



Academic Leadership Charter School

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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By Leena Thomas

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2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Leena Thomas, Principal, prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	committees (e.g. finance, executive)
James Sander	Chair	Education, Finance, Real Estate
Christopher Brignola	Vice-Chair	Education
Lucas Doe	Treasurer	Finance
Mark Keye	Secretary	Finance
Robert Ansbro	Member	Real Estate

Norma Hurwitz has served as the Executive Director since 2009

Leena Thomas has served as the Principal since 2012

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

“With the leadership of the School Board, its administration, teachers and support staff, Academic Leadership Charter School’s mission is to develop in students the ability to exceed NYS performance standards in all major academic areas in a safe and nurturing environment. In partnership with parents and the community, our students will be empowered to become leaders and take an active role in their learning while exhibiting good character.”

Academic Leadership Charter School has set very high academic performance goals for our students and has striven to meet those goals by providing a strong and differentiated instructional program. Our main goal and focus is to provide our students with a quality educational program that helps them to develop and demonstrate College and Career Readiness by meeting or exceeding NYS Common Core Standards through a strong curriculum.

It is our belief that all students can achieve academic success in a nurturing and academically rigorous environment. Our students have outperformed schools in CSD 7, our peer schools, and students city-wide¹. During our initial charter period, we also saw an improvement for individual students from year to year. Our instructional program focuses on Literacy across the content areas in all grades and this has proven to be successful for all of our students, including our struggling population.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2016-17										0	0	0	0	
2017-18	55	50	51	55	47	58	49	49	83	0	0	0	0	549
2018-19	88	76	55	57	55	49	53	40	39	0	0	0	0	521
2019-20	71	106	83	60	58	56	75	53	40	0	0	0	0	602
2020-21	56	81	125	81	68	65	69	66	53	0	0	0	0	664

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students at Academic Leadership Charter School will become proficient in English Language Arts

BACKGROUND

Our Literacy program is designed to help students become fluent readers and critical thinkers. We follow an interdisciplinary approach that is content based and allows for language development and vocabulary expansion. Every day, students read and analyze stories and other rich texts, such as magazine articles and poetry. Fiction and non-fiction stories are analyzed by students based on weekly themes and story genres which enable mastery of that particular weekly topic; character study, mysteries, plays, multicultural stories, myths, fables, legends and novels.

We offer four periods of Literacy instruction daily, employing a balanced literacy program offering a mini lesson followed by a workshop period when the classroom teacher and the associate teacher initially work with at-risk, Special education, or ELL students. Once these students have demonstrated mastery, they proceed to work independently. The classroom teacher then reviews work with the group of on or above level students. Each of the aforementioned groups participate in small group workshop sessions with the classroom teacher, associate, or one of the instructional support teachers for 15-20 minutes sessions daily during the activity portion of the lesson.

The first two periods consist of our core reading program, SRA Imagine It! for grades K-6 which allows students to read a variety of texts and build necessary reading comprehension skills. For grades 7- 8, we use novels and Pearson's Literature reading anthologies. The third period is devoted to supplemental fiction texts that are teacher selected and theme based. The fourth period focuses on writing and responding to literature.

It is important that our students have a love for reading by providing meaningful topical material tailored to students' social and cognitive developmental and interest level, engaging texts, and the opportunity for all students to be active participants in every lesson, regardless of their ability level. To assist with providing best differentiated lessons in ELA, each classroom has created an ELA chart that outlines each comprehension skill, strategy, and elements of figurative language. This system of tracking identifies each student's

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strengths where students are provided more challenging activities, and weaknesses which requires re-teaching. The ELA chart is updated within each six-week period to support most updated differentiated groups.

In addition to rich fiction texts, we use have a variety of non-fiction texts incorporated in our curriculum. From their early years, ALCS students receive a content rich curriculum with social studies and science being taught daily and one period a day devoted to each of those subjects. In addition, during our literacy block, content is reinforced. Teachers have students read and discuss newspaper articles to remain aware of current events. Students examine articles from various newspapers on the same topic, to analyze how each has a point of view and bias and each journalist chooses to write what he or she wants readers to walk away with.

Each lesson is highly interactive and teachers facilitate rich discussions, analysis, and application of what is learned. Instead of teachers simply monitoring and ensuring that each student is on task during independent activities, our teachers use this time to re-teach and provide greater scaffolding to students who need it most.

Every Monday, we hold professional development sessions to help teachers become well versed with our ELA curriculum. School administrators also co-teach with teachers to provide additional support. We assess students every six-weeks using a Mock assessment, modeled after the state's ELA exam, to track student mastery and progress.

METHOD

Students were assessed using internally developed assessments. Our School uses MOCK ELA assessments for grades 3-8 which are modeled after NYS Standardized exams. In addition, we use student writing samples, quizzes, and projects to assess student growth and mastery.

During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exam to assess student growth and achievement in ELA: **Internally developed**

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our school used internally developed assessments to assess students. Our assessments are modeled after NYSED State exams and often reflect released test questions and passages. Given the difficulty of these exams, 60% is used as the indicator of whether or not children were on level.

Results: Goal almost met

52% of our students in grades 3-8 who were with our school for at least 2 years met the 60% mark.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Given the difficulty children faced with remote instruction, we do not believe the results are an accurate indicator of performance. Some students had difficulty completing the exams virtually. The

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questions require students to refer back to the passages several time. This is often difficult to do on a computer screen. Taking notes along the sides of the readings are also difficult on a computer.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

We were close to meeting the goal of 60% of students meeting the 60% mark on internal assessments. The covid-19 pandemic and negatively impacted our ability to provide our academic program to our fullest abilities. However, we were close to our goal and we are proud of these achievements given the circumstances.

ACTION PLAN

Our school will continue to offer vigorous instruction to ensure students continue to meet and or excel our goals. We will continue to provide students with the supports they need and we will assess our efficiency using quizzes, work samples and interim-assessments. We will also move towards greater analysis of work samples.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will be proficient in Mathematics

BACKGROUND

Our mathematics program is designed to help students master basic numerical skills while allowing them to think more critically, solve word problems, and gain necessary skills for their future. We have a spiraled approach to Mathematics, with each lesson beginning with a ten-minute warm-up activity to review arithmetic operations and fundamentals for each algorithm. Each period contains two mini lessons which focus on different math strands. During each lesson, based on how well students have mastered the day's concepts, they either receive further review or participate in an independent activity offering greater challenge. Mathematics is taught for two 45-minute periods daily, allowing ample time for students to master their grade's curriculum while being exposed to concepts of the next grade. Math charts which display each mathematics strand and common core standard will be aligned to each student identifying mastery and needs of improvement which will guide teachers to best differentiate instruction.

For grades K-5, ALCS employs the TERC Investigations in Number, Data and Space. For grades 6-8, we use Connected Mathematics Project. For all grades, in addition to our core Mathematics programs, We also purchase supplemental workbooks from Coach, Test Ready, Progress NY, and Finish Line to enhance our Mathematics curriculum. Having as many resources as possible will allow teachers to teach topics in a variety of ways.

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Teachers create math binders which combine all resources, organized by topic. . This makes lesson planning more manageable and allows for more strategic planning as activities at various levels are easily available to differentiate instruction. Each classroom has a math center with worksheets organized by topic, manipulatives, and computers for student use. This allows students to reinforce topics where students need additional support after each lesson. If a student finishes an activity early, they go to the math center to work at applying understanding or tackling an area where further practice is warranted. Teachers maintain math charts that track progress by strands/skills and show where students need additional support. Students are made aware of their progress as they have their individual math charts in their notebooks and teachers hold conversations with them. This enables students to become active participants in their learning. They know what topics they need to work on and can go to the math center and practice those topics further.

METHOD

Our school used Mock assessments to monitor student mastery. Mock assessments are modeled after NYS assessments and administered and often incorporate released test questions.

During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exam to assess student growth and achievement in mathematics: **Internally developed**

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our school used internally developed assessments to assess students. Our assessments are modeled after NYSED State exams and often reflect released test questions and passages. Given the difficulty of these exams, 60% is used as the indicator of whether or not children were on level.

44% of students met the goal of being at 60% or higher on internally developed assessments.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE:

Given the difficulty children faced with remote instruction, we do not believe the results are an accurate indicator of performance. Some students had difficulty completing the exams virtually. The questions require students to refer back to the passages several time. This is often difficult to do on a computer screen. Taking notes along the sides of the readings are also difficult on a computer

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

We were close to meeting the goal of 60% of students meeting the 60% mark on internal assessments. The covid-19 pandemic and negatively impacted our ability to provide our academic program to our fullest abilities. However, we were close to our goal and we are proud of these achievements given the circumstances.

ACTION PLAN

We will continue to track mastery of math standards and skills more closely. We also plan to implement more frequent quizzes to track student progress.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will be proficient in science

BACKGROUND

Our instructional program, which offers Science daily from Kindergarten through 8th grade, has allowed our children to develop strong skills and collect a body of knowledge. We focus on a variety of units each school year and students are assessed every six-weeks. We combined literacy and hands-on experiments within our science program.

METHOD

We used internally developed Six-Week assessments to assess our science program and student mastery.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Given the difficulties students faced with Covid-19, 60% was used as the mark of mastery. We aimed to have 60% of our students at 60% or higher.

68% of students who have been with us for at least two years were at 60% or higher (Goal Met).

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 and implementing a hybrid model, we ensured our students received science instruction daily. Science lessons, just like all other lessons were held live.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Goal met

ACTION PLAN

We will continue to revise our science curriculum to have students engaged in more experiments and hands on experiences. We are also working on ways to improve spiral review and student retention of information.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent changes to the state’s testing, accountability, and federal reporting requirements, the 2020-21 school accountability statuses are the same as those assigned for the 2019-20 school year. The 2019-20 accountability statuses were based on 2018-19 exam results. Assigned accountability designations and further context can be found [here](#).

Goal 7: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our school is currently in good standing.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Our school is in good standing.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2018-19	Good Standing
2019-20	Good Standing
2020-21	Good Standing