Academy of the City Charter School

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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By Steve Zimmerman

31-29 60th Street
Astoria, NY 11377

718-487-9857

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Steven Zimmerman, Executive Director, 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)
Monica Khan-Liriano	Chair	Executive, Governance; Education; Finance, Legal & Operations/Audit; Board Development
Harold Elish	Treasurer	Executive; Finance, Legal & Operations/Audit (Chair)
Sarah DeBlois	Secretary	Executive, Education
Deborah Evangelakos	Trustee	Board Development (Chair); Finance, Legal & Operations/Audit; Governance, Education
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Stephanie Walker	Trustee	Finance; Legal & Operations/Audit; Governance
Dr. Richard Welles	Trustee	Executive; Education (Co-Chair)

Steven Zimmerman has served as the Executive Director since April 20, 2020.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Academy of the City (AoC) fosters community, supports families, welcomes children of all backgrounds, celebrates diversity and promotes social justice. With our challenging, hands-on liberal arts experience, we strive to develop joyful, creative, independent and successful lifelong learners.

AoC was originally authorized as a K-5 school in 2010 and opened its doors to its first class of 100 students in Grades K-1 in August 2011. AoC received a three-year renewal in 2016, and subsequently received a full five year renewal in 2019 with approval to expand the school to include the middle school grades, 6th through 8th. The 2020-21 school year was the second year of our third charter term.

AoC is deeply embedded in every neighborhood of CSD 30, one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse in the country. Our student body represents the diversity of this culturally rich part of Western Queens. Our students are newcomers, first generation Americans, from families who have recently moved to Queens and those that have been here for generations. There are 29 different home languages spoken in the homes of the students we serve. Last year, our student body was 6% Black, 40% Hispanic, 18% Asian and 30% White. In 2020-21, 8% of our students were English language learners, 13% students with disabilities and 82% are eligible for free- and reduced-priced lunch. It is our vision that every child in our diverse community will achieve academic, social and personal excellence.

This past school year, our BEDS date enrollment was 636 students in Grades K-7. Notably our enrollment as of June 30, 2021 was 640 students which means we were successful in maintaining our enrollment. This is particularly significant given the negative impact the pandemic had on student enrollment and retention across all schools; yet AoC managed to end the school year with an enrollment that was 95% of our maximum chartered enrollment.

Our community-based, independent charter school was founded on the principles of:

- Community involvement
- Workplace democracy partnering with the United Federation of Teachers
- Reflective practices in pedagogy, site-based management and governance
- Continuous Professional Development
- Personal Accountability
- Transparency
- Entrepreneurship

These principles have continued and supported the excellence and growth of our program over our 10 years serving children in our CSD 30 Queens community.

AoC offers a rigorous, liberal arts curriculum that is standards-based and data-driven. A hallmark of AoC's pedagogy is our robust program in interdisciplinary project-based learning. Our students receive daily instruction in the core subjects of ELA, mathematics, science and social studies as well as weekly instruction in music, fine arts and physical education. Students work together as full class, independently and collaboratively in small groups, supported by their teachers. From the youngest of grades, AoC promotes student choice as we give all children an opportunity to select clubs or electives, enrichment opportunities in a small group setting, in which they would like to participate.

<u>The 2020-21 School Year</u>

AoC elected to remain fully remote during the 2020-21 school year. This decision was based on the collective best interests of students, staff and families in our learning community and the conviction on the part of the Board and school leadership that the remote plan would optimize safety while maximizing learning. Because the use of digital resources was central to the delivery of AoC's 2020-

21 educational program, we provided and assisted families with the required devices and tech support needed to facilitate a successful learning experience for all students. The remote learning experiences of the end of the 2019-20 school year provided the school leadership team and staff of both the elementary and middle school to reflect on the practices and design a new and improved remote teaching and learning environment for students that was implemented in 2020-21. Throughout the school year, teachers were provided with continued professional development so that they could perfect the use of existing tools and remote instructional practices and gain access to new tools and best practices for facilitating successful online learning environments.

Through our 2020-21 online instructional program, we sought to uphold the quality education we provide for on-campus instruction, making sure online learning was interactive and met the diverse learning needs of our student population. Importantly, grade level and age level needs informed the breakdown of screen time, independent work time, collaborative work time and the use of technology in the virtual instructional program. To that end, in the elementary school (Grades K-4), daily instruction included a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning. ELA, math, science, PE, Art, Music and Clubs were delivered as live instruction while writing and social studies were delivered asynchronously with students accessing pre-recorded lessons that their teachers would upload on google classroom. In the middle school, all instruction was live instruction.

AoC's remote program reflected a balance of academics, specials and social emotional learning. The remote daily schedule reflected our consciousness of student's screen time and the need for physical activity, body breaks and brain-breaks to avoid screen fatigue. Recognizing that students were experiencing stressful and often intense, traumatic experiences while isolated from their teachers, peers, friends and the school community as a whole, there was daily student check-ins across grade levels to nurture their healing process, ongoing mentorship from middle school advisors, a comprehensive counseling program that supported students with weekly classroom lessons that followed the CASEL competencies to teach them skills and behaviors to deal with the anxiety and stress resulting from the pandemic and ongoing communication with the families to ensure the school was aware of needs or areas of immediate support required by our students. The social emotional and mental health of our students will continue to be prioritized as we enter the 2021-22 school.

Instructional differentiation was achieved in the virtual environment. Teachers were able to pull out small groups of students from their larger classrooms into Zoom breakout rooms to help scaffold the teaching. Teachers' lesson plans included work for students on grade level, those who needed advanced treatment of the material and those who needed additional support, specifically our ELL and SPED students. ELL students were scheduled with the ELL teacher for live small group instruction on Zoom. During that time, ELL teachers worked with ELLs on classroom assignments as well as lessons designed to help students achieve language proficiency. Special education teachers had synchronous group sessions with their students based on their IEP mandates. During that time, teachers worked with special education students on classroom assignments as well as the student's individual IEP goals. Related services (OT, Speech, PT and Counseling) were provided to students through Tele-therapy. After consent was received from parents, related service providers worked with families to create a time to meet with students based on the student's IEP mandates. At-risk students (those who were performing below grade level) continued to receive special support from learning specialists during remote learning. Learning specialists met with students in small groups of up to 6 students in synchronous sessions twice a week during a 6 week cycle in which the learning specialist planned lessons based on the students' needs and focused on reading strategies, phonics, comprehension and/or grade level math skills. Based on student assessment data after the 6 week cycle, decisions were made as to whether students needed continued support.

The most important program adjustment that AoC implemented during 2020-21 that it had not

been able to do after it's abrupt transition to remote learning at the end of the 2019-20 school year was implementing its internal assessment protocol. The planning and professional development in which the school leadership team and teachers engaged in during the summer of 2020 allowed AoC to prepare for and establish protocols that would ensure the reliability of administering internal assessments in the remote context. AoC did not have the time to prepare to administer these assessments remotely at the end of the 2019-20 school year once it began its remote program. This year, however, AoC was able to administer F&P and Measuring Up Reading and Measuring Up Math and Go Math during the 2020-21 school year. While this data indicates that AoC students continued to make progress despite continued remote learning, school leadership is keenly aware that the majority of students are still behind grade level and have been focused this summer on what this data along with other student performance data, including teacher observations of student performance and engagement, will mean in terms of the interventions required during the 2021-22 school year to provide remediation and accelerate student learning.

Supporting Families During the Pandemic

CSD 30 was at the epicenter of the pandemic here in New York City. Many of our families struggled with the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. Tragically, we lost members of our community to the virus. Many of our families have struggled with food and economic insecurity. Our Family Coordinator assessed our families' needs through surveys and daily contact. Working with long-standing community partners, we ensured that every family had access to food and economic support. Our school counselor made daily contact and ran regular programs of emotional support for students and for their families. Families were regularly advised of the governmental relief programs, and at the request of leadership, our PCO and Board undertook a successful fundraising campaign to support those in immediate need who might not have access to those programs. This supportive work, so key to the ability of our students to be able to continue to learn and excel, continues today.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

In the table below, provide the school's BEDS Day enrollment for each school year.

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	57	55	84	106	53	57								412
2017-18	54	57	57	81	108	50								407
2018-19	54	56	58	55	82	107								412
2019-20	87	84	58	58	57	87	99							530
2020-21	81	82	85	57	84	77	81	89						636

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

AoC's students will meet or exceed Common Core and NYS Learning Standards for their grade level in all aspects of literacy, including reading, writing, speaking and listening.

BACKGROUND

The AoC ELA curriculum is designed to ensure that students learn to read and write with interest and understanding, write to communicate clearly, speak confidently and expressively and listen with attention and understanding. The School's ELA curriculum is closely aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. For ELA, AoC uses the Teachers College Readers and Writers workshop model for Grades K-1, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMF) *Journeys* for Grades 2-4 and HMH *Collections* for Grade 5-7. Grades 3-7 also engage in novel study in which the whole class reads the same novel with accompanying reading and writing lessons. ELA instruction is aligned with NYS standards-based instruction that is supported by the curriculum. During AOC's 2020-21 remote learning program, there was 1 hour of live ELA instruction five days a week and 45 minutes of asynchronous writing instruction three days a week with teachers prerecording the writing lesson which was posted on Google classroom in the elementary school. In the middle school, students had 45 minutes of live ELA (reading and writing) instruction five days a week.

Teachers use a lesson format that follows a predictable structure 1. Warm up/Introduction 2. Teach/Introduce new material 3. Try/Collaborate 4. Clarify/Formative Assessment. Small group, targeted instruction occurs during guided reading. Our ongoing ELA program consists of a standards-informed reading workshop which includes shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading and Writer's workshop including shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing, and phonics instruction. Our teachers use a variety of research-based teaching methods to differentiate instruction for all students. During remote learning, teachers were able to pull out small groups of students from their larger classrooms into Zoom breakout rooms to help scaffold the teaching. Teachers' lesson plans included work for students on grade level, those who needed advanced treatment of the material and those who needed additional support, specifically our ELL and SPED students.

Additionally, ELLs, special education and at-risk students had group sessions with the appropriate instructional specialists in order to receive the necessary support, mandated and/or related services. During remote instruction, Special Education and ELL Teachers pushed-into classrooms to provide guided instruction and support for students identified as needing these instructional support services. Teachers' lesson plans included work for students on grade level, those who needed advanced treatment of the material and those who needed additional support, specifically our ELL and SPED students. ELL students were scheduled with the ELL teacher for live small group instruction on Zoom. SPED students received their mandated and related services live through Zoom.

In order to measure and record readers' progress, we use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P) for formal assessment for all grades (or until a student tests out of this assessment). During 2020-21, F&P was administered three times during the year: Fall, Winter and Spring. AoC also administered Mastery Education's Measuring Up Live ELA (MUL ELA) benchmark assessments for the testing grades, 3rd-7th. Grades 3 and 4 were administered MUL ELA in the winter and spring 2021 while middle school grades, 5-7, were administered this assessment fall 2020, winter 2021 and spring 2021. Ongoing formative assessments were conducted throughout the year, using the common core standards as a framework to inform our observations about children's learning and to analyze student work. Also included in our assessment battery is a diagnostic inventory of sight words, an oral language assessment and an assessment of writing skills.

AoC is committed to building the capacity of our teachers through professional development. During remote instruction in the 2020-21 school year, AoC provided time in the daily and weekly schedule for teachers to plan and collaborate together in virtual grade level meetings and department meetings. This past year, AoC's ELA PD priorities were to engage students in a virtual setting, support reading and writing growth, as well as deficiencies acquired from interrupted 2019/2020 school year and master creating a ELA curriculum that translated to the remote setting (transformative) while holding true to AoC's mission and vision. To deliver PD, AoC engaged external PD consultants to provide training and workshops to teachers; in addition, teachers also led PD initiatives with their colleagues. PD and collaboration also continued to center around the sharing of best practices in online learning and online platforms that best supported and enhanced learning.

One of the more significant changes in the ELA instructional program during 2020-21 versus pre-pandemic in school instruction was that the amount of ELA instructional time was reduced from what it had been in school pre-pandemic. Pre-pandemic, the entire daily ELA block was 105 minutes, including 30 minutes of supervised independent reading time (DEAR) which was not able to be accommodated in the remote schedule given the amount of time available for ELA instruction. Because of the need to balance recommendations for the amount of student screen time each day and the need to ensure student's mental health and prevent student burnout by providing brain breaks and body breaks, the amount of instructional time across all courses was reduced from pre-pandemic in-school learning.

METHOD

To measure growth and achievement in ELA, AoC administered two formal assessments in the elementary school and middle school: the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P) and Mastery Education's Measuring Up Live ELA assessments (MUL ELA). F&P was administered to all students, Grades K-7 (or until a student tests out of the F&P), while MUL ELA was administered in the testing grades, 3rd through 7th. Both assessments are valid and reliable and aligned with NYS Learning Standards; however, neither assessment is a nationally-normed assessment.

F&P is administered one-to-one with the teacher and student. Students' independent reading levels are determined by the F&P assessment. F&P provides a scale that translates these reading

levels into a 1-4 scale where Level 1 is far below benchmark, Level 2 is approaching benchmark, Level 3 is at benchmark and Level 4 is exceeding benchmark. During the 2020-21 school year, F&P was administered three times during the year: Fall, Winter and Spring.

The MUL ELA assessment is an online assessment that diagnoses student ELA skill level and standards knowledge. The MUL ELA grade level assessments are delivered in specific testing formats that AoC students will confront on the NYS Testing program. The MUL ELA assessment was administered three times during the year for middle school (Grades 5-7): Fall, Winter and Spring and two times during the year for elementary school (Grades 3-4): Winter and Spring.

Because AoC remained remote for the 2020-21 school year, all assessments were administered remotely. AoC instructional leadership invested a significant amount of time setting up systems and creating protocols to be able to administer both the F&P and MUL ELA assessments to students remotely that would ensure the school had valid and reliable student academic data in order to understand the progress and gaps in student learning and inform necessary interventions and instructional modifications that would be required going forward to accelerate student learning. School administrators and teachers followed the established protocols with regard to communicating with families regarding the benchmark assessments and how the assessments will work remotely, the importance of families not helping students with answers, the importance of the student having a quiet place to take the assessment and ensuring that the home has the technological infrastructure to allow the student to take the assessment. Teachers also communicated with students about the assessment, why they are important, why the student should take them seriously and do their best and how virtual proctoring would work. On the day of the assessment, established protocols were followed by both students/families and teachers with regard to logging into the virtual setting, assigning proctors to monitor their specific groups of students, students turning on their cameras and sharing their audio and screens with the teacher and proctor, etc. Teachers and proctors monitored students by popping in and out of individual students' breakout rooms. Further, teachers and proctors could check on their students to ensure that there were no technological issues, making sure students were sharing their screens and that their microphones were on, etc. Because of the adherence to recommended protocols, AoC is confident that the assessment results from remote administration of the MUL ELA and F&P are valid and reliable.

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The tables below summarize AoC student performance on the Measuring Up Live ELA (MUL ELA benchmark assessment and the F&P benchmark assessment (F&P) for all students and disaggregated subgroups, ELLs and SWD. The tables compare student baseline performance on the assessment[1] with the end-of-year Spring 2021 administration focusing specifically on the percent of students performing at or above benchmark (Level 3+) and the percent who performed far below benchmark (Level 1). The data in the tables provide us with the absolute

[1] Baseline for Grades 3-4 on the MUL ELA was Winter 2021, Baseline for Grades 5-7 on the MUL ELA was Fall 2020.

achievement of students—the percent of students at or above grade level at the end of the year—and with growth both in terms of the increase in the percent of students at or above grade level from baseline to spring and the decrease in the percent of students who are far below grade level from baseline to spring. In addition, by comparing the performance of ELLs and SWD with that of general education students, we are able to assess the effectiveness of AoC's remote instructional program in addressing its most at-risk students. Because of the specific assessments that AoC administered during the 2020-21, we are unable to provide data in terms of the specific metrics defined by the Institute.

Percent of Students Performing at Level 1 and Level 3+ on Baseline and End of Year MUL ELA and F&P Assessments

Measuring Up Live ELA

ALL STUDENTS	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	50.9%	41.0%	(9.9)	22.8%	26.8%	4.0
4	60.7%	52.4%	(8.3)	7.1%	23.2%	16.1
5	53.8%	30.8%	(23.0)	6.4%	25.6%	19.2
6	38.3%	26.3%	(12.0)	30.9%	36.8%	5.9
7	16.3%	18.6%	2.3	54.6%	48.8%	(5.8)
All	43.3%	28.6%	(14.7)	24.9%	32.8%	7.9

Measuring Up Live ELA

ELLS	Baselin Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	75.0%	50.0%	(25.0)	8.3%	25.0%	16.7
4	78.6%	71.4%	(7.2)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0
5	85.7%	71.4%	(14.3)	7.0%	14.3%	7.3
6	81.8%	75.0%	(9.8)	0.0%	8.3%	8.3
7	50.0%	40.0%	(10.0)	20.0%	10.0%	(10.0)
All	74.1%	61.8%	(12.3)	22.2%	27.3%	5.1

Measuring Up Live ELA

SWD	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	75.0%	66.7%	(8.3)	16.7%	33.3%	16.6
4	87.5%	71.4%	(16.1)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0
5	88.9%	87.5%	(1.4)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0
6	70.0%	44.4%	(25.6)	20.0%	33.3%	13.3
7	16.7%	33.3%	16.6	0.0%	16.7%	16.7
All	71.1%	61.9%	(9.2)	8.9%	19.0%	10.1

F&P

ALL STUDENTS	Fall 20 Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Fall 20 Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	95.1%	30.5%	(64.6)	4.9%	50.0%	45.1
1	31.3%	25.3%	(5.9)	52.5%	64.6%	12.1
2	23.2%	25.0%	1.8	59.8%	63.1%	3.3
3	3.6%	8.8%	5.2	83.9%	75.4%	(8.5)
4	14.3%	15.7%	1.4	66.7%	55.4%	(11.3)
5	13.0%	28.4%	15.4	57.1%	51.4%	(5.8)
6	32.1%	43.2%	11.2	43.6%	44.6%	1.0
7	36.9%	15.1%	(21.8)	46.4%	79.1%	32.6
All	32.3%	25.5%	(6.8)	50.6%	60.3%	9.7

F&P

ELLS	Fall 20 Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Fall 20 Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	100.0%	61.5%	(38.5)	0.0%	30.8%	30.8
1	46.2%	36.4%	(9.8)	46.2%	45.5%	(0.7)
2	18.2%	8.3%	(9.9)	45.5%	91.7%	46.2
3	8.3%	25.0%	16.7	33.3%	66.7%	33.3
4	28.6%	7.4%	(21.2)	42.9%	57.1%	14.3
5	37.5%	57.1%	19.6	12.5%	0.0%	(12.5)
6	45.5%	72.7%	27.3	27.3%	18.2%	(9.1)
7	90.0%	33.3%	(56.7)	0.0%	44.4%	44.4
All	46.7%	40.0%	(6.7)	27.2%	40.4%	13.2

F&P

SWD	Fall 20 Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Fall 20 Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	100.0%	20.0%	(80.0)	0.0%	80.0%	80.0
1	77.8%	75.0%	(2.8)	11.1%	25.0%	13.9
2	66.7%	85.7%	19.0	33.3%	14.3%	(19.0)
3	14.3%	25.0%	10.7	71.4%	41.7%	(29.8)
4	37.5%	42.9%	5.4	62.5%	42.9%	(19.6)
5	25.0%	75.0%	50.0	12.5%	0.0%	(12.5)
6	40.0%	60.0%	20.0	30.0%	30.0%	0.0
7	66.7%	33.3%	(33.3)	16.7%	66.7%	50.0
All	47.0%	52.4%	5.4	37.9%	34.9%	(3.00)

Measuring Up Live ELA						
GE	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	44.4%	34.1%	(10.3)	24.4%	25.0%	0.6
4	57.9%	50.7%	(7.2)	7.9%	25.3%	17.4
5	49.3%	24.3%	(25.0)	7.3%	28.6%	21.3
6	33.8%	23.9%	(9.9)	32.4%	37.3%	4.9
7	16.3%	17.5%	1.2	58.8%	51.3%	(7.5)
ALL	39.6%	29.8%	(9.8)	27.0%	34.5%	7.5

F&P						
GE	Fall 20 Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Fall 20 Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	94.7%	31.2%	(63.5)	5.3%	48.1%	42.8
1	25.4%	19.7%	(5.7)	57.8%	69.0%	11.2
2	19.7%	19.5%	(0.2)	61.8%	67.5%	5.7
3	0.0%	4.4%	4.4	88.1%	84.4%	(3.7)
4	11.8%	13.2%	1.4	67.1%	56.6%	(10.5)
5	11.6%	22.7%	11.1	62.3%	57.6%	(4.7)
6	30.9%	40.6%	9.7	45.6%	40.6%	(5.0)
7	34.6%	13.8%	(20.8)	48.7%	80.0%	31.3
All	30.6%	21.0%	(9.6)	61.5%	63.1%	1.6

As is evident from the MUL ELA data, AoC students in the aggregate demonstrated measurable growth from baseline to Spring in terms of the increase in the percent of students who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and the decrease in the percent of students who performed far below benchmark (Level 1). Notably, this growth is evident in the ELL and SWD subgroups, as well. By the end of the year, there was a 7.9, 5.1 and 10.1 point increase in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD, respectively who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and a corresponding 14.7, 12.3 and 9.2 percentage point decrease in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD, respectively, who performed far below Benchmark at Level 1. Although AoC students experienced growth, the reality is that the majority of students are performing below benchmark at the end of the year. With 32.8% 27.3% and 19.0% of all students, ELLs and SWD scoring at least a Level 3 on the spring MUL ELA assessment.

The F&P data provides insight into the growth and achievement of AoC students specifically as readers. As is evident from the tables above, as with the MUL ELA exam, AoC students in the aggregate demonstrated measurable growth from baseline to Spring in terms of the increase in the percent of students who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and the decrease in the percent of students who performed far below benchmark (Level 1). This growth is evident in the ELL subgroup, as well. By the end of the year, there was a 9.7 and 13.2 percentage point increase in the percent of all students and ELLs, respectively who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and a corresponding 6.8 and 6.7 percentage point decrease in the percent of all students and ELLs, respectively, who performed far below Benchmark at Level 1. The SWD subgroup did not experience this same growth having a 5.4 percentage point increase in the number of students performing far below Benchmark at Level 1 at the end of the year than at baseline and a 3.0 percentage point decrease in the number of students performing at or above Benchmark. With the F&P exam, the results were much more mixed than that of the MUL ELA with regard to the performance of individual grades. In particular, students in Grades 2 and the testing grades (Grades 3-6) did not experience reading growth over the year with all students and those in the disaggregated subgroups seeing a percentage point increase in the number of students performing far below Benchmark at Level 1 at the end of the year compared with the baseline and a percentage point decrease in the number of students performing at or above Benchmark.

During 2020-21, all AoC students and the ELL and SWD subgroups did not perform at pre-pandemic levels; however, the ELLs' and SWD's performance lagged in comparison with that of general education students. The following table compares the end of year performance levels of these subgroups of students on the MUL ELA and F&P.

Percent of Students Performing at Level 1 and Level 3+ on End of Year MUL ELA and F&P Assessments

	MUL ELA		F&P	
	Level 1	Level 3+	Level 1	Level 3+
GenEd	29.8%	34.5%	21.0%	63.1%
SWD	61.9%	19.0%	52.4%	34.9%
ELL	61.8%	27.3%	40.0%	40.4%

This achievement gap is consistent with what has happened nationally. According to two new reports from the consulting firm McKinsey & Company and the NWEA, "in math and reading, students are behind where they would be after a normal year, with the most vulnerable students showing the steepest drops."[2] The reports found that "students did not just stall early on, but that the setbacks accumulated over time—and continued even after many students had returned to the classroom this spring."[3] As the New York Times described in stark terms, "The findings paint an alarming picture of an education system plagued by racial and socioeconomic inequities that have only gotten worse during the coronavirus pandemic. An educational gap became a gulf."[4]

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

AoC does not have any concerns regarding the data reported above. As discussed previously, school leadership focused on developing a remote testing protocol and communicating that protocol with parents, staff and children that would ensure to the greatest degree possible that data from the administration of the MUL ELA and F&P would be valid and reliable. The only issue of concern is that AoC did not administer a nationally-normed assessment in ELA or math that would allow it to evaluate student growth, achievement and gap-closing metrics that the Institute has set forth in the absence of NYS ELA and math assessment data. While AoC did not administer a nationally normed assessment, it is important to stress that the assessments that it did administer has provided school leadership and instructional staff with a robust set of data that it has used not only to inform instruction during the school year but has underpinned the planned interventions that AoC will be implementing with the 2021-22 school year in order to address identified needs as a result of pandemic learning loss. Despite Measuring Up not being nationally normed yet it was state specific and aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards. Taking this assessment allowed teachers to see standard breakdown of areas of mastery and areas of growth. This allowed for planning to involve more immediate direct instruction in response to the data collected. In grades 5-7, it provided information to plan a comprehensive summer school program for students that did not master the standards during the school year.

[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

[3] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

[4] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

As a result of the prolonged global pandemic and continued engagement in remote learning, AoC students did not make the necessary progress in ELA for us to be able to claim that we attained our ELA goal during 2020-21. The results of our assessments show that students in the aggregate and ELL and SWD subgroups did demonstrate growth in terms of an increased percent of students at or above benchmark at the end of the year versus baseline and a decrease in the percent of students at the lowest performance level. However, absolute performance levels at the end of the year show that, although with some exceptions, the majority of students will be entering the next grade in 2021-22 performing below benchmark in ELA.

Despite the efforts to create a remote ELA instructional learning experience that was individualized, rigorous and engaging, there were weaknesses that were the result of the remote instructional modality. Primary among the weaknesses was the fact that in our remote learning program, students did not have the necessary time on task to engage with their teachers in reading and writing instruction. In the remote schedule, the ELA instructional block was significantly less time than what it had been in in-person instruction. Because of the reduction in time allocated to ELA, students did not have the same opportunities to engage in the supervised independent reading time that had been in the schedule in pre-pandemic in school learning. DEAR was dropped entirely during remote instruction and the novel study reading was mostly required to be done independently as opposed to reading independently with teacher supervision and reading together during synchronous time with their classmates and teachers given the shortened ELA block. The lack of teacher proximity and guidance during reading did impact growth in reading levels. Further, while books were sent home to students and eBooks were made available to them to practice reading, it was not an equal substitute for the opportunities for students to engage in independent reading in in-person classrooms where students had access to their just right books from their classroom leveled libraries that included a variety of topics to meet students' varied interests and to support English instruction and the integration of English literacy in all subjects—math, science, social studies and specials. Further, the majority of writing instruction happened asynchronously. Students did not have the benefit of daily interaction with their teachers and peers in the writing process. Reading and writing, including literacy across the curriculum, will be a priority in 2021-22 with students returning to in-person instruction.

ACTION PLAN

We are committed to returning to in-school programs, re-engaging our students and addressing the impacts of lost instructional time. The return to in-person instruction in 2021-22 will provide significant benefits over the remote instruction model from the end of 2019-20 through the 2020-21 school year. The benefits range from more direct teacher-to-student time in a structured learning environment to greater opportunities for student social interaction with teachers and peers.

During the end year staff professional development teacher teams met and analyzed the school year. Based on data, they evaluated each standard and determined if the class/grade mastered the standard or will need additional attention the following school year in the next grade. Additionally, it was noted if the standard, due to time constraints or virtual constraints

prevented the standard from being taught at all. This will guide next school year's planning and adjustments needed to ensure students are exposed to necessary prerequisites before exploring and mastering the next level of standards.

The work to address reading and writing skills gaps began this summer with summer academic programming offered to all students whose families chose to participate. Students who were at Level 1 on end of year MUL ELA and F&P assessments were strongly encouraged to attend the in-person summer program. Summer academic programs are one of the primary evidence-based strategies recommended by the U.S. Department of Education to accelerate student learning and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 disruption (*ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs, Volume 2*, pages 31-32 and research cited therein https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf). Our summer program adopted effective practices endorsed in the Handbook by the USDOE including voluntary, extensive (several hours a day) and rigorous instruction in ELA and math delivered by experienced and certified teachers[5]. We engaged Sylvan Learning, a proven provider of tutoring and academic support services, to provide direct ELA instruction to summer school participants in one on one and small group tutoring sessions under the direction of AoC instructional leaders for grades 2-4. It is important to note that most of Sylvan Learning-trained and approved tutors are certified teachers. As reported in the New York Times, research shows that frequent, intensive tutoring—one-on-one or in small groups, multiple times a week—is one of the most effective ways to help students make up for academic gaps.[6]

This high intensity tutoring will continue during the school year in 2021-22 and 2022-23 both during and outside of the school day. The tutoring will include both intensive tutoring in ELA and ELA test prep for the NYS assessments during designated periods during the school day and in after-school sessions. Tutoring will be delivered in a structured and integrated series of tutoring sessions targeted to address student needs and delivered over a period of several weeks. Again, this tutoring will be provided by Sylvan Learning and AoC staff under the direction of the elementary school instructional leadership. Fall baseline assessment data from MUL ELA and F&P will be used to identify students who will receive tutoring services as well as teacher recommendations based on 2020-21 performance, including level of student engagement, student attendance and other factors. Our internal assessments will be used to guide and ensure students who need the support are guaranteed placement in the Sylvan programming. Sylvan in return will use their forms of assessment and data collection to provide teachers with student specific data to incorporate into daily instruction.

One of the key areas for improvement identified by our school's leadership, faculty and parents is writing instruction. During the remote learning experience of the last year, students spent less time than before the pandemic practicing writing. In addition, our remote learning experience highlighted issues of equity in digital access and literacy that impacted students' achievement and growth in writing. For many of our students who lacked prior access to home technology, simply finding the correct letters on their computer keyboards was a challenge, let alone focusing

[5] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

[6] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

on the substantive elements of writing. As one AoC teacher put it, many students "spent more time this year typing than writing." Accordingly, as we return to in-person instruction, we are revising our elementary and middle school curricula with increased focus on writing across the curriculum and supporting students in "putting pen to paper," importantly including more teacher support as well as collaboration among students in the writing process through peer review and peer editing.

We will be adding Writing Revolution to our curricular and instructional resources. Writing Revolution is an evidence-based intervention focused on advancing thinking through writing and helping students develop skills necessary to become competent writers, readers and communicators. The Writing Revolution is grounded in the research-based Hochman Method, a set of specific writing strategies that teachers use in every grade and in all subjects. Teachers will receive training in this methodology so that it can be implemented with fidelity in 2021-22 and expanded in 2022-23.

Finally, with in-person instruction returning in 2021-22, students will have more time available to engage in independent reading. AoC will return to pre-pandemic allocation of daily and weekly time on the student and teacher schedules devoted to ELA. In the elementary and middle school, students will have 90 minutes of ELA.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

AoC's students will meet or exceed Common Core and NYS Learning Standards for their grade level in math.

BACKGROUND

The mathematics curriculum at AoC is designed to ensure that students have a sound base in numeration and number sense on which the mathematical skills can be rooted. AoC implements HMH's Go Math curriculum in Grades K-4 and Illustrative Math in Grades 5-7. Go Math is supplemented with teacher-developed resources and EngageNY lessons as well as more hands-on learning experienes in order to address math topics that we have found are not sufficiently addressed int eh Go Math curriculum. Additionally, literacy is integrated within math instruction including more math talk and math conversation among students.

AoC administers the Go Math and Measure Up Math Assessment in the beginning, middle and end-of-year assessments to measure growth and achievement and inform ongoing instruction. During 2020-21, the Go Math assessments were administered twice for Grades K and 1 in winter and spring 2021, for Grades 2-4, they were administered Fall 2020, Winter 2021 and Spring 2021. AoC also administered Mastery Education's Measuring Up Live Math (MUL Math) benchmark assessments for the testing grades, 3rd-7th. Grades 3 and 4 were administered MUL Math in the winter and spring 2021 while middle school grades, 5-7, were administered this

assessment fall 2020, winter 2021 and spring 2021. Ongoing formative assessments were conducted throughout the year, using the common core standards as a framework to inform our observations about children's learning and to analyze student work.

Math instruction is delivered in the workshop instructional model, as teachers gradually release responsibility of the learning from teacher to the student. Our teachers use a variety of research-based teaching methods to differentiate instruction for all students. During remote learning, teachers were able to pull out small groups of students from their larger classrooms into Zoom breakout rooms to help scaffold the teaching. Teachers' lesson plans included work for students on grade level, those who needed advanced treatment of the material and those who needed additional support, specifically our ELL and SPED students. Additionally, ELLs, special education had group sessions with the appropriate instructional specialists in order to receive the necessary support, mandated and/or related services. During remote instruction, Special Education and ELL Teachers pushed-into classrooms to provide guided instruction and support for students identified as needing these instructional support services. Teachers' lesson plans included work for students on grade level, those who needed advanced treatment of the material and those who needed additional support, specifically our ELL and SPED students. ELL students were scheduled with the ELL teacher for live small group instruction on Zoom. SPED students received their mandated and related services live through Zoom.

During remote learning, staff collaboration and PD continued in a virtual setting. Teachers were supported by AoC's instructional coaches and received math PD from external PD consultants, including from the published curriculum it uses, to provide training and workshops to teachers. PD and collaboration during this time centered around the instructional priorities for the year which included engaging students in a virtual setting, support mathematical standard growth, as well as deficiencies acquired from interrupted 2019/2020 school year and master creating a hands on math curriculum that translated to the remote setting (transformative) while holding true to AoC's mission and vision. It also continued to focus on the sharing of best practices in online learning and online platforms that best support and enhance remote learning.

One of the more significant changes in the math instructional program during 2020-21 versus pre-pandemic in school instruction was that the amount of Math instructional time was reduced from what it had been in school pre-pandemic. Pre-pandemic, the entire daily math block was 60 minutes. Because of the need to balance recommendations for the amount of student screen time each day and the need to ensure student's mental health and prevent student burnout by providing brain breaks and body breaks, the amount of instructional time across all courses was reduced from pre-pandemic in-school learning. For math specifically, students in both the elementary school and middle school received synchronous daily math instruction each week for 45 minutes each day. This compares with 60 minutes of daily math instruction that students received pre-pandemic during in-school learning.

METHOD

To measure growth and achievement in math, AoC administered two formal assessments in the elementary school and middle school: Go Math Benchmark Assessments (Go Math) and Mastery Education's Measuring Up Live Mathematics assessments (MUL Math). Go Math was

administered to all students, Grades K-4, while MUL Math was administered in the testing grades, 3rd through 7th. Both assessments are valid and reliable and aligned with NYS Learning Standards; however, neither assessment is a nationally-normed assessment.

Go Math assessments are curriculum-based online assessments. During the 2020-21 school year, Go Math assessments were administered to Grades 2-4 three times during the year: Fall, Winter and Spring. For Grades K and 1, Go Math assessments were administered twice—Winter and Spring.

The MUL Math assessment is an online assessment that diagnoses student math skill level and standards knowledge. The MUL Math grade level assessments are delivered in specific testing formats that AoC students will confront on the NYS Testing program. The MUL math assessment was administered three times during the year: Fall, Winter and Spring.

Because AoC remained remote for the 2020-21 school year, all assessments were administered remotely. To ensure that the results from student assessments were valid and reliable, AoC instructional leadership invested a significant amount of time setting up systems and creating protocols to be able to administer both the Go Math and MUL Math assessments to students remotely that would ensure the school had valid and reliable student academic data in order to understand the progress and gaps in student learning and inform necessary interventions and instructional modifications that would be required going forward to accelerate student learning. School administrators and teachers followed the established protocols with regard to communicating with families regarding the benchmark assessments and how the assessments will work remotely, the importance of families not helping students with answers, the importance of the student having a quiet place to take the assessment and ensuring that the home has the technological infrastructure to allow the student to take the assessment. Teachers also communicated with students about the assessment, why they are important, why the student should take them seriously and do their best and how virtual proctoring would work. On the day of the assessment, established protocols were followed by both students and teachers with regard to logging into the virtual setting, assigning proctors to monitor their specific groups of students, students turning on their cameras and sharing their audio and screens with the teacher and proctor, etc. Teachers and proctors monitored students by popping in and out of individual students' breakout rooms. Further, teachers and proctors could check on their students through the Diagnostic to ensure that there were no technological issues, making sure students were sharing their screens and that their microphones were on, etc. Because of the adherence to recommended protocols, AoC is confident that the assessment results from remote administration of the MUL Math and Go Math are valid and reliable. During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exams to assess student growth and achievement in mathematics: Measuring Up, Go Math and other formative assessments such as Chapter Tests.
During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exam to assess student growth and achievement in mathematics: Curriculum based and Other.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The tables below summarize AoC student performance on the Measuring Up Live Math (MUL Math) benchmark assessment and the Go Math benchmark assessment (Go Math) for all students

and disaggregated subgroups, ELLs and SWD. The tables compare student baseline performance on the assessment[7] with the end-of-year Spring 2021 administration focusing specifically on the percent of students performing at or above benchmark (Level 3+) and the percent who performed far below benchmark (Level 1). The data in the tables provide us with the absolute achievement of students—the percent of students at or above grade level at the end of the year—and with growth both in terms of the increase in the percent of students at or above grade level from baseline to spring and the decrease in the percent of students who are far below grade level from baseline to spring. In addition, by comparing the performance of ELLs and SWD with that of general education students, we are able to assess the effectiveness of AoC's remote instructional program in addressing its most at-risk students. Because of the specific assessments that AoC administered during the 2020-21, we are unable to provide data in terms of the specific metrics defined by the Institute.

Percent of Students Performing at Level 1 and Level 3+ on Baseline and End of Year MUL Math and Go Math Assessments

Measuring Up Live Math

ALL STUDENTS	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	15.8%	23.2%	7.4	61.4%	58.9%	(2.5)
4	29.3%	34.5%	5.2	46.3%	23.8%	(22.5)
5	55.7%	49.4%	(6.3)	12.7%	19.0%	6.3
6	63.3%	46.9%	(16.4)	8.9%	22.2%	13.3
7	53.5%	52.4%	(1.1)	20.9%	32.1%	11.2
All	45.2%	42.4%	(3.00)	28.2%	29.4%	1.2

Measuring Up Math

ELLS	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	25.0%	16.7%	(8.3)	50.0%	58.3%	8.3
4	35.7%	35.7%	0.0	14.3%	57.1%	42.8
5	85.7%	50.0%	(35.7)	14.3%	33.3%	19.0
6	90.9%	16.7%	(74.2)	0.0%	50.0%	50.0
7	80.0%	30.0%	(50.0)	0.0%	50.0%	50.0
All	59.3%	29.2%	(30.1)	16.7%	52.1%	35.4

Measuring Up Math

SWD	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Fall 20 Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	50.0%	33.3%	(16.7)	33.3%	41.7%	8.4
4	50.0%	71.4%	21.4	25.0%	28.6%	3.6
5	77.8%	25.0%	(52.8)	0.0%	12.5%	12.5
6	80.0%	0.0%	(80.0)	0.0%	57.1%	57.1
7	83.3%	57.1%	(26.2)	0.0%	28.6%	38.6
All	66.7%	36.6%	(30.1)	13.3%	39.0%	25.7

Measuring Up Math

GE	Baseline Level 1	Spring 21 Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring 21 Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
3	15.9%	11.1%	(4.8)	66.0%	66.7%	(10.3)
4	32.9%	25.3%	(7.6)	23.7%	48.0%	24.3
5	52.9%	12.5%	(40.4)	14.3%	64.1%	49.8
6	60.9%	7.0%	(53.9)	10.1%	74.4%	64.3
7	51.3%	14.5%	(36.8)	22.5%	75.0%	52.5
All	44.8%	15.2%	(29.6)	24.2%	64.7%	40.5

Go Math

ALL STUDENTS	Baseline Level 1	Spring Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	1.2%	1.3%	0.10	91.7%	86.3%	(5.4)
1	2.5%	1.3%	(1.20)	46.3%	59.2%	13.0
2	25.3%	4.9%	(20.40)	16.9%	75.6%	58.7
3	42.2%	23.5%	(18.7)	3.5%	36.3%	32.7
4	67.9%	19.0%	(48.9)	2.4%	36.9%	34.5
All	27.1%	9.0%	(18.1)	34.0%	59.0%	25.0

Go Math

ELLS	Baseline Level 1	Spring Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	7.7%	7.7%	0.0	76.9%	92.3%	15.4
1	8.3%	0.0%	(8.3)	33.3%	45.5%	12.1
2	33.3%	8.3%	(25.0)	0.0%	66.7%	66.7
3	41.7%	30.0%	(11.7)	0.0%	20.0%	20.0
4	64.3%	15.4%	(48.9)	0.0%	23.1%	23.1
All	31.7%	11.9%	(19.80)	22.2%	50.8%	28.6

Go Math

SWD	Baseline Level 1	Spring Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	100.0%	100.0%	0.0
1	12.6%	14.3%	1.7	25.0%	28.6%	3.6
2	57.1%	40.0%	(17.1)	0.0%	20.0%	20.0
3	57.1%	27.3%	(29.9)	0.0%	18.2%	18.2
4	87.5%	28.6%	(58.9)	0.0%	14.3%	14.3
All	47.6%	22.9%	(24.7)	16.7%	31.4%	14.7

Go Math

GE	Baseline Level 1	Spring Level 1	Inc/(Dec)	Baseline Level 3+	Spring Level 3+	Inc/(Dec)
K	1.3%	1.3%	0.0	91.1%	85.3%	(5.8)
1	1.4%	0.0%	(1.4)	48.6%	62.3%	13.7
2	22.4%	2.6%	(19.8)	18.4%	79.2%	60.8
3	37.2%	22.5%	(14.7)	4.7%	42.5%	37.8
4	65.8%	18.1%	(47.7)	2.6%	29.2%	26.6
All	24.6%	7.5%	(17.1)	48.0%	61.9%	13.9

[7] Baseline for Grades 3-4 on the MUL Math was Winter 2021, Baseline for Grades 5-7 on the MUL Math was Fall 2020. Baseline for Grade K-1 on the Go Math was Winter 2021, Baseline for Grades 2-4 on the Go Math was Fall 2020.

As is evident from the MUL Math data, AoC students in the aggregate demonstrated measurable growth from baseline to Spring in terms of the increase in the percent of students who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and the decrease in the percent of students who performed far below benchmark (Level 1). Notably, this growth is evident in the ELL and SWD subgroups, as well. By the end of the year, there was a 1.2, 35.4 and 25.7 point increase in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD, respectively who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and a corresponding 3.0, 30.1 and 30.1 percentage point decrease in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD, respectively, who performed far below Benchmark at Level 1. Although AoC students experienced growth, the reality is that the majority of students are performing below benchmark at the end of the year. With 29.4%, 52.1% and 39.0% of all students, ELLs and SWD scoring at least a Level 3 on the spring MUL Math assessment.

As is evident from the tables above, as with the MUL math exam, elementary school AoC students in the aggregate demonstrated measurable growth from baseline to Spring in terms of the increase in the percent of students who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and the decrease in the percent of students who performed far below benchmark (Level 1) on the Go Math benchmark assessments. This growth is evident in the ELL and SWD subgroups, as well. By the end of the year, there was a 25.0, 28.6 and 14.7 percentage point increase in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD respectively who performed at or above benchmark (Level 3 and above) and a corresponding 18.1, 19.8 and 24.7 percentage point decrease in the percent of all students, ELLs and SWD, respectively, who performed far below Benchmark at Level 1.

With very few exceptions, each grade level for all students and disaggregated subgroups, experienced an increase in the percent at or above Level 3 from baseline to Spring administration and a decrease in the percent of students at the lowest performance level on both the MUL Math and Go Math exams. Grades 3 and 4 were the exceptions on the MUL Math exam—experiencing a percentage point increase in the number of students performing far below Benchmark at Level 1 at the end of the year compared with the baseline and a percentage point decrease in the number of students performing at or above Benchmark.

During 2020-21, all AoC students and the ELL and SWD subgroups did not perform at pre-pandemic levels; however, the ELLs' and SWD's performance lagged in comparison with that of general education students. The following table compares the end of year performance levels of these subgroups of students on the MUL Math and Go Math.

Percent of Students Performing at Level 1 and Level 3+ on End of Year MUL Math and Go Math Assessments

	MUL Math		Go Math	
	Level 1	**Level 3+**	**Level 1**	**Level 3+**
GenEd	15.2%	64.7%	7.5%	61.9%
SWD	36.6%	39.0%	22.9%	31.4%
ELL	29.2%	52.1%	11.9%	50.8%

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

AoC does not have any concerns regarding the data reported above. As discussed previously, school leadership focused on developing a remote testing protocol and communicating that protocol with parents, staff and children that would ensure to the greatest degree possible that data from the administration of the MUL Math and Go Math would be valid and reliable. The only issue of concern is that AoC did not administer a nationally-normed assessment in ELA or math that would allow it to evaluate student growth, achievement and gap-closing metrics that the Institute has set forth in the absence of NYS ELA and math assessment data. While AoC did not administer a nationally normed assessment, it is important to stress that the assessments that it did administer has provided school leadership and instructional staff with a robust set of data that it has used not only to inform instruction during the school year but has underpinned the planned interventions that AoC will be implementing with the 2021-22 school year in order to address identified needs as a result of pandemic learning loss. Despite Measuring Up not being nationally normed yet it was state specific and aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards. Taking this assessment allowed teachers to see standard breakdown of areas of mastery and areas of growth. This allowed for planning to involve more immediate direct instruction in response to the data collected. In grades 5-7, it provided information to plan a comprehensive summer school program for students that did not master the standards during the school year.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

As a result of the prolonged global pandemic and continued engagement in remote learning, AoC students did not make the necessary progress in math for us to be able to claim that we attained our math goal during 2020-21. The results of our assessments show that students in the aggregate and ELL and SWD subgroups did demonstrate growth in terms of an increased percent of students at or above benchmark at the end of the year versus baseline and a decrease in the percent of students at the lowest performance level. However, absolute performance levels at the end of the year show that, although with some exceptions, the majority of students will be entering the next grade in 2021-22 performing below benchmark in math.

Despite the efforts to create a remote math instructional learning experience that was individualized, rigorous and engaging, there were weaknesses that were the result of the remote instructional modality. Primary among the weaknesses was the fact that in our remote learning program, students did not have the necessary time on task to engage with their teachers in math instruction. In the remote schedule, the math instructional block was significantly less time than what it had been in in-person instruction.

In the elementary school, Grade 3 and 4 student performance on the MUL Math assessments reflect the cumulative impact of remote learning since March 2020's lockdown. Grade 3 and 4 students enter "test prep" and "test ready" curriculum in these grades and the Journeys and Go Math curriculum becomes more intensive and requires more of students in these grades. The lack of teacher proximity with students for these grades impacted student acquisition of grade-level standards. In middle school, the Illustrative math curriculum presented challenges in math instruction in that it is a very hands-on program which presented difficulties translating

it to a remote environment. Despite the challenges of the remote learning environment Middle School engaged students with additional support during Empower Hour, tutoring and at-risk groups. Elementary School utilized office hours to meet with the student and family to discuss specific needs and stayed on after virtual sessions to support and clarify misconceptions from the learning.

ACTION PLAN

We are committed to returning to in-school programs, re-engaging our students and addressing the impacts of lost instructional time. The return to in-person instruction in 2021-22 will provide significant benefits over the remote instruction model from the end of 2019-20 through the 2020-21 school year. The benefits range from more direct teacher-to-student time in a structured learning environment to greater opportunities for student social interaction with teachers and peers.

During the end year staff professional development teacher teams met and analyzed the school year. Based on data, they evaluated each standard and determined if the class/grade mastered the standard or will need additional attention the following school year in the next grade. Additionally, it was noted if the standard, due to time constraints or virtual constraints prevented the standard from being taught at all. This will guide next school year's planning and adjustments needed to ensure students are exposed to necessary prerequisites before exploring and mastering the next level of standards.

The work to address math skills gaps began this summer with summer academic programming offered to all students whose families chose to participate. Students who were at Level 1 on end of year MUL math and Go Math assessments were strongly encouraged to attend the in-person summer program. Summer academic programs are one of the primary evidence-based strategies recommended by the U.S. Department of Education to accelerate student learning and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 disruption (*ED COVID-19 HANDBOOK Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs, Volume 2*, pages 31-32 and research cited therein https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf). Our summer program adopted effective practices endorsed in the Handbook by the USDOE including voluntary, extensive (several hours a day) and rigorous instruction in ELA and math delivered by experienced and certified teachers[8]. We engaged Sylvan Learning, a proven provider of tutoring and academic support services, to provide direct math instruction to summer school participants in one on one and small group tutoring sessions under the direction of AoC instructional leaders. It is important to note that most Sylvan Learning-trained and approved tutors are certified teachers. As reported in the New York Times, research shows that frequent, intensive tutoring—one-on-one or in small groups, multiple times a week—is one of the most effective ways to help students make up for academic gaps.[9]

[8] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

[9] https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/us/covid-schools-at-home-learning-study.html

This high intensity tutoring will continue during the school year in 2021-22 and 2022-23 both during and outside of the school day. The tutoring will include both intensive tutoring in math and math test prep for the NYS assessments during designated periods during the school day and in after-school sessions. Tutoring will be delivered in a structured and integrated series of tutoring sessions targeted to address student needs and delivered over a period of several weeks. Again, this tutoring will be provided by Sylvan Learning under the direction of the elementary and middle school instructional leadership. Fall baseline assessment data from MUL Math and Go Math will be used to identify students who will receive tutoring services as well as teacher recommendations based on 2020-21 performance, including level of student engagement, student attendance and other factors. Our internal assessments will be used to guide and ensure students who need the support are guaranteed placement in the Sylvan programming. Sylvan in return will use their forms of assessment and data collection to provide teachers with student specific data to incorporate into daily instruction.

With in-person instruction returning in 2021-22, students will have more time available to engage in math. AoC will return to pre-pandemic allocation of daily and weekly time on the student and teacher schedules devoted to math instruction. In the elementary and middle school, students will have 60 minutes respectively, of math. Further, AoC is adding an at-risk math teacher in the coming school year to provide more instruction intervention capacity to accelerate math learning, especially for ELLs, SWD and academically at-risk students. In the elementary school a Math Learning Specialist was added to the staff to ensure support is provided to students who are performing below grade level expectations as the year progresses in at-risk groups.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

AoC students will meet or exceed the NYS core curriculum standards and National Education standards for their grade level.

BACKGROUND

The science curriculum is designed to ensure that students collect and record first-hand data and to represent and analyze it using the scientific method. Children learn to identify patterns, describe relationships, make connections, develop models, pose questions, make predictions, check hypothesis and puzzle over answers using the scientific method.

AoC uses the Science *Dimensions* text by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for Grades K-4 and IQWST from Activate Learning for Grades 5-7, both are highly correlated with the NYS and Next Generation Science Standards. Science instruction combines mastery of core vocabulary and conceptual knowledge with the application of scientific principles in laboratory settings. Science assessments, for example, include sections that focus on the key terms and ideas of a unit as well as a performance task component that require students to synthesize and analyze data from laboratory experiments.

Science teachers also actively work to reinforce key mathematical concepts, especially graphing and measurement skills.

Professional development for our science teachers includes training from consultants provided by the curriculum we utilize as well as individual workshops that teachers attend. In addition, science teachers receive coaching from leadership team members.

During the 2020-21 school year, all instruction at AoC was remote. In both the elementary school and middle school, whole group science instruction was delivered to students by their teachers in live synchronous instruction over Zoom with elementary school students receiving one 45-minute period of whole group science instruction each week while middle school students received two 45-minute periods of science instruction each week. In addition to whole group instruction with the science teacher, students also had asynchronous science time and small group opportunities. Even though students were remote, AoC ensured that all students could engage in hands-on laboratory experiments which are critical to scientific study. The elementary school sent a workbook from the *Dimensions* curriculum home for each child. The workbook had lab experiments built in and the science teacher adapted the lab experiments that were to be conducted at home so that average household items could be used. Families were given advance notice of the particular experiment their child was to conduct and the materials that would be needed. The science teacher made every effort to ensure that families did not need to purchase any special materials, or at the least it was kept to a minimum. Likewise, in the middle school science materials also were sent home to students so that they could conduct experiments at their homes. In addition, the Grade 7 science curriculum includes a partnership with the Billion Oyster Project which offers public school students (among other constituents) the opportunity to learn about New York City's rich oyster history and lead the movement to restore it. This STEM partnership provides students with the chance to learn science through the lens of New York's waterways and the ecosystems that exist among them. Through this partnership, 7th graders were able to engage together in practical hands-on *in-person* experimentation led by AoC's 7th Grade science teacher and presenters from the Billion Oyster Project outdoors along New York waterways at College Point in Flushing Bay, Williamsburg Yacht Club and New York Harbor. The culmination of the partnership is the end of year Billion Oyster Project Symposium in which students developed and submitted created projects related to New York Harbor. Notably, six of the research projects submitted and presented by AoC students were judged to be "Exemplary Projects" (https://www.billionoysterproject.org/2021-symposium-projects).

METHOD

Science assessment at AoC involves the published curriculum's chapter tests aligned to the standards to measure mastery of concepts covered in each chapter of the text. Teachers administer ongoing formative assessments to monitor student learning to inform instruction, intervention groups and reteaching. At the end of the year, Grade 3 and 4 students in the elementary school were administered an end of year benchmark assessment from the *Dimensions* curriculum.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the absence of the Grade 4 NYS Science exam, there was no NYS standards-aligned valid and reliable benchmark assessment in science that was administered to AoC students in 2020-21 in order to evaluate progress towards AoC's Science goal.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

As noted in the previous question, AoC did not administer a NYS standards-aligned benchmark assessment in science and thus has no data to report.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

We are unable to objectively measure AoC's progress towards our Science accountability goal in 2020-21 because of the absence of the NYS Grade 4 science assessment and the fact that AoC does not administer a valid and reliable NYS-aligned science benchmark assessment. Based on formative assessments and attendance rates for students in remote science instruction, we know that student performance in science has declined during the pandemic. The amount of science instruction provided in the remote instructional plan was less than what had been offered pre-pandemic. During 2020-21 students had synchronous instruction with the science teacher one day a week for a 45-minute period across Grades K-4. For Grades 3-4, this was less than half of what they would have received pre-pandemic, where science was twice a week and each period was 50 minutes. Middle school students received synchronous instruction live for 45 minutes once a week for 5-6th grade and twice a week for 7th.

ACTION PLAN

We are committed to returning to in-school programs, re-engaging our students and addressing the impacts of lost instructional time. The return to in-person instruction in 2021-22 will provide significant benefits over the remote instruction model from the end of 2019-20 through the 2020-21 school year. The benefits range from more direct teacher-to-student time in a structured learning environment to greater opportunities for student social interaction with teachers and peers.

During the end year staff professional development science teachers met and analyzed the school year. Based on data, they evaluated each standard and determined if the class/grade mastered the standard or will need additional attention the following school year in the next grade. Additionally, it was noted if the standard, due to time constraints or virtual constraints prevented the standard from being taught at all. This will guide next school year's planning and adjustments needed to ensure students are exposed to necessary prerequisites before exploring and mastering the next level of standards.

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

AoC's 2020-21 Accountability Status is in Good Standing as it is the same as the 2019-20 school year which was based on the 2018-19 NYS test results.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

AoC's performance on the NYS ELA and math assessments have consistently met AYP for all accountability subgroups.

Accountability Status by Year

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