



Albany Community Charter School

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

S. Neal Currie Jr., Principal, prepared this 2019-20 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's 2020-21 board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
John P. Reilly	Chair
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S. Neal Currie has served as the Executive Director or Principal since 2006.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION

The mission of Albany Community Charter School has been to provide a high-quality educational experience for children in the Albany area by building a shared responsibility and commitment for student success. We believe all children can excel in a nurturing and supportive environment of high expectations, love and respect giving them the ability to determine their future success in school and life.

Through a relentless focus on academic achievement and character development, we have sought to develop in our students the academic and social skills necessary to enable them to discover their unique gifts and talents in order to become responsible public citizens dedicated to the advancement of one's self, one's family and one's community.

BACKGROUND

Albany Community Charter School began operating in September 2006 and was subsequently renewed for full terms in 2011 and 2016, with the current term expiring in July 2021. Currently, ACCS serves 650 students in grades K-8 in two separate facilities in the south end of Albany, New York. At the time of this report submission, normal routines, schedules, and school life have not yet returned to normal, but school has re-opened with a new normal.

2019-20 KIPP TECH VALLEY MERGER

The boards of Albany Community Charter School and KIPP Tech Valley Charter School (KTV) made the decision to merge into one education corporation during the 2019-20 school year. This merger was approved in March 2020 by the SUNY Trustees and became official on July 1, 2020. Both boards had successfully governed SUNY-authorized elementary and middle schools on the north and south ends of Albany, New York for nearly fifteen years. Given that the shared intent of both boards was to help grow more than 1,600 K-8 graders into college-prepared high school students, there was a sensible fit to combine efforts and realize the benefits of such a merger.

The surviving board in this merger was KIPP Tech Valley Charter School. Members of both former boards now make up the new merged board, which was renamed KIPP: Albany Community Public Charter Schools (KIPP Albany). Under this merger, the new board will now oversee both charter schools and will promote best practices from each school across the expanded school community. KIPP TV will receive support in ACCS practices of engaging families. KTV will provide ACCS with more systematized support and specialized expertise in central functions, particularly academics. Each school will operate as linked, but individual charter schools operating with its own accountability plan.

The KIPP and ACCS merger will also allow for a city-wide brand of two college-prep K-8 schools that will appeal to a larger population of the Capital Region. KIPP Albany is affiliated with the KIPP Foundation, a national network of 242 college-preparatory public charter schools with a 25-year track

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record of preparing students in educationally underserved communities for success in college and in life. This will include many families who can have all of their children attend a nationally recognized network, with options on both ends of Albany. With the capacity to serve more than 1,600 students, even families with COVID transportation concerns may now have a choice of a KIPP/ACCS school within a walk of their home. This merger also opens greater options for our overall programming, such as enhanced special education services, English language learner programs and academic enrichment additions. We will be considering all possibilities during the first merged year (2020-21).

With KIPP's partnership and full support, ACCS wants to define for Albany what excellent education looks like for students and families, be the employer of choice for qualified teachers, and have the organizational foundation to ensure that we are the top choice for years to come.

The KIPP merger will strengthen the overall academic program, as ACCS will be transitioning to KIPP's curriculum, pedagogical support structure, and overall schedule. This transition is already underway at the time of this renewal submission. A considerable amount of core academic components will move from those previously used at ACCS to those that KIPP is using successfully at the elementary and middle school levels. Therefore, there will be references to KIPP TV uses of curriculum and instructional support that largely align with the August 2019 KIPP TV renewal application narrative.

The ACCS seamless alignment with KIPP will include a well-structured schedule with high, clear expectations; a standards-based curriculum; strong instructional leadership and staffing; and a rigorous assessment system. These drivers need to be consistent from K-8 so middle school years are built on a strong primary skills foundation in Math, reading and writing. The ACCS school wide objective will match that of KIPP TV; to bring a full continuum of K-8th graders to NYS proficiency and be well-prepared for the rigors of high school.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2015-16	74	76	76	76	75	74	71	71	71	664
2016-17	76	72	67	68	67	60	59	65	47	581
2017-18	77	80	76	74	79	78	78	78	61	681
2018-19	73	74	78	75	71	79	69	63	65	647
2019-20	73	75	76	75	73	71	69	77	56	645

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Summary of changes to the Elementary ELA Goal due to the Covid-19 school closure:

- Schools will be unable to report state test proficiency rates, PIs, district comparisons, effect sizes, or mean growth scores.
- However, in the absence of state test results, schools should report relevant results from internally developed assessments, national norm-referenced tests, and/or any other evaluation method below. When possible, schools report tabular data aligned to the narrative.

Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students at the Albany Community Charter School will become proficient in reading and writing of the English Language.

BACKGROUND

In 2018-19 ACCS adopted the Achievement First Curriculum for grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. The curriculum includes multiple components of literacy instruction including guided reading, close reading, phonics instruction and writing. Some key reasons for the shift to Achievement First included:

Increased rigor

Lessons identify scaffolded questions to check for understanding and extend learning

-Lesson internalization:

Educators can focus on immersing themselves in content, instead of constructing or re-writing lessons without a framework and materials

Lessons include exemplar responses

Lessons identify potential misconceptions with action plans to proactively address concerns

Educators can engage in lesson rehearsal prior to delivering instruction to students and receive constructive feedback from coaches and peers

-Ensure vertical and horizontal alignment across grade levels and content

-Increased focus on literacy with built curriculum for each subject across content areas

Close reading

Guided reading

Core standards-based instruction

Read-alouds

Literature

Non-fiction

Writing

-Student Discourse

Lessons are aligned to the prioritized common core standards. Teachers facilitate lessons that are backwards planned, directly aligned to or exceeding the rigor of New York State Assessments. Students read and are exposed to a variety of complex texts. Instruction is explicit skill based, so that students can utilize these skills to comprehend and analyze text. The expected outcome is that students will be able to respond orally and in writing. It is also the intent that we foster a love of reading in our students and challenge them to start to critically question themselves and the world around them. Students will be constantly honing in on their critical thinking skills, ability to use evidence to support their responses while building a robust academic vocabulary.

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and schools closed to in-person instruction with very little notice to the school community. ACCS spent a lot of time and resources to keep their students engaged, connected and learning.

ACCS REMOTE LEARNING PLAN

- 1 teacher per grade level will deliver and upload a recorded lesson in each subject each day for (ELA, Math, SCI, SS). For grades K-2 (ELA & Math only).
- Lesson are viewed and followed online by each scholar according to the daily schedule. The scholars will actively complete all learning tasks while watching the lesson (ex. Read, take notes, answer questions, etc.) and turn in assignments through Google classroom.
- Twice each day according to the schedule, a teacher communicates directly with each scholar to answer questions, review lesson material, completed work and provide feedback to scholars in small groups. Teachers should divide the class in half to follow up with scholars at scheduled times. (This is not a whole class meeting).
- Teachers must also be available to answer questions during designated times during the day via email, phone and other face to face platforms for scholars and families
- Each Friday scholars were given tests and quizzes on the material that was assigned during the week. Test and quizzes were graded.
- Parents were provided guidance documents and links to assist them to support their child.
- AIS, SpED, and Social Work schedule virtual sessions with scholars to continue services during Check In periods and other periods.
- Scholars were required to complete I-Ready lessons for 90 minutes each week in ELA and Math.
- Teacher conducted parent/scholar meetings via zoom to review expectations for online learning.

Families received their google classroom codes and log-in information. Below is the suggested schedule to provide structure for each scholar's day. It is not expected that scholars will be working online all day. Each scholar can work at their own pace to complete assignments. We understand that each family may have to slightly adjust the schedule to one that meets their individual needs.

However, in order to receive teacher support, scholars needed to be available during designated check in times.

Meal Program: ACCS breakfast and lunch meals for all scholar families were distributed from 8:30 am - 12:30pm.

Technology Distribution: 325 Chromebooks were distributed to scholars who did not have access to technology during the week of April 6th.

METHOD

The *i-Ready Diagnostic* is an adaptive assessment that adjusts its questions to suit the student's needs. Each item a student sees is individualized based on their answer to the previous question. For example, a series of correct answers will result in slightly harder questions, while a series of incorrect answers will yield slightly easier questions. The purpose of this is not to give your student a score or grade, but instead to determine how best to support your student's learning.

The school attempted to administer the iReady Diagnostic to all students who were participating with virtual learning to gauge progress in ELA and math at the end of the year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

There was a delay in the availability of the online version of the iReady Diagnostic, but once available ACCS wanted to have students complete it to see how they fared with remote learning. Because ACCS had 91 percent of students that qualified as economically disadvantaged, not all students had a quiet place to work and learn.

We found that the results were not reliable, or indicative of what scholars could achieve. There was low participation, student effort and in some cases, people assisting students with the test. Scholars were scoring inconsistently with past performance, both above and below. We will be using it again but will be doing online proctoring to control for some of those issues.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Unfortunately, we were unable to collect valid, reliable end of year assessments from our students during the pandemic.

ACTION PLAN

The 2020-21 school year will be used as a transition year to move into KIPP Wheatley ELA K-8 curriculum. KIPP Wheatley uses an approach emphasizing culturally relevant text in order to maximize student engagement. This allows students to participate in reading and writing where the content is interesting and therefore teachers will have an opportunity to see high student engagement throughout classes. The following excerpt is from KIPP Wheatley:

KIPP Wheatley encourages a balanced approach to literacy instruction that includes close reading, independent reading, language study, and writing every single day. Research and experience show that effective literacy programs build students' word and world knowledge, integrate reading and writing instruction, align with college-ready standards, and are centered on authentic, high-quality texts.

Not only will ACCS now have access to an ELA curriculum that has proven successful at KIPP for the same exact ages (K-8), ACCS will no longer be creating content. KIPP Wheatley is a fully supportive curriculum where the work of creating the content, scope and sequence, and formative assessments are entirely included. It is therefore the job of ACCS teachers to deliver the curriculum, not create it. In fact, the three Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA are addressed with KIPP Wheatley, including: 1. Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language 2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from texts 3. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction KIPP Wheatley addresses all CCSS in Reading (Informational and Literary).¹

In considering our reopening plan, we grounded our decision making in safety, relationships, routines, and providing instruction that has a positive measurable impact on student outcomes. Considering all of those factors, it is our intention to provide 100% virtual instruction through October 30, 2020 for our students, with the fully virtual model designed to best prioritize and achieve safety, build positive and sustaining relationships, establish consistent routines and expectations, and deliver instruction that is measurable and achievable for our students. We will reevaluate our return to a hybrid learning model throughout the fall and return for hybrid instruction when it is possible for our community.

Our model relies on a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning, robust, grade-aligned learning management systems, curriculum that is adapted for virtual delivery, and a commitment to ensuring all students can access both instruction and the additional supports they need to be successful. A key component of this plan is providing every student with a Chromebook (including a touchscreen version for K-3) and other learning tools as needed, to include prepaid MiFi internet devices, noise-cancelling headphones, desks, white boards, and other essential school items. While instruction will be delivered by our subject area teachers (and in some cases, by a master teacher model), students in all grades will be broken into pods of 10-15 students to ensure close progress monitoring and a significant bond with at least one adult staff member.

Our hybrid learning model is a rotation of in-person and remote learning for all grades, with less than 50% of students and staff in the building at any one time. To facilitate safety and routine, Cohort A would attend school for nine consecutive days (Mon - Fri, Mon - Thurs) while Cohort B learned remotely and then the cohorts would switch. Within those cohorts, students would maintain their 10-15 student pods. Every tenth day would be full remote learning for 100% of students while the buildings are deep cleaned between cohorts. Our hybrid model uses similar tools and teaching methods as the remote model to keep learning consistent for students.

¹ <http://www.kipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/KIPP-Wheatley.pdf>

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS

Summary of changes to the Elementary Mathematics Goal due to the Covid-19 school closure:

- Schools will be unable to report state test proficiency rates, PIs, district comparisons, effect sizes, or mean growth scores.
- However, in the absence of state test results, schools should report results from internally developed assessments, national norm-referenced tests, and/or any other evaluation method below. When possible, schools report tabular data aligned to the narrative.

Goal 2: Mathematics

BACKGROUND

In 2018-19 ACCS adopted the Achievement First Math curriculum which includes a focus on number sense, conceptual understanding, number fluency, adaptive reasoning and productive After conducting a robust curriculum audit, ACCS transitioned away from the EngageNY modules in the winter 2017.

We are confident that with our shift to Achievement First Open Source Curriculum we have significantly increased the level of instructional rigor and standards-based alignment to our math program. In addition, scholars at ACCS also now receive 45 minutes of additional small group math instruction each day. The intervention block allows teachers time to reteach lessons, remediate deficient skills and provide enrichment to advanced scholars. We expect that we will begin to see increases in student achievement with more efficient targeted instruction to scholars particularly those who were within 10 points of proficiency this school year.

The K-8 mathematics program at ACCS is grounded in a belief that teaching and learning of mathematics should stimulate curiosity, inquiry, joy, and deep understanding of the mathematics concepts outlined in the Common Core. We are building a program in which we will see the mathematical practices come to life through the shifts (focus, coherence, rigor), called for by the standards. We will continue to refine the components of and resources for the program, on our path to seeing these practices and shifts embodied by our students and driving instruction.

METHOD

The i-Ready Diagnostic was given to students in K-8, but we feel the results are not indicative of student achievement due to the reasons stated above.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Although the students at ACCS continued math instruction throughout the remote learning period in spring 2020, there were no norm referenced assessments administered in a solid format. There were

lessons learned at our end and we will be structuring a more controlled situation for all exams utilized going forward.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS GOAL

Unfortunately, reliable evidence demonstrating goal attainment was not collected through an assessment that could be used in lieu of the NYS math exam.

ACTION PLAN

The transition of the ELA program will be the academic focus for the 2020-21 school year. We will continue with current practices in math instruction as this school year will be filled with activities associated with merging two schools, embarking on a new ACCS ELA and science curriculum and returning from COVID-19' initial pandemic. The math program will be the same in 2020-21, but will be delivered virtually to begin the year in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

Summary of changes to the Elementary Science Goal due to the Covid-19 school closure:

- Schools will be unable to report state test proficiency rates or a district comparison.
- However, in the absence of state test results, schools should report results from internally developed assessments, national norm-referenced tests, and/or any other evaluation method below. When possible, schools report tabular data aligned to the narrative.

Goal 3: Science

All students at Albany Community Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

BACKGROUND

Harcourt Science Fusion Series

ACCS used the Harcourt Science series because the curriculum is designed to be exploratory and introduce students to foundational concepts in life science, physical science, earth and space science, and technology engineering. Harcourt Science teaches students from the perspective of the scientist – using inquiry and exploration to engage students and help them master important scientific facts. In the Harcourt Science series, students investigate science concepts through hands-on activities, reinforce scientific inquiry through reading support, and link the real world to the classroom.

METHOD

During the COVID closure, science was a scheduled time on student’s schedules. Teachers uploaded the daily morning message which outlined the assignments for the day by 7:45am, along with the teacher contact phone number and zoom link for check in.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

There were not any year end remote science assessments administered.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY SCIENCE GOAL

Students completed science coursework throughout the closure.

ACTION PLAN

The transition of the ELA and science programs will be the academic focus for the 2020-21 school year. We will be transitioning to Amplify Science in the 2020-21 school year. Amplify Science is a highly engaging, phenomena-based program for grades K–8 that integrates the latest practices in science teaching and learning, as well as interactive digital tools and hands-on activities, to teach students how to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers.

GOAL 4: ESSA

The 2019-20 ESSA Goal remains unchanged due to the Covid-19 school closure. The 2019-20 accountability status based on 2018-19 results and can be found by navigating to the school report card available [here](#).

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

This measure has been met.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school continues to be in good standing.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2017-18	Good Standing
2018-19	Good Standing
2019-20	Good Standing

