

**ELM COMMUNITY
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

AUGUST 16, 2021

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2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Priscilla Walton, Founder & Principal, and Kayla Cobb, Assistant Principal prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees: Priscilla Wat

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	committees (e.g. finance, executive)
Chris Kong	Chair	finance, executive
Debbie Thomas	Vice Chair	executive
Michael Dorcelly	Secretary	executive, academic
Anupa Jacob	Treasurer, finance chair	finance
Prijo Thomas	Voting member	finance
Zaineb Hussain	Academic chair	academic
Grace Yun	Voting member	academic

Priscilla Walton has served as the Founder & Principal since 2017.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

As a school seeking to invest in Queens, our vision is to see every child in the central Queens area discover their passions, talents, and power to enrich their community. We believe that in order to truly invest in this community's growth and development, we must aim high, committing to reaching every child that walks through our doors.

Thus, our mission is to cultivate student leaders with the character and capacity to form their own identity, seize any opportunity, and shape the world around them through integrated studies and collaborative learning. Our goal is to provide a rigorous and holistic academic program that will enable our students to choose a middle-school program of their choice.

In the 2020-21 school year, Elm served Kindergarten through Third Grade. In full capacity, Elm will serve Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

Elm is founded upon 5 key design elements that drive our academic program and school culture:

Collaborative Learning: Elm believes that students learn best when they are challenged to discuss, debate, and form conclusions and opinions with others similar to and different from themselves. Collaborative learning ultimately develops students' ability to think critically and creatively, while also building their social skills, confidence, and capability to articulate their ideas clearly. At Elm, our academic program highlights collaborative group work, with rubrics that hold teachers and students accountable to focusing on a group's collaborative learning process rather than solely the product.

Student-Led Integrated Studies: At Elm, we believe that students learn best when they are engaged in interdisciplinary studies and pushed to use higher order thinking skills, adapting their knowledge and understanding to conflicting perspectives and real-world scenarios. Our essential learning periods are our Integrated Studies blocks: Humanities and STEM. During these blocks, students design and conduct their own experiments and projects, explore divergent solutions and conclusions, and show their understanding of content through the development of their own evidence-based conclusions. When students take ownership over their education, it can yield a greater love for learning and academic success.

Data-Driven Small Group Learning: At Elm, we believe students learn best when instruction is tailored to their specific needs. Teachers will receive weekly training on data collection and analysis using standard-based grading and reading leveled assessments. Our schedule also creatively and strategically creates space for smaller class sizes including, splitting classes in half up to 2 hours a day and providing small group instruction up to 3 hours a day. Our staffing plan allows for a lead and associate teachers in every classroom, giving teachers the flexibility to implement a myriad of teaching options including parallel teaching, and co-teaching.

A Focus on Self-Exploration and Self-Awareness: We believe students learn best when they are self-aware, knowing what frustrates and motivates them in order to do their best throughout the day. At the foundation of successful collaborative learning must be social and emotional intelligence. Our schedule devotes considerable time guiding students through their emotions around failure,

disagreements, and conflicts. The goal is to cultivate students’ self-awareness so that they are able to articulate their feelings, preferences, and ideas with one another. The development of students’ emotional intelligence will be nurtured through Yale’s RULER program on Emotional Intelligence.

Creative Courses (Doing and Making to Think Differently): At Elm, we believe students learn best when they can make things with their hands and voices, experiencing topics through the arts. We aim to provide students with a well-rounded education through our Creative Courses, which consist of fine arts, chorus/vocal and music theory, woodwork/shop class, blocks, physical education and organized sports, and Spanish. Our schedule ensures that specials teachers are able to join collaborative planning meetings, as well as facilitate small groups of students who choose to present their knowledge through an arts project rather than an academic performance task.

During the 2020-21 school year, Elm started the school year with the whole school solely in a virtual remote learning model. In October, Elm invited roughly 50% of learners back to in-person learning following the NY Department of Health’s health and safety guidelines. In November, due to the increase of COVID-19 positive cases, Elm resumed fully remote learning. In March, as COVID-19 positive cases decreased, Elm opened its doors again to in-person learning and was able to successfully implement a hybrid learning model with roughly 50% of learners and staff in-person and 50% of learners and staff teaching remotely.

Throughout the school year, Elm’s leadership team held weekly meetings with Elm families to provide weekly updates and receive feedback. Elm continued to conduct quarterly parent workshops virtually, our in-house school counselor worked closely with teachers, leaders, and parents of at-risk learners. Elm partnered with T-Mobile to provide families with hot spots and neighboring schools to provide weekly groceries to families in need.

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														
2017-18														
2018-19	53	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	101
2019-20	78	55	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	189
2020-21	48	78	56	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	237

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students will be proficient readers and writers in English Language Arts.

BACKGROUND

Elm will create its own adaptation of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) to support all students in becoming proficient readers and writers. TCRWP employs a balanced literacy approach, is aligned to New York Common Core Learning Standards, and provides students with multiple opportunities throughout the day to strengthen their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in various forums. This is especially beneficial for our ELLs, whom we call our Emergent Bilingual Learners (EBLs), as they expand their receptive and expressive language skills.

The balanced literacy approach was chosen for Elm because of the structured workshops and explicit lessons providing all students a model of excellence, an opportunity to practice independently or in collaborative groups, and the dedicated time for teachers to provide 1:1 or small group support to meet the individual needs of students. It is a good foundation in gradually building our own literacy curriculum tailored for our students' specific needs.

Starting in kindergarten, all Elm students will receive at least two hours of literacy instruction each day and engage in the following literacy components: Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, Interactive Reading, and SFA (K-1), and Guided Reading (K-4).

During the 2020-21 school year, learners in both remote and in-person settings continued to participate in full day schedules in whole group instruction with 1-2 hours of small group instruction. Remote learners participated in synchronous / live instruction throughout the day, while in-person learners were able to participate in small group instruction virtually. The Elm leadership team continued to provide professional development specifically around virtual learning components and changes during weekly whole-staff and grade-level instructional meetings. Elm leaders and teachers continued to conduct quarterly assessments virtually.

METHOD

During the 2020-21 school year, Elm primarily used the quarterly Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) Benchmark Assessment System to assess student growth and achievement in ELA. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, 100% of in-person Elm learners opted out of state testing. In order to continue collecting data on student growth in this area, Elm developed internal benchmarks mirroring the NY ELA State Test.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

By the end of each grade level, 80% of learners should be at or above grade level benchmarks determined by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. The table below shows this end of year data.

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient ¹	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
K	83%	46	n/a	n/a
1	58%	78	64%	61
2	55%	56	58%	50
3	65%	65	74%	47
All	65%	235	65%	158

Overall, Elm learners continue to grow in reading levels (below), particularly in Kindergarten. Achievement of Elm’s goal for Kindergarten of 80% proficiency can be attributed to significant changes to Year 3’s reading and writing program and a greater focus on professional development on literacy. In grades 1-3, there continue to be gaps in reading level proficiencies, but data shows a steady increase in learners enrolled in at least their second year at Elm (above). While Elm continues to work diligently to increase academic achievement and close academic gaps, data shows that reading levels continue to grow with the following average growths in each grade level:

- Kindergarten: 1.6 reading levels
- First Grade: 1.2 reading levels
- Second Grade: 1.1 reading levels
- Third Grade: 0.7 reading levels

Overall, our end of year assessments showed:

- By the end of Kindergarten, 80% of learners should be reading at or above a Level D according to the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. At the end of the Year 3, 83% of Kindergarteners met this goal.
- By the end of First Grade, 80% of learners should be reading at or above a Level J according to the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. At the end of Year 3, 58% of First Graders met this goal.
- By the end of Second Grade, 80% of learners should be reading at or above a Level M according to the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. At the end of Year 3, 55% of Second Graders met this goal.

¹ Proficient is defined as scoring at or above the grade-level RIT score cut score according to the most recently available linking study found [here](#). Refer to pages 15-16, tables 3.5 and 3.6.

- By the end of Third Grade, 80% of learners should be reading at or above a Level P according to the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. At the end of Year 3, 65% of Third Graders met this goal.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

While we were able to assess all learners during the quarterly assessments, all remote learners participated in F&P assessments virtually, which had many difficulties. Learner engagement was often not as high with limited support at home or ability for teachers to provide additional support to ensure accurate assessment data. Professional development targeted methods of questioning and various support (e.g. frequent breaks, scaffolded questions) that teachers could implement.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Kindergarten was able to achieve the literacy goal set in the Accountability Plan. However, overall, while Elm students have grown throughout the school year, grades 1-3 did not attain the literacy goals set in the Accountability Plan. During quarterly leadership and staff data analysis, we also closely analyzed Elm's at-risk populations. While we need to continue to close achievement gaps, many at-risk students continue to grow throughout the school year, with the following proficiencies:

- 83% proficiency amongst Kindergarten students with IEPs
- 90% proficiency amongst Kindergarten students identified as ELL
- 19% proficiency amongst First Grade students with IEPs
- 53% proficiency amongst First Grade students identified as ELL
- 29% proficiency amongst Second Grade students with IEPs
- 30% proficiency amongst Second Grade students identified as ELL
- 50% proficiency amongst Third Grade students with IEPs
- 67% proficiency amongst Third Grade students identified as ELL

Overall, Elm learners are growing in reading proficiency, but there are areas of growth and targeted strategies to implement in this upcoming 2021-22 school year.

ACTION PLAN

During an End of Year Data Day, Elm's leadership team facilitated data analysis amongst all staff and created priorities for the 2021-22 school year.

Data-Driven Instruction: A foci in professional development sessions will be continuous monitoring and conferring with targeted teaching points. Together with leadership, Elm teachers will consistently collect informal data in order to track and growth and proactively adjust instruction to meet learners' needs.

Curriculum: In 2021-22, Elm's leadership team will revamp 3rd and 4th grade guided reading, shifting the emphasis to novel studies and lessons that push for deeper levels of comprehension in longer, more complex texts.

Targeted Instruction: In 2021-22, we plan on inviting all students back to in-person learning. Elm will continue to implement small group literacy instruction with the use of technology. This year, in

addition to reading comprehension small groups, students will also be divided into homogeneous groups for phonics using Elm's Success For All (SFA) program, which was temporarily paused due to the pandemic and health and safety protocols. Teachers will keep track of student progress more frequently through the use of reading trackers, and students will be grouped flexibly, able to fluidly move around according to their individual performance.

Rich Discourse: To better support all learners, but particularly our ELL students, another focus in professional development will be the development of rich discourse using accountable talk and various learning experiences including the incorporation of frequent partner talk, small group, and whole group discussions.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.

BACKGROUND

Elm will utilize two main components for Math: Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) and Math Workshop. During the 2020-21 school year, students in each grade will have approximately 45 minutes of math instruction each day regardless of whether they are remote or in-person.

CGI will operate in direct alignment with New York State's Common Core Learning Standards for Mathematics, which are based on the Common Core State Standards for Mathematical Practice.

Math Workshop is a mastery-based academic component that will teach students fundamental math skills. The focus of this curriculum is on students building a strong conceptual foundation that they can use to solve problems in their everyday experiences. The curriculum will be tailored from TERC Investigations and Context For Learning curriculum to have a greater emphasis on mastering math skills.

METHOD

During the 2020-21 school year, Elm primarily used internal Math Benchmark Assessments adapted from math assessments utilized nationally and created by Stephanie Z. Smith and Marvin E. Smith. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, 100% of in-person Elm learners opted out of state testing. However, in lieu of the third grade NYS Math Test, we administered an internally developed assessment for 3rd grade learners that reflected previously administered NYS Math tests.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

By the end of each grade level, 85% of learners should demonstrate proficiency on the end of year Math Benchmark Assessment. The table below shows this end of year data.

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient ²	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
K	78%	46	N/A	N/A
1	78%	63	83%	47

² Proficient is defined as scoring at or above the grade-level RIT score cut score according to the most recently available linking study found [here](#). Refer to pages 15-16, tables 3.5 and 3.6.

2	65%	55	67%	49
3	24%	55	20%	46
All	61%	219	57%	142

Overall some progress was made toward the end of year goal of 85% proficiency on the Math Benchmark Assessment. Significant progress was made in Kindergarten and First Grade, with both grades missing the goal by only 7 percentage points.

Although 2nd grade was further from the end of year proficiency goal, throughout the year Second grade learners made 57 percentage points of growth from the beginning of year benchmark to the end of year benchmark. This high percentage of growth demonstrates the positive instructional changes (targeted small groups, meaningful reteach lessons, continuous monitoring) made throughout the year to identify learners gaps and support learner growth.

Third grade learners did not perform well on the end of year math benchmark, missing the goal by 61 percentage points. While this assessment was aligned to standards, we do not believe that it accurately reflects learners’ performance on the NYS Math Test. When administered another assessment that was more similar to the NYS Math Test, 45% of learners demonstrated proficiency, which is closer to the District 24’s proficiency of 50%.

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient ³	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	45%	55	48%	46

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

During our remote learning periods of learning, Elm’s math program severely differed from our normal program. Elm’s math program includes integration of hands-on learning activities and manipulatives in every activity and lesson. However, due to health and safety guidelines, Elm’s math program was limited to virtual and visual components with little to no hands-on / kinesthetic manipulatives. Similarly, these limitations also existed in Elm’s assessments, with all learners (in-person and virtual) completing assessments virtually with little use of manipulatives. This along with other factors may have hindered academic growth and proficiency:

- Only 25% of 2nd and 3rd graders had an opportunity to receive in-person instruction in the 2020-21 school year. With math being a manipulative heavy subject area, remote learners had access to fewer tools to support their learning.

³ Proficient is defined as scoring at or above the grade-level RIT score cut score according to the most recently available linking study found [here](#). Refer to pages 15-16, tables 3.5 and 3.6.

- The format of assessments for 3rd grade was new. The addition of a combination of multiple choice and short response questions in the benchmark assessments was difficult for remote learners to master without the use of printed materials.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Some significant progress was made in Kindergarten and First Grade, largely due to revisions to math curriculum in these grade levels over the years. Kindergarten and First Grade both achieved 78% proficiency in math, a 2% gap from Elm's Math Accountability Goal. Second and Third Grade proficiencies did not meet the math goals in the Accountability Plan with 65% proficiency in Second Grade and only 24% proficiency in Third Grade. While the majority of second and third graders attended school in a remote learning setting, feedback from teachers also indicated gaps and improvements needed in the second and third grade math curriculum. There are areas of growth and targeted strategies to implement in this upcoming 2021-22 school year.

ACTION PLAN

Based on the data analysis, we plan to implement the following changes in Year 4:

- **Mastery Based Curriculum:** Elm plans to further enhance the 3rd Grade Math Workshop curriculum with a mastery-based curriculum that is aligned to NYS Standards. This shift to a more mastery-based curriculum will ensure learners master grade-appropriate standards.
- **Increased Frequency of Math:** The frequency of Math Workshop will increase from three times a week to four times a week for 3rd and 4th grade students who spent the majority of the previous school years in a remote setting. The increase in frequency will allow for more content to be covered during the school year, ultimately preparing learners to demonstrate mastery on the NYS State Tests.
- **Math Routines:** For all grade levels, 15-20 minutes of math fluency practice will be implemented a few times a week. This math fluency practice will support learners with counting and grade-appropriate math facts.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of the scientific method to design, conduct, and analyze experiments, and represent conclusions.

BACKGROUND

Elm's engaging science curriculum will be inquiry and project-based. The curriculum will build students foundational science skills by completing experiments that will answer scientific questions

related to life, earth, and physical science. In Year 1-2, leadership will guide and collaborate with STEM teachers to develop an innovative and rigorous curriculum. Currently, Elm has adopted Amplify as our science curriculum due to its emphasis on experiments and inquiry-based learning, as well as its direct alignment to New York State's CCLS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Pacing calendars, assessments, units and lessons will be developed in-house and eventually achieve horizontal alignment with Humanities.

In the 2020-21 school year, learners received a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction when virtual. For those learners that came to school in-person, they received science instruction 4 days a week. Whether in-person or virtual, learners were able to engage in all planned units, activities, and assessments, including project-based, performance tasks.

METHOD

In the 2020-21 school year, Elm did not have any grades participating in state testing. According to our accountability plan, we are unable to provide state testing data to show our growth toward NY State Tests.

However, starting Year 1, Elm has implemented a series of assessments that we believe will prepare our learners for the NYS Science Test. Each quarter, learners are assessed using internally created, content-based assessments along with performance tasks aligned to Next Generation Science Standards.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Brief narrative highlighting results that directly addresses the goal. The narrative should include, for example, discussion of by how much the school exceeded or fell short of targets, as well as notable performance in specific grades and student populations. Also, use this section to explain the results in the context of the school program, attributing the results to effective practices or problem areas. When possible, schools should provide specific growth and achievement results aggregated to the school and grade level in tabular form.

Overall, we saw some progress toward our Science proficiency goals. Our end of year goal for Science was 85% proficiency.

- In Kindergarten 73% of learners demonstrated proficiency, missing our end of year goal by 12 percentage points.
- In First Grade, 79% of learners demonstrated proficiency, missing our end of year goal by 6 percentage points.
- In Second Grade, 88% of learners demonstrated proficiency, exceeding our end of year goal by 3 percentage points.
- In Third Grade, 87% of learners demonstrated proficiency, exceeding our end of year goal by 2 percentage points.

In the 2020-21 school year, we continued to create a more rigorous and inquiry-based science curriculum adapted from Amplify Science. We again saw a dip in the kindergarten and 1st grade data, however, we feel confident that a more rigorous curriculum and assessment will better prepare our learners for the NYS Science Test in 4th grade.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Overall, there was growth toward Elm’s accountability goal of 85% proficiency in Science. Utilizing internal science benchmarks based on science standards (NGSS) and science state tests. As learners continue to engage in Elm’s science curriculum, there is an increase in proficiency.

ACTION PLAN

In the 2021-22 school year, we will focus on continuing to provide rigorous instruction and assessment in Science. This year, we are also excited to create science assessments with performance tasks aligned to state testing standards and skills.

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

State the school’s ESSA status this year. Provide a narrative explicitly stating whether or not the school met the measure and any changes over time.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Provide a narrative reviewing the school’s ESSA status during each year of the current Accountability Period.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2018-19	N/A
2019-20	Good Standing
2020-21	Good Standing

APPENDIX A: DATA REPORTING TABLES

In this upcoming 2021-22 school year, Elm will implement norm-referenced tests. In the 2020-21 school year, Elm depended on data collected from internal assessments that allowed comparison across Year 1-3.