



The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr., Executive Director, and Vanessa Asencio-Trezza, Assistant Principal, prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's Board of Trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Kimberly Kelly	Board Chairperson, Complaint Review Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Finance/Audit Committee
Marvin Waldman	Vice-Chairperson, Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
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Ariel Dobkin	Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/ Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Gregory Kimble, Jr.	Trustee
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Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr. has served as the Executive Director since March 2020.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 (BBL1) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. BBL 1 opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1. One grade was added each year thereafter and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1-5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. On January 15, 2008, the State University Trustees granted BBL 1 a full-term charter renewal for 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K-5 through the 2012-2013 school year. BBL 1 added a Kindergarten program in the fall of 2008 and served 345 students in grades K-5. In 2010-11 the school enrolled 386 students in those same grades. On March 4, 2013, the State University Trustees granted another full five-year renewal of the charter for Bronx Charter School for Better Learning. Additionally, on June 4, 2014, the State University Trustees approved a five-year charter for the replication of BBL1 and, in turn, the opening of Bronx Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) for September 2015. Since September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) has governed both charters, i.e., BBL1 and BBL2. BBL 1 had an enrollment of 555 students for the 2019-2020 school year.

BBL 1 was originally located in a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227th Street in the Bronx, NY. Following the first year of operation, BBL 1 reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which BBL 1 received permission to locate in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx, NY. The school used 3 classrooms and an office in the main building of P.S. 111 for the first time in 2008-09, to accommodate its growth in enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2008-2009, replaced by 5th grade in 2009-2010. Beginning September 2014, BBL 1 occupied three additional classrooms in the main building and added another two classrooms for the 2015-16 school year. Currently, its Kindergarten, 1st Grade and some 2nd Grade classes situate in the main P.S. 111 building.

The mission of the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning is as follows:

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning provides its students with a solid foundation for academic success, through achievement that exceeds citywide averages and meets or exceeds New York State standards and national norms in all curriculum areas tested, especially in mathematics and language arts. Our teaching constantly adjusts to the needs of our students, leading to independence, autonomy, responsibility and a sustained love of learning, all of which contribute directly to high academic achievement.

To fulfill its mission, the school's teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it.

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Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons; assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child’s high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students’ work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students’ use of what they know to master new content; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

In 2015, BBL1 was recognized by the Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents as a 2014-15 “High progress Reward School”. The award celebrates BBL1’s success in closing the gap between historically low and high performing students in the state. In 2018, BBL1 was recognized as a Recognition School by the New York State Department of Education for having high academic achievement and student growth.

BBL1:

- is not test-prep driven; as noted, the instructional approach is constructivist: we know children “construct” their knowledge, understanding and skills, so our teaching is guided by their learning and does not dominate it;
- does not have extended school days
- does not incorporate an extended school year;
- backfills at all grade levels; and
- welcomes and actively recruits students eligible for free and reduced lunch, eligible for special education services and/or eligible for support as English Language Learners (ELLs).

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	101	101	100	94	65	63								
2017-18	78	102	101	100	94	62								
2018-19	78	78	102	101	95	92								
2019-20	100	98	75	75	102	101								
2020-21	103	102	77	78	99	94								

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Students will become proficient readers and writers of the English Language.

BACKGROUND

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 (BBL 1) continues its focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

During the 2020-21 school year, BBL 1 maintained its strong commitment to ensuring a quality ELA program for all its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards by:

- a. Continuing to edit and revise our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade ELA curriculum, primarily to increase rigor and to transition away from skill-based instruction to one that is theme based, focusing on the underlying mental functionings that are called upon for the range of reading skills that ensure high achievement;
- b. Continuing to emphasize the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*;
- c. Continuing to incorporate, as part of its ELA class sessions, the use of Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop;
- d. Continuing to support increased reading proficiency through the STAR program;
- e. Providing technology resources and computer-based non-fiction resources with *Achieve 3000*, a web-based, adaptive, differentiated instruction resource;
- f. Continuing to closely monitor each student's progress through regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly "Data Day":
- g. Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- h. Maintaining a Director of Professional Development to oversee and coordinate teacher development, including our Fellowship program, which incorporates a Master's degree program with SUNY Albany, designed specifically to promote teachers' capacity to practice well our unique pedagogy, the *Subordination of Teaching to Learning*;
- i. Elevating high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leaders, assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level;

- j. Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists and outside consultants, to both teachers and assistants, further ensuring each person's readiness to support the needs of all of our students; and
- k. Continuing to utilize writing rubrics that are aligned with the State's Learning Standards

In September 2020, BBL schools opened in a fully remote model of instruction due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. On October 5, 2020, we opened our building doors for a hybrid model, offering families the option to send their child to school 2-3 times per week or the option to remain fully remote. On November 6, 2020, our school building was closed due to multiple positive COVID cases. At that point, we decided to remain fully remote for the remainder of the school year to offer our families the most consistent instructional model. During our remote instruction period, we stayed steadfast in our commitment to high quality education, focusing on three general categories for remote learning:

- 1) Interactive Instruction: Regularly scheduled, synchronous learning via various videoconferencing systems and online chats, directly between students and teachers, in both large and small groups.
- 2) Assignments Using Established Interactive Learning Systems and Apps: These resources included a wide range of programs and systems that supported learning and practice, often including adaptive responses to students' performance, with built-in mechanisms to track student participation times and progress, along with the capability to report on that information.
- 3) Posted Assignments: Daily asynchronous learning through teacher prepared written assignments, worksheets, writing prompts, website visits, and special projects.

METHOD

BBL schools administered early diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the year and corresponding "post-tests" to determine student achievement and growth within the school year. During 2020-21, the school primarily used Star to assess student growth and achievement.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As summarized in the table below, in the 2020-2021 Star exam, of all students tested, the school's growth percentile was 48, missing the target of 50 by two points. Of the 142 students tested who did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in the fall, 55% of them did meet or exceed proficiency in the spring administration, meeting the target of 55. The median student growth percentile of 3rd through 5th grade students with disabilities was 63, meeting the target of 47. Additionally, 53% of 3rd through 5th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school either met or exceeded the scale score proficiency equivalent according to the STAR proficiency scores.

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Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median student growth percentile of all 3 rd through 5 th grade students will be greater than 50. Student growth is the difference between the beginning of year score and the end of year score.	All students	50	264	48	No
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median student growth percentile of all 3 rd through 5 th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.	Low initial achievers	55	142	55	Yes
Measure 3: Each year, the median student growth percentile of 3 rd through 5 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median student growth percentile of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities ¹	47	34	63	Yes
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 5 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent according to the STAR proficiency scores.	2+ students	75%	257	53%	No

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Our school, like most others, faced many challenges during this past school year, especially regarding assessments. To mitigate those challenges, we partnered with parents throughout the school year to maximize testing integrity while students tested at home. Further, we implemented remote testing protocols to ensure testing consistency and offered multiple training sessions for assessment proctors.

Given those interventions, we are confident that the results reported reflect, as accurately as possible, the academic growth of our students, given the very difficult circumstances encountered.

¹ Schools may elect to report the aggregated data for a different subpopulation of students if the total tested number of students with disabilities is 5 or fewer, or if the school's mission aligns to serving a different specific subpopulation. For schools that choose a different subpopulation (e.g. English language learners, students experiencing housing insecurity, etc.), please explain the rationale in the narrative section

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Our English Language Arts Goal Students is for all students to become proficient readers and writers of the English Language. While we narrowly missed achieving the criterion for Measure 1, the substantial growth reflected in the results for Measures 2 and 3 support that we continued, despite the very challenging conditions, to meet that goal. Overall, the outcomes indicate that our students continued to improve in English Language Arts.

We remain committed to providing a rigorous, high-quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success. To that end, below is our action plan for the upcoming school year.

ACTION PLAN

As highlighted in our action plan, below, we continue to closely review and enhance our newly revamped ELA curriculum, along with ancillary actions that have proven successful. The BBL Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to ensure the continued improvement of student performance in ELA, including working with the Executive Director to provide all needed resources. As we prepare for the 2021-2022 year, we have already planned and initiated the following steps, in order further to boost student achievement.

1. In 2020-2021, our ELA Curriculum Coordinator streamlined and further improved our ELA program by integrating the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curriculums (K-5), aligning the K-5 ELA curriculums with social studies/science curriculums, and created and organized resources for teachers. We are confident that these initiatives will further support our work to integrate the social studies and ELA curriculum, train teachers to execute our integrated curriculum in a way that aligns with our pedagogy, the Subordination of Teaching to Learning, and further align the K-2 curriculum with the 3-5 curriculum.
2. In the wake of today's social unrest, BBL continues to engage in social justice issues through the lens of the humanities, with our Humanities Committee. Over the past year, The Bronx Humanities Committee for Better Learning, engaged in issue-driven conversations, and considered curriculum topics, with help from our Professional Development Department. The new workgroup consisted of delegates from both BBL 1 and BBL 2, including management, professional development, teachers, teacher assistants, and guidance staff. That structure provided a range of voices to inform and respond positively to the moment and drive curriculum decisions that will have a direct impact on our students' engagement with literacy and social studies.
3. Our purpose throughout has been to increase the rigor of the content and the academic challenges we present, significantly "raising the bar" in vocabulary development, sophistication in handling complex texts and improving students' accuracy, clarity and cohesiveness in their writing. This year, we will continue our efforts to improve our ELA curriculum in grades K-5 by:
 - 3.1 Continuing to plan and integrate the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curriculums (K-5): An integrated reading, writing and Words in Color ELA

curriculum provides a comprehensive, broader perspective for teaching and learning. Rather than teaching reading, writing and Words in Color in isolated lessons, the integrated units will feature all three aspects of our literacy program. This provides a vehicle for students to develop literacy skills, tackle advanced vocabulary by using Words in Color, analyze renowned authors' techniques and artistry and write their own high-level texts as a comprehensive learning experience.

4. Increased Early Grade Emphasis on Vocabulary Development and Reading

Comprehension: While our core program for early literacy – Words in Color – is designed to support students' capacity to write and to understand what they read as well as their spoken language allows, we have determined that our ELA instruction can continue to improve in Kindergarten through 2nd grade by adjusting the following:

4.1 Our K –2 teachers will incorporate, much more extensively in their lessons, work with students in the Primers and Worksheets that are part of the Words in Color program. Doing so will prepare students better to meet the increased challenges and expectations awaiting them in 3rd grade and beyond.

5. Administrative Support: The continued availability of an Assistant Principal will increase support and feedback for teachers. A refined evaluation schedule includes regularly scheduled "classroom walkthroughs," with written feedback and reflection sessions to targeting student engagement, lesson development, and differentiation.

6. Planning Meetings: 2nd and 3rd grade teachers will continue to meet at least once every month to discuss differentiation and targeted challenges. Their purpose will be to better prepare the 2nd grade students for 3rd grade.

7. Lesson Planning Review: Academic Leaders at all grade levels will closely monitor lesson planning to ensure that teachers provide sufficient attention and time to both reading and writing.

8. Active involvement of our Guidance Department: With the increase of staff in our guidance department, we have been able to create in-house behavior interventions for Tier 2 students and have seen the impact/effect on the classroom climate. They will continue to conduct group and individual sessions to help students deal with testing and other anxiety, peer pressure and conflicts, and other academically related challenges. This year, in response to the trauma that COVID-19 and the current social unrest has created for our students, our school aims to be a Trauma Informed institution. All teachers have gone through Trauma Informed Care training by our guidance department. Further, our guidance department is scheduled to conduct monthly social and emotional lessons (SEL) in each class and integrate the SEL curriculum with our literacy curriculum.

9. Expanded Parent Partnerships: BBL schools value our parent partnership and look forward to deepening our parent relationships at all levels of the schools. This year, we will continue to support parents with trauma informed care through seminars, workshops, and

information sessions. We are also preparing to broaden our parent resources with the following:

9.1 Parent Resource Center: We will continue to utilize our online Parent Resource center, located on our website. This webpage provides parents with information and resources for all school topics, including, technology trainings, training in our pedagogy, videos for supporting their children in academics and emotional learning, as well lists of community resources. We will continue to update the Parent Resource Center every quarter with pertinent information.

9.2 Parent Seminars: We will continue to host parent seminars throughout the school year. These targeted workshops offer parents resources on topics such as the middle school application process, social and emotional well-being, and training on our pedagogy.

10. Student Support: Our newly expanded academic support program, staffed with some of our most veteran teachers, will better meet the needs of underperforming students. This year we will start our afterschool program earlier in the school year to address the literacy recuperation needed for our students brought on by the pandemic.

11. Transition to a New Assessment Platform: This year BBL schools will pivot to a new assessment program, NWEA. We are confident that this assessment program will be a comprehensive resource for our teachers to better assess and analyze student performance. In addition, we will implement a Growth Model framework to better analyze student growth over the next three years, as we re-build in a post pandemic era.

12. Finally, our expanded Technology Committee will work with management, Professional Development, and our Academic Leaders to ensure tech equity. We have significantly increased our technology capability, given that technology is now a cornerstone of education during these unprecedented times. The Technology Committee has taken the following steps to boost student achievement:

12.1 Provided each student in grades 3-5 with a Google Classroom account and each student in grades PreK-2 with a SeeSaw account.

12.2 Collaborated with our Professional Development team to create online versions of our curriculum tools and documents, including Words in Color Charts and Primers.

12.3 Continued with the development of our in-house iReadBetter app, augmented our online subscriptions to ensure engagement with a multitude of online resources for literacy, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing skills.

12.4 Hosted numerous training sessions for both parents and staff to ensure everyone is ready to engage with the technology platforms used by BBL.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

BACKGROUND

BBL maintains a focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

BBL1 demonstrates a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities, to ensure the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all of its students by:

- Reviewing the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Learning Standards;
- Maintaining a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Consistently applying the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, even in the earliest stages, so students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to bolster each person’s readiness to meet the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through more frequent classroom visits by the principals;
- Emphasizing our students’ development of two overarching capacities, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in computation skills and increasing their ability to focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real-world application of those skills; and
- Ensuring that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time, moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction.

In September 2020, BBL schools opened in a fully remote model of instruction due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. On October 5, 2020, we opened our building doors for a hybrid model, offering families the option to send their child to school 2-3 times per week or the option to remain fully remote. On November 6, 2020, our school building was closed due to multiple positive COVID cases. At that

point, we decided to remain fully remote for the remainder of the school year to offer our families the most consistent instructional model. During our remote instruction period, we stayed steadfast in our commitment to high quality education, focusing on three general categories for remote learning:

- 1) Interactive Instruction: Regularly scheduled, synchronous learning via various videoconferencing systems and online chats, directly between students and teachers, in both large and small groups.
- 2) Assignments Using Established Interactive Learning Systems and Apps: These resources included a wide range of programs and systems that supported learning and practice, often including adaptive responses to students' performance, with built-in mechanisms to track student participation times and progress, along with the capability to report on that information.
- 3) Posted Assignments: Daily asynchronous learning through teacher prepared written assignments, worksheets, writing prompts, website visits, and special projects.

METHOD

BBL schools administered early diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the year and corresponding "post-tests" to determine student achievement and growth within the school year.

During 2020-21, the school primarily used Star to assess student growth and achievement.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As summarized in the table below, in the 2020-2021 Star exam, of all students tested, the school's growth percentile was 54, meeting the target of 50. Of the 92 students tested who did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in the fall, 63% of them did meet or exceed proficiency in the spring administration, meeting the target of 55. The median student growth percentile of 3rd through 5th grade students with disabilities was 50, missing the target of 54. 67% of 3rd through 5th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school either met or exceeded the scale score proficiency equivalent, according to the Star proficiency scores.

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Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median student growth percentile of all 3 rd through 5 th grade students will be greater than 50. Student growth is the difference between the beginning of year score and the end of year score.	All students	50	258	54	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median student growth percentile of all 3 rd through 5 th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.	Low initial achievers	55	92	63	Yes
Measure 3: Each year, the median student growth percentile of 3 rd through 5 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median student growth percentile of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities ²	54	33	50	No
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 5 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent according to the Star proficiency scores.	2+ students	75%	257	67%	No

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Our school, like most others, faced many challenges during this past school year, especially regarding assessments. To mitigate those challenges, we partnered with parents throughout the school year to maximize testing integrity while students tested at home. Further, we implemented remote testing protocols to ensure testing consistency and offered multiple training sessions for assessment proctors.

Given those interventions, we are confident that the results reported reflect, as accurately as possible, the academic growth of our students, given the very difficult circumstances encountered.

² Schools may elect to report the aggregated data for a different subpopulation of students if the total tested number of students with disabilities is 5 or fewer, or if the school's mission aligns to serving a different specific subpopulation. For schools that choose a different subpopulation (e.g. English language learners, students experiencing housing insecurity, etc.), please explain the rationale in the narrative section

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Our Mathematics goal is for students to demonstrate competency in understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving. While we missed achieving the criterion for Measure 3 by 4 points, the substantial growth reflected in the results for Measures 1 and 2 support that we continued, despite the very challenging conditions, to meet that goal. Overall, the outcomes indicate that our students continued to improve in English Language Arts.

We remain committed to providing a rigorous, high-quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success. To that end, below is our action plan for the upcoming school year.

ACTION PLAN

As highlighted in our action plan, below, we continue to closely review and enhance our mathematics program, along with ancillary actions that have proven successful. Teachers will continue to assess student knowledge and skills through assessments. We will continue to analyze individual student test results on our interim assessments to plan effectively and to map our instruction. While we have already planned the following targeted steps, those analyses will lead to additional adjustments in our mathematics program. As we prepare for the 2021-2022 year, we have already planned and initiated the following steps, in order further to boost student achievement.

1. Instructional Alignment: Our mathematics professional development staff, as well as the Academic Leaders, along with our teachers, will continue to review our informal assessments and in-class assignments to reflect the structure of the assessment questions of the NYS Mathematics exam. Through weekly grade-level planning, professional development staff, AL's and teachers will adapt the curriculum to ensure students' familiarity of the nature of the assessment when tested, especially in 3rd grade, which once again will include a cohort of students who will be taking this assessment for the first time.
2. Instructional Rigor: The mathematics program will continue to focus on ensuring that students demonstrate competence in their understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving. The Academic Leaders have several years' experience with the mathematics curriculum. Their expertise will support the teachers' professional development, curriculum planning, the facilitation of common planning meetings, one-on-one targeted coaching with the teachers around our approach and the use of manipulatives in the classroom.
3. Data Driven Decision Making:
 - a. We will give two benchmark exams and one NYS practice assessment to help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.

b. NYS assessment-like groupings will be created and incorporated into daily math lessons to allow teachers an additional opportunity to monitor student progress and adjust instruction as necessary.

c. Weekend homework will be given with NYS assessment-like questions added to give students additional opportunities to practice skills assessed on the NYS Mathematics exam. We also assign “break packets” for the long vacations in December, February and April to ensure consistent focus on mathematics.

d. We will conduct a formal midterm assessment for 3rd through 5th grades to assess how they are achieving the curricular and instructional goals. We will assess them in January using EdVista and incorporate the NWEA assessment as an additional tool to understand and analyze student growth quarterly.

4. Student Support: Students who are “at-risk” will be identified early in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed and begin those services earlier in the school year than in years past. This will give our support teachers an opportunity to assess any gaps in learning due to the COVID-19 school closure and provide targeted instruction in areas where students are struggling and/or underperforming.

a. Special Education instructional options: Students who are identified as being in need of special education services will continue to receive those services throughout the school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).

b. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.

6. Professional Development: The mathematics professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction through regularly scheduled professional development sessions after school hours, as well as in-class support to ensure the application of the school’s pedagogy throughout each class.

7. Home-School Connection: We plan to continue our partnership with parents, whether it be virtually or in person, allowing for parents to learn and ask questions regarding our approach. To build more support for mathematics at home, we will continue to use parent teacher conferences to review individual scores with parents, virtual “Coffee and Conversation” sessions to go over overall progress of each grade, and we will also have two virtual Curriculum Nights in the beginning of the year –one in September for all parents and one in October for parents new to our school. Our primary purpose will be to increase parents’ comfort with and willingness to rely on manipulatives to bolster students’ deep understanding of basic mathematical concepts.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

BACKGROUND

Bronx Better Learning 1 continues its focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

Our science staffing and curriculum remained virtually unchanged during the COVID-19 school closing. While all our classes were conducted remotely, our science lessons continued to focus on our four priorities listed above. We successfully adapted our Science 21 lessons to meet the needs of our students, allowing them to participate in science experiments and the scientific method all while doing so virtually.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to promote student mastery of the State's standards in science by:

- a. Continuing to implement the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning, incorporating techniques and materials that foster students' active participation in lessons;
- b. Continuing to implement lessons that emphasize hands-on experimentation and make use of BOCES prepared science kits (Science 21 Program) that complement the school's core pedagogy;
- c. Continuing to incorporate a problem solving approach that presents students with "real life" problems and working in groups, which analyze data/information to come up with solutions to the problems, all of which leads students to a deeper appreciation of cause and effect relationships; and
- d. Continuing to provide supplemental support to students who are not progressing as expected.
- e. Leveraging technology and online platforms to ensure a rich and rigorous science curriculum while students work remotely from home.

METHOD

During the 2020-2021 school year, BBL administered internally developed assessments that were aligned to state standards. Those assessments included teacher made tests and quizzes, anecdotal evidence based on student engagement with curriculum, and problem-based learning projects. Furthermore, science teachers collaborated with our ELA teachers on essential questions to further integrate writing into science. Online programs such as Kidblog, IXL and BrainPop were used to progress monitor student growth in vocabulary acquisition and science concepts.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Based on last year's trends, progress noted by teachers on internal exams, anecdotal evidence based on student engagement with curriculum, and problem-based learning projects, we can predict that BBL students would have outperformed prior NY State Science exam scores should it have been administered.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Our science goal is for students to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning. We believe that our efforts to meet this goal have proven effective. As shown above, our work in the science department continues to focus on academic rigor, the scientific method and problem-based learning projects. This approach, coupled with the success of our students on past state science exams prove that we continue to provide a sound and enriching science education for all our students. We remain committed to providing a rigorous, high quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for continued success in science.

ACTION PLAN

While student performance in Science continues to be laudable, Bronx Better Learning will refine and improve its program through:

1. Instructional Rigor: The science program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective analytical skills for all students through:
 - a. Academic Leaders, who have been placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards.
 - b. Data Driven Decision Making: Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
2. Focus on At-Risk Students: The science program continues to support students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:

- a. Experienced Teachers: The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL’s most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student’s instructional program.
 - b. Special Education Instructional Options: Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services, and related services, e.g., speech, occupational therapy and counseling.
 - c. English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support: The ELL Coordinator’s schedule ensures the effective delivery of needed support for students identified as ELL.
3. Professional Development: The science program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
- a. Weekly Institutes: The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Academic Leaders have arranged a weekly Institute schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school’s pedagogy throughout the school.
 - b. In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in “real situations” the effectiveness of the school’s approach.
 - c. Technology Training: The Technology department and Professional development department will continue to partner to ensure that teachers are prepared to leverage online platforms and online problem-based learning opportunities in science.

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

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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

Bronx Better Learning 1 is in good standing. The school has met this measure and achieved the goal.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Accountability Status by Year

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

