in math and improve their instructional leadership and professional development skills. CIT members will lead weekly professional development sessions for DOIs to bolster their instructional coaching skills and assisted the deans in planning weekly teacher planning and development sessions.

For SY 2018-19, with significant assistance from the newly strengthened network talent team and a dedicated managing director of lower schools, Central Brooklyn Ascend is in its strongest staffing

position since inception. A robust leadership team is in place, with a dean of instruction staffed for each of the school's five grades, as well as two returning deans of students.

A top priority for the school next year is strengthening systems and structures. The network schools and curriculum teams, together with school leadership, have drawn action plans to tackle these challenges and build on improvements of this past year.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School Students will meet grade level expectations in science.

BACKGROUND

Since SY 2014-15, Central Brooklyn Ascend has implemented the Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 2017-18, the components of the science program included the following:

- MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's *A Closer Look* science program was selected as the curriculum for the lower school because of its strong Common Core alignment, integration of rich content with well-conceived inquiry experiments, and vibrant, engaging textbooks. An independent study of St. Louis Public Schools (which are deploy the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill science series), revealed that black students' performance on the Missouri Assessment Program is exhibiting a growth trend that exceeds that of the state average.⁹ Ascend has since added many original science units that are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and culminate in project-based learning projects.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in fourth grade in spring 2018. The school converted each student's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Eighty-nine-point-five percent of Central Brooklyn Ascend students in grade 4 were found proficient on the New York State science exam in SY 2017-18; therefore, the school met the measure.

Charter School Performance on 2017-18 State Science Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	89.5%	57

⁹ Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, "The Impact of *No Child Left Behind* on Science Education."

All	89.5%	57
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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 2017-18 was the first year Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled students in a tested grade in science; therefore, there is no additional evidence for this measure.

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.

METHOD

The school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the school district of comparison. Given the timing of the state's release of district science data, the 2017-18 comparative data is not yet available. Schools should report comparison to the district's **2016-17** data.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Compared to the most recent district science exam data available (from SY 2016-17), Central Brooklyn Ascend students' proficiency rate surpassed that of their district peers, by 2.1 percentage points; therefore, the school met the measure.

2017-18 State Science Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	89.5%	57	87.4%	2,916
All	89.5%	57	87.4%	2,916

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 2017-18 was the first year Central Brooklyn Ascend enrolled students in a tested grade in science; therefore, there is no additional evidence for this measure.

SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 22 for SY 2017-18, Central Brooklyn Ascend students attained excellence in science in the school's first year with a tested grade, meeting both measures for success in science.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State examination.	Met
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	Met

ACTION PLAN

Central Brooklyn Ascend will maintain its current levels of proficiency in science in grade 4 by building upon successful systems already in place.

In the middle school grades, the network's curriculum and instruction team will in school year 2018-19 provide science teachers with scripted lesson plans aligned to the standards-based Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP). These lesson plans will lead to consistent, high-quality science lessons in the middle school grades across all Ascend schools.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Goal 4: ESSA

Central Brooklyn Ascend will remain in good standing.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

Under the state's ESSA accountability system, the school is in good standing: the state has not identified the school for comprehensive or targeted improvement.

METHOD

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's performance standards, the federal statute 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. As New York State, like all states, is required to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Each year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school's status under the state accountability system.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

ESSA MIP targets for student subgroups have not yet been released as of this submission. Therefore, Central Brooklyn Ascend is not yet able to report on its ESSA accountability status for 2017-18.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

In school year 2016-17, the school was in Good Standing.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2015-16	Not applicable
2016-17	Good Standing
2017-18	Not available

