



**Brooklyn Ascend Charter School**

**2015-16 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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By Dylan Schaffer

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School  
205 Rockaway Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11212

(347) 464-7600 ext. 1124

## INTRODUCTION

**Dylan Schaffer, planning and external affairs associate, Ascend Learning, Inc.** prepared this 2015-16 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

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

**Johana Andujar** has served as school director, Lower School, July 2014.

**Marsha Gadsden** has served as school director, Middle School, since July 2015.

**Melissa Jarvis-Cedeño** has served as school director, High School, since May 2014.

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of Brooklyn 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

Brooklyn Ascend opened in September 2008 and has grown to serve students in kindergarten through grade 9 in 2015-16. It will continue to grow by a grade per year to offer at maturity a comprehensive K-12 college-preparatory program. Brooklyn Ascend is located in Community School District 18 in Brooklyn. In SY 15-16, 83% of Brooklyn Ascend students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch, 97% were black or Latino, and 13% 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
2011-12	131	106	110	85	80	54								566
2012-13	133	132	113	111	87	80	64							720
2013-14	139	135	141	115	113	80	97	59						879
2014-15	134	137	133	136	113	110	81	80	52					976
2015-16	140	139	143	144	142	106	107	78	82	69				1150

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## Goal 1: English Language Arts

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English Language Arts.

## BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend moved fully away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the components of the English language arts programs included:

- *Foundations*, grades K-2—a program for phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. 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 later grades of the lower school, *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, influenced by a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools and at Icahn Charter Schools (which serve student populations not unlike those served Ascend schools), 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.
- *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.
- In the *Shared Text* component, modeled after a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools, 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. In the lower school, Shared Text is a companion component to Literature Circle; in grades 5-8 texts are often selected to align with the Humanities Program Scope and Sequence. Texts are selected in a range of genres and often provide historical context to the anchor text book under discussion.

- Ascend’s Humanities Program, which begins in grade five, 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, the great books program was designed to develop students’ individual voices, reading and writing sensibilities, and public speaking skills with an ambitious syllabus that includes a cross-cultural selection of classic literature and key primary texts.

Brooklyn Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark assessments, unit tests, STEP and STAR assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The purchase in SY 14-15 of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allowed staff to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback.

In SY 15-16, all Ascend schools initiated Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program 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.

### 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 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2016. 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).

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### 2015-16 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	144	0	0	0	0	144
4	143	0	0	0	1	144
5	107	0	0	0	0	107
6	106	0	0	1	0	107
7	78	0	0	0	0	78
8	82	0	0	0	0	82
All	660	0	0	1	1	662

## RESULTS

42.7% of all Brooklyn Ascend students achieved proficiency on the NYS English language arts exam in SY 15-16; 44.3% of students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency. Students in grades 3-4 achieved the highest levels of proficiency in the school, and grade 7-8 students also performed well; grade 5-6 students struggled to achieve proficiency at levels comparable to their peers.

### Performance on 2015-16 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	51.4%	144	55.6%	117
4	51.0%	143	54.0%	124
5	32.7%	107	33.0%	91
6	30.2%	106	32.2%	90
7	42.3%	78	41.9%	74
8	42.7%	82	41.6%	77
All	42.7%	660	44.3%	573

## EVALUATION

In SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. The gap of 30.7% between Brooklyn Ascend's overall performance of 44.3% and the absolute measure threshold of 75% is significant. The performances of grades 3 at 55.6% and grade 4 at 54.0% are more promising. These students have benefitted from taking part in the Ascend Common Core curriculum from an earlier stage 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

<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

delivered to the entire staff. The relative strength of grades 3 and 4 in ELA is likely attributable in part to the strength of this implementation.

In grade 5, the lower proficiency level of 33% can be seen in the context of the transition that students experience in the ELA curriculum at this stage. Grade 5 is the first year students take part in Ascend’s ambitious and challenging Humanities program, and the first time there is no dedicated guided reading block.

With proficiency levels at 33.0% and 32.2% respectively, the performance of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students this year failed to meet the school’s standards and aspirations for these students’ success. Brooklyn Ascend struggled with staffing challenges at the grade 5 level, which in turn led to weaker performance in that grade. The issues at Brooklyn Ascend that have led to weaker than expected performance in some grades will be addressed with urgency during the next school year and throughout this accountability period in order to increase achievement.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 15-16, in particular, showcased strong growth in performance over the preceding year, as evidenced in the table below. Brooklyn Ascend has improved from 29.4% proficiency in ELA in SY 14-15 to 44.3% proficiency in SY 15-16, a notable increase of 14.9 percentage points. In grades 3 and 4, students improved their proficiency levels by 17.6 and 19.4 percentage points, respectively, over one year. All grades, in fact, have increased their proficiency markedly since last year, and all but grade 5 posted net growth since SY 13-14.

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	31.7%	106	38.0%	129	55.6%	117
4	35.8%	99	34.6%	107	54.0%	124
5	38.4%	78	17.2%	87	33.0%	91
6	21.7%	60	19.7%	76	32.2%	90
7	29.6%	54	26.8%	71	41.9%	74
8	--	--	36.0%	50	41.6%	77
All	31.7%	397	29.4%	520	44.3%	573

#### 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 2015-16 English language arts AMO of **104**. 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, Brooklyn Ascend achieved a PLI of 124.4 in SY 15-16.

English Language Arts 2015-16 Performance Level Index				
Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
660	18.5%	38.8%	32.3%	10.5%
$  \begin{array}{rcl}  \text{PI} & = & 38.8 + 32.3 + 10.5 = 81.6 \\  & & 32.3 + 10.5 = 42.8 \\  & & \text{PLI} = 124.4  \end{array}  $				

## EVALUATION

The school met the measure for a PLI value, exceeding the SY 15-16 English language arts AMO of 104. Notable performances include a high percentage of grade 3 students at Level 3 (41%), a high percentage of grade 4 students at Level 4 (17.5%), and a high percentage of grade 6 and grade 8 students at Level 2 (53.8% and 51.2%, respectively). This achievement was accomplished by a strong number of students achieving Level 2, 3, and 4 proficiency, and by a relatively small percentage of students scoring in the Level 1 range. This performance in particular can be attributed by Brooklyn Ascend’s strong response to intervention (RTI) program, which provides tiered interventions to students who are struggling academically, while still keeping those students integrated with their classmates through a series of push-in and pull-out services. In 2014, Brooklyn Ascend also purchased and implemented the use of Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA), which allowed for increased efficiency and effectiveness of tracking student performance and growth across a variety of measures. These initiatives and systems, along with a robust professional development and planning program, have allowed for the school to better prepare teachers for providing targeted, purposeful lessons aimed at improving student achievement levels.

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

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

## METHOD

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

## RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend’s aggregate performance on NYS English language arts exams outpaced Community School District 18, the school’s home district, by 13.3 percentage points. Brooklyn Ascend achieved 44.3% proficiency among students enrolled in at least their second year, compared to 31% proficiency for all CSD students. The strongest comparative performance occurred in grade 3, where Brooklyn Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed all district students by 19.6 percentage points. In grades 5 and 6, this year’s weaker comparative performance reinforces the school’s intent to address the challenges described above with urgency.

2015-16 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	55.6%	117	36%	1,263
4	54.0%	124	35%	1,244
5	33.0%	91	28%	1,286
6	32.2%	90	26%	1,040
7	41.9%	74	27%	1,161
8	41.6%	77	34%	1,324
All	44.3%	573	31%	7,318

## EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance in the same tested grades by 13.3 percentage points. Brooklyn Ascend also exceeded district performance for every tested grade in SY 15-16. In the lower school grades (3-4), the positive performance relative to the district is notable. In general, Brooklyn Ascend’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 Ascend’s Common Core curriculum to lower school students from an early stage, have contributing to their strong comparative performance.

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<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

Brooklyn Ascend students have achieved an increase of 12.6 percentage points in ELA proficiency over the past three years, compared to CSD 18, which has improved by 10 points. Overall, Brooklyn Ascend students have maintained an edge over CSD 18 students in the same tested grades over the past three years. In grades 3 and 4 in particular, Brooklyn Ascend’s growth has outpaced that of the CSD consistently. In grade 6 and 7, Brooklyn Ascend has reversed early slight declines in performance to post proficiency numbers in SY 15-16 that are not only 10.5 and 12.3 points higher than in SY 13-14, but that also outpaced CSD growth in those grades since that year.

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 Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	31.7%	22%	38.0%	21%	55.6%	36%
4	35.8%	25%	34.6%	23%	54.0%	35%
5	38.4%	24%	17.2%	23%	33.0%	28%
6	21.7%	17%	19.7%	24%	32.2%	26%
7	29.6%	19%	26.8%	19%	41.9%	27%
8	--	--	36.0%	28%	41.6%	34%
All	31.7%	21%	29.4%	23%	44.3%	31%

### 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 2014-15 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### RESULTS

Brooklyn Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.86 overall in SY 2014-15. Grades 3, 4, 7, and 8 each achieved an Effect Size greater than 0.3.

*2014-15 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>86%</b>	<b>134</b>	37.3%	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>1.19</b>
4	<b>88%</b>	<b>113</b>	34.5%	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>1.31</b>
5	<b>89%</b>	<b>109</b>	17.4%	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>0.17</b>
6	<b>80%</b>	<b>80</b>	18.8%	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>-0.05</b>
7	<b>86%</b>	<b>77</b>	27.3%	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>1.10</b>
8	<b>89%</b>	<b>52</b>	34.6%	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>1.26</b>
All	<b>86%</b>	<b>565</b>	28.7%	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>0.84</b>

### EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend met the measure of achieving an Effect Size greater than 0.3, performing better than expected to a meaningful degree. Four of six grades performed better than expected to a large degree, while five of six grades posted a positive Effect Size in SY 14-15. In grades 5 and 6, significant improvement in scores in SY 15-16 provide an indication that all grades are within reach of achieving an Effect Size over 0.3 this year.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brooklyn Ascend's overall Effect Size has increased steadily over the past three years. The school has maintained a positive overall Effect Size since SY 13-14, and has performed better than expected to a meaningful degree over the past two 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
2012-13	3-6	77%	347	21.9%	21.3%	0.07
2013-14	3-7	80%	461	29.3%	21.3%	0.58
2014-15	3-8	86%	565	28.7%	17.5%	0.84

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

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

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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 2014-15 and also have a state exam score from 2013-14 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2013-14 score are ranked by their 2014-15 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 2014-15 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>5</sup>

### RESULTS

In SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile of 48.0, compared to the statewide median of 50.0. While the mean growth percentiles for grades 7 and 8 were above that of the statewide median, other grades did not outperform the median.

2014-15 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	45.5	50.0
5	40.5	50.0
6	46.0	50.0
7	61.5	50.0
8	51.0	50.0
All	<b>48.0</b>	50.0

### EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend did not meet the measure of a mean growth percentile higher than the state's median of the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Though this result is disappointing, the school, which educates students with higher levels of need than the statewide averages, is making a concerted effort to grow performance in spite of this high need.

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

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brooklyn Ascend’s disaggregated mean growth percentile values are not currently available for years prior to SY 14-15.

## SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75% proficiency, Brooklyn Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in English language arts.

As evidenced by this year’s significant progress in grades 3, 4, 7, and 8 on absolute and comparative measures, 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 its use. Despite lower scores for grades 5 and 6 relative to the rest of the school, Brooklyn Ascend Middle School has, through improved staff retention and hiring, already begun to address some of the challenges facing those grade levels, with some positive effects already apparent. When controlling for economic disadvantage with the Effect Size measure, the school has improved its position relative to previous years, performing better than expected to a meaningful degree. Though Brooklyn Ascend failed to meet the growth measure in SY 14-15, the significant increase in proficiency achieved by students in SY 15-16 is a positive indicator for future achievement on this measure, and another signal of previous programmatic adjustments coming to fruition.

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

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

### ACTION PLAN

Through the next accountability period, Brooklyn Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practices and results in ELA, while identifying and improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Brooklyn Ascend will take part in Ascend's network-wide initiatives: cultivating a Love of Reading, and the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work. The Love of Reading initiative will help to bolster English language arts scores by developing rituals and activities in the school that celebrate, highlight, and inspire a love of reading among students and faculty. Strengthened implementation and effectiveness of all literacy blocks, a pilot writing workshop program at the lower school level, and added dedicated time for independent reading, will provide the framework for these cultural changes.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work initiative will be implemented to build on the overall success of Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) efforts, which began in SY 14-15, as well as the ongoing positive effects of strong incremental goal-setting and targeted intervention in place at Brooklyn Ascend Lower School in SY 15-16. The initiative will standardize incremental goal-setting as a practice across all levels, allowing for increased staff development opportunities for leaders and teachers.

Literacy interventions for struggling students represent an important subset of monitoring student work. This year will mark the second year of implementation for the leveled literacy intervention program at Brooklyn Ascend; increased familiarity with the program, combined with professional training, will allow for a more robust progress for struggling students in the future.

## MATHEMATICS

### Goal 2: Mathematics

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

### BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend moved fully away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the components of the English language arts programs included:

- 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 network.
- *Singapore Math* is the primary math program in the 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 Teacher 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.
- For approximately 10-20 minutes per day, students practice *Math Routines* to build automaticity and fluency in computation.
- In middle school, one of the 45-minute daily math periods is deployed for *EngageNY*. The second math period is dedicated to *Math in Context*.

Brooklyn Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark assessments, unit tests, STEP and STAR assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The purchase in SY 14-15 of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allowed staff to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback.

In SY 15-16, all Ascend schools initiated Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program 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

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that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

### Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

### METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2016. 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.

2015-16 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	144	0	0	0	0	144
4	143	0	0	1	0	144
5	107	0	0	0	0	107
6	107	0	0	0	0	107
7	78	0	0	0	0	84
8	81	0	0	1	0	82
All	660	0	0	2	0	662

### RESULTS

42.0% of all Brooklyn Ascend students achieved proficiency on the NYS mathematics exam in SY 15-16; 43.1% of students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency. While grade 7 students struggled to achieve proficiency at levels similar to their peers, other tested grades showed stronger results. The performance of 64.5% in grade 4 was particularly strong.

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<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.

## Performance on 2015-16 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	47.2%	144	48.7%	117
4	62.2%	143	64.5%	124
5	37.4%	107	38.5%	91
6	34.6%	107	37.4%	91
7	20.5%	78	20.3%	74
8	33.3%	81	34.2%	76
All	42.0%	660	43.1%	573

### EVALUATION

In SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. The gap of 31.9% between Brooklyn Ascend's overall performance of 43.1% and the absolute measure threshold of 75% is significant. Yet, the performance of grade 3 at 48.7% and grade 4 at 64.5% are encouraging. Grade 3 and 4 students have benefitted from taking part in the Ascend Common Core curriculum from an earlier stage. For them and students in grades 5, 6, and 8, the emphasis placed this year on incremental goal-setting in math has had on exam scores.

With a proficiency level of 20.3%, the performance of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students this year was weak, failing to meet the school's standards and aspirations for these students' success. At this level, staffing concerns that arose throughout the school year (as discussed above in the corresponding section for ELA) had a pronounced impact in grade 7 mathematics and were addressed. The school is working diligently to prevent similar issues from arising in the future, in order to increase achievement in grade 7 throughout the middle school.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 15-16, in particular, showcased strong growth in performance in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 over the preceding year, as evidenced in the table below. Brooklyn Ascend has improved from 27.7% proficiency in math in SY 13-14 to 43.1% proficiency in SY 15-16, indicating a steady, positive trend. While SY 14-15 saw mixed results for grade 3 and 4 students due to the implementation of the new and challenging Ascend Common Core curriculum, those grades posted larger jumps in performance from SY 14-15 to SY 15-16, including a 34.6 percentage-point growth in grade 4.

The decline at the grade 7 level from SY 14-15 is disappointing, and this result has led to modifications to the school's staffing to better support the grade level academically. Still, grade 7 scores have improved from a level of 11.1% in SY 13-14 to 20.3% in SY 15-16. To this point, all tested grades have improved their scores over the past three years.

## Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	34.9%	106	41.1%	129	48.7%	117
4	38.4%	99	29.9%	107	64.5%	124
5	24.4%	78	23.0%	87	38.5%	91
6	16.7%	60	24.7%	77	37.4%	91
7	11.1%	54	22.5%	71	20.3%	74
8	--	--	22.0%	50	34.2%	76
All	27.7%	397	29.0%	521	43.1%	573

### 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 2015-16 mathematics AMO of 101. 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

In mathematics, Brooklyn Ascend achieved a PLI of 119.2 in SY 15-16.

#### Mathematics 2015-16 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
660	22.9%	35.2%	23.2%	18.8%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 35.2 & + & 23.2 & + & 18.8 & = & 77.2 \\
 & & & & 23.2 & + & 18.8 & = & \underline{42.0} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 119.2
 \end{array}$$

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

## EVALUATION

The school met the measure for a PLI value exceeding the SY 15-16 English language arts AMO of 101. Notable performances include a high percentage of grade 3 and 4 students at Level 4 (28.5% and 32.2%, respectively) and a high percentage of grade 6, 7, and 8 students at Level 2 (46.7%, 39.7%, and 49.4%, respectively). This achievement was accomplished by a strong number of students scoring at Level 3 and 4 proficiency. Brooklyn Ascend's response to intervention (RTI) program, which provides tiered interventions to students who are struggling academically while still keeping those students integrated with their classmates through a series of push-in and pull-out services, was enhanced by robust incremental monitoring of student progress, especially in the lower grades. In 2014, Brooklyn Ascend also purchased and implemented the use of Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA), which allowed for increased efficiency and effectiveness of tracking student performance and growth across a variety of measures. These initiatives and systems, along with a robust professional development and planning program, have allowed for the school to better prepare teachers for providing targeted, purposeful lessons aimed at improving student achievement levels.

### Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

## METHOD

A school compares the performance of tested students enrolled in at least their second year to that of all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>8</sup>

## RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend's aggregate performance on NYS mathematics exams outpaced Community School District 18, the school's home district, by 20.1 percentage points. Brooklyn Ascend achieved 43.1% proficiency among students enrolled in at least their second year, compared to 23% proficiency for all CSD 18 students in the same tested grades. The strongest comparative performance occurred in grade 4, where Brooklyn Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed all district students by over 38.5 points. The school will address the challenges facing grade 7 with urgency.

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<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](#).

## 2015-16 State Mathematics Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	48.7%	117	31%	1,268
4	64.5%	124	26%	1,247
5	38.5%	91	22%	1,300
6	37.4%	91	23%	1,042
7	20.3%	74	19%	1,175
8	34.2%	76	16%	1,232
All	43.1%	573	23%	7,264

### EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance by 20.1 percentage points. Brooklyn Ascend also exceeded CSD 18 performance in every tested grade in SY 15-16. In the lower school grades (3-4), the positive performance relative to the district is notable, and can be attributed in part to successful continuous incremental goal-setting for student performance in place for math during SY 15-16. Further, Brooklyn Ascend'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 Ascend's Common Core curriculum to lower school students from an early stage, have contributing to their strong comparative performance.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brooklyn Ascend students have achieved an increase of 15.4 percentage points in mathematics proficiency over the past three years, compared to a zero-percentage-point increase achieved by CSD 18. While the CSD proficiency level has remained flat since SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend's scores have increased by 14.1 percentage points. Though grade 7 at Brooklyn Ascend has faced challenges in achieving math proficiency, their 9.2 percentage point increase since SY 13-14 outpaces the 2-point increase achieved by CSD 18 in the same time frame. The difference in growth is also notable for grade 4, where Brooklyn Ascend students have improved by 26.1 percentage points over three years, while CSD proficiency has remained essentially flat at its SY 13-14 level of 26%.

## 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					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	34.9%	26%	41.1%	29%	48.7%	31%
4	38.4%	26%	29.9%	25%	64.5%	26%
5	24.4%	26%	23.0%	27%	38.5%	22%
6	16.7%	21%	24.7%	20%	37.4%	23%
7	11.1%	17%	22.5%	19%	20.3%	19%
8	--	--	22.0%	17%	34.2%	16%
All	27.7%	23%	29.0%	23%	43.1%	23%

### 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 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2014-15 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

### RESULTS

Brooklyn Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.24 overall in SY 14-15 for mathematics. Grades 3 and 8 achieved an Effect Size greater than 0.3 that year.

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## 2014-15 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>86%</b>	129	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>0.59</b>
4	<b>88%</b>	107	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>0.19</b>
5	<b>89%</b>	87	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>-2.6%</b>	<b>-0.15</b>
6	<b>80%</b>	77	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>-0.11</b>
7	<b>86%</b>	71	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>0.27</b>
8	<b>89%</b>	50	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>0.56</b>
All	<b>86%</b>	521	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>0.24</b>

## EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend fell slightly below the measure of achieving an Effect Size greater than 0.3. The school performed better than expected by a meaningful amount in grades 3 and 8, but to a slighter degree in grades 4 and 7. In grades 5 and 6, Brooklyn Ascend's Effect Size was slightly negative, results that will likely be reversed in the school's SY 15-16 Effect Size analysis given those grades' strong performance and maintenance of a similar level of economically disadvantaged students. In grade 4, too, where the SY 14-15 Effect Size was 0.19, the measure will likely improve in SY 15-16 analysis for the same reason.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Though in SY 12-13 and SY 13-14 Brooklyn Ascend had a negative Effect Size, these figures were small in magnitude, and the trend was reversed in SY 14-15, when Brooklyn Ascend performed better than expected to a slight degree, coming close to the threshold of an Effect Size greater than 0.3. Given Brooklyn Ascend's growing proficiency levels and maintenance of a large population of economically disadvantaged students in SY 15-16, the school expects this measure to improve further this year.

## Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2012-13	3-6	77%	347	23.3%	24.2%	-0.05
2013-14	3-7	80%	461	26.0%	28.9%	-0.15
2014-15	3-8	86%	521	28.4%	24.2%	0.24

# MATHEMATICS

## 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 2014-15 and also have a state exam score in 2013-14 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2013-14 scores are ranked by their 2014-15 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 2014-15 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.<sup>10</sup>

## RESULTS

In SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile of 46.0, compared to the statewide median of 50.0. While the mean growth percentile for grades 7 and 8 was considerably above that of the statewide median, grades 4-6 did not outperform the median.

2014-15 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	37.0	50.0
5	37.0	50.0
6	47.0	50.0
7	60.0	50.0
8	63.5	50.0
All	<b>46.0</b>	50.0

## EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend did not meet the measure of a mean growth percentile higher than the state’s median of the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Though this result is disappointing, the school, which educates students with higher levels of need than the statewide averages, is making a concerted effort to grow performance in spite of this high need.

<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).

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brooklyn Ascend’s disaggregated mean growth percentile values are not currently available for prior to 2014-15.

## SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75% proficiency, Brooklyn Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in mathematics.

As evidenced by this year’s significant progress in grades 3 and 4 in absolute and comparative measures, the school is confident in the strength of the Ascend Common Core curriculum, especially for those students, who from an early age, have benefitted from its use. Though Brooklyn Ascend failed to meet the growth and Effect Size measures in SY 14-15, the significant increase in proficiency achieved by students in SY 15-16, including by those who make up the large population of economically disadvantaged students, is a positive indicator for future achievement of this measure, and another signal of previous programmatic adjustments coming to fruition.

Overall, the school has shown steady improvement towards attaining its mathematics goal in this accountability period; still, much work remains, especially in the middle school grades. Targeted improvements to the educational program and school staff as described below, persistence and enhancement of successful practices, and continued staff development will contribute to more consistent progress and achievement towards this goal in the next accountability period.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2013-14 school district results.)	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 state’s unadjusted median growth percentile.	Did Not Achieve

### ACTION PLAN

Through the next accountability period, Brooklyn 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.

Brooklyn Ascend will take part in Ascend's network-wide initiative towards Continuous Monitoring of Student Work. Building on the positive effects of strong incremental goal-setting and targeted intervention at Brooklyn Ascend Lower School in SY 15-16, the initiative will standardize incremental goal-setting as a practice across all levels, allowing for increased staff development opportunities for leaders and teachers. Further, this initiative will serve to enhance the existing structure of Teaching Planning and Development (TPD) meetings, with increased analysis of frequent "exit tickets" and other informal assessments of student learning, as well as improved data-focused coaching.

More frequent and in-depth monitoring of student work will also inform and improve the ways teachers address the learning needs of their students, by allowing teachers to enhance the interventions provided in the classroom for struggling students and those nearing proficiency.

In order to address weaker performance in grades 5 through 8, several interventions will take place this year and beyond to ensure greater progress towards accountability measures. Particularly in grades 5 and 7, a special emphasis has been placed on hiring and re-staffing positions such that classrooms will be taught by highly-skilled, high-performing teachers. In each of these grades, the school has redoubled its efforts to recruit similarly strong new staff members.

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### Goal 3: Science

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in science.

### BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend fully moved away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the elements of this curriculum for science included:

- 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 are instructed under the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill science series), revealed that black students' performance on the Missouri Assessment Program is exhibiting a growth trend that exceeds 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.

### 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 2016. 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

Brooklyn Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year achieved 79.2% proficiency overall in science, with a particularly strong performance by grade 4 students, who achieved 92.6% proficiency.

## Charter School Performance on 2015-16 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency	
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	92.6%	122
8	57.3%	75
All	79.2%	197

### EVALUATION

The school met the measure for achieving at least 75% proficiency for all students enrolled in at least their second year, exceeding the measure by 4.2 percentage points. Though grade 8 students did not achieve 75% proficiency this year, their performance will fuel an effort to improve their scores and achieve proficiency at the level of their younger peers.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since SY 13-14, Brooklyn Ascend has achieved over 75% proficiency in science for students enrolled in their second year. A dip in scores during SY 14-15 was frustrating and indicated the difficulties of implementing a new curriculum, combined with a lack of targeted intervention in science. In SY 15-16, though, the school has regained ground in grade 4 to achieve proficiency above 90%. The lower scores in grade 8 will be addressed with urgency in the coming school year, with the help of teachers with thorough knowledge of the curriculum who have been retained, and with targeted intervention and professional development at the middle school level.

### Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	96.0%	99	78.3%	106	92.6%	122
8	--	--	72.0%	50	57.3%	75
All	96.0%	99	76.3%	156	79.2%	197

### Goal 3: Comparative Measure

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

### METHOD

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

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which the school had tested students in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

### RESULTS

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 18 in SY 15-16.

#### 2015-16 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	92.6%	122	--	--
8	57.3%	75	--	--
All	79.2%	197	Not available	Not available

### EVALUATION

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 18 in SY 15-16.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 18 in SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend's overall performance in previous years has been strong. Brooklyn Ascend students outpaced their peers by 12 percentage points in SY 13-14 and by 10.3 points in SY 14-15. Though grade 4 Brooklyn Ascend students had a performance slightly lower than CSD students in SY 14-15, Brooklyn Ascend's scores have rebounded after responding to improved teacher training and more targeted intervention.

#### 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					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
4	96.0%	84%	78.3%	81%	92.6%	--
8	--	--	72.0%	45%	57.3%	--
All	96.0%	84%	76.3%	66%	79.2%	Not available

### SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 18 in SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend students continue to perform well in science, particularly in grade 4. Over the past three years, the school's science performance in grade 4 has remained above 75% proficiency, indicating the strength of the Ascend science curriculum. Beyond this, Brooklyn Ascend students have outperformed their CSD

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peers by significant margins—a trend that is likely to continue in SY 15-16 given the school’s continued strong performance. Work remains to be done at the grade 8 level, where declining scores will be addressed directly with the aim of improving proficiency in this accountability period.

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

### ACTION PLAN

Brooklyn Ascend hopes to expand on current levels of proficiency in science by building upon successful systems already in place, while specifically addressing challenges to the grade 8 program.

This year, professional development in science will continue to expand as it has over the past two years since the implementation of the new science program. This, combined with a staff of teachers who have gained experience and expertise in science instruction over time, will lead to a further strengthening of the science program. This year, Brooklyn Ascend will also implement professional development tailored more specifically to the middle school level, in order to support the needs of the middle school grades as the school strives to raise grade 8 proficiency to the level of their younger peers.

## 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

Brooklyn Ascend’s NCLB status for SY 15-16 will be Good Standing.

### EVALUATION

The goal will be met.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Brooklyn Ascend has achieved Good Standing status over the past three years.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2013-14	Good Standing
2014-15	Good Standing
2015-16	Good Standing

## GOAL 5: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

### Goal 5: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

*[Brooklyn Ascend Charter School has not yet developed with SUNY's Charter Schools Institute Accountability Plan goals for its high school grades, and will undertake to do so.]*

#### Goal 5: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of students in first and second year high school Total Graduation Cohorts will earn at least ten credits (if 44 needed for graduation) or five credits (if 22 needed for graduation) each year. *[Eight credits are required for promotion to the second year at Brooklyn Ascend High school; 44 are needed for graduation. See below for details]*

#### METHOD

This measure serves as a leading indicator of the performance of high school cohorts and examines their progress toward graduation based on annual credit accumulation. The measure requires that, based on the school's promotion requirements, the school will promote 75 percent of its students in each cohort to the next grade by the end of August OR that 75 percent of the first and second year high school Total Graduation Cohorts will earn the requisite number of credits.

Students at Brooklyn Ascend High School must earn the following minimum number of total accumulated credits by the end of each year. One credit is earned per semester for each full-time course that receives a passing grade of 65 or higher, and a specific amount of credits are needed in each subject area. The following courses were offered for credit in SY 15-16:

Course name	Department name	Credits per semester
Algebra I	Mathematics	1.00
Biology	Science	1.00
The City and Art	Visual/Performing Arts	0.50
Civic Reflections	Elective	0.75
Conversational Spanish	Language Other Than English	0.50
College Seminar I	Elective	0.50
Intro to Web Development	Elective	0.50
Dance	Visual/Performing Arts	0.50
English I	English	1.00
Film	Visual/Performing Arts	0.50
Global I	Social Studies	1.00
Independent Study	Independent Study	0.50

Investigations in Science	Science	0.50
Yoga	Physical Educations	0.50

Students at risk of not meeting promotion standards will be notified in January or February. Student who do not meet promotion requirements in June have the opportunity to attend summer school and be promoted in August if promotion standards are met at that time.

Grade level	Minimum credits
9	8
10	20, including 4 in English and 4 in Social Studies
11	30
12	44

## RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Brooklyn Ascend students in the high school’s first year cohort achieved a promotion rate of 78%. Out of 68 students in the cohort, 15 did not advance to their second year.

Percent of Students in First and Second Year Cohorts  
Earning the Required Number of Credits in 2015-16

Cohort Designation	Number in Cohort	Percent promoted
2014	N/A	N/A
2015	68	78%

## EVALUATION

Brooklyn Ascend met the measure by achieving 78% promotion for students in the first year high school Total Graduation Cohort. The school exceeded the measure’s threshold of 75% by a small margin. Brooklyn Ascend High School’s summer school allowed struggling students to catch up to their peers and to advance on time. The school will continue to make efforts to improve their promotion percentage by strengthening these supports both during the school year and through the summer.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 15-16 was the first year of operation for Brooklyn Ascend High School. Therefore, there are no additional data available.

### Goal 5: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of students in the second year high school Total Graduation Cohort will score 65 on at least three different New York State Regents exams required for graduation.

## METHOD

This measure serves as a leading indicator of the performance of high school cohorts and examines their progress towards graduation based on Regents exam passage. The measure requires that 75 percent of students in each cohort have passed at least three Regents exams by their second year in the cohort. In August of 2015, the 2013 cohort will have completed its second year.

## RESULTS

Brooklyn Ascend High School did not enroll any students in their second year Total Graduation Cohort in SY 15-16. Therefore, this measure is not applicable.

## EVALUATION

Not applicable.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

### Goal 5: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of students in the fourth year high school Total Graduation Cohort and 95 percent of students in the fifth year high school Total Graduation Cohort will graduate.

## METHOD

This measure examines students in two high school Graduation Cohorts: those who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade as members of the 2011 cohort and graduated four years later and those who entered as members of the 2010 cohort and graduated five years later. At a minimum, these students have passed five Regents exams in English language arts, mathematics, science, U.S. History and Global History. Students have through the summer at the end of their fourth year to complete graduation requirements.

The school's graduation requirements appear above under the graduation goal's first measure pertaining to annual grade-by-grade promotion or credit accumulation.

## RESULTS

Brooklyn Ascend High School did not enroll any students in their fourth year Total Graduation Cohort in SY 15-16. Therefore, this measure is not applicable.

## EVALUATION

Not applicable.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

### Goal 5: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of students in the high school Total Graduation Cohort graduating after the completion of their fourth year will exceed that of the Total Graduation Cohort from the local school district.

## METHOD

The school compares the graduation rate of students completing their fourth year in the charter school’s Total Graduation Cohort to that of the respective cohort of students in the local school district<sup>11</sup>. Given that students may take Regents exams through the summer of their fourth year, district results for the current year are generally not available at this time.

## RESULTS

Brooklyn Ascend High School only enrolled students in their first year Total Graduation Cohort in SY 15-16. Therefore, this measure is not applicable.

## EVALUATION

Not applicable.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION GOAL

While Brooklyn Ascend High School only served 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in SY 15-16, their initial progress towards graduation was on pace with the school’s expectations and the Accountability Plan’s measure for promotion.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of students in first and second year high school Total Graduation Cohorts will earn at least ten credits (if 44 needed for graduation) or five credits (if 22 needed for graduation) each year.	Achieved
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of students in the fourth year high school Total Graduation Cohort and 95 percent of students in the fifth year high school Total Graduation Cohort will graduate.	N/A
Absolute	Each year, the percent of students in the high school Total Graduation Cohort graduating after the completion of their fourth year will exceed that of the Total Graduation Cohort from the local school district.	N/A

<sup>11</sup> Schools can retrieve district level graduation rates from the SED’s Information and Reporting Services office. News releases and an Excel workbook containing these data are available from the [IRS Data Release webpage](#).