



HARLEM LINK CHARTER SCHOOL

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Steven Evangelista prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

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Steven Evangelista has served as the principal since 2011 and as the Co-Director from 2004 to 2011.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Harlem Link, an independent public charter school, opened its doors in the fall of 2005 to link academics, values and community to graduate articulate scholars who meet or exceed New York Performance Standards and active citizens who learn and serve their communities. Since 2005, the school has grown to serve PreK-5 students in Harlem and its surrounding communities.

Diverse families from more than ten districts across New York City choose Harlem Link for their children with the majority of students attending residing in District 5. Of the total student population for the 2020-21 school year, 92% of students were in poverty; 28% of students had at least one disability; and 10% were Multiple Language Learners.

Harlem Link anticipates that its percentage of MLL students served will increase in the upcoming year, based on internal assessments completed in the year prior. Harlem Link identified 11 additional students who were eligible for a provisional MLL designation. In order to identify students within this category of support we used home language and did informal screenings based on NYSITELL to gauge students would likely qualify. The school integrated both formal and provisionally designated students in MLL services. They received support through integrated co-teaching during co instruction with the schools two ENL teachers.

The ENL Specialist and coach also designed an internal ENL Interim assessment that was given 3x Fall, winter and spring. The specialist designed and led an MLL teacher leader program that meets several times Over the school year to learn and practice ENL best practices with their students. This group also analyzed the ENL interim assessments together and decided next steps for instructional support for MLL students in their classrooms. Finally, the ENL specialist along with the Literacy Director and the Special Education manager led intervention meetings with each class to discuss students, including MLL and their progress

Though Harlem Link is located in CSD 3, its student population is much more disadvantaged than CSD 3. Harlem Link’s student population is more similar to CSD 5, the district with the greatest scholar enrollment at Harlem Link.

	Harlem Link	CSD 3	CSD 5
In poverty	92%	47%	83%
With disabilities	28%	20%	28%
Multiple Language Learners	10%	4%	9%

2020-21 Demographic Comparison for School and Districts

Leveraging the key design elements described below, Harlem Link consistently prepares its students to attend high performing, competitive public and private middle schools. These outcomes along with the significant and consistent progress the school has made toward achieving its mission has

resulted in the SUNY Charter School Institute granting Harlem Link a three-year charter renewal in 2010 and five-year charter renewals in 2013 and 2018.

Harlem Link's instructional vision, adopted in 2014, is: "We align our practice and use our relationships to help students achieve world-class scholarship and build good character." The school's educational program has undergone some important changes in recent years due to the development of the school's Instructional Vision. Notably, the early childhood program is further emphasizing learning through play and social emotional learning. Returning more forcefully to the school's founding philosophy after a period in which teacher-directed lessons were the norm, student-to-student interaction is again more highly valued in all grades and subjects, as is student thinking and learning through error making and reflection. Finally, students are more involved in their own goal-setting and receive more frequent feedback against the progress of those goals.

The school has strived to actualize Responsive Classroom (RC) guiding principles, which include the notion that social and emotional learning is as important as academic learning. The four elements of Responsive Classroom (Positive Community, Engaging Academics, Effective Management and Developmental Awareness) support the core of the vision: data-driven, rigorous learning and leadership.

Harlem Link's key design elements are:

1) Rigorous, high expectations and a belief in students

Harlem Link seeks to uphold the same, rigorous, college-bound expectations for its students as those typically found in our nation's most well-resourced communities. These are embodied in the school's long-term vision for student success, supported by a preparatory environment for college and careers including the school's challenging curriculum and Core Values.

The school's first cohort alumni, which graduated from fifth grade in 2010, graduated from high school in four years at a rate of 73%. As of 2019-2020, 54% of that cohort is enrolled in college. The school is carefully tracking college matriculation and progress for its alumni, as well as supporting graduates along the path in middle and high school. We have found that 75% of the first four cohorts enrolled in college, 38% of these students have persisted and graduated, 33% have paused and of those, 23% have paused in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working backward from the goal of college graduation, the school promotes a growth mindset. A core belief of the school is that behaviors presented by students are not reflective of fixed attributes, but can change and evolve with direction and effort. For this reason, the school never gives up on students and strives to engage and retain even those students expressing disaffection. To do so, Harlem Link partners with families, builds on the hopes and dreams of children, and creates a milieu of belief in which students can thrive.

2) A data-driven curriculum and pedagogy that support the school's mission

Harlem Link seeks to provide a curriculum and teaching structures that support the development of critical thinking skills and student independence. The school uses a balanced literacy curriculum and a set of inquiry-based math and science programs, in which students have frequent opportunities to direct their own learning, examine their thinking and speak and listen about their

ideas and strategies with peers. Students must also acquire basic skills; therefore, the school incorporates highly structured academic programs that include a multisensory, sequential phonics program in the early grades and copious practice in basic mathematics skills.

Teachers choose instructional strategies based on data they collect and analyze that indicate student needs. This data is derived from the school's comprehensive assessment calendar, comprised of five distinct levels of assessment. Formal school-wide assessments (Level 4) during pre-pandemic times include Foundations phonics and Heggerty phonemic awareness inventories, the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Inventory, practice state exams, periodic math fluency assessments and a once-per-grade annual performance-based Science Expo.

The school has developed a protocol for analyzing unit-end performance assessments (Level 3). The school is now collecting and analyzing data school-wide on prioritized classroom-based lesson objective measures (Level 2), which include trade and teacher-made tests, exit slips, mini-quizzes and student-teacher conferencing notes. Teachers use Level 1 assessment (checks for understanding) to ensure their lesson is on target and preparing students for Level 2 assessments.

The school has formal programmatic structures in place to support each element of its Instructional Vision. Responsive Classroom (RC) creates the conditions in each classroom for strong learning. The RC practices include a consistent approach to morning meeting, introducing new material or routines, speaking to students, delivering lessons, learning about students, differentiating lessons and building community.

In Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), teachers introduce a challenging mathematical problem, having planned carefully around state standards and watching all students work independently with specific outcomes, strategies and misconceptions in mind. Teachers then orchestrate a collaborative discourse in which students share increasingly sophisticated strategies, helping students learn from each other and measuring their increased understanding over time. CGI addresses number sense, operations and fractions standards, while the school's TERC curriculum units address the remainder of the math standards in a daily Math Workshop.

In the upper grades, the school piloted the use of Visible Learning in its test preparation program, and is bringing this approach school-wide. Visible Learning is based on the principle that people, including children, learn best when they set meaningful goals and receive frequent concrete feedback on their standing against those goals. Visible Learning successfully transitioned students in the upper grades from relying on extrinsic incentives to focusing on learning targets for the satisfaction of learning.

Emotionally Responsive Practice (ERP), a set of pedagogical tools and knowledge provided by Bank Street College of Education's Safe and Sound Schools program, helps teachers use child developmental principles to create a learning environment where students who experienced trauma can be successful. Strategies such as reflective technique (in which students receive validation for their feelings regardless of their state, and thereby gain investment in the classroom community) create this environment, which benefits all children.

The school teaches the five competencies of the Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL), which are consistent with both RC and ERP's work. The five capacities are in the domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills and responsible decision-making.

The school staffs most classrooms with two teachers and has developed a model for co-teaching in which teachers choose from a small menu of appropriate structures and roles depending on the course, content and academic goals for students. Co-teachers also utilize Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an instructional technique to maximize engagement and address diversified IEP goals and management needs. The school features at least two Integrated Co-Teaching classrooms on each grade, a robust student intervention program, and a rigorous promotion policy. For students who struggle academically or to complete required course work during the school year, successful completion of a mandatory summer academy may be required for promotion to the next grade.

3) High levels of professional learning

The school utilizes both contracted and internal resources in order to support teachers in meeting the school's mission and effectively executing the curriculum and pedagogy. Harlem Link has developed a professional learning community on its campus in which all adults are constant learners, and the use of professional development resources encourages collaboration among staff.

Harlem Link contracts for professional development in areas such as mathematics, literacy and science and provides on-site training and coaching in planning and assessing, co-teaching, differentiating instruction, and use of assessment data among other areas.

Within the first year of teaching at Harlem Link (and in most cases, prior to service) each teacher is trained in the four-day Responsive Classroom I course, and a two day Cognitively Guided Instruction workshop. These workshops are provided in addition to a two-day on-site orientation and a two-week Summer Institute, during the latter of which all staff members participate in workshops, discussions and team planning sessions.

Harlem Link uses internal resources by having Grade Team Leaders, teachers recognized as having achieved a high level of both student achievement and fidelity to the school's vision, support newer teachers to the school; by having teachers join administrators in thematic walkthroughs, which include feedback by peers, administrators and consultants to the host classroom; and by ensuring grade teams function as an organized unit, such that each classroom is able to learn from the other or others on the team. Twice per month, grade teams have dedicated time set aside to perform pre-unit protocols, post-unit data analysis protocols and other forms of data analysis including part of the school's Child Study Process.

Over the past four years, the school has also developed a set of goals around diversity, equity and inclusion. A Diversity and Social Justice (DSJ) committee, jointly led by teachers and administrators, has driven the planning for school-wide and group activities. Each year, the full staff has

participated in training toward the execution of a five-year plan (now concluding Year Two), and engaged in a myriad of activities to address related goals in various areas of the school. For the first time in 2020-21, the school measured progress on these goals by administering a Panorama survey expressly focused on diversity and equity.

4) Family and community involvement strategies

Harlem Link supports the development of its independent parent association, the primary means by which parents can be involved in the life of the school and decision-making. The school also maintains an open-door policy, in which parents are encouraged to make appointments and spend time observing or helping in their child's classroom. The school has employed parents when appropriate, and invites family members in for programs, performances and events throughout the year, both during and after school. The school places a high level of importance on universal participation in tri-annual family-teacher conferences. As a community-based institution, the school is also committed to enrolling a student population representative of the community of location, in keeping with, originally, the spirit and, now, the letter of the charter law.

Living up to one of the founding reasons for the name "Link," the school's curriculum also includes attention to the rich tapestry of New York City and its surrounding environs as resources for learning. As part of units of study, scholars visit and study the local Harlem community and visit other parts of the city to support social studies learning throughout the grades.

The school maintains partnerships with community institutions in order to support its mission, instructional priorities, and families. The school boasts a number of key partnerships, for example: The Africa Center, which has provided cultural programming and support; a cadre of early childhood programs including the Northern Manhattan Neo-Natal Partnership, the Helen B. Atkinson Clinic, and the Bank Street Straus Center, which support the school's Start to Finish program and help coordinate resources to promote early learning in the community; the Northside Center for Children and Families, which provides on-site individual and family therapy to students in need; and the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, which has provided programming including essay contests, a boys support group, and the development of a college-focused competitive Step Team.

5) Supportive school culture

Harlem Link defines school culture as the tone created by the physical environment and all the actions and words of the people in it. The school places an emphasis on supporting teachers to promote their retention and continued growth and having an open, collaborative work environment for all staff. The school intends that teachers, administrators and all other staff members model the school's Core Values and successful student behaviors at all times and that the tone of the school is serious about learning but also joyful and celebratory.

Each day begins with a structured Morning Meeting in each classroom. Each classroom has the same set of goals for this time: to convey a sense of belonging, importance and fun to each student every day; to build positive community and relationships with and among students; and to practice academic content in novel and engaging ways.

The school used Responsive Classroom principles and practices throughout not only classrooms but common spaces as well. RC Teacher Language, which frames three complementary types of teacher approaches to student learning (Reinforcing, Redirecting and Reminding Language), is applicable in the lunchroom for not only maintaining order and safety but also teaching Social and Emotional Learning competencies.

The emphasis on students and families being physically represented in the school, in pictures and work on the walls, through performances and events, and in the school's open-door policy, creates a warm, inviting and joyful learning environment where students can focus and learn at a high academic level.

5a) Covid Family Response

As an extension of our school culture, Harlem Link provided additional family supports during the time of Covid-19. We provided a predictable and consistent schedule with synchronous learning, with teachers planning for each student's individual needs. While students were learning remotely, HL ensured that no child would go hungry or be without the learning materials they needed to be successful. Staff remained on site to serve families by providing them access to additional educational tools. HL changed its food services agreement to Red Rabbit, which allowed for home delivery of food.

The school listened to families, who expressed little interest in returning to campus throughout the school year, and chose to focus on consistency and continuity by investing in a strong remote program rather than to attempt hybrid learning. One advantage of this approach, for example, was that the school was able to hold its usual daily morning meeting in each classroom each day consistently throughout the year, with teachers remaining constant; morning meeting sets the tone for learning and upholds a strong sense of culture by conveying a sense of belonging, importance and fun to each child. Harlem Link also ensured that each child had a Chromebook to support their work. The staff conducted home visits and material drops so that families did not have to come to the school in order to be prepared.

For students experiencing homelessness, Harlem Link partnered to set up home hot spots for community shelters. Hot spots were also provided to families without a regular internet connection. Harlem Link also thought creatively about how to reintroduce students to in person learning while minimizing the potential for covid-19 exposure. Following this, at first two and eventually up to eight pods of 10 students were set up for on-campus care. Dedicated staff members assisted these students in their learning and navigating instruction and related services, which continued remotely. In addition to these direct supports, Harlem link sent home family updates on a regular basis through a communications team. These updates included not only school information but also listed community resources for families in need.

In order to address the diversity of family needs, Harlem Link created a robust "Challenge and Response" data tracking system whereby it deployed tailored resources in direct response to specific needs. Finally, Harlem Link [commissioned a mural](#) to commemorate the resiliency demonstrated by its community during the Covid-19 pandemic and to thank its community for its continued civic commitment and academic learning.

Transition to Remote Learning

- When the school was first impacted by Covid-19 in March of 2020, a transition to remote learning was made. At this time, Harlem Link established strong virtual practices which extended themselves to the 2020-2021 academic year. Harlem Link built upon its foundation for successful remote learning: driving principles, clear goals, and a [Virtual School website](#) with information for families. Harlem Link extended its use of the Virtual School website, a comprehensive site for families, including all links to remote learning sessions, schedules, technology support, mental health support, resources, and other communications from the school. The school also made contact with all families and deployed technology and other resources directly to students' homes.
- The school implemented daily synchronous learning to sustain school community and maximize learning in the remote setting. Resources were differentiated by grade level: Seesaw (for PK-2) and Google Classroom (for grades 3-5) emerged as most developmentally and academically appropriate. Teachers collected student work and gave feedback daily. In ELA, Harlem Link has used Lexia Core 5 and Epic to support independent reading. In mathematics, Harlem Link was able to adapt TERC to be used online by contracting with the Savvas platform. Data was collected from each of these tools to inform future practice and intervention. On SeeSaw there were 29,688 Posts Added and 13,472 Feedback entries from Teachers on Student Work.
- Classroom Portfolios: Every PK-5th Grade classroom teacher and Specials teachers incorporated the development of student portfolios into their practice. All teachers now have samples of student work from all semesters reflecting high, medium & low samples within ELA and Math (and for specials, within their content). The portfolios are standards based, with explanations of student work, and explanations of grading/feedback.
- Academic intervention, counseling, and related services continued. Teachers leveraged breakout rooms to give extra support in ICT classrooms. Students had access to standalone multi-language learning time and academic intervention. The school created online resources to teach PATHS, its SEL curriculum, remotely in the 2020-21 school year.
- Harlem Link closely monitored student attendance and was in frequent proactive communication with families to support them through the challenges of the pandemic, including illness and caretaking within family units, provision of childcare for families who were essential workers, access to technology, and the unfortunate increase in unemployment, home insecurity, and food insecurity. Harlem Link made daily calls and used secure Google sheets for documentation and an internal Slack channel to discuss and address issues. The social work team handled case management for difficult and challenging hardships; in the spring, the school increased the size of this team by bringing on a dedicated case manager. Through surveys and anecdotal comments to staff members, families have expressed very positive feedback to Harlem Link's proactive, thoughtful, empathetic, and community-focused approach.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

- In strategically planning the year, Harlem Link adopted a framework for the Return to School, provided by Opportunity Labs and made available via a webinar hosted by Schoolworks. Beginning the process, the school adopted these key principles:
 - **Care:** We maintain our priority of caring for our community, supporting vulnerable populations, and prioritizing wellness (including physical health and safety and mental health) as the top considerations of all planning.
 - **Flexibility:** We are prepared for multiple scenarios (on-site, remote learning and a mixture), and we use data to adjust roles, schedules and programs to meet student needs.
 - **Accelerated Learning:** Intervention will become part of core instruction during this recovery period. We identify foundational skills and standards (“pre-requisites”) in each grade and core subject area, and provide extra instructional time to close gaps in learning while also teaching new content.
 - **Core Remote Teachers** were established to lead small groups and join classrooms to provide new levels of differentiation. Administrators as well as teachers took on this role, which allowed for all school-based stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of student performance and more deeply analyze student data.
 - **Engagement:** We utilize the strengths and interests of our entire community, keep stakeholders working together, and prioritize engaging academic work both remotely and in the classroom.
 - **Collaboration and Documentation:** Careful planning, consistent communication and organized record keeping is essential in a time of great uncertainty and change, to protect our school and maintain learning for the future.

Through the Return to School Framework, the school formed a number of committees to contribute to two sets of shifts: the school year planning that takes place each summer, plus the pandemic/remote-specific aspects of planning. School Management team members led each committee, which covered the following topics:

- Literacy subcommittee
- Math subcommittee
- Wellness: Mental Health/SEL Crisis Response Team
- Wellness: Physical Health & Safety
- Scheduling
- Attendance
- Classroom community and routines (First Six Weeks)
- Blended Learning and Technology
- Facility

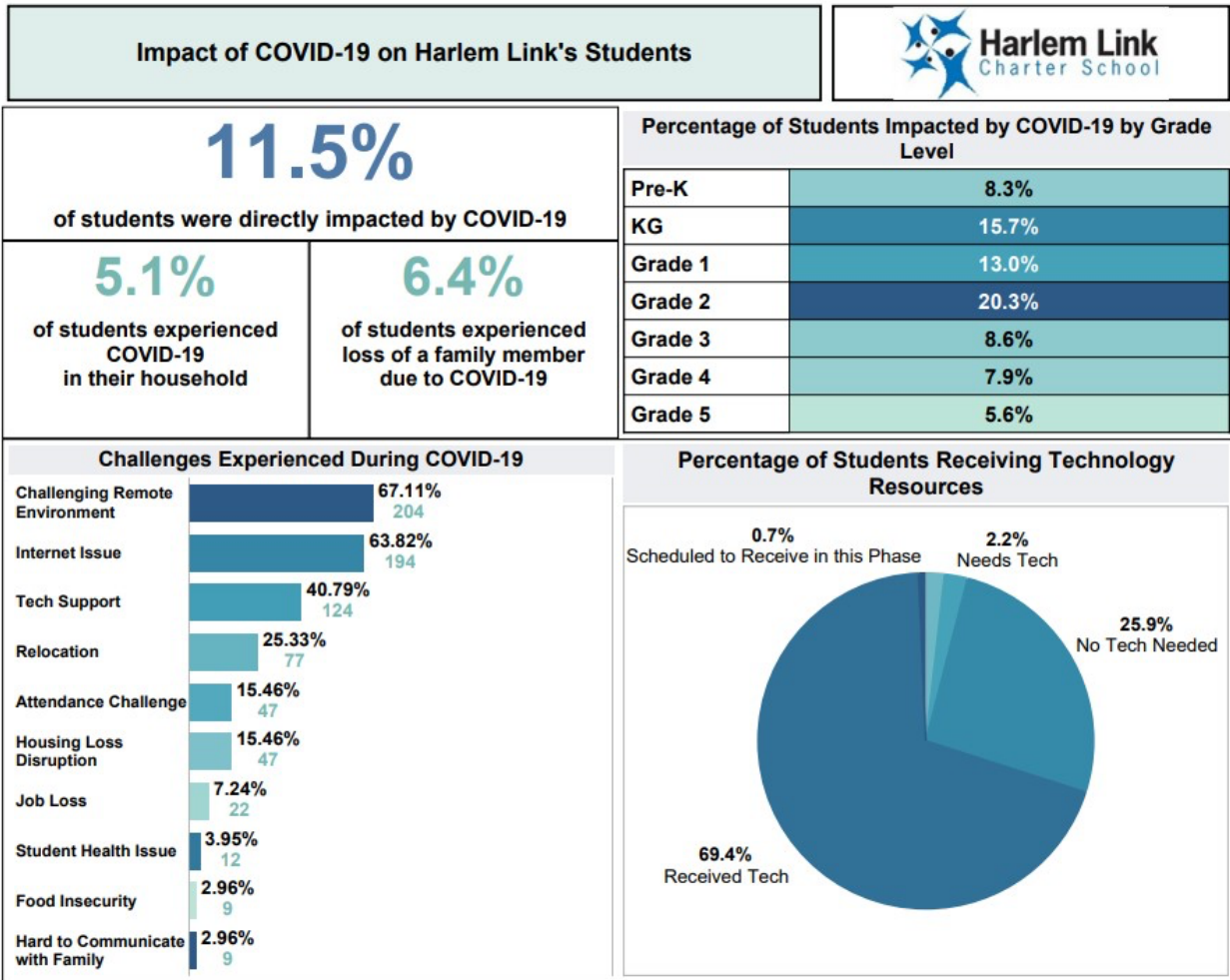
Harlem Link also surveyed teachers three times to ensure their feedback about school programming, remote learning, staff/family/student wellness, and culture were incorporated into planning. The pre-school planning period was extended from 10 to 12 days and conducted remotely. In devising the remote schedule for the 2020-21 school year, the number of synchronous

teaching minutes were increased from the previous spring's remote plan (varies by grade and day of week):

- Morning meeting: 30 minutes
- ELA: 60-90 minutes
- Writing: 0-30 minutes
- Math: 45-75 minutes
- Specials: 30 minutes
- Enrichment (after school): 30 minutes

Harlem Link believes firmly that families are experts on their children, and it is critical to the success and wellbeing of each student that the school is connected to families and that they feel they belong at Harlem Link. Reflecting this, the school conducted teacher-driven family interviews with every family. Through these interviews, staff was able to learn about family background, enrollment, technology issues, student wellbeing, and more. In addition, each student was paired to a specific staff member "mentor" for the 2021-2022 school year who acted as a consistent proactive contact on attendance and wellbeing. The school also conducted lower school early childhood town halls with families, where the Assistant Principals, teachers, and behavior specialist could hear the perspectives of families and answer their questions.

The following chart provides an overview of the **direct** impact of Covid-19 upon its families based on Harlem Link's Challenge and Response Data tool:



It is important to note that while the chart above captures the intensity of some of the challenges faced by our students, it fails to also describe the indirect effects of covid on our community. For example, while 47 families explicitly noted attendance related barriers as a result of COVID-19, we know that this issue was more widespread, as approximately 40% of our students ended the school year with 90% or less annual attendance.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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	83	74	54	52	46	50								359
2017-18	79	75	87	53	55	52								401
2018-19	69	69	79	75	56	45								393
2019-20	77	76	71	82	78	45								429
2020-21	67	73	68	69	76	70								423

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Scholars will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.

<p>ELA Goal: Additional Measure</p> <p>Each year, 75% of students in Grades 1-5 enrolled for two or more years will achieve the Instructional Benchmark level on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System corresponding to their grade according to the table below, which is based on F&P's recommended benchmark level standard: Grade 1: Level F, Grade 2: Level K, Grade 3: Level O, Grade 4: Level R, Grade 5: Level U.</p>
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Note: as state testing data is not available due to COVID-19, Harlem Link has based its ELA progress analysis on its additional approved measure, listed above.

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link uses a balanced literacy approach to teaching English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers use the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop as a guide for instruction. This includes the use of read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and other small group instruction, independent reading with teacher conferencing, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and independent writing as elements of classroom instruction. Teachers use individual conferences and a variety of unit-level and term-level formal assessments to gauge student achievement and to plan differentiated instruction based on individual student needs. Harlem Link uses the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment as a school-wide reading level benchmarking tool. Teachers use results to plan small group instruction and develop student goals.

Harlem Link's curriculum is aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. The school has modified the Reading and the Writing scopes and sequences in each grade to increase nonfiction reading and persuasive writing. Based on these and other small changes to the ELA program, a large percentage of returning students are arriving to the school on or above grade level for ELA.

During the current charter period the school adopted Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), in which the school assesses, differentiates, creates groupings, provides intervention, and uses data to monitor improvements across both academic and socio-emotional learning domains (including math, Fountas and Pinnell, reading, test prep, socio-emotional learning and attendance). The school employs four Academic Intervention Specialists who provide interventions to struggling readers and writers. Harlem Link's RTI program is organized through Child Study Team meetings. As part of RTI, each student receives targeted goals with expected periods for improvement, interventions and frequent progress monitoring. The school emphasizes classroom-based interventions with the goal of sparingly referring students for a special education designation and only when school-based interventions are ineffective, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Using this framework, Harlem Link is working toward a support-centered, coherent academic program and aligning its instruction, assessments, and professional learning accordingly.

METHOD

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

Harlem Link leveraged the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System as an internal measure of ELA progress. Our school predicted that students would have experienced some learning loss due to covid, so internally used benchmarks were shifted to adequately review progress. This allowed teachers to respond more realistically to the needs of their scholars.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The subsequent tables demonstrate the progress of Harlem link students in reading for SY20-21. By May of '21, 59.1% of students achieved or exceeded the reading benchmark, with 39.5% of students performing above benchmark. Variation existed across grades, with growth in reading being the greatest for grade four students, followed by students in kindergarten. Students in grade five demonstrated slower growth, on average, than their peers. Some of the lagging growth may be related to covid-19 (see "additional context and evidence").

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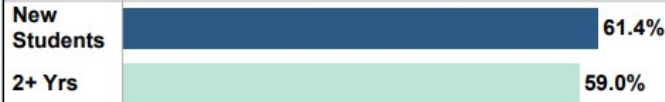
SY20-21 Percentage of Students in Grades K-5 Meeting Grade Level Reading Benchmarks



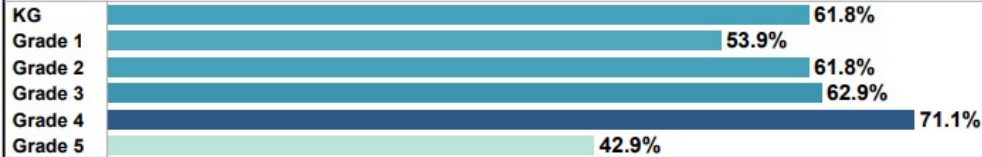
59.1%

of students met the reading benchmark

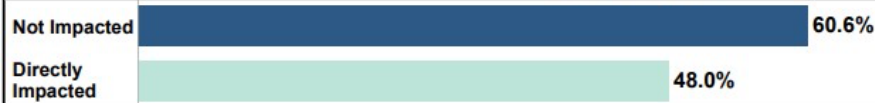
Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Benchmark by Years Enrolled in School



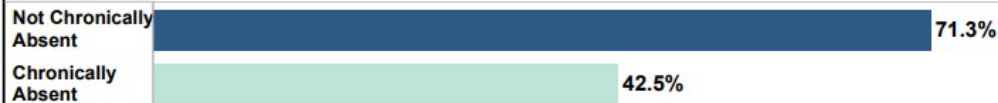
Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Benchmark by Grade Level



Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Benchmark by COVID-19 Impact*



Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Benchmark by Attendance Status**



* "Directly impacted" by COVID-19 is defined as students who had COVID-19 in their household, child had COVID-19, COVID-19 of family members that require care or having to quarantine due to COVID-19, or students who experienced COVID-19 morbidity with the loss of a family member due to COVID-19.

** Students were considered chronically absent if their attendance rate was lower than 90% and considered not chronically absent if their attendance rate was equal to or greater than 90%.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

In addition to providing a summary of average performance by grade, the table above also demonstrate differences in student performance based on their level of exposure to Covid-19. For the purposes of these tables students "impacted" by Covid-19 are those who had Covid-19 in their household, child had COVID-19, COVID-19 of a family member that required care or having to quarantine, or students who experienced COVID-19 morbidity with the loss of a family member due to Covid-19. In reviewing this data, we found that students who were directly impacted by Covid-19 were less likely to meet their grade level benchmark than those who were not. Additionally, a large amount of variation could be seen by students who were chronically absent vs their peers. Lastly, we wish to note that we are proud of our ability to test over 90% of all students in all grades, with very little attrition despite attendance challenges. We therefore believe this data to be truly representative of our student population.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Per our accountability goals, the table below differentiates those students who have been enrolled at Harlem Link for 2 or more years from their peers. In grades 2-5, those students who had been enrolled at Harlem link for 2+ years significantly outperformed their peers.

Grade	Benchmark	Actual (All Students)	Actual (Students at HL 2+ years)
1	75% at F	62.33% at or above F, with 41.56% exceeding the benchmark	55% of students met or exceeded benchmark
2	75% at K	61.23% at or above K, with 36.59% exceeding the benchmark	59% of students met or exceeded benchmark
3	75% at O	41.43% at or above O, with 27.14% exceeding the benchmark	65% of students met or exceeded benchmark
4	75% at R	50% at or above R, with 38.16% exceeding benchmark	71% of students met or exceeded benchmark
5	75% at U	33.82% at or above U, with 12% exceeding benchmark	42% of students met or exceeded benchmark

ACTION PLAN

In addition to those who met benchmark, for all cohorts except grade 5, nearly 1/3 of students exceeded the F&P benchmark. However, Harlem Link recognizes that some students are still behind. Specifically, Administrators reflected on the data and hypothesize that staffing shifts could have impacted the accumulation of learning standards for the fifth-grade cohort. In the 2019-20 school year, when this group was in fourth grade, 80% of the faculty was new to the grade, a highly unusual occurrence at Harlem Link, and teacher evaluations documented concerns with some instructors that we were never fully able to address in the in-person environment because the year was interrupted by the pandemic. Similarly, the school began phasing a key new instructional resource in upper grades ELA (Into Reading), and the pandemic interruption may have stalled teacher professional growth in fidelity to the program.

In immediate response to areas of lagging progress, our school hired an extra Academic Intervention Specialist who will start for the 21-22 year. We are also implementing dedicated time for differentiated Word Work through the “Words Their Way” program in grades 3-5. And, we have started teacher professional learning communities focused on literacy. This is a new year-long initiative to ensure that teachers receive an extra layer of support aside from the coaching already offered by Harlem Link.

In addition to these new initiatives, the school has adopted Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), in which the school assesses, differentiates, creates groupings, provides intervention, and uses data to monitor improvements across both academic and socio-emotional learning domains (including math, Fountas and Pinnell, reading, writing, test prep, socio-emotional learning and attendance). The school employs four Academic Intervention Specialists who provide interventions

to struggling readers and writers. Harlem Link’s RTI program is organized through Child Study Team meetings. As part of RTI, each student receives targeted goals with expected periods for improvement, interventions and frequent progress monitoring. The school emphasizes classroom-based interventions with the goal of sparingly referring students for a special education designation and only when school-based interventions are ineffective, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Using this framework, Harlem Link is working toward a support-centered, coherent academic program and aligning its instruction, assessments, and professional learning accordingly.

In addition, Harlem Link is approaching the 2021-22 school year with a commitment to Accelerated Learning, wherein introduction of new material will continue even as interventions are in place to support students who have not met previous benchmarks. The school will use federal pandemic-related funds to hire additional staff for additional small group interventions and will also leverage non-teaching staff (such as associate deans) to provide reading instruction, further reducing class sizes and direction individualized attention to students who need it, after piloting this responsibility out of necessity in the remote setting.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics: *Each year scholars will demonstrate proficiency in mathematics*

Mathematics Goal: Additional Measure

[Each year, 75% of students in Grades 1-5 enrolled for two or more years will score at 75% or higher on the school’s year-end math interim assessment, provided by CGI consultants.]

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link delivers to its scholars a comprehensive, standards-based math curriculum aligned to the school’s mission.

Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) builds on students’ natural problem-solving strategies to guide them toward mathematical understanding. CGI addresses all of the New York State number sense standards, and has been built into the mathematics sequencing to appropriately build conceptual understanding. When using CGI, students will attempt to solve problems without direct instruction from teachers. Instead, the teacher will guide students to understand the different strategies used by others in the class to solve the math problem. The class will collaboratively identify the most efficient strategies with students teaching each other how to use the strategies through modeling and teacher guidance. With a high degree of student engagement, this approach places the onus of

learning on the student rather than the teacher. Teachers intentionally select math problems to build students' mathematical understanding.

Harlem Link teachers implement the TERC and CGI math programs and provide students with skills practice during Morning Meeting and direct skills instruction through assessment-driven, teacher designed instruction. As constructivist math programs, TERC and Contexts for Learning foster mathematical thinking. New York State's eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, with their focus on student argumentation, communication, and problem solving, are consistent with the school's structured constructivist approach. Teachers also implement the Contexts for Learning program, which supplements conceptual gaps in TERC such as measurement of time and money and basic number sense while using the same pedagogical philosophy.

Teachers create individualized math stations and lead Guided Math groups to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students. This combination of programs ensures students have the number sense and basic number fact recall to wrestle with and master conceptual problems. It also allows students to understand and apply mathematical computation and problem solving to situations that arise in everyday life.

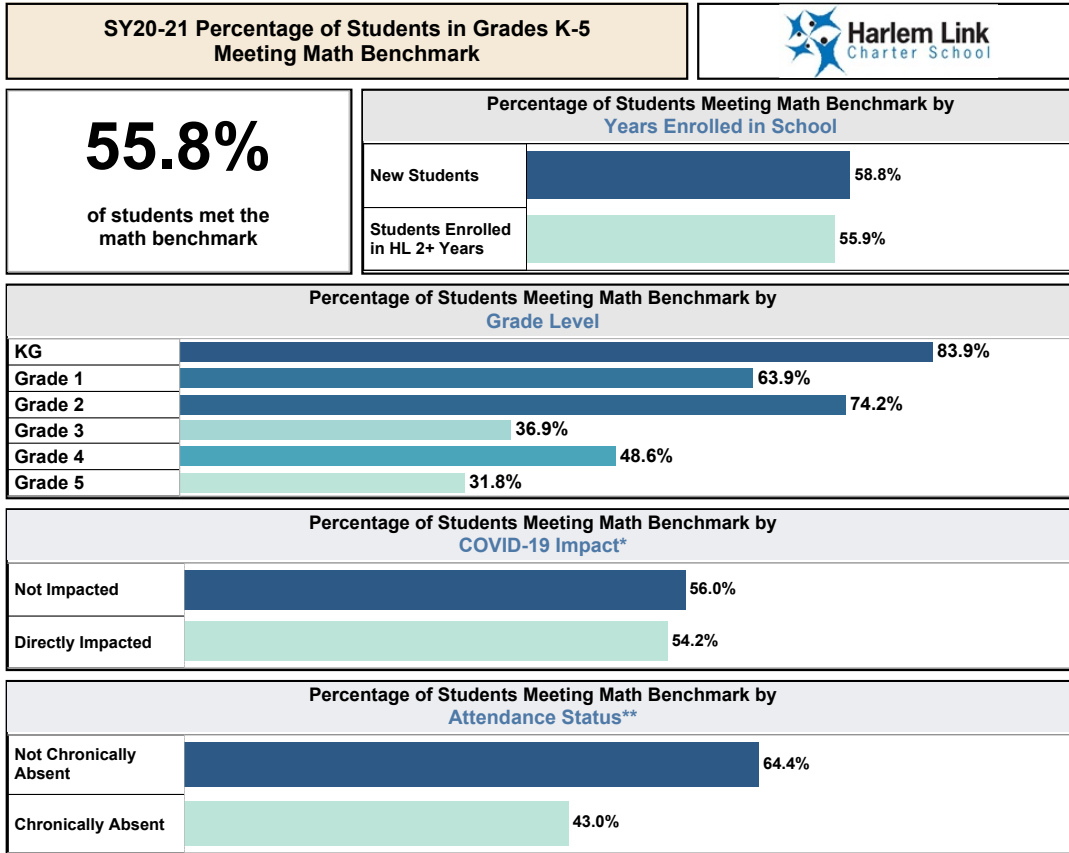
METHOD

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

For the 2020-21 school year, Harlem Link modified its interim CGI assessment for the remote setting with a focus on power standards, utilizing the Savvas platform to devise grade-level assessments with the appropriate balance of standards assessed. The exam was administered twice during the academic year. In future years, Harlem Link anticipates adopting the NWEA MAP assessment and augment its accountability metric to leverage this data, upon authorizer approval.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:



* "Directly impacted" by COVID-19 is defined as students who had COVID-19 in their household, child had COVID-19, COVID-19 of family members that require care or having to quarantine due to COVID-19, or students who experienced COVID-19 morbidity with the loss of a family member due to COVID-19.

** Students were considered chronically absent if their attendance rate was lower than 90% and considered not chronically absent if their attendance rate was equal to or greater than 90%.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Grade	Benchmark	Actual (all scholars)	Actual (Scholars at HL 2+ years)
1	75%	62% of students scored 75% of higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment.	63% of students met or exceeded benchmark.
2	75%	71.6% of students scored 75% of higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment.	74% of students met or exceeded benchmark.
3	75%	36.9% of students scored 75% of higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment.	37% of students met or exceeded benchmark
4	75%	48% of students scored 75% of higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment.	49% of students met or exceeded benchmark
5	75%	33% of students scored 75% of higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment.	32% of students met or exceeded benchmark

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE:

Across all grade levels there were several students with scores of "0". This may indicate a lack of full participation, given that the exam was administered virtually. Across all grades, students who have spent 2+ years at Harlem Link outperformed their peers. The highest performing cohort was grade 2, while grades 3 and 5 lagged behind their peers, comparatively. Similar to findings for ELA, in mathematics, students who were not chronically absent performed significantly better than those who missed 10 or more days of school during the year. A small (negative) variation was also found across those students who had been directly impacted by COVID-19 and those who had not.

While the school took steps to counter concerns, our data are not entirely surprising. In both grades 3 and 5, the school found building conceptual understanding in the remote setting to be challenging given the shifts in standards from grade to grade. For example, multiplication, fraction and volume standards are do not directly build on prior year standards in the same way Operations and Algebraic Thinking do in the lower grades. In-person, the school relies heavily on hands-on activities with manipulatives to build conceptual understanding, and found the delivery of this type of information more challenging in the remote environment than other academic areas.

ACTION PLAN

In the upcoming year we will seek to change our goal to center around the NWEA MAP assessment. While the power standards information is helpful, NWEA MAP will have the dual advantages of being nationally normed, reliable and valid on the one hand, and of providing comparison scores to New York State test scores based on performance, given the absence of test scores in 2020 and 2021.

In addition, the NWEA team launched a Remote Testing and School Closure support team, which will be helpful in navigating this change should further remote learning be needed, and if approved to augment our goal. In the interim, we are using our assessment data to provide targeted supports to all scholars and differentiating based on their needs. The Savvas assessment allows us to narrow in on the standards with which our students are struggling, both individually and as cohorts.

In addition to our MTSS program (described within the ELA component of this report) we have prioritized reteaching and reassigning the school's Math Coach to work directly with students who struggled in priority standards. School leaders believe that while the results of these and other interventions did not help Harlem Link meet the benchmarks in 20-21, they did lay the groundwork for using data for math intervention as part of Accelerated Learning in the 2021-22 school year. In response to this data, the school also prioritized student-work analysis protocols in the 2021-22 year that will more precisely identify gaps in understanding.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link uses and supplements the FOSS (Full Option Science System) program, an inquiry-driven set of units that align to New York State Learning and Performance Standards. The school staff's science instruction with two Specialty Teachers. Students receive science instruction three periods per week. The school also sets aside time and when necessary extra funding for external enrichment programs that support science units. The school takes advantage of its proximity to Central Park and the variety of museums in New York City for hands-on experiences that support curriculum units.

Internal science assessment is done primarily through the use of curriculum-based measures provided with the FOSS kits. The school has also begun adjusting the science curriculum to meet Common Core learning standards. As a result, science instruction is closely aligned to ELA standards, mirrors the constructivist math approach, and includes small and whole group instruction.

METHOD

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the New York State science examination was not administered, and so these results are not available. Student learning in science was evaluated through formative data including performance tasks and grades. However, there was no interim assessment given in science in the 2020-2021 school year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

n/a

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Harlem Link has demonstrated strong performance in science in each of the past three years when the New York State science exam was administered.

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

Harlem Link has met this measure; the school is in good standing in 2020-2021.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Harlem Link has been in good standing in each of the past three years.

Accountability Status by Year

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