



EMPOWER

CHARTER SCHOOL

Explore Empower Charter School

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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By Explore Schools Inc.

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2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Explore Schools Inc. prepared this 2018-19 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Morty Ballen	Member, Accountability Committee
Jana Reed	Member, Finance and Accountability Committees
Hank Mannix	President, Accountability Committee
Angie Brice	Member, Accountability Committee
Lindsay Danon	Member, Accountability Committee
Robert Archer	Parent Representative
Lindsay Matovich	Member, Finance Committee

Thomas Anthony and Awo Busumsi have served as the Co-Principals since July 2017 and July 2018 respectively.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Explore Empower Charter School is a K–8 public charter school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Empower opened in 2009 and graduated its first class of 8th graders in 2016 to some of the top college-preparatory high schools in New York City. While Empower’s mission continues to be to provide students with the academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school, we have honed the vision and priorities for how we go about achieving that mission. Our vision for instruction includes:

- We View Excellent Curriculum and Instruction as a Pathway to Equity and a Response to the Opportunity Gap by Providing our Scholars with Access and Opportunities to Succeed
- Our Curriculum is Culturally Responsive, Rigorous, and Standards Aligned
- We Believe Children are Natural Problem Solvers, and so we Value Teaching that Balances Critical Thinking with Learning New Skills and Knowledge
- We Cultivate Student Investment by Nurturing Curiosity, Providing High-Quality Feedback, and Using Data to Drive Our Decision Making

In the 2018-19 school year, Empower served 509 students as of BEDS Day (October 3, 2018).

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2014-15	56	61	57	59	59	57	60	53	-	462
2015-16	55	59	54	53	55	55	61	57	44	493
2016-17	49	52	60	58	59	54	59	59	55	505
2017-18	59	63	58	61	60	62	56	54	57	530
2018-19	54	59	58	62	58	59	59	51	49	509

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Explore Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English.

BACKGROUND

For the 2018-19 school year, Empower Charter School used the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Skills and Listening & Learning Strands for grades K–2 and Expeditionary Learning in cohort with Teachers College Writing curriculum, Words Their Way, and Grammar Works, for grades 3–8. In addition, the school reserved a block for independent reading, and students who are reading below grade level received guided reading or Leveled Literacy Intervention. Empower’s previously established partnership with Lavinia Group continued through the 2018-19 school year. The Lavinia group provided dedicated professional development to Empower’s teachers on close reading strategies. The ongoing training ensured that Empower’s students received four intensive periods of Close Reading where they read short grade-level texts and dissected the main ideas. Students were

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

taught to closely read a cold text, identify the genre and central idea, and then analyze the text throughout all subject areas.

ESI's program team continued to provide support directly to Empower's leaders and teachers. In the 2018-19 school year, ESI's program team included a Senior Director of Literacy and a Network Literacy Specialist who worked to ensure Empower leaders had the tools, resources, and access to high-quality trainings for literacy instruction.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts ("ELA") assessment to students in 3rd through 8th grade in April 2019. 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).

2018-19 State English Language Arts Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	59					59
4	54				1	54
5	55	1			1	57
6	58					58
7	47				2	49
8	49					49
All	322					327

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Students in at least their 2nd year at Empower fell short of this measure by 31.2 percentage points. Empower did not meet this measure. While we did not achieve this measure, we did see growth (3.2pp growth over 2017-18) overall, and 4 of our 6 testing grades met or exceeded their

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

performance compared to 2017-18. In addition, our 7^h graders increased their proficiency levels by over 15pp when compared to 2017-18 NYS assessment results.

Performance on 2018-19 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	45.8%	59	46.0%	50
4	37.0%	54	37.0%	46
5	27.3%	55	30.2%	43
6	46.6%	58	49.0%	51
7	48.9%	47	45.5%	44
8	55.1%	49	53.2%	47
All	43.2%	322	43.8%	281

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Although students enrolled in at least their 2nd year at Empower did not meet this absolute measure, they did achieve growth when comparing 2017-18 scores to 2018-19. Over the charter term, Empower students in their 2nd year achieved significant growth, increasing proficiency by over 10pp.

We believe this is a direct result of multiple changes implemented in 2017-18 and beyond, including our partnership with Lavinia Group to implement close reading strategies. With this continued partnership, coupled with a focus on developing students' writing skills by exposing them to different writing styles and ample time to practice writing, we expect to see continued growth in 2019-20. We also credit this growth to the systems and processes we implemented in the 2017-18 school year that we continued to emphasize in the 2018-19 school year.

ELA Performance by Grade Level and Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	28.2%	39	37.5%	48	46.0%	50
4	41.7%	48	48.9%	45	37.0%	46
5	33.3%	42	33.3%	51	30.2%	43
6	15.2%	46	46.5%	43	49.0%	51
7	24.4%	45	28.6%	49	45.5%	44
8	53.8%	52	50.0%	52	53.2%	25
All	33.5%	272	40.6%	288	43.8%	281

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

In New York State, ESSA school performance goals are met by showing that an absolute proportion of a school's students who have taken the English language arts test have scored at the partially proficient, or proficient and advanced performance levels (Levels 2 or 3 & 4). The percentage of students at each of these three levels is used to calculate a PI and determine if the school has met the MIP set each year by the state’s ESSA accountability system. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PI value that equals or exceeds the state’s 2018-19 English language arts MIP for all students of 105. The PI is the sum of the percent of students in all tested grades combined scoring at Level 2, plus two times the percent of students scoring at Level 3, plus two-and-a-half times the percent of students scoring at Level 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 250.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our performance index for the 18-19 academic year in English Language Arts was 129.8. We have surpassed the measure set by the state by 24.8 points. The increased proficiency can be attributed to Empower’s focus on independent reading, allowing students to practice comprehension and decoding strategies, as well as small group instruction, which allowed teachers to address students’ skill gaps by analyzing data collected during literacy components in the classroom.

English Language Arts 2018-19 Performance Index

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	19.2%	37.0%	33.5%	10.3%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 37 & + & 33.5 & + & 10.3 & = & 80.8 \\
 & & & & 33.5 & + & 10.3 & = & 43.8 \\
 & & & & & + & (.5)*10.3 & = & 5.2 \\
 & & & & & & \text{PI} & = & \mathbf{129.8}
 \end{array}$$

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.²

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower met this measure. Students enrolled in at least their 2nd year at Empower met this measure for ELA and outperformed their local district. This growth can be attributed to many factors, including but not limited to:

- a) More intentional teacher coaching using thoughtful termly benchmarks
- b) Partnership with Lavinia Group to train teachers on close reading strategies
- c) Systematic and cohesive processes for setting benchmarks and responding to data

2018-19 State English Language Arts Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	46.0%	50	51.4%	1228
4	37.0%	46	45.5%	1388
5	30.2%	43	30.0%	1330
6	49.0%	51	43.8%	1543
7	45.5%	44	37.3%	1468
8	53.2%	25	46.7%	1513
All	43.8%	281	42.4%	8470

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Overall, students in at least their 2nd year at Empower outperformed local district students in ELA. This trend is demonstrated in all but two grades at Empower. Empower's Upper School in particular outperformed the district. From 2017-18 to 2018-19, Empower closed the gap when compared to the district schools, going from 1.1pp below the district to 1.4pp above the district's performance.

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Scoring at or Above Proficiency Compared to District Students					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	28.2%	34.8%	37.5%	45.2%	46.0%	51.4%
4	41.7%	35.8%	48.9%	44.5%	37.0%	45.5%
5	33.3%	28.5%	33.3%	30.1%	30.2%	30.0%
6	15.2%	24.3%	46.5%	45.0%	49.0%	43.8%
7	24.4%	34.9%	28.6%	38.5%	45.5%	37.3%
8	53.8%	41.6%	50.0%	47.1%	53.2%	46.7%
All	33.5%	33.5%	40.6%	41.7%	43.8%	42.4%

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2018-19 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2017-18 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower did not meet this measure but its overall performance was slightly higher than expected when comparing actual comparative performance to predicted performance. Three of the six grades tested exceeded the predicted level of performance by an Effect Size higher than 0.3. In the 3rd grade specifically, performance of economically disadvantaged students led to an Effect Size of .67, more than double the threshold to meet this measure.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2017-18 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	83.3	57	40.4	40.9	-0.6	-0.03
4	87.7	53	49.1	36.5	12.6	0.67
5	85.0	60	35.0	26.3	8.7	0.55
6	78.6	52	40.4	39.9	0.5	0.03
7	72.2	51	29.4	33.6	-4.2	-0.23
8	75.0	54	48.1	41.0	7.1	0.35
All	80.5	327	40.4	36.2	4.1	0.23

School's Overall Comparative Performance:

Slightly higher than expected.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Over the charter term, Empower has continued to improve upon proficiency of economically disadvantaged students going from a .16 overall Effect Size in 2016-17 to a .23 overall Effect Size in the 2018-19 school year.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2015-16	3-8	83.9	316	28.6	25.9	0.16
2016-17	3-8	80.1	340	31.1	29.7	0.06
2017-18	3-8	80.5	327	40.4	36.2	0.23

Goal 1: Growth Measure³

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

METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2017-18 and also have a state exam score from 2016-17 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2016-17 score are ranked by their 2017-18 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the target for this measure, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2018-19 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2017-18 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁴

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower met this measure, surpassing the states mean growth percentile of 50%. Overall, Empower had a mean growth percentile of 61.8% and each grade level also surpassed the mean growth percentile by at least 7.5pp. This represents an increase of 9.6pp when comparing to the previous year's mean growth percentile.

2017-18 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Target
4	57.5	50.0
5	61.5	50.0
6	59.5	50.0
7	69.5	50.0
8	61.0	50.0
All	61.8	50.0

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Over the past three years, Empower has met this measure. While the school has a small dip in growth percentile in 2016-17 as compared to the 2015-16 year, the growth percentile continued to be above the threshold of 50.0. In the 2017-18 school year the school saw strong acceleration in that growth fueled by several programmatic changes including adopting close reading with the support of Lavinia Group.

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

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Target
4	35	50.1	57.5	50.0
5	47	51.7	61.5	50.0
6	60	48.8	59.5	50.0
7	62	58.8	69.5	50.0
8	62	52.2	61.0	50.0
All	53	52.2	61.8	50.0

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Empower achieved three ELA performance measures during the 2018-19 school year, increasing the number of measures met by one when compared to the previous school year. While Empower did not meet the absolute measure of 75% of student scoring proficiently or the comparative measure

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

of exceeding the predicted level of performance for economically disadvantaged students, it did improve upon both measures when compared to the beginning of the current charter term.

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 PI on the state's English language arts exam will meet that year's state MIP as set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.	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 school district of comparison.	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 meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2017-18 results.)	Did Not Achieve
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50. (Using 2017-18 results.)	Achieved

ACTION PLAN

Curriculum

K-2:

Empower's early literacy curriculum focuses on comprehensive instruction. The K-2 literacy program focuses on developing phonological awareness, building content knowledge and vocabulary, and developing comprehension skills. Empower uses the CKLA program in grades K-2 as its core curriculum. CKLA has two program strands: Knowledge and Skills. CKLA's two strand program is research-based and provides extensive support for students as they become critical readers and writers.

According to CKLA, the **Knowledge** Strand emphasizes comprehension skill development in a language- and knowledge-rich context. The primary instructional activity is a read-aloud that exposes students to complex texts, related to a systematically ordered set of topics, or domains. The materials are designed to build knowledge in areas of history, science, literature, and geography. The lesson activities emphasize vocabulary acquisition, build comprehension skills through interactive discussions during and after reading, and use writing to extend and explore the texts and their content.¹ To complement this instruction, The **Skills** strand is a comprehensive, explicit, and systematic phonics program designed to build decoding, fluency, and writing/spelling skills.²

In addition to the two CKLA strands, Empower also offers students Close Reading and Interactive Read Alouds to ensure students have the opportunity to read and analyze high-quality, complex texts that are both on and above grade level. Empower supplements the writing instruction offered inside of CKLA by using their companion program, Writing Studio. Writing Studio is highly aligned with the scope and sequence inside of the Knowledge Strand and offers students continued support and practice in writing narrative, opinion, and informational texts.

3–8:

Our literacy program, for these essential periods of development, is methodologically designed and integrated to help our students become successful readers and life-long learners who are prepared to thrive in college-preparatory high school programs and beyond.

Specifically, Empower uses Expeditionary Learning (EL) as the primary resource for teaching literacy in grades 3–8. Expeditionary Learning includes both reading and writing instruction as well as explicitly imbedding the Speaking and Listening Standards. The curriculum is designed to address the three key components of the standards: (1) regular practice with complex text and its academic language, (2) reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from both literary and informational text, and (3) building knowledge through content-rich non-fiction. Based on the latest research supporting the power of background knowledge, EL modules are designed around topics that help students build background knowledge. Modules also include a blend of fiction and non-fiction complex texts. In each module, students have the opportunity to dig deeply into a high-interest topic by analyzing complex, grade-level texts and then completing performance tasks and assessments aligned to the standards. In addition, we offer students four periods per week of Close Reading where they read short grade-level texts, dissect the main ideas and craft and structure moves in order to build independence as readers.

Special Populations of Students (ELL, Students with Disabilities):

Empower's Special Populations team worked to improve instruction and support for our special populations. In the coming school year, small group instruction (SGI) will be the key component of Empower's approach to supporting special populations. The primary resource for SGI in grades K–3 will continue to be skills double dose. This intervention provides data-based support for students struggling with decoding and comprehension, aligned to the core Skills curriculum. In 4–8, Leveled Literacy Intervention, (LLI) and Wilson are the primary intervention resources for decoding and comprehension for students who are significantly below grade level in reading. In addition, small group close reading groups will be created based on reading and interim data.

Approach to data-driven instruction

In the 2018-19 school year, we implemented numerous data systems and structures to provide school leaders and teachers with actionable data to accelerate student learning. This year, we've developed a comprehensive data platform through the use of PowerBI providing school leaders earlier access to assessment data that can be analyzed and compared across grades, schools, terms, and years.

We use a set of common benchmarks and measures for student performance in ELA and math. In collaboration with the school's leadership, the network sets End of Year (EOY) measures tied to official assessments. They include:

- the mathematics and English language arts state exams,
- Fountas and Pinnell,
- Core Knowledge Skills assessments, and
- NYSESLAT

Aligned to the EOY measures, the network also sets cycle measures that identify intervals for improvement on internal assessments in order to be on track to meet EOY measures. Teachers use these measures to set classroom level goals and track progress toward them throughout the year. Progress toward benchmarks is tightly monitored, through weekly data tracking of student outputs aligned to each measure, and through teacher observations, feedback, and professional development

aligned to a focused set of teacher inputs. Almost all network-driven professional development and resource creation is aligned to the benchmarks with student outputs and teacher inputs identified termly. Student outputs are defined as observable student behaviors that indicate progress toward achieving the cycle and EOY measures. Teacher inputs are defined as observable strategies and actions teachers can take that will lead to the student outputs.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Explore Empower Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in math.

BACKGROUND

Empower's approach to math instruction prioritizes the three key elements of the standards: 1) Deep dive into few topics, 2) Coherence: linking topics and thinking across grades, and 3) Rigor: pursuing conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application with equal intensity. Empower implements research-based curricular resources that best support this vision for mathematical instruction. In grades 3–8, Empower uses Achievement First's Math Curriculum, AF Navigator.

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 3rd through 8th grade in April 2019. 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.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2018-19 State Mathematics Exam Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁵				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	59					59
4	54				1	55
5	54	1			2	57
6	57				1	57
7	49					49
8	49					49
All	322	1			4	327

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower students in at least their 2nd year did not meet this measure for Math. Empower missed this measure by 22.7pp. However, the school demonstrated significant growth in this area from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Empower's overall proficiency rate increased by over 12pp, jumping from 39.4% to 52.3%. The school's 4th graders who have been at Empower for 2+ years increased their proficiency by over 25pp.

Performance on 2018-19 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	78.0%	59	76.0%	50
4	57.4%	54	60.9%	46
5	29.6%	54	26.2%	42
6	45.6%	57	44.0%	50
7	51.0%	49	47.8%	46
8	57.1%	49	55.3%	47
All	53.4%	322	52.3%	281

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

While Empower did not meet this measure in all grades, Empower students enrolled in at least their second year, performed almost comparably to all student tested in all grades and outperformed all

⁵ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

students in 4th grade. Over the charter period, students enrolled in at least their second year have increased overall performance in math by 23pp.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	43.6%	39	50.0%	48	76.0%	50
4	38.3%	47	33.3%	45	60.9%	46
5	19.5%	41	34.0%	50	26.2%	42
6	23.9%	46	37.2%	43	44.0%	50
7	31.1%	45	40.8%	49	47.8%	46
8	21.2%	52	40.4%	52	55.3%	47
All	29.3%	270	39.4%	287	52.3%	281

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

In New York State, ESSA school performance goals are met by showing that an absolute proportion of a school's students who have taken the mathematics test have scored at the partially proficient, or proficient and advanced performance levels (Levels 2 or 3 & 4). The percentage of students at each of these three levels is used to calculate a PI and determine if the school has met the MIP set each year by the state's ESSA accountability system. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PI value that equals or exceeds the state's 2018-19 mathematics MIP for all students of 107. The PI is the sum of the percent of students in all tested grades combined scoring at Level 2, plus two times the percent of students scoring at Level 3, plus two-and-a-half times the percent of students scoring at Level 4. Thus, the highest possible PI is 250.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our performance index for the 18-19 academic year in Math was 144.5, surpassing the measure set by the state by 37.5 points.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Mathematics 2018-19 Performance Level Index (PI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	23.3	23.3	25.2	28.3

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 23.3 + 25.2 + 28.3 = 76.8 \\
 &+ 25.2 + 28.3 = 53.5 \\
 &+ (.5) * 28.3 = 14.2 \\
 \text{PI} &= \mathbf{144.5}
 \end{aligned}$$

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower met this measure for the 2018-19 school year. Students in at least their 2nd year at Empower Charter School outperformed all district 17 students on the 2018-19 math exam by an average of 12pp. Empower students in at least their second year outperformed all students in district 17 in all grades except 5th grade.

2018-19 State Mathematics Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	76.0%	50	50.3%	1243
4	60.9%	46	41.9%	1393
5	26.2%	42	34.4%	1353
6	44.0%	50	38.8%	1556
7	47.8%	46	33.4%	1344
8	55.3%	47	32.6%	1347
All	52.3%	281	38.4%	8236

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Students enrolled in at least their second year at Empower outperformed their district overall in math by nearly 20pp. Additionally, all grades except grade 5 saw growth in math from 2018 of at least 5 percentage points, most by significantly more. From 2017-18 to 2018-19 Empower continued to pull ahead of the district, moving from 5.8% ahead to 13.9% ahead.

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					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	43.6%	38.8%	50.0%	46.3%	76.0%	50.3%
4	38.3%	28.1%	33.3%	37.5%	60.9%	41.9%
5	19.5%	28.5%	34.0%	29.1%	26.2%	34.4%
6	23.9%	29.2%	37.2%	34.4%	44.0%	38.8%
7	31.1%	17.9%	40.8%	25.5%	47.8%	33.4%
8	21.2%	16.9%	40.4%	28.9%	55.3%	32.6%
All	29.3%	26.5%	39.4%	33.6%	52.3%	38.4%

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Although Empower did not meet this measure, falling short of the 0.3 Effect Size threshold, the school's economically disadvantaged students performed slightly higher than predicted by 4.5pp. In addition, the school did improve upon this measure by 0.28 when compared to the previous academic year and came within 0.09 of the Effect Size threshold.

2017-18 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	83.3	57	50.9	43.8	7.1	0.33
4	87.7	53	34.0	35.1	-1.1	-0.05
5	85.0	59	30.5	30.7	-0.2	-0.01
6	78.6	52	32.7	33.9	-1.2	-0.10
7	72.2	51	41.2	33.4	7.8	0.38
8	75.0	54	38.9	23.7	15.2	0.67
All	80.5	326	38.0	33.5	4.5	0.21
School's Overall Comparative Performance:						
Slightly higher than expected						

Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2015-16	3-8	83.8	317	30.7	25.3	0.29
2016-17	3-8	80.1	339	26.7	27.7	-0.06
2017-18	3-8	80.5	326	38.0	33.5	0.21

Goal 2: Growth Measure⁷

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

METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2017-18 and also have a state exam score in 2016-17 including students who were retained in the same grade.

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Students with the same 2016-17 scores are ranked by their 2017-18 scores and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to meet the measure, the school would have to achieve a mean growth percentile above the target of 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2018-19 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2017-18 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁸

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Students at Empower charter school met the mean growth percentile measure with a mean growth percentile of 64.1, exceeding the threshold by 14.1pp. Students in all grades, with the exception of 4th grade, exceeded the measure. Student in grade 7 did particularly well exceeding the measure by 35.5pp. This data demonstrates that Empower students continue to grow in proficiency at a faster rate than students who had similar scores in the previous school year.

2017-18 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Target
4	48.0	50.0
5	53.0	50.0
6	72.5	50.0
7	85.5	50.0
8	61.5	50.0
All	64.1	50.0

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Over the past three years, students at Empower have consistently exceeded the mean growth percentile of 50.0 demonstrating over the charter term that students at Empower grew academically at a rate faster than other students with similar scores on the NYS math assessment. In the 2017-18 school year, that growth was particularly strong when compared to the previous 2 years. This data demonstrates that the changes to Empower's academic program are yielding demonstrable results.

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

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Target
4	32.1	48.2	48.0	50.0
5	48.0	54.4	53.0	50.0
6	55.3	58.2	72.5	50.0
7	73.9	69.5	85.5	50.0
8	66.5	39.7	61.5	50.0
All	54.9	53.8	64.1	50.0

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

In the 2018-19 school year, Empower met 3 of its 5 accountability measures. While the school did not meet the absolute measure of 75 percent of student in their second year demonstrating proficiency on the NYS math exam, the students at Empower continued to improve their performance when compared to the previous school year, improving proficiency by 13pp. Although the school did not meet all of its measures, it improved upon all math measures when compared to the 2017-18 school year, demonstrating the effectiveness of the math academic program being implemented by the school.

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 PI on the state’s mathematics exam will meet that year’s state MIP as set forth in the state’s ESSA 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 school district of comparison.	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 meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2017-18 results.)	Did Not Achieve
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50. (Using the 2017-18 results.)	Achieved

ACTION PLAN

With the adoption of the AF Navigator curriculum, Empower elevated the level of rigor in math instruction for its students. Below we outline the additional steps Empower took by grade band—to continue to improve the quality of math instruction this past year:

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

- **Grades K–2:** This past school year (2018-19) Empower implemented Achievement First’s Math Stories curriculum in grades K–2. Math Stories is a curriculum that uses strategically designed routines, to help students develop a deep number sense and flexibility with numbers in order to support complex problem solving. Math Stories also provides students with an access point into basic math operations by using real life topics familiar to students. Overall, the implementation of Math Stories has shown promising signs, with K–2 Empower students improving proficiency in accuracy and representation by 38 and 42pp respectively by the end of the 2018-19 school year.
- **Grades 3–8:** In partnership with Achievement First, Empower’s 3–8 grade math teachers participated in robust training for AF Navigator, designed to deepen their understanding of the math content and the critical thinking work students must engage with to show mastery of the standards. In addition, Empower started to offer additional math intervention blocks to allow teachers to further assess student needs and employ timely and effective interventions in the 2018-19 school year. Interventions ensure students struggling with grade-level standards continue to get exposure to grade-level content while still remediating lagging skills. Finally, another change Empower made last year to effectively assess student progress with the AF Navigator curriculum, was to adopt the AF Navigator interim exams in grades 3–8. These exams are externally validated and provide benchmark data for how students at Empower, and across the Explore Schools network, did in comparison to other schools.
- **Special Populations:** Empower’s Special Populations team worked to revamp the approach to small group instruction (SGI) in math during the 2018-19 school year. The goal was to ensure small group instruction and SETSS were aligned to the current classroom curriculum. To support in remediating any lagging skills, Empower will be using Goal Book which uses vertical progression, allowing teachers to scaffold to reach the priority skills while also providing additional practice for students.

Approach to data-driven instruction

In the 2018-19 school year, we implemented numerous data systems and structures to provide school leaders and teachers with actionable data to accelerate student learning. This year, we’ve developed a comprehensive data platform through the use of PowerBI providing school leaders earlier access to assessment data that can be analyzed and compared across grades, schools, terms, and years.

We use a set of common benchmarks and measures for student performance in ELA and math. In collaboration with the school’s leadership, the network sets End of Year (EOY) measures tied to official assessments. They include:

- the mathematics and English language arts state exams,
- Fountas and Pinnell,
- Core Knowledge Skills assessments, and
- NYSESLAT

Aligned to the EOY measures, the network also sets cycle measures that identify intervals for improvement on internal assessments in order to be on track to meet EOY measures. Teachers use these measures to set classroom level goals and track progress toward them throughout the year. Progress toward benchmarks is tightly monitored, through weekly data tracking of student outputs aligned to each measure, and through teacher observations, feedback, and professional development aligned to a focused set of teacher inputs. Almost all network-driven professional development and resource creation is aligned to the benchmarks with student outputs and teacher inputs identified termly. Student outputs are defined as observable student behaviors that indicate progress

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

toward achieving the cycle and EOY measures. Teacher inputs are defined as observable strategies and actions teachers can take that will lead to the student outputs.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Explore Empower Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in Science.

BACKGROUND

In 2018-19, Empower Charter School employed a full-time K–5 science teacher, a full-time 6th grade science teacher, and a full-time 7th & 8th grade science teacher. Empower’s science curriculum is designed to promote inquiry, problem solving skills, and exposure to 21st century learning and skills. Science teachers develop their own lessons based on best practices in the field, and they partner with school leaders to ensure the lessons are rigorous and aligned to NYS standards. In the 2018-19 school year, the school continued to work with Dr. Purvis, a veteran science instructor and consultant recommended to us by Success Academy to work with our network’s science teachers to examine their lesson plans and curriculum to ensure alignment with the NY Science Standards. Dr. Purvis has decades of experience working in science education, and he worked with Success Academy to design their science curriculum. He provides group professional development to all network science teachers, and he also provides one-on-one coaching and lesson plan feedback to individual teachers.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4th and 8th grade in spring 2019. The school converted each student’s raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower did not meet this measure. Empower 4th and 8th grade students in at least their 2nd year achieved 60.6% proficiency. While not meeting the measure, Empower did improve upon its performance on the New York State science exam when compared to the previous academic year by over 4pp. In particular, students in 8th grade improved significantly, raising proficiency on the exam by 17pp when compared to 2018.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Charter School Performance on 2018-19 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency of Students in At Least 2 nd Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	72.3%	47
8	48.9%	47
All	60.6%	94

Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	78.7%	47	84.4%	45	72.3%	47
8	35.3%	51	31.9%	47	48.9%	47
All	56.1%	98	57.6%	92	60.6%	94

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

The school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the school district of comparison. Given the timing of the state's release of district science data, the 2018-19 comparative data may not yet be available. If not, schools should report comparison to the district's **2017-18** data.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

At this time, we have not received access to district science performance data and therefore cannot determine comparative performance.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2018-19 State Science Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students ⁹	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	72.3%	47	--	--
8	48.9%	47	--	--
All	60.6%	94	--	--

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					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
4	78.7%	--	84.4%	--	72.3%	--
8	35.3%	--	31.9%	--	48.9%	--
All	56.1%	--	57.6%	67.0%	60.6%	--

SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

Empower did not meet the absolute measure for 75% of students in at least their second-year performance at or above proficiency. However, the school did increase overall proficiency by over 4pp when compared with the previous year's scores. At this time, we have not received access to district science performance data and therefore cannot determine comparative performance.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State examination.	Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	N/A

ACTION PLAN

Empower is continuing to build a robust, high-quality science program that gives students a 21st century science experience, in the 2019-20 school year, Empower Upper will be introducing Amplify Science. The new high-quality curriculum blends hands on investigations with literacy rich tools to support students.

⁹ This table uses the prior year's results as 2018-19 district science scores are not yet available.

2018-19 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Also rated highly by ED Reports, we expect that Amplify Science will help support Empower teachers in providing high-quality instruction in science. 8th grade students at Empower will have the opportunity to prepare and take the Living Environment Regents. Empower will offer a Living Environment Regents prep course for all 8th grade students within the regular science blocks. The school will also increase the amount of science that 8th grade students are getting: All 8th grade students will receive science 4 times a week for 45 mins and an additional 90 mins of science lab hours every week. We will continue to host network-wide professional development sessions for science teachers during our staff in-service days.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Goal 4: ESSA

Explore Empower Charter School will make adequately yearly progress.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's performance standards, the federal statute stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. As New York State, like all states, is required to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Each year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school's status under the state accountability system.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Empower has continued to meet this measure over the past three years and remains in good standing with ESSA.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2016-17	Good Standing
2017-18	Good Standing
2018-19	Good Standing