



**Brownsville Ascend Charter School**

**2016-17 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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## INTRODUCTION

Dylan Schaffer, planning and external affairs manager of Ascend Learning prepared this 2016-17 Accountability Plan Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

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

**Erica Murphy has served as lower school director since July 2013.**

**Emily Fernandez has served as middle school director since July 2014.**

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

1. A rich and rigorous liberal arts curriculum that drives student achievement
2. Cultural practices that foster student independence and agency
3. A commitment to operate truly public schools

Brownsville Ascend opened in September 2009 and has since grown to serve students in kindergarten through grade 8. 8th grade students from Brownsville Ascend matriculate to Brooklyn Ascend High School and in the future will be offered admission to one of Ascend’s cluster high schools. Brownsville Ascend is located in Community School District 23 in Brooklyn. In school year (SY) 16-17, 85 percent of Brownsville Ascend students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch, 96 percent were black or Latino, and 11 percent were special education students.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2012-13	118	139	114	100	84									555
2013-14	117	121	144	118	102	84								686
2014-15	118	116	115	133	115	105	84							786
2015-16	111	116	116	114	143	107	109	84						900
2016-17	102	111	118	106	110	142	101	103	85					978

## GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### Goal 1: English Language Arts

Brownsville Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English language arts.

### BACKGROUND

Since SY 14-15, Brownsville Ascend has implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 16-17, the components of the English language arts program included:

- *Foundations*, a program for phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, is deployed in grades K-2. The program is based on the Wilson Reading System principles, which is supported by multiple studies, including one by Massachusetts's Lynn Public Schools, of which the student population is comprised of 66 percent black or Latino students. The study found that the System expedites grade-level reading increases among elementary school students who previously struggled in achieving appropriate reading level growth.
- In kindergarten, the writing program is Units of Study in Opinion, Informational, and Narrative Writing, by Lucy Calkins. In other lower school grades, Voyages in English: Grammar and Writing is used to help students with the mastery of grammar, writing, and the use of the English language. Voyages in English has been fine-tuned throughout the 70 years of its published life. It is also the recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Achievement Award by the Association of Educational Publishers.
- Ascend's *Literature Circle* program was adopted to promote student discussion as teachers help students mine the deepest meaning of the finest children's literature and develop the habits of excellent readers, all while building reading comprehension skills, and seminar style discussion skills. In addition, Literature Circle builds students' core background and cultural knowledge by following the Core Knowledge History and Geography Scope and Sequence. Frequent, interactive Read Aloud sessions with students in K-1 provide a model of fluent, expressive reading, and help children recognize what reading for pleasure is all about.
- In the *Shared Text* component the teacher models the habits of a skilled reader, and leads students briskly to accessing and then writing about the deeper meaning of a short, complex text. Students are guided in answering Common Core-style comprehension questions and short response questions. Texts are often selected to align with content in Literature Circle in lower school grades and in the Humanities Program in middle school grades. Texts are selected in a range of genres and often provide historical context to the anchor text book under discussion.

- *Guided Reading*—a separate reading class—creates a bridge between Shared Text and independent reading. It is taught in small groups of students who are on the same reading level, as determined by individual one-on-one reading assessments. Teachers serve as skilled facilitators, guiding students through prompts, and questioning student strategies as they read a book together. Each guided reading session addresses needs identified through the previous session, whether in the area of decoding, fluency, or comprehension. The University of Chicago Impact STEP formative assessment system is used to track student progress in guided reading.
- *Ascend's Humanities Program*, which begins in grade 5, is the natural successor to the lower school's Literature Circle and Guided Reading programs. Modeled closely on the practices of the city's finest private and selective public schools, this interdisciplinary great books program was designed to develop students' individual voices, reading and writing sensibilities, art appreciation, and public speaking skills with an ambitious syllabus that includes a cross-cultural selection of classic literature, key primary texts, and art gallery lessons.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, STEP assessments, norm-referenced NWEA MAP assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system—in use at Ascend since SY 14-15—allows staff to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students. Recognizing the impact of feedback on student access of knowledge and academic achievement, Ascend in SY 16-17 implemented its network-wide initiative for the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work, and will continue this initiative in SY 17-18.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program begun in SY 15-16 aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling. The TPD program complements the Continuous Monitoring initiative by providing dedicated time in teachers' and leaders' schedules for analysis of student work, tracking data, and developing teacher strategies for improving their response to student performance during lessons.

In SY 16-17, a second network-wide initiative—the Love of Reading Initiative—was implemented at all Ascend schools, with the goal of strengthening core literacy block instruction and continuing growth in students' performance in ELA. Implementation includes the addition to the schedule of time for independent reading, and focuses on creating a culture that celebrates reading and inspires students to read confidently and joyfully.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### 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 2017. 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).

2016-17 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	Refused	
3	105	1	0	5	1	111
4	112	0	0	1	0	113
5	141	0	0	1	1	143
6	101	1	N/A	0	2	103
7	101	0	0	3	2	106
8	85	0	0	0	0	85
All	645	2	0	10	6	661

### RESULTS

44.2 percent of all Brownsville Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency on the NYS English language arts exam in SY 16-17, slightly higher than the 42.8 percent of all students in tested grades who achieved proficiency. Students in the lower school (grades 3-5) achieved promising levels of proficiency, while students in grades 6 and 7 struggled to achieve proficiency at levels similar to their younger peers. Results from Brownsville Ascend’s first class of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were promising.

Performance on 2016-17 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	55.0%	105	55.0%	100

<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.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

4	59.0%	112	61.0%	105
5	48.0%	141	48.5%	136
6	22.0%	101	23.6%	89
7	30.0%	101	30.0%	90
8	39.0%	85	40.0%	80
All	42.8%	645	44.2%	600

### EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. The divergence in grades 3 and 4 from this absolute measure however, by 20 and 14 percentage points respectively, is promising. These students have benefitted from taking part in the Ascend Common Core curriculum from an earlier stage in their academic careers than their older peers. The Shared Text component of the curriculum, in particular, was implemented more successfully in grades 3 and 4, with more effective and thorough training delivered to the entire staff.

With proficiency levels of 23.6 percent and 30 percent respectively, the performance of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students this year was weak, failing to meet the school's standards and aspirations for these students. Brownsville Ascend Middle School, after doubling its school population and experiencing cultural and academic challenges in SY 15-16, underwent a turnaround in SY 16-17. The school was co-led by Ascend network leaders during School Director Emily Fernandez's maternity leave, until her return in December 2016. Throughout SY 16-17, the school was largely re-staffed and new schedules and school-wide procedures were established; however, many of these changes did not have meaningfully positive effects on academic performance until late in the year. Challenges also arose from a lack of sufficient cultural and operational staff positions; in SY 17-18, additional deans of students and a dedicated school director of operations have been hired to address this. School and network staff will continue to address with urgency persistent challenges at the middle school during SY 17-18 in order to increase achievement. There is already early evidence that teacher and leader hiring for this year is stronger, and staff more aligned and experienced than in past years.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since SY 14-15, Brownsville Ascend has improved from 24.6 percent proficiency in ELA to 44.2 percent, an increase of nearly 20 percentage points. In grades 3 and 4, significant improvements in proficiency levels in SY 15-16 were maintained in SY 16-17, and in grade 5, performance continued to improve as students achieved scores 38 percentage points higher than two years prior.

Though students' performance in grades 6 and 7 was disappointing, proficiency in each grade increased over the previous year. Brownsville Ascend's first 8<sup>th</sup> grade cohort also posted an impressive 15-percentage-point increase from the 25 percent proficiency level attained by this cohort as 7<sup>th</sup> graders in SY 15-16.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	28.6%	126	55.6%	108	55.0%	100

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4	31.7%	101	62.3%	122	61.0%	105
5	10.1%	89	31.0%	100	48.5%	136
6	25.3%	75	19.4%	93	23.6%	89
7	--	--	25.0%	80	30.0%	90
8	--	--	--	--	40.0%	80
All	24.6%	391	40.8%	503	44.2%	600

### 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 PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2016-17 English language arts AMO of **111**. 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

In English language arts, Brownsville Ascend achieved a PLI of 126.0 in SY 16-17.

#### English Language Arts 2016-17 Performance Level Index

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
645	16.7%	40.5%	29.8%	13.0%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 40.5 & + & 29.8 & + & 13.0 & = & 83.3 \\
 & & & & 29.8 & + & 13.0 & = & \underline{42.8} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 126.0
 \end{array}$$

### EVALUATION

The school met the measure for a PLI value, exceeding the SY 16-17 English language arts AMO of 111. The school's overall PLI was bolstered by the high percentage of students attaining a Level 2 score on the exam, particularly in the middle school grades (6-8), where 44.6 percent, 51.5 percent, and 52.9 percent of students, respectively, scored Level 2. In grade 4, the percentage of students scoring Level 1 was notably low, at 6.3 percent.

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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

### METHOD

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>3</sup>

### RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend's aggregate performance on NYS English language arts exams outpaced Community School District 23, Brownsville's home district, by 22.7 percentage points. Brownsville Ascend achieved 44.2 percent proficiency among students enrolled in at least their second year, compared to 21.5 percent proficiency for all CSD students in corresponding grades. Brownsville Ascend students in grades 3-5 each outperformed their district peers by over 30 percentage points, while grades 6-8 outperformed their district peers at more modest levels.

2016-17 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 2nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	55.0%	100	22.0%	713
4	61.0%	105	17.1%	729
5	48.5%	136	16.5%	622
6	23.6%	89	14.1%	866
7	30.0%	90	24.5%	880
8	40.0%	80	33.2%	829
All	44.2%	600	21.5%	4679

### EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance in the same tested grades by 22.7 percentage points. Brownsville Ascend also exceeded district performance for every tested grade in SY 16-17. In the lower school grades (3-5), strong and stable leadership has led to increased staff retention and the development of well-trained, expert teaching staff, who have been successful at implementing Ascend's Common Core curriculum with lower school students from an early stage, contributing to their strong comparative performance.

<sup>3</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](#).

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend students have achieved an increase of nearly 20 percentage points in ELA proficiency over the past two years, more than double the level of growth achieved by CSD 23. While grades 6 and 7 proficiency levels in CSD 23 either remain the same or decreased from SY 15-16 to SY 16-17, Ascend students improved their performance at these levels. In grades 3 and 4, Ascend students continued to outperform their district peers by significant margins. In grade 5, Ascend improved by 38.4 percentage points over two years, while CSD 23 improved by just 8.5 points over the same period.

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					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	28.6%	13%	55.6%	22%	<b>55.0%</b>	22.0%
4	31.7%	11%	62.3%	21%	<b>61.0%</b>	17.1%
5	10.1%	8%	31.0%	10%	<b>48.5%</b>	16.5%
6	25.3%	15%	19.4%	16%	<b>23.6%</b>	14.1%
7	--	--	25.0%	21%	<b>30.0%</b>	24.5%
8	--	--	--	--	<b>40.0%</b>	33.2%
All	24.6%	12%	40.8%	18%	<b>44.2%</b>	21.5%

### 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 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2015-16 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

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### RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.92 overall in SY 15-16. Each grade, with the exception of grade 6, achieved a positive Effect Size greater than 0.3. The negative Effect Size in grade 6 underlines the urgency of improvements in the middle school which we believe to already be having an impact this school year.

*2015-16 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	<b>91.2%</b>	108	55.6%	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>28.1%</b>	<b>1.51</b>
4	<b>80.4%</b>	122	62.3%	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>1.78</b>
5	<b>87.2%</b>	100	31.0%	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>0.65</b>
6	<b>86.7%</b>	93	19.4%	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>	<b>-0.14</b>
7	<b>89.3%</b>	80	25.0%	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>0.38</b>
All	<b>86.5%</b>	503	40.8%	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>0.92</b>

**School's Overall Comparative Performance:**

***Higher than expected to a meaningful degree***

### EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure by achieving an Effect Size of 0.92, indicating that the school performed better than expected to a meaningful degree. In grades 3 and 4, the school performed better than expected to a significant degree, with Effect Sizes greater than 1. The school's grade 6 comparative performance was negative and disappointing; though it reinforces the need to address challenges facing the middle school grades, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade cohort made some progress toward improving their comparative performance, increasing their Effect Size from -0.80 in SY 14-15, in grade 5.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend has increased its overall Effect Size each year since SY 13-14, most significantly from SY 14-15 to SY 15-16. The school has maintained a positive overall Effect Size in each the past three years.

*English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year*

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2013-14	3-5	84%	297	22.2%	21.3%	0.08
2014-15	3-6	80%	437	23.3%	20.9%	0.16
2015-16	3-7	87%	503	40.8%	24.6%	0.92

## 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 2015-16 and also have a state exam score from 2014-15 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2014-15 score are ranked by their 2015-16 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 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2015-16 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>5</sup>

## RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Brownsville Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile of 53.0, compared to the statewide median of 50.0. Grade 4 performed significantly above the statewide median; grades 6-7 were comparable to the statewide mean, while grade 5 did not outperform the median.

2015-16 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	64.5	50.0
5	43.5	50.0
6	49.5	50.0
7	49.5	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	<b>53.0</b>	50.0

## EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend has improved its overall unadjusted mean growth percentile from 46.0 in SY 14-15 to 53.0 in SY 15-16, and surpassed the statewide median for the first time in SY 15-16.

<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).

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Additionally, at each grade level, Brownsville Ascend’s mean increased in SY 15-16 from the previous year.

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

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Statewide Median
4		52.0	64.5	50.0
5		38.0	43.5	50.0
6		47.5	49.5	50.0
7		--	49.5	50.0
8		--	--	50.0
All	No data	46.0	<b>53.0</b>	50.0

### SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75 percent proficiency, Brownsville Ascend students met every other accountability measure in SY 16-17 and remain on a path toward continued progress in English language arts.

The school is confident in the strength of the Ascend Common Core curriculum instituted in SY 14-15, especially for those students who, from an early age, have benefitted from it. Students in grade 5 showed significant improvement in SY 16-17, and students in grades 3-4 maintained impressive proficiency levels first achieved in SY 15-16. Students in those grades continue to outperform their district peers by considerable margins, attain levels of proficiency meaningfully greater than expected, and grow robustly year-over-year. Brownsville Ascend’s first 8<sup>th</sup> grade cohort, too, showed significant improvement over its performance in previous years.

Overall, the school has shown progress towards attaining its English language arts goal this year; still, much work remains, especially in grades 6 and 7. Targeted improvements to the educational program as described below, persistence and enhancement of successful practices, and continued staff and cultural development at the middle school will contribute to more consistent progress and achievement towards this goal.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did not meet
Absolute	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.	Met
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.	Met
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	Met

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	(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 2015-16 results.)	
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. (Using 2015-16 results.)	Met

### ACTION PLAN

Brownsville Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practice and results in ELA, while improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Brownsville Ascend implement Ascend's network-wide initiatives in SY 17-18: Strengthening Early Literacy, the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work, and Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom.

Every Ascend lower school will focus on the rapid development of early literacy skills in grades K-2, in order to deliver more students to upper elementary and middle schools as confident and capable readers. By improving the effectiveness of literacy instruction with an emphasis on phonics and guided reading, the school will bring additional students to grade level in reading by the end of second grade. Developing adult understanding of how children learn to read, strengthening program implementation in grades K-2, and the addition of read-aloud in grades K-1 will provide the framework for implementation.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work Initiative began in SY 15-16 and will again be implemented to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure effective feedback in order to improve student understanding. The intended outcomes are to improve the ability of teachers and leaders to accurately evaluate student work to assess mastery; improve the ability of teachers to identify misconceptions evidenced in student work; plan and deliver effective student feedback; improve student mastery through application of frequent, targeted teacher feedback; improve the efficacy and efficiency of instruction through analysis of regularly collected student work; and improve the mechanisms for monitoring student progress daily and weekly. Continuous Monitoring will continue to inform the Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) program, as well as teacher evaluations and coaching.

Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom will lead to better implementation to create autonomy, and a heightened sense of community, in turn improving academic performance. The intended outcomes of this initiative are to improve the intentional use of teacher language components that develop students' academic and social skills, implement data-driven advisory and morning meeting, and improve teachers' use of interactive modeling.

In order to address weaker performance in grades 6 and 7, several interventions will take place this year and beyond to ensure broader progress towards accountability measures. Across the middle school, teaching staff has been redeployed and open positions filled by teachers with a higher average number of years experience teaching. Special focus will again be given to cultural initiatives aimed at improving teachers' and students' ability to perform on time and on task. An Advisory program has been implemented to enhance the school's sense of community. One dean of students is now staffed for each grade to establish and maintain the school's culture and discipline. This staff

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expansion will permit focus on professional development, lesson planning, and other teacher practices, thereby boosting performance in the next accountability period.

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### Goal 2: Mathematics

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

### BACKGROUND

Since SY 14-15, Brownsville Ascend has implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 16-17, the components of the mathematics program included the following:

- The curriculum in math features the approach known as *Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)*. CGI has significantly improved performance in other leading NYC charter schools, including those in the Success and Achievement First networks.
- *Singapore Math* is the primary math program in kindergarten through the fifth grade. Singapore Math is based on the curriculum that took Singapore students to the top of international math assessments. The program focuses on building problem-solving skills and an in-depth understanding of essential math skills. It is closely aligned with curricular focal points recommended by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Common Core Learning Standards. Students are taught not only mathematical methods, but also why they work.
- In *Number Stories*, which is founded on the tenets of CGI, students spend an entire period studying a single Common Core-style math problem, constructing their own solutions, defending their thinking, and comparing their approaches. Math fluency is also reinforced in the routines that open each *Number Stories* lesson, when for approximately 10-20 minutes a day, students practice *Math Routines* to build automaticity and fluency in computation.
- In the middle school, one of the 45-minute daily math periods is deployed for *EngageNY*. The second math period is dedicated to *Math in Context*.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, norm-referenced NWEA MAP assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. Since the purchase in SY 14-15 of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system, staff are able to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as data for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and



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purposeful feedback to students. Recognizing the impact of feedback on student access of knowledge and academic achievement, Ascend in SY 16-17 implemented its network-wide initiative for the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work, and will continue this initiative in SY 17-18.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program first implemented in SY 15-16, aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling. The TPD program complements the Continuous Monitoring initiative by providing dedicated time in teachers' and leaders' schedules for analysis of student work, tracking data, and developing teacher strategies for improving their response to student performance during lessons.

### 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 2017. 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.

2016-17 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>6</sup>				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	106	1	0	4	1	111
4	112	0	0	1	0	113
5	141	0	0	1	1	143
6	101	0	N/A	0	1	102
7	99	0	0	4	3	106
8	85	0	0	0	0	85
All	644	1	0	10	6	660

<sup>6</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

47.9 percent of Brownsville Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency on the NYS mathematics exam in SY 16-17, while 46.3 percent of all Brownsville Ascend students in tested grades achieved proficiency. Grades 3-5 displayed notably strong levels of proficiency, while grades 6-8 students struggled to achieve proficiency at levels similar to their younger peers.

### Performance on 2016-17 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	77.0%	106	77.2%	101
4	67.0%	112	68.6%	105
5	58.0%	141	58.1%	136
6	22.0%	101	24.7%	89
7	21.0%	99	23.9%	88
8	19.0%	85	18.8%	80
All	46.3%	644	47.9%	599

## EVALUATION

In SY 16-17, Brownsville Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. However, students in grades 4-5 showed remarkable progress towards the goal of 75 percent proficiency, and in a notable achievement, students in grade 3 exceeded the 75 percent goal for the first time, by 2.2 percentage points. Gains in these grades have further narrowed the overall gap to just over 27 percentage points between Ascend's overall performance and the 75 percent threshold.

With proficiency levels at 24.7 percent, 23.9 percent, and 18.8 percent, respectively, the performance of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students this year was weak, failing to meet the school's standards and aspirations for these students. Brownsville Ascend Middle School, after doubling its school population and experiencing cultural and academic challenges in SY 15-16, underwent a turnaround in SY 16-17. The school was co-led by Ascend network leaders during School Director Emily Fernandez's maternity leave, until her return in December 2016. Throughout SY 16-17, the school was largely re-staffed and new schedules and school-wide procedures were established; however, many of these changes did not have meaningfully positive effects on academic performance until late in the year. While a mathematics intervention block was built into the school's schedule, the block was not effective in raising achievement due to weak Tier 1 instruction. The school faced other cultural and operational staffing challenges at the leadership level, which have been remedied in SY 17-18 with the addition of more deans of students and a dedicated school director of operations. Instructional leaders in mathematics has been re-trained to use practices modeled from Ascend's most successful middle school, Brooklyn Ascend Middle School. School and network staff will continue to address with urgency the challenges at the middle school during SY 17-18 in order to increase achievement.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since SY 14-15, Brownsville Ascend students have improved their overall rate of proficiency by 13.5 percentage points. SY 16-17 continued the trend of impressive growth in performance for grades 3-5 over preceding years. Each of those grades improved proficiency by at least 18 percentage points since SY 15-16, and by between 31 and 40 points since SY 14-15.

The slight decline at the grade 6 level in SY 15-16 is disappointing; so, too, is the decline in proficiency of the SY 15-16 grade 7 and grade 8 cohorts from their previous performance in grades 6 and 7 during SY 15-16. These results have led to modifications to the school’s staffing design to better support the school culturally and academically as described above, and to a significant re-hiring of the middle school mathematics team.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	36.5%	126	55.6%	108	77.2%	101
4	32.7%	101	50.8%	122	68.6%	105
5	26.7%	90	30.0%	100	58.1%	136
6	42.7%	75	25.8%	89	24.7%	89
7	--	--	21.5%	79	23.9%	88
8	--	--	--	--	18.8%	80
All	34.4%	392	38.6%	498	47.9%	599

### 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 PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2016-17 mathematics AMO of 109. 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>7</sup>

## RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend achieved a PLI of 124.3 in SY 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> In contrast to NYSED’s Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

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## Mathematics 2016-17 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
644	22.0%	31.7%	28.4%	17.9%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 31.7 & + & 28.4 & + & 17.9 & = & 78.0 \\
 & & & & 28.4 & + & 17.9 & = & \underline{46.3} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 124.3
 \end{array}$$

## EVALUATION

The school met the measure by achieving a PLI value exceeding the SY 16-17 mathematics AMO of 109. In grades 3 and 4, less than 10 percent of students scored Level 1 on the state exam. In grades 7 and 8, despite weaker proficiency levels, a significant portion of students—42.4 percent and 60 percent, respectively—attained a Level 2 score.

### 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.<sup>8</sup>

## RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend's aggregate performance outpaced Community School District 23 by 32.7 percentage points. Notably, Brownsville Ascend's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students outperformed their district peers by over 50 percentage points, while Ascend 5<sup>th</sup> graders outpaced district students by nearly 40 points. Though the absolute performance of Brownsville Ascend students in grades 6-8 was weaker than hoped, those students still outperformed their peers in CSD 23 by between 8 and 10 points.

## 2016-17 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

<sup>8</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](#).

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3	77.2%	101	22.8%	712
4	68.6%	105	12.2%	739
5	58.1%	136	18.6%	666
6	24.7%	89	12.4%	873
7	23.9%	88	15.3%	877
8	18.8%	80	10.6%	669
All	47.9%	599	<b>15.2%</b>	4536

### EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance by 32.7 percentage points. Brownsville Ascend also exceeded CSD 23 performance for every tested grade in SY 16-17. In the lower school grades (3-5), the positive performance relative to the district is notable, and can be attributed in part to the successful incremental goal-setting for student performance. Further, Brownsville Lower School's strong and stable leadership has led to increased staff retention and the development of a well-trained, expert teaching staff, who have been successful at implementing the Ascend Common Core curriculum to lower school students from an early stage, contributing to their strong comparative performance.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend students have achieved an increase of 13.5 percentage points in mathematics proficiency over the past two years, compared to just a 0.2-point growth in proficiency achieved by CSD 23. In the younger grades, the contrast between Brownsville Ascend's growth and that of the district is striking: while district students in grades 3-5 have improved by 4 points, 1 point, and 7 points respectively since SY 14-15, Ascend students in those grades have improved by 22 points, 18 points, and 28 points respectively.

#### 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					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
3	36.5%	19%	55.6%	22%	77.2%	22.8%
4	32.7%	11%	50.8%	17%	68.6%	12.2%
5	26.7%	12%	30.0%	10%	58.1%	18.6%
6	42.7%	16%	25.8%	16%	24.7%	12.4%
7	--	--	21.5%	16%	23.9%	15.3%
8	--	--	--	--	18.8%	10.6%
All	34.4%	15%	38.6%	16%	47.9%	<b>15.2%</b>

#### 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)

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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 2016-17 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2015-16 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

## RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.59 overall in SY 15-16 for mathematics. Grades 3, 4, and 7 all achieved Effect Sizes greater than 0.3 that year, performing better than expected to a meaningful degree. All grades achieved a positive Effect Size in SY 15-16.

### 2015-16 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	<b>91.2%</b>	108	55.6%	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>1.16</b>
4	<b>80.4%</b>	122	50.8%	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>0.86</b>
5	<b>87.2%</b>	100	30.0%	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>0.29</b>
6	<b>86.7%</b>	89	25.8%	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.11</b>
7	<b>89.3%</b>	79	21.5%	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>0.31</b>
All	<b>86.5%</b>	498	38.6%	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>0.59</b>

#### School's Overall Comparative Performance:

***Better than expected to a meaningful degree***

## EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure of achieving an Effect Size of greater than 0.3, thereby performing better than expected to a meaningful degree.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since SY 13-14 Brownsville Ascend has maintained a positive Effect Size. Though the school's Effect Size went down in SY 14-15 to 0.2, its Effect Size rebounded in SY 15-16 as the school again performed better than expected to a meaningful degree.

### Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2013-14	3-5	84%	298	28.5%	21.3%	0.56
2014-15	3-6	80%	438	33.6%	29.8%	0.20
2015-16	3-7	87%	498	38.6%	26.4%	0.59

### Goal 2: Growth Measure<sup>9</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 2015-16 and also have a state exam score in 2014-15 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2014-15 scores are ranked by their 2015-16 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 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2015-16 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>10</sup>

## RESULTS

Brownsville Ascend achieved an unadjusted mean growth percentile of 53.0 in SY 15-16, compared to the statewide median of 50.0. The school's mean growth percentile in grade 4 was significantly above the statewide median, while grade 6 performed slightly above the median. The mean percentiles for grades 5 and 7 were below the median.

### 2015-16 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

<sup>9</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

<sup>10</sup> Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's business portal: [portal.nysed.gov](http://portal.nysed.gov).

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	67.0	50.0
5	44.5	50.0
6	52.0	50.0
7	42.5	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	<b>53.0</b>	50.0

## EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure by attaining a mean growth percentile higher than the state’s median in SY 15-16. The grade 4 cohort showed significant growth from their previous year.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend increased its overall unadjusted mean growth percentile from SY 14-15. In SY 14-15, one grade out of three achieved a mean percentile higher than the statewide median; in SY 15-16, two grades of four achieved a mean percentile higher than the median.

Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Statewide Median
4		43.5	67.0	50.0
5		44.0	44.5	50.0
6		68.5	52.0	50.0
7		--	42.5	50.0
8		--	--	50.0
All	No data	<b>51.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	50.0

## SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75 percent proficiency, Brownsville Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in mathematics, and displayed notable academic achievements, particularly in the lower grades. For the first time, a cohort surpassed the Plan’s 75 percent absolute proficiency threshold.

The school is confident in the strength of the Ascend Common Core curriculum instituted in SY 14-15, especially for those students who, from an early age, have benefitted from it. Students in grades 3-5 continued an impressive trend of improvement since SY 14-15. Students in those grades continue to outperform their district peers by considerable margins, attain levels of proficiency meaningfully greater than expected, and grow robustly year-over-year.

Overall, the school has shown improvement towards attaining its mathematics this year, and has met all but one measures of performance. Still, much work remains, especially in grades 6-8, where



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weaker performance on most measures is particularly concerning. Targeted improvements to the educational program as described below, persistence and enhancement of successful practices, and continued staff and cultural development at the middle school will contribute to more consistent progress and achievement towards this goal.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did not meet
Absolute	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.	Met
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.	Met
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 2015-16 school district results.)	Met
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Met

### ACTION PLAN

Brownsville Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practice and results in math, while improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Brownsville Ascend will implement Ascend's network-wide initiatives in SY 17-18: Strengthening Early Literacy, the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work, and Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom. The Early Literacy Initiative is discussed above, in the English language arts Action Plan.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work Initiative began in SY 15-16 and will again be implemented to support accurate teacher diagnosis of misconceptions, allow strategic instructional adjustments, and ensure effective feedback in order to improve student understanding. The intended outcomes are to improve the ability of teachers and leaders to accurately evaluate student work to assess mastery; improve the ability of teachers to identify misconceptions evidenced in student work; plan and deliver effective student feedback; improve student mastery through application of frequent, targeted teacher feedback; improve the efficacy and efficiency of instruction through analysis of regularly collected student work; and improve the mechanisms for monitoring student progress daily and weekly. Continuous Monitoring will continue to inform the Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) program, as well as teacher evaluations and coaching.

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Strengthening Implementation of Responsive Classroom will focus on creating autonomy, and a heightened sense of community, in turn improving academic performance. The intended outcomes of this initiative are to improve the intentional use of teacher language components that develop students' academic and social skills, implement data-driven advisory and morning meeting, and improve teachers' use of interactive modeling.

In order to address weaker performance in grades 6-8, several interventions will take place this year and beyond to ensure broader progress towards accountability measures. Across the middle school, teaching staff has been redeployed and open positions filled by teachers with a higher average number of years experience teaching. Special focus will again be given to cultural initiatives aimed at improving teachers' and students' ability to perform on time and on task. An Advisory program has been implemented to enhance the school's sense of community. One dean of students is now staffed for each grade to establish and maintain the school's culture and discipline. Changes to instructional practices and leadership in mathematics, too, will enable higher levels of achievement, based on successful practices already in place at Ascend's most successful middle school, Brooklyn Ascend Middle School. These adjustments will permit focus on professional development, lesson planning, and other teacher practices, thereby boosting performance in the next accountability period.

## GOAL 3: SCIENCE

### Goal 3: Science

Brownsville Ascend Charter School Students will meet grade level expectations in science

### BACKGROUND

Since SY 14-15, Brownsville Ascend has implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 16-17, the components of the science program included the following:

- MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's *A Closer Look* science program was first selected as the curriculum for the lower school because of its strong Common Core alignment; integration of rich content with well-conceived inquiry experiments; and vibrant, engaging textbooks. An independent study of St. Louis Public Schools (which deploy the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill science series), revealed that black students' performance on the Missouri Assessment Program is improving at a rate exceeding that of the state average. Ascend has since added many originally created science units that are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and culminate in project-based learning projects.
- In the middle school, students learn standards-based science in the context of intriguing personal and societal issues through the *Science Education for Public Understanding Program*, developed at the University of California at Berkeley and composed of courses in Issues and Earth Science, Issues and Life Science, and Issues and Physical Science. Two decades' worth of research have demonstrated the program's positive impact on students' science education with regards to fostering subject knowledge, inquiry skills, engagement, and approaches for making decisions and solving issues. Ascend-created units on topics related to health and nutrition have been integrated into the program.

### 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 2017. 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

Brownsville Ascend grade 4 and grade 8 students enrolled in at least their second year achieved 75.1 percent proficiency. Grade 4 results were particularly strong, where students achieved 94.3 percent proficiency.

# SCIENCE

## Charter School Performance on 2016-17 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	94.3%	105
8	50.0%	80
All	75.1%	185

### EVALUATION

Brownsville Ascend met the measure by achieving a proficiency rate higher than 75 percent for all students enrolled in at least their second year. While grade 4 students exceeded the measure by a significant margin, grade 8 students did not meet the measure.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brownsville Ascend's 4<sup>th</sup> grade students have maintained consistently high levels of proficiency over recent years. SY 16-17 was the first year Brownsville Ascend administered the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science exam.

### Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	91.0%	100	97.5%	120	94.3%	105
8	--	--	--	--	50.0%	80
All	91.0%	100	97.5%	120	75.1%	185

### 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.

### RESULTS

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 23 in SY 16-17.

2016-17 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	94.3%	105	--	--
8	50.0%	80	--	--
All	75.1%	185	Not available	Not available

EVALUATION

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 23 in SY 16-17.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 23 in SY 16-17, Brownsville Ascend’s performance compared to overall CSD performance in previous years has been strong. In SY 14-15 and SY 15-16, Brownsville students have posted numbers more than 24 percentage points higher than their CSD peers. When compared to the most recent available data for grade 8 students in CSD 23 (from SY 15-16), Brownsville Ascend 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in SY 16-17 outperformed the district by 17 percentage points.

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					
	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Charter School	District	Charter School	District	Charter School	District
4	91.0%	64%	97.5%	73%	94.3%	--
8	--	--	--	33%	50.0%	--
All	91.0%	64%	97.5%	73%*	75.1%	Not available

\*Does not include grade 8 data; SY 15-16 grade 8 data for CSD 23 is for comparison to SY 16-17 Ascend grade 8 performance.

SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 23 in SY 16-17, Brownsville Ascend students continue to attain excellence in science. Over the past three years, the school’s science performance in grade 4 has remained above 90% proficiency, indicating the strength of the Ascend science curriculum. In its first year administering the grade 8 exam, the school met the measure of attaining 75 percent proficiency overall. Brownsville Ascend students have outperformed their CSD peers by wide margins—a trend that is likely to continue given the school’s strong performance this year.

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

**ACTION PLAN**

Brownsville Ascend hopes to maintain its current levels of proficiency in science by building upon successful systems already in place in grade 4 and strengthening its grade 8 program.

Ascend continues to expand and strengthen accountability for science performance, and has set internal proficiency goals for each grade in SY 17-18. This year, professional development will continue to expand as it has over the past three years since the implementation of the new science program. Professional development for science teachers during Ascend’s most recent Summer Institute was, compared to previous years, significantly more robust.

## GOAL 4: NCLB

### Goal 4: NCLB

To achieve an Accountability Status of good standing

#### 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

The school will not remain in Good Standing in SY 16-17.

### EVALUATION

The school missed its Annual Year Progress goal for students with disabilities in English language arts for the second time in SY 16-17.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 16-17 is the first year the school will not be in good standing.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2014-15	Good Standing
2015-16	Good Standing
2016-17	Not in Good Standing