

**Amber Charter School
CHARTER SCHOOL**

2007-08

**ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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Vasthi Acosta and Rafael Ortiz prepared this 2007-08 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

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Rafael Ortiz	Member, Committees: finance, facilities, education program, governance (<i>ex officio</i>)
Julio Rodriguez	Member

INTRODUCTION

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

At its inauguration, Amber served 120 children in grades K-1; today we serve 364 students in grades K through 6. Our students—51% black/African American and 49% Latino/Hispanic—hail from East Harlem, Harlem, Washington Heights, and the South Bronx, with 89% free and reduced.

In addition to our 17 classrooms, we offer specialty classes in reading, technology, physical education, visual arts, special education, and Spanish. Our classes average 24 students per teacher, and in grades K, 1, and 2 the teacher is assisted by a teacher assistant. Students in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 have part time morning tutors to support students at risk. Amber was successfully re-chartered in spring 2005 by SUNY’s Charter Schools Institute. Over 85% of teachers are certified (over the 70% requirement). The English Language Arts program at Amber has included the Scott Foresman, Success for All which allow for guided reading, read aloud, book clubs, and independent reading. The math program uses exclusively TERC Investigations. The science program includes K12 Science, and Scott Foresman. The social studies program has been internally created and is aligned to the NY State Standards.

Each year, we have made some progress and learned some lessons, but the constant has been growth and change. Our testing scores, however, have not been consistent; they have been mixed. Since our last renewal, we have grown by 44% and added two grades. We also have experienced a great deal of faculty and recently administrative leadership turnover (especially since 2007).

Even though Amber offers instruction to families from Kindergarten through sixth grade, in this past year the New York City Department of Education offered middle school beginning at 6th grade – it is now a better option for families to transition after grade 5. We have therefore counseled parents to take advantage of this opportunity in a timely matter and not delay for a year their child’s application to middle school. In that manner our students get the best opportunity to enter the middle school of their choice. *Our focus is a simple one: with a largely new faculty and administration, we will improve our ability to offer our students a K-5 program where they become proficient and master New York State standards (skills and content knowledge).*

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	42	44	48	50	19	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	203
2004-05	78	50	40	42	49	14	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	273
2005-06	86	77	40	38	29	46	13	X	X	X	X	X	X	329
2006-07	83	83	54	33	29	27	24	X	X	X	X	X	X	333
2007-08	83	92	64	50	28	24	23	X	X	X	X	X	X	364

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

Background

The English language arts program at Amber Charter School has included the Scott Foresman textbook series for grades K to 4 and the Success for All reading series for grades 5 and 6, which allow for guided reading, read aloud, book clubs, and independent reading. Key professional development was planned and executed this past year in support of our English language arts goal. These include the use of a staff developer (a new position in school year 2007-08) who with a consultant from the Center for Educational Options provided training in teaching writing, organized phonics workshops and conducted book study workshops.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to students in third through sixth 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. *There were no 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
4	28	0	0	0	28
5	24	0	0	0	24
6	23	0	0	0	23
All	125	0	0	0	125

Results

**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%	36.0%	56.0%	8.0%	64.0%	50
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	38.6%	52.3%	9.1%	61.4%	44
4	All Students	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	28
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	48.1%	51.9%	0.0%	51.9%	27
5	All Students	0.0%	54.2%	45.8%	0.0%	45.8%	24
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	52.2%	47.8%	0.0%	47.8%	23
6	All Students	0.0%	43.5%	56.5%	0.0%	56.5%	23
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%	54.5%	22
All	All Students	0.0%	45.9%	52.1%	2.0%	54.1%	125
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0%	46.1%	51.6%	2.3%	53.9%	116

In 3rd grade, 64% of all students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 61.4% of students also scored at Level 3 & 4 in at least their second year at Amber. In 4th grade, 50% of all students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 51.9% students in at least their second year at Amber in 4th grade scored level proficiency. In 5th grade, 45.8% of all students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 47.8% students in at least their second year at Amber in 5th grade scored level proficiency. In 6th grade, 56.5% of all students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 54.5 % students in at least their second year at Amber in 6th grade scored level proficiency. In all

grades tested, 54.1% of students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 53.9% students in at least their second year at Amber in grades three to six scored level proficiency.

Evaluation

We did not meet the CSI required 75% proficiency benchmarks, for students in their second year, at any grade on the English Language Arts exam of January 2008. The strongest success factor in these scores is that there were no Level 1 students at any of the four grades tested. This demonstrates that there has been a concerted effort to make sure the most struggling students are marking progress; this is a two-year trend that bodes well for continued success.

Upon a close examination of individual student scores, we also found that almost all (90-100%) Amber students were achieving close to the same level: between high “2” or low “3.” We found that the line between proficiency and not proficient was extremely close for almost all students at Amber. This has led us to focus on our ELA program, our professional development, and on individual teacher needs. Given the twelve new teachers that Amber hired in the summer 2007 and a change in the instructional leader this year, we have focused on what new teachers need in order to effectively offer students mastery in ELA at Amber.

Subsequent to the ELA exam, with the help of an independent educational consultant and a team from the Charter Schools Institute during their annual visit and debriefing session, we identified problems with teacher techniques and pacing. We believe that our new teachers need more support on raising rigor to accomplish our goals.

Additional Evidence

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3					79.3%	29	70.0%	30	61.4%	44
4					50.0%	26	80.0%	30	51.9%	27
5					50.0%	28	57.1%	28	47.8%	23
6					33.3%	12	48.0%	25	54.5%	22
7										
8										
All					53.2%	95	63.8%	113	53.9%	116

In order for us to more accurately understand this year’s ELA results, we reviewed the trend over the past three years. The instability in grades 3-5 proficiency tells us two things: 1. our new teachers need more directive support in how to teach reading and writing; 2. SFA is working in 6th grade and we have adopted it as of summer 2008 for all grades (replacing Scott Foresman in the lower grades). We have also decided to obtain more prescriptive professional development in writing for those teachers requiring support. In addition, a prescribed writing program will be identified and

implemented this summer and fall. Last, after doing an item analysis, we found that our students need more deliberate curricular supplements in:

- Phonics in lower grades
- Reading instructions on their own – not simply responding to verbal cues (for grades 3-4)
- Picking out details in text (for grades 3-4)
- Editing (grade 5)

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

Method

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

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	
3-6	0.0%	45.9%	52.1%	2.0%	125

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl}
 \mathbf{PI} & = & 45.9 & + & 52.1 & + & 2.0 & = & 100 \\
 & & & & + & & 2.0 & = & 54.1 \\
 & & & & & & \mathbf{PI} & = & \mathbf{154.1}
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

The Performance Index (PI) was met. Amber’s PI surpassed the expected Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) with 153.9, well over the state required 133.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

Year	Grades ¹	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2005-06	3-6	125	7%	44%	47%	1%	148	122
2006-07	3-6	119	0%	35%	63%	2%	165	122
2007-08	3-6	125	0.0%	45.9%	52.1%	2%	154.1	133

Evaluation

Amber has successfully met and surpassed each of the Performance Index and the Annual Measurable Objective in each of the past three years for English Language Arts. We continue to have no students in Level 1. The percentage of students in Level 2, unfortunately, rose slightly this year.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

Method

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students and the results for the respective grades in the local school district, as well as between the total result of students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district. The Charter Schools Institute requires we compare ourselves to a local community school district (CSD). Although Amber is located in CSD 4, as negotiated with our authorizer, Charter Schools Institute, we use district 5 as the basis of comparison (Harlem) as this district was Amber’s location at its inception and a majority of students live in CSD 5.

¹ Beginning in 2005-06 the state administered tests in grades 3-8 and a single AMO was set for the aggregate PI of all tested students in those grades.

Results

**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 (CSD 5)	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	61.4	44	43	1029
4	51.9	27	45	1039
5	47.8	23	55	1062
6	54.5	22	48	1273
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	53.9	116	47.8	4403

The table above compares Amber’s ELA scores by grade and total to CSD 5. Amber met the comparative measure with the percent of all students who were enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 is greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local district. Overall, when compared to CSD 5, Amber’s scores outpaced the local district by 6.1 percentage points.

Evaluation

Amber’s third grade scores outpaced the district’s by 18 percentage points. Amber’s fourth grade scores outpaced the district’s by 6.9 percentage points. Amber’s sixth grade scores outpaced the district’s by 6.5 percentage points. The only grade where the district outpaced Amber students was fifth grade (by 7.2 percentage points). In the fifth grade, we had considerable behavior management issues and this has resulted in some personnel changes and in the splitting of this class in the middle the 2007-8 school year.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Charter School	District 5	Charter School	District 5	Charter School	District 5	Charter School	District 5	Charter School	District 5
3					79.3	37.1	70.0	40.1	61.4	43.0
4					50.0	43.4	80.0	40.8	51.9	45.6
5					50.0	34.7	57.1	38.9	47.8	55.2
6					33.3	34.9	48.0	38.4	54.5	47.8
7					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All					53.2	37.5	63.8	39.5	53.9	47.9

Evaluation

When we compare Amber's scores to the local community school district, we can do so with three years worth of data. In a comparison of ELA test scores for all grades, Amber shows higher proficiency rates in each year against the local community school district. We outpaced the district in the current year by 6 percentage points. Last year we outpaced the district by 24 percentage points and in the previous year by 15.7 percentage points.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school's actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school's actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure. Given the timing of the state's release of poverty data, the 2007-08 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2006-07 results, the most recent ones available.

Glossary

Grade - Grades in which the state exam was administered in 2007.

Percent of Free Lunch Eligible Students - Percent reported by the State Education Department, which appears in 2006-07 School Report Cards.

Actual Percent of Students at Levels 3&4 - Percent reported by the State Education Department in October 2007.

Predicted Percent of Students at Levels 3&4 - Calculated after performing a regression to measure the effect of a school's free lunch population on its performance in each tested grade, based on all public schools in New York State, including charter schools, with the same tested grade in 2006-07. (The percent predicted for all grades is weighted by the number of students tested in each grade.)

Effect Size - A statistical measure calculated by dividing the difference between the actual and predicted outcome by the standard deviation difference. It reflects the difference between a school's attained and expected performance in each tested grade, relative to other schools with similar free-lunch statistics and tested grade. (The Effect Size for all grades is weighted by the number of students tested in each grade.)

School's Overall Comparative Performance - Based on the following Effect Size ranges:

- Above 0.79 Higher than expected to a large degree
- 0.50 to 0.79 Higher than expected to a medium degree
- 0.30 to 0.49 Higher than expected to a small degree
- 0.29 to 0.29 About the same as expected
- 0.30 to -0.49 Lower than expected to a small degree
- 0.50 to -0.79 Lower than expected to a medium degree
- Below -0.79 Lower than expected to a large degree

Results

2006-07 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3		34	76.5	52.2	24.3	1.67
4		31	77.4	52.6	24.9	1.66
5		28	57.1	52.5	4.7	0.32
6		26	50.0	44.5	5.5	0.33
7		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All		119	66.4	50.7	15.7	1.06

School's Overall Comparative Performance:
Higher than expected to a large degree.

Evaluation

The chart above displays how the charter school students in each grade performed compared to students in public schools in New York State with the same grade and a similar population of free-lunch-eligible students. Amber's Effect Size was 1.06 (higher than expected by a large degree). This is especially true of grades 3 and 4.

In two of four tested grade levels there are considerable effect sizes. The third grade effect size is 1.67, fourth grade's is 1.66, fifth grade is .32 and sixth grade is .33. Amber's overall comparative performance relative to demographically similar public schools state-wide shows a higher than expected to a large degree.

Additional Evidence

Given the timing of the state's release of poverty data, the 2007-08 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2006-07 results, the most recent ones available. As such, we are unable to review current and past performance in comparison to similar schools statewide.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch ²	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2004-05	3-6	58	66	n/a	n/a	n/a
2005-06	3-6	77.3	125	49	Unknown	Unknown
2006-07	3-6	75.3	119	66.4	Unknown	Unknown
2007-08	3-6	72	125	53.9	Unknown	Unknown

Goal 1: Growth Measure

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

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent proficient. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 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. In addition, the aggregate of all cohorts is examined to determine the growth of all students who took a state exam in both years.

Results

Cohort Growth on State English Language Arts Exam from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08	
4	26	84.6%	Incremental gain	51.9%	NO
5	23	73.9%	74.5%	47.8%	NO
6	22	63.6%	69.3%	54.5%	NO
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	71	74.1%	71.9%	53.9%	NO

² These percentages represent only “free lunch” students in grades 3-6.

Evaluation

For school year 2007-08, we did not meet the target in all three cohorts. Our analysis of test Performance Levels of the three cohorts of students (from grade 3 to 4, from grade 4 to 5, and grade 5 to 6 --from year 2007 to 2008) showed losses in proficiency levels for each cohort. For the 6th grade, actual performance was 54.5% and the target was 69.3%. For the 5th grade, the actual performance was 47.8% and the target was 74.5%. For the 4th grade, we believe this cohort experienced a drop in achievement (51.9%) yet the CSI template says there has been an “incremental gain”.

We attribute these drops in gained proficiency to several causes including: large number of new teachers, behavior management issues in several rooms, a need for an improved ELA program in the lower grades (which will be SFA beginning in fall 2008) and, a need for enhanced alignment to the state standards. We also believe that Amber’s occasional use of mixed-grade groupings and occasional use of straight grades has led to varying levels of student achievement (especially when combined with the high teacher turnover last year). Under our new instructional leadership, we will only shift grade grouping structures once teachers can more fully utilize the state standards across grades (that is, having the ability to pin point mastery level standards by grade).

Additional Evidence

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

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

In 2006-7, one cohort at Amber met the target on the ELA exam. In 2007-8, no cohorts met the target.

Goal 1: Optional Measure

For 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

Method

In 2004-05, Amber for the first time instituted the Terra Nova exam, a nationally-normed assessment. This test, developed by McGraw Hill, was administered to students in grades one through five in late September and again in early May. The current school year, 2007-08, was the fourth time that Amber administered the test. Charter Schools Institute guidelines recommend comparisons of testing be conducted spring to spring, thus this was the fourth year Amber’s comparisons are made on a spring to spring basis. As per the Charter Schools Institute: “If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the difference between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the

first year’s average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (As per CSI guidelines, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)” The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

$$\text{Threshold} = \text{spring 2007 NCE} + [(\text{NCE 50} - \text{spring 2007 NCE})/2]$$

Grade Level Equivalent is a score on a scale developed to indicate the school grade (usually measured in months) that corresponds to an average age, mental age, test score, or other characteristic of students. For example, Grade Level Equivalent of 6.4 is interpreted as a score that is average for Grade 6, 4th month. The “typical” student should gain 1 grade per year to maintain his/her position in relation to age-mates.

Results

Results Cohort Growth on Terra Nova Reading Test from Spring 2007 to Spring 2008

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08	
K	84	58.6	59.8	61 ³	Yes
1	91	57.0	56.35	55.7	No
2	63	55.3	56.5	57.7	Yes
3	50	65.0	55.6	46.3	No
4	27	56.1	51.0	46.0	No
5	24	54.0	50.0	46	No
6	23	61.0	54.6	48.1	No
All	362	58.1	54.8	51.5	No

Terra Nova Reading Grade Equivalents

Grade	2005	2006	2007	2008
K	*	*	1.4	1.1
1	*	*	2.3	2.1
2	*	1.7	2.9	3.4
3	2.4	2.6	5.6	3.6
4	2.9	4.1	5.9	3.9
5	3.5	4.8	6.9	5.5
6	5.7	5.3	6.8	5.8

Using the Terra Nova exam’s norm curved equivalent (NCE) scores; a review of the grade level cohorts of grades 1 through 6 reveals only in one grade cohort positive increases. The table below summarizes the Terra Nova spring 2007 and 2008 NCE reading results. (This data shows a cohort of students from one year to the next but does not reflect attrition nor new admits from one year to the next.)

³ The kindergarten scores represent two different cohorts.

The Kindergarten cohort of 2007 had an average NCE score of 61. The Kindergarten cohort of 2006 scored 58.6. As their target was 59.8, the Kindergarten 2007 cohort did achieve their threshold.

In 2007-08, the first grade cohort had an average NCE score of 55.7. When these students were in Kindergarten in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 57. Since the target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 55.7 and 50, the cohort did not surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the second grade cohort had an average NCE score of 57.7. When these students were in the first grade in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 55.3. Since the second grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 57.7 and 50, the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the third grade cohort had an average NCE score of 46.3. When these students were in the second grade in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 65. Since the third grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 46.3 and 50, the cohort did not surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the fourth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 46.0. When these students were in the third grade in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 56.1. Since the fourth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 46.0 and 50, the cohort did not surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the fifth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 46.0. When these students were in the fourth grade in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 54. Since the fifth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 46.0 and 50, the cohort did not surpass its target.

In 2007-08, the sixth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 48.1. When these students were in the fifth grade in Spring 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 61. Since the sixth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 48.1 and 50, the cohort did not surpass its target.

Evaluation

Overall, the Terra Nova Reading results as measured by NCE's offered two cohorts achieving their targets, with five other grades not achieving their targets.

From the grade level equivalents, we see that students are essentially on grade level from grades K-2. However, in 3rd – 6th grades, we see grade equivalents that indicate test takers are not on grade level (given that the final test was taken in Spring 2008).

We believe that some gains in the scores of the lower grades can be accounted for by a full time Title 1 reading teacher who worked primarily with the first and second grade students. Teachers, the reading specialist, and the Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETSS) worked with all

regular and special education students. In addition, with the support of our community sponsor, ACDP, we were able to offer extended day and Saturday program which began in October. Amber paid close attention to research that shows group size variation—especially smaller groups for those students identified as being at risk through Title 1.

For the upper grades and for the first time, an extensive analysis of individual students’ Terra Nova scores dramatically helped drive instruction. This past year included the third year of the Reading Edge program for students in our three upper grade classes whom were grouped by ability. Some groups met in teams of 10 to 15 and all worked intensively during each six-week cycle. In addition, we engaged five classroom-based tutors to supplement teacher instruction. Instructional leadership, teachers, and professional developers from Success for All analyzed scores consistently and changed students to appropriate ability groupings during cycles. We believe this methodology will yield results in the upper grades (and an expansion of SFA into the lower grades will also support performance).

Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Achieved
Growth	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State exam.	Did Not Achieve
Optional --Growth	For 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	Did Not Achieve (except in 2 grades)

The overall news on Amber Charter School’s progress in English language arts is mixed. We did not reach the 75% required benchmark. However, we did meet the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the state exam enabling us to meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO). In addition, we did surpass the local school district as it relates to the state English exam. Unfortunately, we did not achieve reduction by one half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State exam. And on our own Terra Nova exam, we did not achieve the value added targets in many grades, though we did achieve our target in two grades.

Action Plan

This past spring Amber created a robust action plan that has already begun for instructional improvements. When we received the 2007-8 test scores and the CSI report from the spring visit, we knew that we were on the right course with a comprehensive action plan that seeks to make focused and strong results with our students. The components of our plan include:

- ELA programming changes/Expanding SFA to all grades (not just the upper grades): Though SFA was selected for 5th and 6th grades upon our last renewal (and as those grades were new for Amber then), we did not apply this ELA text to grades K-4. Instead, teachers at that time were accustomed to using Scott Foresman, so it was maintained. Upon reflection, we now believe that it would have been better to shift all grades to an SFA program then. Regardless, Amber has decided to do this as of the Summer 2008, including August training and a Fall implementation.

Similarly, we have found that our ELA program needs a more structured approach to writing. A prescribed writing program will be identified and implemented this summer and fall as well as provision of more prescriptive professional development in writing. We have also found that more experienced teachers were supplementing the program with additional phonics work. SFA provides a solid phonetic component that will support instruction

- Instructional leadership: With a change in instructional leadership in 2007-8, we have already seen a clearer focus on pedagogical techniques in the classroom, a better focus on what is being taught at each grade and a focus to help teachers plan more effectively. Teachers have also been energized by the amount of feedback they have been receiving this year. To complete this focus on instruction, the Amber board is currently reviewing its administrative structure in order to have the leader of the school also be the instructional leader.
- Enhanced & targeted professional development for teachers: While Amber has long offered extensive professional development opportunities inside the classroom and externally, we have found that we must sharpen our focus. In particular, with the amount of new teachers that have been hired at Amber within the new year our focus must be on planning and instruction:
 - Teaching reading
 - Teaching math
 - The NY State standards
 - Forming team and teaching the “Amber” method of instructional expectations
 - Teaching classroom management
- Alignment of the curriculum to the NYS standards: Amber has aligned its curriculum to the NY State standards several times over the years. This has been necessary as teachers have turned-over, as various texts were introduced, as we have converted from a dual-language Spanish immersion school, and as we have learned from item analysis of the state exams. As such and under new instructional leadership and a new faculty, Amber is currently in the process of re-aligning its curriculum to the NY Standards. We believe this process and the

ensuing professional development for teachers to master the standards intuitively will greatly assist in having students achieve proficiency at each grade.

- **Hiring more experienced teachers:** Amber has traditionally had several teachers in the beginning years of their profession. In Summer 2007, we had a sudden and large-scale turnover of teachers. We believe this was an opportunity for Amber to hire more experienced teachers, but because it was so late in the summer, we assembled the best faculty possible. As of Summer 2008, we were able to negotiate with the UFT to have a new title (Lead Teacher) in order to hire more experienced teachers who would not only teach, but also be able to support more novice teachers with instructional guidance (similar to a “dean” concept). And in fact, we have begun to hire a few more experienced teachers this summer.
- **Remediation:** Over the years, Amber has assembled many tools to support the remediation of students who are behind: Saturday academies, tutors, teaching assistants, summer school, longer blocks of ELA and math. *Simply put, we have discovered that we have the right tools but we have to use them better.* Our focus will be on better execution of our efforts to improve individual student performance. An example of this is that we must have more one-on-one meetings with parents in order for parents to send the students who have the largest academic needs to the Saturday academies (phone calls are not effective enough). We would also like for our additional instructional time (and for our tutors and teaching assistants) to use curriculum developed by our own staff that would be focused on the specific skill needs of students (in ELA and math), not simply address general remediation or test preparation.

Last, we believe that the best tool for our remediation needs is a better use of our data. While we do have a fair amount of annual testing data, we do not have interim assessment data (except for SFA testing). This means too much time passes before we are able to adequately measure progress. We will institute the SFA interim assessments in grades K-6 and are in the process of identifying a math interim assessment. This year, we will have consistent staff meetings to review individual student data and determine any required instructional/curricular changes based on that new data. To assist us in our current manual efforts, we have recently purchased PowerSchool and Pearson’s Inform and are seeking an additional technological tool for the electronic storage of our curricular units.

- **Forming Academic Culture & High Expectations:** Over time, we believe that Amber has lost some of its initial focus on academic seriousness and focus, while also maintaining a welcoming community. With regard to school culture, we have planned a character education and community service program to enable students to focus on improving their attitude to learning. We are revamping the discipline policy in order that students can understand the seriousness of their learning experience at Amber. Finally, we believe that more access to regular assessment data (via the interim assessments) will empower students to “own” their learning more than in recent years.
- **More time for core learning:** Another component of our action plan involves a shift in our Spanish program. Amber originally began as a dual language Spanish-immersion program. Since then, there have been a few different iterations of programming as attempts to offer a strong Spanish program (including the FLES program and offering Spanish five times a week), but we have had a need for additional time for ELA and math instruction. We have determined that we must utilize the school day to offer more ELA and math instruction and

as such, will request an amendment to CSI to offer Spanish one time a week as a special class to all students. The foreign language objective will be on students achieving oral competency in Spanish by gaining vocabulary through conversation.

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics All students at Amber Charter School will become proficient in math and will make strong yearly progress towards mastery of mathematical skills.

Background

The mathematics program at Amber is focused exclusively on the TERC Investigations series for grades K to 6. Key professional development was planned and executed this past year in support of our mathematics goal. These include the use of a staff developer (a new position in school year 2007-08), continuing to engage the consulting group from Lehman College Math Center for training in teaching all elements of the NYS math program. The consultant met with teachers and instructional leadership twice monthly.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3rd through 6th grade in March 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.

Results

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

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁴			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	50	0	0	0	50
4	28	0	0	0	28
5	24	0	0	0	24
6	23	0	0	0	23
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	125	0	0	0	125

**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	2.0	16.0	76.0	6.0	82.0	50
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	15.9	77.3	6.8	84.1	44
4	All Students	3.6	39.3	53.6	3.6	57.1	28
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	3.7	37.0	55.6	3.7	59.3	27
5	All Students	12.5	33.3	54.2	0.0	54.2	24
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	8.7	34.8	56.5	0.0	56.5	23
6	All Students	4.3	39.1	56.5	0.0	56.5	23
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	4.5	36.4	59.1	0.0	59.1	22
7	All Students						
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year						
8	All Students						
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year						
All	All Students	5.6	31.9	60.1	2.4	62.5	125
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	4.2	31	62.1	2.6	64.7	116

In 3rd grade, 82% of all students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 84.1% of students in at least their second year at Amber in 3rd grade scored level proficiency. In 4th grade, 57.1% of all students scored at Level 3. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 59.3% of students in at least their second year at Amber in 4th grade scored level proficiency. In 5th grade, 54.2% of all students scored at Level 3. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 56.5% of students in at least their second year at Amber in 5th grade scored level proficiency. In 6th grade, 56.5% of all students scored at Level 3. As it relates to Amber’s accountability measure 59.1% of students in at least their second year at Amber in 6th grade scored level proficiency. In all grades tested, 62.5% of students scored at Level 3 & 4. As it relates to

⁴ 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

Amber’s accountability measure 64.7% of students in at least their second year at Amber in grades three to six scored level proficiency.

Evaluation

We did not meet the CSI required 75% proficiency benchmarks, for students in their second year, in three of the four grades (grades 4, 5, and 6) tested on the mathematics exam of January 2008. Only the third grade showed solid strength in mathematics with 84.1% surpassing the benchmark. A success indicator is that there were very few Level 1 students in two of the four grades tested. This demonstrates that there has been a concerted effort to make sure students in most need are getting focused attention.

We also see that students did gain the longer they were at Amber. This trend was true in every grade. Another positive trend is that there were more students achieving “Level 4” in lower grades (i.e., grades 3 and 4). We believe that this means our efforts to focus on early mastery of math skills is beginning to demonstrate results. For the upper grades, it is clear from this data that we have small populations achieving at the lowest levels and from our item analysis we know that this is largely due to missing basic computation skills and deciphering word problems of more than one computational step. The good news is that these students can be moved to Level 2 by offering them this missing remediation. Similarly, we will be focusing on students in Level 2 to get them to proficiency (and Level 3 to 4) by focusing on rigor issues and grade-specific mastery standards in our curriculum alignment.

Additional Evidence

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3					61.3	31	93.1	29	84.1	44
4					57.7	26	60.7	28	59.3	27
5					35.7	28	44.8	29	56.5	23
6					7.7	13	60.0	25	59.1	22
7					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All					40.6	98	64.7	111	64.7	116

Results

Amber’s math scores held steady over the past two years (64.7% proficiency). Proficiency decreased in grade 3, but increased in grade 5. Only slight decreases (approximately 1%) occurred in grades 4 and 6 – essentially the same scores as last year.

Evaluation

As stated above, of those students in their second year, in 3rd grade, 84.1% of students scored at Levels 3 & 4; compared to the previous year where students in third grade scored 93.1%, represents a

9 percentage point drop. This may be due to the fact that one of the 3rd grade teachers was new to Amber and the other was new to teaching.

In 4th grade, 59.3% of students scored at Level 3 & 4, compared to the previous year's 60.7, this is a slight less than 1 percentage point drop. In 5th grade, 56.5% of students scored at Level 3 & 4; compared to the previous year's 44.8%, this is an 11.7 percentage gain.

Again, these scores are better than three years ago at Amber (overall 40.6% proficiency rate), but results were only strong in 5th grade. In 6th grade, 59.1 % of students scored at Level 3 & 4; compared to the previous year's 60% this is a slight-percentage decrease. In all grades, 64.7% of students scored at Level 3 & 4 – exactly what was scored last year.

We have examined the possible causes to the flat trend in mathematics test scores from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Similar to our concerns regarding the English language arts results, among our concerns as to the flatness of our math scores is chiefly inexperienced faculty. However, we believe that with the timing of the test, in March two months after the English language arts exam, helped our teachers became more familiar with the exam, testing procedures, and encouraging students to do better on the test.

The relative steady hold of student performance in all grades over the previous years reflects a somewhat strong instructional program and instructional performance. It indicates that the current instructional staff has a reasonable grasp of the math content and students were more prepared to participate in the testing program.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards all students being proficient by the year 2013-14. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state's learning standards in 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 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

Calculation of 2007-08 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of All Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3-6	5.6	31.9	60.1	2.4	125

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 31.9 + 60.1 + 2.4 = 94.4 \\
 &+ 60.1 + 2.4 = 62.5 \\
 \text{PI} &= \mathbf{156.9}
 \end{aligned}$$

Evaluation

The Performance Index (PI) of 156.9 surpassed the expected Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) well over the state required 133.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

Year	Grades	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2005-06	3-6	123	18	37	39	5	144	122
2006-07	3-6	119	4	32	54	9	163	122
2007-08	3-6	125	5.6	31	60.1	2.4	156.9	133

Evaluation:

Amber has successfully met and surpassed each of the Performance Index and the Annual Measurable Objective in each of the past three years for mathematics. Unfortunately, this year we had a slight number of students at Level 1 and a drop of students at Level 4. Positively, we did have a strong gain in the number of students at Level 3.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

Method

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

requires we compare ourselves to a local community school district (CSD). Although Amber is located in CSD 4, as negotiated with our authorizer, Charter Schools Institute, we use district 5 as the basis of comparison (Harlem) as this district was Amber’s location at its inception and a majority of students live in CSD 5.

Results

**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 Students (CSD5)	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	84.3%	44	76%	1067
4	59.3%	27	67%	1062
5	56.5%	23	61%	1086
6	59.1%	22	66%	1303
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	64.7%	116	67.5%	4518

Evaluation

The table above compares Amber’s mathematics scores by grade and total tested to Community School District 5. Overall, when compared to Amber’s scores, the local community school district outpaced us by 2.8 percentage points. Amber did not meet its goal, except in 3rd grade.

Amber’s third grade scores outpaced the district’s by 8.3 percentage points. Amber’s fourth grade scores were behind the district’s by 7.7 percentage points. The district outpaced Amber’s fifth grade scores by 4.5 percentage points. Amber’s sixth grade scores were behind the district’s by 6.9 percentage points.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5
3					61.0	58.4	93.1	69.3	84.1	76.1
4					58.0	58.2	60.7	58.4	59.3	66.9
5					36.0	36.7	44.8	58.1	56.5	61.1
6					8.0	45.1	60.0	55.3	59.1	65.6
7					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All					40.8	49.6	64.7	60.3	64.7	67.4

Evaluation

When we compare Amber’s scores to the local community school district, we can do so with three years worth of data. In a comparison of Math test scores for all grades, Amber began with very low proficiencies (40.8% in 2005-6) and has grown dramatically to 64.7%. Growth, however, was stagnant in the past academic year. The district, on the other hand, has made solid progress each year in math proficiency. There seems to be real progress with students in the district from grades 3 to 4 (and this is where Amber students seem to decline in proficiency). We believe this is about the acquisition of basic computation skills – an area where we will focus more in the upcoming year.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school’s actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure. Given the timing of the state’s release of poverty data, the 2007-08 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2006-07 results, the most recent ones available.

Glossary

Grade - Grades in which the state exam was administered in 2007.

Percent of Free Lunch Eligible Students - Percent reported by the State Education Department, which will appear in 2006-07 School Report Cards.

Actual Percent of Students at Levels 3&4 - Percent reported by the State Education Department in October 2007.

Predicted Percent of Students at Levels 3&4 - Calculated after performing a regression to measure the effect of a school's free lunch population on its performance in each tested grade, based on all public schools in New York State, including charter schools, with the same tested grade in 2006-07. (The percent predicted for all grades is weighted by the number of students tested in each grade.)

Effect Size - A statistical measure calculated by dividing the difference between the actual and predicted outcome by the standard deviation difference. It reflects the difference between a school's attained and expected performance in each tested grade, relative to other schools with similar free-lunch statistics and tested grade. (The Effect Size for all grades is weighted by the number of students tested in each grade.)

School's Overall Comparative Performance - Based on the following Effect Size ranges:

Above 0.79 Higher than expected to a large degree
0.50 to 0.79 Higher than expected to a medium degree
0.30 to 0.49 Higher than expected to a small degree
-0.29 to 0.29 About the same as expected
-0.30 to -0.49 Lower than expected to a small degree
-0.50 to -0.79 Lower than expected to a medium degree
Below -0.79 Lower than expected to a large degree

Results

The chart below displays how the charter school students in each grade performed compared to students in public schools in New York State with the same grade and a similar population of free-lunch-eligible students.

2006-07 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size	
			Actual	Predicted			
3		35	91.4	76.9	14.5	0.97	
4		30	56.7	69	-12.3	-0.77	
5		29	44.8	64.2	-19.4	-1.01	
6		25	60	56.8	3.2	0.15	
7		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
8		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
All		73.9	119	64.7	67.6	-2.9	-0.12

School's Overall Comparative Performance:
About the same as expected

Evaluation

In two of four tested grade levels there were negative effect sizes. The third grade effect size is 0.97, fourth grade's is -0.77, fifth grade is -1.01 and sixth grade is 0.15. Amber's overall comparative performance relative to demographically similar public schools state-wide shows, according to CSI, *about the same as expected*.

Additional Evidence

Results

Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch ⁵	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2004-05	n/a	n/a	95	41.0	n/a	n/a
2005-06	3-6	77.3	123	43.1	Unknown	Unknown
2006-07	3-6	75.3	119	63.2	Unknown	Unknown
2007-08	3-6	65.8	125	62.5	Unknown	Unknown

Evaluation

Given the timing of the state’s release of poverty data, the 2007-08 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2006-07 results, the most recent ones available. However, as this data is not available, we cannot analyze the predicted and effect size indicators.

Goal 2: Growth Measure
 Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s state mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s state mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent proficient. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 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.

⁵ These percentages represent only “free lunch” students in grades 3-6.

Results

Cohort Growth on State Mathematics Exam from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08	
4	27	88.9	Gain ⁶	59.3	NO
5	23	52.2	63.6	56.5	NO
6	22	50	62.5	59.1	NO
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All	72	63.7%	70.1%	58.3%	NO

Evaluation

For school year 2007-08, we had some gain in one cohort, but overall we did not meet the target for any cohort. Of the three cohorts, 58.3% were at Levels 3 & 4, yet there was a 7% total loss from the previous year. Yet, at 58.3%, this was below the 70.1% target for the year.

As it relates to individual grades, our analysis of test Performance Levels of the cohort of students from grade 3 in 2007 to grade 4 in 2008 showed 59.3% were at Levels 3 & 4 however there was a 33.8% loss from the previous year. Our analysis of test Performance Levels of the cohort of students from grade 4 in 2007 to grade 5 in 2008 showed 56.5% were at Levels 3 & 4, with a small loss of 4.2% from the previous year. Our analysis of test Performance Levels of the cohort of students from grade 5 in 2007 to grade 6 in 2008 showed 59.1% were at Levels 3 & 4 with a positive gain of 9.1% over the previous year. The positive impact of stronger teaching of math in the upper grades and of direct tutoring in math resulted in this gain.

As in the ELA endeavors, our focus will be on pushing mastery of specific needed skills by especially preventing losses from occurring from the 3rd to 4th grade. We will do this by offering target professional development on stronger methods for teaching computation skills and by ensuring strong alignment with the NY State standards via our alignment project in Summer 2008. We will also utilize a math interim assessment test for the first time beginning in Fall 2008 and this will give us on-going data about individual skill development for individual students. This information will allow us to better modify both curriculum and instructional methods.

⁶ Again, we are not certain the CSI template is offering the correct interpretation of the 4th grade cohort.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

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

Evaluation

Our analysis shows that year-to-year cohort performance for the past two years show no growth trend. Last year, one cohort met its target and in 2007-8, no cohorts met their targets.

Goal 1: Optional Measure

2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed math test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

Method

In 2004-05, Amber for the first time instituted the Terra Nova exam, a nationally-normed assessment. This test, developed by McGraw Hill, was administered to students in grades one through five in late September and again in early May. The current school year, 2007-08, was the fourth time that Amber administered the test. Charter Schools Institute guidelines recommend comparisons of testing be conducted spring to spring, thus this was the fourth year Amber’s comparisons are made on a spring to spring basis. As per Charter Schools Institute: “If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the difference between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the first year’s average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (As per CSI guidelines, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)” The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

$$\text{Threshold} = \text{spring 2007 NCE} + [(\text{NCE 50} - \text{spring 2007 NCE})/2]$$

Grade Level Equivalent is a score on a scale developed to indicate the school grade (usually measured in months) that corresponds to an average age, mental age, test score, or other characteristic of students. For example, Grade Level Equivalent of 6.4 is interpreted as a score that is average for Grade 6, 4th month. The “typical” student should gain 1 grade per year to maintain his/her position in relation to age-mates.

Results

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

Grade	Average NCE			Target
	2006-07	Target	2007-08	Achieved
K	n/a	n/a	65.1	n/a
1	47.2	50.35	53.5	Yes
2	56.8	58.65	60.5	Yes
3	58.4	51.9	45.4	No
4	53.5	48.4	43.3	No
5	47.7	46.75	45.8	No
6	51.1	47.5	43.9	No

Terra Nova Math Grade Equivalent

Grade	2005	2006	2007	2008
K	*	*	1.4	1.3
1	*	*	1.6	1.7
2	*	1.3	3.1	3.2
3	2.2	3.2	4.9	3.5
4	2.6	3.9	6.8	4.0
5	3.6	4.6	5.7	5.4
6	4.8	5.3	7.0	6.3

Evaluation

Using the Terra Nova exam’s norm curved equivalent (NCE) scores; a review of the grade level cohorts of grades 1 through 6 reveals positive increase in two of six cohorts. The table above summarizes the Terra Nova spring 2007 and spring 2008 NCE reading results. (This data shows a cohort of students from one year to the next but does not reflect attrition nor new admits from one year to the next.)

In 2007-08, the first grade cohort had an average NCE score of 53.5. When these students were in Kindergarten in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 47.2. Since the first grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 53.5 and 50, the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the second grade cohort had an average NCE score of 60.5. When these students were in the first grade in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 56.8. Since the second grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 60.5 and 50, the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the third grade cohort had an average NCE score of 45.4. When these students were in the second grade in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 58.4. Since the third grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 45.4 and 50, the cohort did not surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the fourth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 43.3. When these students were in the third grade in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 53.5. Since the fourth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 43.3 and 50, the cohort did not surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2007-08, the fifth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 45.8. When these students were in the fourth grade in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 47.7. Since the fifth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 45.8 and 50, the cohort did not surpass its target, but it came close.

In 2007-08, the sixth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 43.9. When these students were in the fifth grade in 2006-07, they had an NCE score of 51.1. Since the sixth grade's target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 43.9 and 50, the cohort did not surpass its target.

Overall, the Terra Nova mathematics results as measured by NCE's did not surpass the current school year compared to the previous years, except in grades 1 and 2. In terms of grade level equivalencies, we find flat performance in grades K-2, but beginning 3rd grade we have drops in performance.

After a careful test item analysis, we believe these results are largely due to the need for stronger instruction in computation as well as curricular mis-alignments which will be remedied beginning in the Summer 2008 with our curriculum alignment work. We also believe teacher turnover and an inadequate amount of regular benchmarked performance data (i.e., having no math interim assessment) have contributed to the drops in performance. Further, as older students are lacking basic computational skills, the higher level skills become impossible to master. We believe we can better target our remediation methods to address these specific gaps in knowledge by tailoring our curriculum to these gaps.

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Achieved
Growth	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s state exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State exam.	Did Not Achieve
Optional --Growth	2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally-normed math test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.	Did Not Achieve

Overall, Amber students have mixed results in mathematics. The school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam meets the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system. Amber has also exceeded its predicted level of performance on the state math exam (effect size). However, Amber has yet to achieve its absolute and growth measures. The path has also been varied for Amber in terms of its comparative data with CSD 5. While Amber has exceeded the district’s performance on various measures in various years, it has not consistently done so (especially given the 2007-8 performance). While math is the stronger content area for Amber students (with 64.7% proficient), consistent performance does not meet school goals.

Action Plan

For the next school year, we plan to intensify our efforts to improve mathematics instruction. The adoption of the TERC Investigations series for Amber’s mathematics program has helped to create a curriculum that generally prepares students to meet State standards. Customized for New York State, and providing alignment with the NYS math standards, TERC Investigations provides consistency of instruction taught among classes in a grade and between grades. However, over time we have found some deficiencies in exact alignment, especially regarding timing of when certain skills are taught within the year from the text and the state exam. We will continue to examine the best timing of lessons upon the updating of our pacing guide in math (to be finalized after the curriculum alignment project is complete in the summer 2008). In short, we plan to improve our scope and sequence, map out the curriculum, improve and upgrade lesson plans. We also need to better document curricular supplements to particular math topics that have been created over time (and to share these within grade levels).

To address the need for stronger computational instruction the TERC Investigations will be supplemented in every classroom with the Saxon Math Morning Meeting routine. This portion of the Saxon Math curriculum emphasizes the acquisition of math facts on a daily basis through the use of the calendar, practice counting, telling time, patterning and estimation.

We also believe the use of a math interim assessment that is aligned to the TERC series will support our desire for more regular data on our students. Professional development for new teachers on the types of items that are on the state exam and Terra Nova and item analysis for their classes' performances is also required. This "deep dive" on the expected skill mastery by grade will help to inform the new teacher about what students need to know in his/her grade and the format in which students will be asked certain types of questions. Further, this type of review will allow teachers to plan with the actual skill needs of their students in mind: for mastery by grade level.

Amber has further discovered that there is a need for more targeted professional development for the new teachers. While Amber has enjoyed a long-standing partnership with Lehman College in the area of math instruction, they offered a great deal of support to teachers who have since left Amber. We plan to increase the amount of support by Lehman College; we must retrain. Similarly, our staff developer will support our newest faculty. Therefore, our main action is to focus on steady and deep professional development in math for teachers (both in workshops and pushed inside of their own classrooms).

Please also see the components of the overarching reform action plan Amber is utilizing (as referenced in the action plan for ELA). These components (such as firmer instructional leadership and hiring more experienced teachers) will impact both ELA and math.

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

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

Background

Amber's science curriculum is focused on Scott Foresman since 2004 and K12 Solutions since this past two years. The former is our traditional textbook company and the latter, K12 Solutions, is a science based company providing staff development and instructional resources to grades K through grade 3. Our instructional staff organized a school wide science fair that engaged students in the scientific method over several weeks followed by hands-on exploration and presentations to a standing room audience of parents and local visitors helping to focus our students on vital science skills. Further, we are encouraged that for a second year in a row there were no Level 1 students.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

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

Method

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

Results

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 State Science Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
4	All Students	0.0	32.1	57.1	10.7	67.9	28
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	29.6	53.9	11.1	<u>65</u>	27
8	All Students	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Evaluation

The percentage of students in their second year at Amber Charter School who scored Level Proficiency on the 2007-08 science exam was 65%. We did not meet our goal of 75% proficiency. We believe that the drop in scores this year is a result of the newness of the science test to the fourth grade teacher. In particular, this fourth grade class was a bit large (28 students) and the students had a wide continuum of learning needs/abilities. We have new experienced teachers prepared to teach 4th grade in 2008-9 and we have become more careful in our groupings of students.

Additional Evidence

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	n/a	n/a	75.9	54	70.8	24	85.2	27	65	27
8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Evaluation

Despite the less-than-expected science score, we believe that the school continues to have a reasonably strong science program. This past year, as a result of the work with K12 Solutions, our students in grades K through 3 participated in hands-on science experiments. Further, given that we have seen fluctuation in science scores over the past few years, we believe that as our instructional staff retention normalize, and we will see continued progress on the science measure.

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

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

Method

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

Results

**2007-08 State Science Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	65	27	Unknown	Unknown
8				

Evaluation

We cannot perform this analysis without the benefit of the CSD 5 science scores. The district has not released their science scores as of the writing of this report.

Additional Evidence

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Charter School	Local District	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5
4			75.9	Unknown	70.8	Unknown	85.2	Unknown	65	Unknown
8										

Evaluation

Unfortunately, it has been difficult to get the Science scores from the local district year after year. Therefore, an analysis is not possible.

Summary

The percentage of students attaining level proficiency in science was below the required 75% benchmark, thus we did not achieve our goal for the 2007-08 school year. The lack of reported scores for the local public school district prevents us from comparing the school to the local district.

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

Action Plan

We will intensify our science professional development for all of our teachers. Our external science consultant will provide additional support in modeling lessons, observing teachers and providing feedback. Our internal staff developer will provide support to all teachers. We will work on a superior pacing guide for science with our new 4th grade teacher.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Goal 4: Social Studies

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

Background

Amber Charter School’s curriculum for social studies is apparent throughout each grade level and aligned with the New York state standards. The program is a mix of “home grown” lessons and text-book based information. These home grown lessons have been developed over previous school years and passed on to subsequent teaching members.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program social studies assessment to students in 5th grade in November 2007. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

Results

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 State Social Studies Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
5	All Students	3.7	18.5	66.7	11.1	77.8	27
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	18.5	63	7.4	70.4	24 ⁷
8	All Students						
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year						

Amber’s results for the fifth grade NYS Social Studies exam indicate that 77.8% of students scored at Levels 3 & 4 – meeting the 75% requirement. For students who have attended Amber for two years or more, 70.4% scored at Level 3 or 4 (slightly under the 75% expectation).

Evaluation

77.8% of Amber students in fifth grade who took the NYS Social Studies exam scored at Level, surpassing the 75% requirement. The social studies curriculum at Amber is one that has been developed by instructional leaders and staff over the years. It is aligned to the NYS standards. We continue to be pleased with our students’ results on the fifth grade NYS Social Studies exam. Strength in the scores reflect a school-wide social studies curriculum that is aligned with state standards, articulated appropriately from year-to-year, and supported with useful field trips to appropriate historical and cultural venues.

Additional Evidence

Year-to-year trends during the current Accountability Period demonstrate a high level of performance in social studies. A table for this section on performance disaggregated by number of years in the school is below. Since the test is a cumulative exam, representing social studies knowledge learned between grades K to 4, our scores reflect the rigor embedded and expected in the curriculum.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5			66.7	12	80.5	41	71.0	31	70.4	24
8										

⁷ Student number is 24 (instead of 27) because of two statistical facts: 1. One student was transferred out of Amber after the November 2007 testing. 2. Two students were transferred out of 5th grade and placed into 6th mid-year in late November 2007 at Amber.

Goal 4: Comparative Measure

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

Method

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

Results

Community School District 5's NYS Social Studies scores were unavailable; no comparison can be made at this time.

**2007-08 State Social Studies Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Amber Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	70.4	24	Unknown	Unknown
8				

Evaluation

Due to the lack of local district scores, no comparison can be made at this time.

Additional Evidence

Results

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year and All District Students at Levels 3 and 4									
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Charter School	Local District	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5	Amber	District 5	Amber	District
5			66.7	Unknown	80.5	43	71.0	Unknown	70.4	Unknown
8										

Evaluation

Due to the lack of local district scores, no comparison can be made at this time.

Summary

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Insufficient Data

Amber achieved the absolute measure for social studies with 77.8% of all students achieving proficiency in 5th grade. We also do recognize the anomaly of having 70.4% of students who have been at Amber for two or more years reaching proficiency.

Due to a lack of reported results for the local community school district, we cannot determine whether we achieved or did not achieve the comparative measure.

Action Plan

We believe that our social studies curriculum is strong. We will continue to refine our pacing guide and lesson plans for social studies over time to ensure the best results. We do believe that we need additional training for new teachers on the NY State social studies standards.

NCLB

Goal 5: NCLB
 Under the state’s 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

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2003-04	Good Standing
2004-05	Good Standing
2005-06	Good Standing
2006-07	Good Standing
2007-08	Good Standing

Amber Charter School is a "School in Good Standing" as per the New York State Department of Education for the school year 2007-08. Amber has held this designation since its inception in 2000. This is in compliance with NYSED/Title 1 requirements to make public our status.

Evaluation

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

APPENDIX B: OPTIONAL GOALS

The following sections are for optional goals; data tables are provided for commonly used optional measures.

Goal 6: Parent Satisfaction

Amber will maintain strong enrollment and strong parent interest.

Goal 6: Absolute Measure

Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least two-thirds of *all* parents² provide a positive response to each of the survey items.

Method

Amber conducts its own parent survey. The parent survey was developed by Amber in consultation with the parent association. It was distributed by Amber and responses collected in spring, 2008. Amber received 300 parent responses, yielding an 82% response rate. The parents rated the questions presented on a scale of excellent, good, or needs improvement. The percentages below indicate the responses within excellent and good.

Results

2007-08 Parent Satisfaction Survey Responses – Amber Survey

Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
300	365	82%

² *All* parents include those who do not respond to the survey.

2007-08 Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results

Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
I am satisfied with my child's academic progress	75 %
My child likes to come to school	77 %
My child is interested in learning	77 %
I am pleased with Amber's Technology Curriculum	78 %
I am pleased with Amber's Art Curriculum	79%

Evaluation

Amber met its goal with a parent overall satisfaction rate of 73% being satisfied with the school’s program. This percent was determined by taking the percentage of all the questions asked in the parent survey and dividing it by the number of questions. As evidenced by the results parents were highly satisfied with the enrichment programs of technology and art. In the coming year, music will be added to the enrichment subjects offered to Amber students.

Additional Results

The following data for Amber was collected from the New York City’s Department of Education Learning Environmental survey for 2007-8. Amber volunteered to participate in the New York City’s Department of Education Learning Environment Survey. We saw this as an opportunity to have an external measure of parental satisfaction.

2007-08 Parent Satisfaction Survey Responses – NYC DOE Survey

Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
214	365	66%

2007-08 Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results

Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
Academic Expectations	92
Communication	92
Engagement	95
Safety and Respect	97

Evaluation

Even when surveyed externally strong parent satisfaction with Amber is further evidenced. According to the DOE study, approximately 93 percent of parents were satisfied with the level of assistance given to their child in regards to extra help with homework and class work. Over 90 percent of parents were pleased with the education that their child received this year. An overwhelming majority of parents expressed their satisfaction in regards to parent teacher

relationships, the amount and quality of homework and class size. Curriculum, discipline and communications from school personnel also received extraordinary rates of satisfaction.

Goal 7: Absolute Measure

Each year, 90 percent of the parents will participate in Parent Teacher Conferences and Primary Language Interviews.

This year 93% of the parents participated in Parent Teacher Conferences and Primary Language Interviews. Amber met this goal. Amber conducts the Primary Language Interviews during the first week of school in September. The Parent Teacher Conferences are conducted twice a year one in the fall and another in the spring. The teachers made a concerted effort to reach out to parents setting appointments before school hours and even into the early evening. Report cards were distributed during these conferences to assure parents’ comprehension of each student’s progress and achievement. In addition during these conferences issues regarding a student’s attendance and tardiness were appropriate were addressed. Teachers who met with 100% of their student’s parents were acknowledged and rewarded.

Goal 8: Absolute Measure

Each year, 90 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.⁸

Method

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

Results

2007-08 Student Retention Rate

2006-07 Enrollment	Number of Students Who Graduated in 2006-07	Number of Students Who Returned in 2007-08	Retention Rate 2007-08 Re-enrollment ÷ (2006-07 Enrollment – Graduates)
334	24	281	91%

Amber has a 91% retention rate from 2006-7 to 2007-8.

Evaluation

Amber met its goal regarding student retention. With 91% retention rate, Amber met the goal of 90% student retention and we will continue to improve retention over time. We will continue our current methods of carefully tracking reasons for student attrition and our strong parent involvement.

⁸ This was not a goal set by Amber and it is not in our accountability plan. It was in the CSI Template for this report.

Additional Evidence

Year	Retention Rate
2003-04	n/a
2004-05	n/a
2005-06	86%
2006-07	80%
2007-08	91%

In 2007-2008 the retention rate increased by 11%. Although Amber has gotten more sophisticated in collecting data, there is still the need to more accurately collect information as it pertains to the reasons for students leaving. For example, a large portion of the students leaving are kindergarten students who attend the first few weeks of September and then are accepted at another school and parents transfer them out.

We are pleased that the student retention rate has increased and plan to continue to have strong parent orientations to help continue to raise this rate even more in the coming year.

Goal 9:

Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.

Method

Amber classroom teachers take attendance within 30 minutes of commencing instruction. Pupil Personnel Services staff collect daily attendance rosters for input into its data collection system connected to the New York City Department of Education’s ATS. On a daily basis appropriate staff call parents of absentee students to determine reason for absence and troubleshoot with the parent any issues.

Results

2007-08 Attendance

Grade	Average Daily Attendance Rate
1	91%
2	92%
3	92%
4	93%
5	92%
6	93%
7	N/A
8	N/A
Overall	92%

Evaluation

Amber did not meet its target of 95% attendance. It is close, however, with a 92% average daily attendance rate. This is an increase from last year's 89%, demonstrating that the steps taken have given results. More incentive measures for student attendance will be implemented in the coming year, such as monthly perfect attendance awards at bi-monthly assemblies. We have improved attendance by working closely with parents.

Additional Evidence

Year	Average Daily Attendance Rate
2003-04	92%
2004-05	93%
2005-06	90%
2006-07	89%
2007-08	92%

Evaluation

Amber has increased average daily attendance by 3% from last year. We will continue our efforts to meet this goal.

Goal 10: Amber Charter School will be in legal compliance

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

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

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

Amber has established, put in place, and refined effective systems, policies, and procedures and other controls ensuring that all legal and charter requirements are met. Amber board members meet bi-monthly, document all board meetings, and take an active role in creating and enforcing policies. We have also updated our complaint policy.

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

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

Fiscal Soundness

Goal 11: Amber Charter School will make sound decisions and effective, responsible use of financial resources to maximize student learning.

Budgeting

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

On a monthly basis, Amber's fiscal office produces a balance sheet for the current fiscal year. The balance sheet is reviewed by the board treasurer and additional members of the board who serve on the finance committee. The balance is filed quarterly with the Charter Schools Institute as well as additional agencies that oversee Amber's fiscal matters, including Raza Development Fund, which holds the mortgage for Amber's building. In the year ending June 30, 2008 representing the 2007-08 school year, Amber demonstrates a balance between resources and expenses. The detailed results are attached in the appendices. Amber continues to abide by GAAP, engages an external auditing firm to review its books, materials, resources, and procedures. An audit will begin in August 2008 and is expected to be completed by mid October. The audit will be reviewed by Amber staff and board to be discussed and to be approved by the board. The completed and approved audit will be delivered to the Charter School Institute by November 1, 2008.

Financial Condition

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

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

Internal Controls and Compliance

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

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