Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School

2015-16 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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By Dylan Schaffer

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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

Michelle Flowers has served as school director since July 2014.

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Central 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

Central Brooklyn Ascend opened in September 2014 and has grown to serve students in kindergarten through grade 2 in 2015-16. It will continue to grow by a grade per year to offer at maturity a comprehensive K-12 college-preparatory program. Central Brooklyn Ascend is located in Community School District 18 in Brooklyn. In SY 15-16, 86% of Central Brooklyn Ascend students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch, 95% were black or Latino, and 15% 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														N/A
2012-13														N/A
2013-14														N/A
2014-15	76	75												151
2015-16	76	78	77											231

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Central 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:

- *Fundations*, 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.

Central 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 had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State English language arts exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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 school had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State English language arts exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

The school had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State English language arts exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

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 school had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State English language arts exam.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

Goal 1: Growth Measure[1]

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

The school had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State English language arts exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Not applicable.

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.	N/A
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.	N/A

[1] See Guidelines for Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan for an explanation.

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.	N/A
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.)	N/A
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.	N/A

ACTION PLAN

Not applicable

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

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

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Central 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.*

Central 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 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 had no students in grades 3 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the New York State mathematics exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

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.[2]

RESULTS

Not applicable.

[2] In contrast to NYSED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

MATHEMATICS

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

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.[3]

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

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,

[3] 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.

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

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

Goal 2: Growth Measure[4]

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.[5]

RESULTS

Not applicable.

[4] See Guidelines for Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan for an explanation.

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

MATHEMATICS

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Not applicable.

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.	**N/A**
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.	**N/A**
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.	**N/A**
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.)	**N/A**
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.	**N/A**

ACTION PLAN

Not applicable.

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

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

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Central Brooklyn Ascend moved fully 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 had no students in grades 4 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the NYS science exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

SCIENCE

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

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 had no students in grades 4 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the NYS science exam.

RESULTS

Not applicable.

EVALUATION

Not applicable.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

The school had no students in grades 4 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the NYS science exam.

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

ACTION PLAN

The school had no students in grades 4 through 8 in SY 15-16 and therefore did not administer the NYS science exam.

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

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

EVALUATION

The goal will be met.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2013-14	N/A
2014-15	N/A
2015-16	Good Standing