



**BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL FOR  
BETTER LEARNER**

**2014-15 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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Dr. Kevin Brennan, Executive Director, and Dr. Theodore Swartz, Director of Professional Development, with the assistance of consultant Simeon Stolzberg, prepared this 2014-15 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning (Bronx Better Learning) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. Bronx Better Learning opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1, added one grade each year thereafter, and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1 – 5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. On January 15, 2008, the State University Trustees granted Bronx Better Learning a full-term charter renewal for 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K – 5 through the 2012-13 school year. Bronx Better Learning added a Kindergarten program in the fall of 2008 and served 345 students in grades K – 5. In 2010-11 the school enrolled 386 students in those same grades. On March 4, 2013, the State University Trustees granted another full five year renewal of the charter for Bronx Charter School for Better Learning. Additionally, on June 4, 2014, the State University Trustees approved a five year charter for the replication of Bronx Better Learning and, in turn, the opening of Bronx Better Learning 2 for September 2015. As part of the approval to replicate Bronx Better Learning 1, the SUNY Trustees approved Bronx Better Learning 1's adding an additional five classrooms over the next three years. Beginning in September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) will govern both charters, i.e., Bronx Better Learning 1 and Bronx Better Learning 2.

Bronx Better Learning originally located in a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227th Street in the Bronx. Following the first year of operation, BBL reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which Bronx Better Learning received permission to locate in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx. The school used 3 classrooms and an office in the main building of P.S. 111 for the first time in 2008-09 to accommodate its growth in enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2008-09, replaced by 5th grade in 2009-10. Beginning September 2014, Bronx Better Learning occupied three additional classrooms in the main building and is scheduled to add another two classrooms for the 2015-16 school year. Bronx Better Learning 2 requested and was granted to co-locate at M.S. 144 (Michelangelo Middle School) at 2545 Gunther Avenue in the Bronx. Bronx Better Learning 2 is located in CSD 11 approximately two miles from Bronx Better Learning 1.

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

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

To fulfill its mission, the school's teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons;

assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child’s high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students’ work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students’ use of what they know to master new content; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

Recently, Bronx Better Learning was recognized by Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents as a 2014-15 High Progress Reward School” The award celebrates Bronx Better Learning’s success in supporting educational excellence.

**Bronx Better Learning:**

- is not test-prep driven; as noted, the instructional approach is constructivist: we know children "construct" their knowledge, understanding and skills, so our teaching is guided by their learning and does not dominate it;
- does not have extended school days;
- does not incorporate an extended school year;
- backfills at all grade levels; and
- serves all students, including those eligible for free and reduced lunch, eligible for special education services and/or eligible for support as English Language Learners (ELL).

**School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year**

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2011-12	69	69	69	66	61	52								386
2012-13	72	72	70	63	62	56								395
2013-14	89	72	72	72	57	58								420
2014-15	108	93	72	72	72	57								474

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

#### Background

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

During the 2014-15 school year, BBL maintained its strong commitment to ensuring a quality ELA program for all of its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards by:

- Continuing to emphasize the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*;
- Continuing to refine the curriculum to ensure its alignment with the State's Common Core Standards;
- Continuing to incorporate as part of its reading foundation the use Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop throughout the school;
- Continuing to foster a joy for reading through the Growing Great Readers program;
- Continuing to support the increased reading proficiency through the Accelerated Readers program;
- Continuing to foster the expansion of the students' vocabulary through the use of the Word of the Day during the school's morning broadcast;
- Continuing to make available to all students access to an extensive classroom library and school library;
- Continuing to closely monitor each student's progress through the use of regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly "Data Day;"
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Identifying a Director of Professional Development to oversee and coordinate teacher development, including the newly expanded Jumpstart Internship Program;
- Raising high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leaders assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level;
- Continuing to provide professional development through our in-house professional development specialists to both teachers and assistants to further ensure each person's readiness to support the needs of all of our students;

- Continuing to utilize writing rubrics that are aligned with the State’s Common Core Standards; and
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations and “walkthroughs” by administration.

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

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

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2015. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year).

**2014-15 State English Language Arts Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>1</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	78	0	0	0	78
4	68	0	0	0	68
5	57	0	0	0	57
All	196	0	0	0	196

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

## Results

On the 2014-15 state ELA exam, 31% of all students scored at the proficient or above level, and the same percentage of continuously enrolled students scored at that level. About one-quarter of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were at least proficient, rising to about one-third in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.

### Performance on 2014-15 State English Language Arts Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	26.8	71	24.2	66
4	33.8	68	34.8	66
5	33.3	57	33.3	57
All	31.1	196	30.7	189

## Evaluation

The school did not meet this measure. Overall it fell about 45 percentage points below the 75% proficient target. That said, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students had higher rates of proficiency, suggesting that students who remain in the school increasingly benefit from the school's program.

## Additional Evidence

The absolute performance this year was lower than the previous year and about the same as two years ago. Our initial analysis of the student test data, coupled with a thorough review of potentially contributing variables, points to several factors that most likely contributed significantly to the drop in scores, including:

- The grouping of students for testing resulted in larger than usual testing groups, creating a less than optimal testing environment;
- Maternity leave reduced targeted academic support for at-risk students, particularly in third grade;
- The shifting of several of our most effective, experienced teachers from regular classroom duties to instructional leadership roles, while anticipated to have a long range positive effect on student performance, reduced the overall quality of ELA instruction in all three testing grades; and
- The interim assessment tool used to monitor student performance during the school year, while effective in the past, was not sufficiently reflective of the structure and rigor of the NYS ELA assessment.

As reflected in our ELA Action Plan, below, we are aggressively addressing and correcting all of the four identified factors.

### English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	30.6	62	43.5	69	24.2	66
4	36.1	61	49.1	53	34.8	66
5	33.9	56	44.8	58	33.3	57
All	33.5	179	45.6	180	30.7	189

#### Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (“PLI”) 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 enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state’s learning standards in English language arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Level Index (“PLI”) value that equals or exceeds the 2014-15 English language arts AMO of 97. The PLI 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 PLI is 200.<sup>2</sup>

#### Results

The school’s Performance Index was 107, which exceeds the AMO of 97.

#### English Language Arts 2014-15 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	24.0%	44.9%	28.1%	3.1%

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 44.9 + 28.1 + 3.1 = 76.0 \\
 &+ 28.1 + 3.1 = 31.1 \\
 &\text{PLI} = 107.1
 \end{aligned}$$

<sup>2</sup> In contrast to SED’s Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

## Evaluation

The school met the measure. It continued to exceed the AMO, this year by 10 points.

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

### Method

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year 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 in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>3</sup>

### Results

With 31% of students scoring at the proficient or above level, the school exceeded the district's performance of 22% proficient or above.

**2014-15 State English Language Arts Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	24.2	66	21.8	3176
4	34.8	66	22.5	3239
5	33.3	57	20.4	3051
All	30.7	189	21.6	9466

<sup>3</sup> Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its Access database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

## Evaluation

The school met this measure. It exceeded the district's performance by nine percentage points.

## Additional Evidence

The school has consistently outperformed the district's percent at or above proficiency.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	30.6	21.0	43.5	22.4	24.2	21.8
4	36.1	20.0	49.1	22.8	34.8	22.5
5	33.9	20.6	44.8	18.8	33.3	20.4
All	33.5	20.5	45.6	21.4	30.7	21.6

#### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

#### Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school's actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar economically disadvantaged percentage. The difference between the schools' actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state's release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2014-15 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2013-14 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

## Results

The school had an overall effect size of 1.7 in 2013-14, which was higher than expected to a large degree.

### **2013-14 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3						
4						
5						
All	80.0		45.5	22.5	23.0	1.7

<b>School's Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
<b><i>Higher than Expected to a Large Degree</i></b>

## Evaluation

The school met this measure.

## Additional Evidence

The school has consistently generated a large, positive effect size for the past three years, growing each year to 1.7 in 2013-14.

### **English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2011-12	3 - 5	64.0	178	57.9	48.7	0.61
2012-13	3 - 5	76.9	181	33.7	22.2	0.87
2013-14	3 - 5	80.0	187	45.5	22.5	1.7

**Goal 1: Growth Measure<sup>4</sup>**

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

**Method**

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2013-14 and also have a state exam score from 2012-13 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2012-13 score are ranked by their 2013-14 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students’ growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school’s mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state’s release of Growth Model data, the 2014-15 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2013-14 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>5</sup>

**Results**

The school’s Mean Growth Percentile was 46.

**2013-14 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level**

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	41	50.0
5	45	50.0
All	43	50.0

**Evaluation**

The school did not meet this measure, falling short of the statewide median by seven points.

<sup>4</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

<sup>5</sup> Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED’s Business Portal: [portal.nysed.gov](http://portal.nysed.gov).

## Additional Evidence

In 2011-12 and 2012-13 the school exceeded the statewide median, but fell short by four points in 2013-14.

### English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2011-12 <sup>6</sup>	2012-13	2013-14	Statewide Median
4		50	46	50.0
5		55	46	50.0
All	61	53	46	50.0

## Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

The school met three out of five of the measures in this goal. Given the state’s realignment of the state tests to Common Core standards, the school was unlikely to achieve the target of 75% proficient, but exceeded the state’s annual measurable objective and the district’s performance, and well has achieving a significant effect size in comparison to similar schools statewide. In terms of growth, the school was close to, but did not achieve, the state median.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state English language arts exam will meet that year’s 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 proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of 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 English language arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State (using 2013-14 school district results.)	Achieved
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state’s unadjusted median growth percentile.	Did Not Achieve

<sup>6</sup> Grade level results not available.

## Action Plan

After three years of steady improvement in student performance on the NYS ELA assessment, this year's student performance data represents a drop in our overall performance of 14%. While student performance in ELA continues to exceed the overall results from CSD 11, the Bronx and the city as a whole, as well as being on par with overall state results, clearly this year's results require our full attention and the development of an action plan that will return the scores to the very high levels previously demonstrated by BBL students.

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

While the ongoing analysis of individual student test results and an item analysis of the NYS ELA assessment will likely lead to additional adjustments in the ELA program as the school year begins, the following targeted steps are already planned:

1. **Curriculum Review:** The ELA curriculum will be further reviewed to ensure its alignment with the NYS Common Core Standards and the NYS ELA assessment. Additionally, curriculum maps will be reviewed to ensure appropriate sequence and pacing of the ELA instructional program.
2. **Lesson Planning Review:** Lesson planning will be closely supervised to ensure that sufficient attention and time are provided for both reading and writing.
3. **Alignment of Academic Leaders:** While Academic Leaders have been provided for each grade, two full-time Academic Leaders with specific expertise in ELA will be assigned to grades three, four and five to further support the delivery of a rigorous and effective ELA program.
4. **Review of Interim Assessments:** Both the schedule and method for monitoring student progress throughout the school year will be reviewed to ensure the accurate alignment with the curriculum and that the assessment criteria are sufficiently rigorous.
5. **Student Support:** The scheduling of academic support will be reviewed and expanded as needed to better meet the needs of underperforming students.
6. **Administrative Supervision:** While the frequency of teacher evaluation was increased last year, the use of "classroom walkthroughs" with written feedback to teachers will be increased. "Classroom walkthroughs" will focus on classroom organization and student engagement.

Additionally, and specifically to address the factors we have identified as mostly likely to have contributed significantly to the drop in ELA test performance:

7. We will fully utilize additional instructional space secured this school year to replicate, during the testing sessions, the more natural, uncrowded classroom conditions typical of our instructional program.
8. We will "overstaff" ELA support, anticipating pending maternity leave.

9. We will re-assign our most senior, effective ELA teachers during the school year, balancing their leadership responsibilities, which are crucial to our long-term success and viability, with daily instructional responsibilities to targeted groups of students in our testing grades.
10. We will institute a series of interim assessments in ELA that more accurately reflect the anticipated rigor and length of the NYS ELA assessments.

## MATHEMATICS

### **Goal 2: Mathematics**

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

#### **Background**

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

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities and, in turn, to ensuring the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all of its students by:

- Continuing to review the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Common Core Standards;
- Continuing to maintain a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Continuing to consistently apply the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, to ensure, even in the earliest stages, that students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to further ensure each person's readiness to support the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations by administration;
- Continuing to emphasize the development of two essential skills, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in their computation skills and increasing the student's ability to effectively focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills; and
- Continuing to ensure that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction, throughout the school year, to gather and analyze student performance data to ensure that each student's individual needs are being addressed.

**Goal 2: Absolute Measure**

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

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2015. Each student's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year's test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year.

**2014-15 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>7</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	71	0	0	0	71
4	68	0	0	0	68
5	57	0	0	0	57
All	196	0	0	0	196

**Results**

The percentage of continuously enrolled students who scored at the proficient or above level was 67%. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 59% scored at this level while more than 70% of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students did so.

**Performance on 2014-15 State Mathematics Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	59.2	71	59.1	66
4	72.1	68	72.7	66
5	70.2	57	70.2	57
All	66.8	196	67.2	189

<sup>7</sup> 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.

## Evaluation

The school did not meet this measure. Overall, it was eight percentage points below the target of 75%. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades came very close to 75%.

## Additional Evidence

The school maintained the significant gains from 2012-13, when 44% were at least proficient. About the same percentage were at least proficient, with 68% in 2013-14 and 67% in 2014-15.

### Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	40.3	62	55.1	69	59.1	66
4	57.4	61	83.0	53	72.7	66
5	33.9	56	69.0	58	70.2	57
All	44.1	179	67.8	180	67.2	189

### Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) 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 enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state's learning standards in mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Level Index (PLI) value that equals or exceeds the 2014-15 mathematics AMO of 94. The PLI 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 PLI is 200.<sup>8</sup>

## Results

The school has a PLI of 158 compared to the AMO of 94.

<sup>8</sup> In contrast to NYSED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

### Mathematics 2014-15 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	8.7%	24.5%	36.7%	30.1%

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 24.5 + 36.7 + 30.1 = 91.3 \\
 &= 36.7 + 30.1 = 66.8 \\
 \text{PLI} &= 158.2
 \end{aligned}$$

#### Evaluation

The school met this measure. Its PLI of 158 exceeded the AMO by 64 points.

#### Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

#### Method

A school compares the performance of tested students enrolled in at least their second year to that of all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>9</sup>

#### Results

Overall 67% of students scored at or above the proficient level, compared to 29% of district students in the same grades.

### 2014-15 State Mathematics Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	59.1	66	27.8	3219
4	72.7	66	28.0	3291
5	70.2	57	31.7	3091
All	67.2	189	29.0	9601

<sup>9</sup> Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

## Evaluation

The school met this measure. It outperformed the district by approximately 38 percentage points.

## Additional Evidence

The school has continued to outperform the district and has maintained the gap of 38 percentage points for the last two years.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	40.3	23.8	55.1	29.2	59.1	27.8
4	57.4	24.1	83.0	32.6	72.7	28.0
5	33.9	21.5	69.0	26.8	70.2	31.7
All	44.1	23.1	67.8	29.6	67.2	29.0

### Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

### Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school's actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar economically disadvantaged percentage. The difference between the schools' actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state's release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2014-15 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2013-14 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

## Results

The school had an overall Effect Size of 1.88.

### **2013-14 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3						
4						
5						
All	80.0	187	67.4	31.2	36.2	1.88

<b>School's Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
<b><i>Exceeded Expectations to a Large Degree</i></b>

## Evaluation

The school met this measure. Its Effect Size was higher than expected to a large degree and all three grades individually exceeded the target of 0.3

## Additional Evidence

The school has consistently performed higher than expected to a large degree with the highest effect size of 1.88 last year.

### **Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2011-12	3 - 5	64.0	178	78.7	58.2	1.15
2012-13	3 - 5	76.9	181	44.2	25.4	1.11
2013-14	3 - 5	80.0	187	67.4	31.2	1.88

**Goal 2: Growth Measure<sup>10</sup>**

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

**Method**

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2013-14 and also have a state exam score in 2012-13 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2012-13 scores are ranked by their 2013-14 scores and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students’ growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school’s mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state’s release of Growth Model data, the 2014-15 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2013-14 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>11</sup>

**Results**

In 2013-14 the school’s overall mean growth percentile was 62.

**2013-14 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level**

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	66	50.0
5	46	50.0
All	56	50.0

**Evaluation**

The school met this target. It exceeded the statewide median of 50 by 6 points, overall. Fifth grade fell below by 4 points, while fourth exceeded the median by 16 points.

**Additional Evidence**

The school has continued to exceed the statewide median for the third year in a row.

<sup>10</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

<sup>11</sup> Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED’s business portal: [portal.nysed.gov](http://portal.nysed.gov).

## Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2011-12 <sup>12</sup>	2012-13	2013-14	Statewide Median
4	49	61	69	50.0
5	67	55	54	50.0
All	58	58	56	50.0

### **Summary of the Mathematics Goal**

The school met all but one of the measures in this goal. It came close to meeting the absolute measure of 75% proficient. It far exceeded the performance of the local district and similar schools statewide. Finally, it has demonstrated strong growth compared to the state.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year's 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 proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of 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 mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2013-14 school district results.)	Achieved
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Achieved

### **Action Plan**

Bronx Better Learning students continue to demonstrate noteworthy achievement throughout the testing grades; still, there is room for improvement. As such, BBL continues its commitment to ensuring that all of its students perform excellently in mathematics. To facilitate the continued growth of our students, the following actions will be taken:

1. **Instructional Rigor:** The mathematics program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective computational skills for all students through:

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<sup>12</sup> Grade level results not available.

- a. Academic Leaders: Academic Leaders in grades kindergarten through second continue to be placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards. In the upper grades, third through fifth, which are departmentalized, Academic Leaders are assigned by subject, i.e., beginning this coming school year, there will be an Academic Leader specifically for mathematics.
  - b. Data Driven Decision Making: Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning. In order to ensure the meaningfulness of the assessment data, the interim assessment tool has been changed from Test Wiz to Achievement Network.
2. Focus on At-Risk Students: The Mathematics program will continue its support for students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:
- a. Experienced Teachers: The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL’s most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student’s instructional program.
  - b. Special Education Instructional Options: Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services, and related services, e.g., speech, occupational therapy and counseling.
  - c. English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support: The ELL Coordinator’s schedule continues to ensure the effective delivery of needed support for students identified eligible for ELL support services.
3. Professional Development: The mathematics program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
- a. Daily Institutes: The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Mathematics Academic Leader have arranged a weekly institutes schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school’s pedagogy throughout the school.
  - b. In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in “real situations” the effectiveness of the school’s approach.

## SCIENCE

### **Goal 3: Science**

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

#### **Background**

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

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to strongly promote effective student mastery of the State's Common Core Curriculum in science by:

- Continuing to implement the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning, incorporating techniques and materials that foster students' active participation in lessons;
- Continuing to implement lessons that emphasize hands-on experimentation and make use of BOCES prepared science kits (Science 21 Program) that complement the school's core pedagogy;
- Continuing to incorporate a problem solving approach that presents students with "real life" problems and working in groups, which analyze data/information to come up with solutions to the problems, all of which leads students to a deeper appreciation of cause and effect relationships; and
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students who are not progressing as expected.

### **Goal 3: Absolute Measure**

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

#### **Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in spring 2015. The school converted each student's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

#### **Results**

96% of the school's fourth grade students achieved a level 3 or 4 on the NYS Science assessment.

**Charter School Performance on 2014-15 State Science Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	96	66	N/A	N/A

**Evaluation**

The school met this measure. It far exceeded the target of 75% proficient.

**Additional Evidence**

The school has consistently met this measure, with no less than 96% proficient in any of the last three years.

Also, additional evidence may include other valid and reliable assessment results that demonstrate the effectiveness of the science program.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	98	61	100	57	96	66
All	98	61	100	57	96	66

**Goal 3: Comparative Measure**

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

**Method**

The school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year 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 in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

## Results

District Science results are not available.

### 2014-15 State Science Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	96	66	N/A	N/A

## Evaluation

This measure cannot be determined because district Science results are not available.

## Additional Evidence

District results are not available, making it impossible to evaluate trends over time.

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students					
	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
4	98	N/A	100	N/A	96	N/A
All	98	N/A	100	N/A	96	N/A

## Summary of the Science Goal

With 96% of students proficient in Science, the school has met this goal.

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

## Action Plan

The students continue to perform exceptionally well on the NYS Science assessment – achieving 96% passing for the 2014-2015 school year. While student performance in Science continues to be laudable, Bronx Better Learning will refine and improve its program through:

1. Instructional Rigor: The science program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective analytical skills for all students through:
  - a. Academic Leaders have been placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards.
  - b. Science Curriculum Coordinator: A Science Curriculum Coordinator has been appointed to facilitate instructional planning and curriculum refinement.
  - c. Data Driven Decision Making: Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
2. Focus on At-Risk Students: The science program continues to support for students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:
  - a. Experienced Teachers: The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL's most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student's instructional program.
  - b. Special Education Instructional Options: Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services, and related services, e.g., speech, occupational therapy and counseling.
  - c. English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support: The ELL Coordinator's schedule ensures the effective delivery of needed support for students identified as ELL.
3. Professional Development: The science program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
  - a. Daily Institutes: The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Academic Leaders have arranged a weekly Institute schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school's pedagogy throughout the school.
  - b. In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in "real situations" the effectiveness of the school's approach.

## NCLB

### Goal 4: NCLB

The school will make Adequate Yearly Progress.

### Goal 4: Absolute Measure

Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status is in good standing: the state has not identified the school as a Focus School nor determined that it has met the criteria to be identified as school requiring a local assistance plan.

### Method

Because *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 state proficiency standards. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards. The report cards indicate each school's status under the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.

### Results

Bronx Better Learning is in good standing.

### Evaluation

The school has met this measure and achieved the goal.

### Additional Evidence

The school has consistently been in good standing .

#### NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2012-13	Good Standing
2013-14	Good Standing
2014-15	Good Standing