



PERSISTENCE
PREPARATORY ACADEMY

**PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Joelle Formato, Founder & Head of School, prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Daniel Greene	Chair; Governance (chair), Finance, Development, Academic Accountability, Facilities
Amanda Winkelsas	Vice Chair; Governance, Academic Accountability (chair)
Catherine Roberts	Secretary; Governance
Kenneth Newsom	Treasurer; Finance (chair)
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Derrick Parson	Trustee; Governance
Elisha Tomasello	Trustee; Development
Bobbie Finocchio	Trustee; Academic Accountability
Joelle Formato	Head of School, non-voting member

Joelle Formato has served as the Head of School since September 1, 2017.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

*Through rigorous academics, high-quality instruction and leadership development, **Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School** ensures that all K through 8 scholars are firmly on the path to succeed within a four-year college and create positive change within their communities.*

Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School (Persistence Prep) completed its third year of operation in the 2020-2021 school year, serving 225 scholars in grades K-3. Persistence Prep was born out of the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship. Our Founder and Head of School, Joelle Formato, was a 2016-2017 BES Fellow, and had the opportunity to observe best practices from over 50 high-performing charter schools across the country. Building Excellent Schools is still involved with the school providing coaching, observation and resources to our Head of School and Board of Trustees.

Our mission, shown above, is grounded in our five core beliefs:

1. We believe that high-quality teaching is the key driver of academic achievement.

Persistence Prep fundamentally believes that every classroom must be led by an engaging, highly skilled, strategically supported, and effective teacher. We consider a strong teacher to be the number one factor in ensuring scholar achievement. To guarantee a strong teacher in every classroom, Persistence Prep focuses extensive time and resources into the recruitment, development, and retention of strong teachers. Our school design features **27 days of practice-based professional development, weekly observations and feedback meetings, weekly whole staff professional development and four dedicated data analysis days throughout the year.**

2. We believe that college preparation begins in Kindergarten.

To ensure our scholars can reach ambitious goals and be firmly on the path to the four-year college of their choice, we believe that college preparation must begin on the first day of Kindergarten. This preparation is grounded in our **extended day schedule**, providing scholars with 60 more minutes of instructional time per day than the BPS district. Our school calendar will also be longer by five (5) days. College is a consistent part of the language used at Persistence Prep, with **classrooms named after universities, daily college cheers, annual college tours**, etc. We firmly believe in the power of exposing our scholars to the world of opportunities available to them.

3. We believe that a structured, supportive, and joyful school culture, with a focus on leadership development, is foundational.

Persistence Prep firmly believes that school culture is the foundation upon which all else rests. Scholars thrive in structure, and can flourish within a consistent environment in which they know what to expect and what is expected of them. Through implementation of the **Responsive Classroom model**, each classroom promotes **social-emotional learning, structured routines and procedures** to promote efficiency and ensure scholars' physical, emotional, and intellectual safety. Persistence Prep believes that character and leadership can be developed, and that the school is responsible for playing a key role in this development. Our **core values of Community,**

Enthusiasm, Respect, Grit, and Justice will be explicitly taught and reinforced throughout the year by both classroom teachers, as well as our scholar support team. Scholars will also consistently be celebrated for their leadership and growth through **weekly Community Circle Celebrations**.

4. We believe in proactive supports for all learners based upon the purposeful use of assessment and data analysis.

To best educate our scholars, it is imperative that teachers have a constant pulse on what scholars have, and have not yet, mastered. Information will be gained through the purposeful use of both formative and summative assessments. This data will be leveraged to intimately know the strengths and areas for growth for each scholar, and provide them with targeted interventions, supports, and extensions to ensure continued academic achievement and growth. All K-2 classrooms will feature a **two-teacher model** that will allow for increased **small group instruction and daily literacy rotations**. Additionally, our annual calendar features **four dedicated data days** during which our teachers will closely analyze scholar data, allowing them to further target their instruction and meet scholars where they are.

5. We believe that family engagement is vital to scholar achievement.

Persistence Prep acknowledges and welcomes families as key partners in ensuring the academic and character growth of every scholar. This vital relationship proactively begins to be built before a scholar starts school, through **Home Visits** made by members of the school Leadership Team, and is cultivated continuously throughout the year through frequent communication and a variety of events including **Family Orientations, Weekly communication, Monthly University Nights, Monthly Coffee Chats and Family Achievement Conferences**. We view familial involvement as an imperative piece of our school, and will develop and maintain strong relationships with our families.

In 2020-2021 we educated 225 scholars, who came to us from all across the City of Buffalo. The demographics of our student population were 90% African American, 3% Hispanic, 6% Multiracial, and 1% white. 94% of our scholars are economically disadvantaged and 10% of them receive Special Education services. We filled open seats throughout the year, welcoming 3 mid-year enrollees over the course of the year.

In the face of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, our team developed a reentry plan that prioritized scholar & staff safety, time with teachers (live instruction), proactive containment, social-emotional well-being, access for all, and flexibility. We had extensive communication with our staff and families prior to the start of the school year, including a re-opening task force comprised of stakeholders from all major groups (leadership, teachers, board members, parents).

Over the course of the year, we operated under both hybrid and fully virtual models of instruction. We began the year by offering both a hybrid and a fully virtual option for families, with approximately 40% of our student population opting into hybrid. Our hybrid model was one week in-person (M-Th) and one week fully virtual. We believed that this model allowed us to gain momentum with our young scholars and provide a consistent structure for 4 days. We had one class of fifteen 3rd grade scholars, many of whom receive Special Education Services, who attended fully in-person Monday through

Thursday each week. On Fridays, all scholars were virtual, completing required minutes of Lexia and Zearn each week, as well as assigned asynchronous work. Scholars submitted written work via EdLight, a platform that allowed for teachers to see pictures of scholar work and provide immediate feedback. Fridays allowed for teachers to engage in professional development, collaborative planning, time to update the virtual site with videos and assignments, and analyze scholar work and data.

In mid-October, we had a number of COVID-19 cases in our school and shifted to a fully virtual model temporarily. This also coincided with increased positivity rates across our county, and we remained virtual through winter break. Beginning in January, we welcomed scholars back to hybrid instruction, increasing to 55% of scholars attending in-person in some capacity. We offered the option to change instructional modes again in March, and welcomed 75% of our scholars back to hybrid instruction. In January, we also added live intervention groups on Fridays to address targeted gaps in student learning.

For scholars who were fully virtual, we were able to develop a schedule that prioritized live instruction with teachers. Scholars received 3 hours of synchronous instruction each morning in core content areas, as well as small group guided reading and guided math in the afternoons (a minimum of 30 minutes each day). All scholars were provided with an at-home learning kit that included math manipulatives, whiteboards, school supplies, etc. to utilize for learning at home. Each month, teachers prepared written materials and books for each fully virtual scholar. Pick-up of these materials coincided with some type of family outreach (examples include: Drive-thru BBQ, Thanksgiving dinner giveaway, holiday food & gift drive). We also maintained a virtual Google site throughout the year for recorded videos, assignments and resources. Rtl and Special Education services also continued virtually for all scholars.

Throughout the pandemic and uncertainty, our Persistence Prep team worked diligently to provide supports for the social emotional well-being of our staff, scholars and families. We provided regular check-ins with staff members, and provided one self-care early release Friday monthly.

Our supports for scholars were adapted to a virtual format which included: small group lunch bunches, one-on-one counseling sessions or more informal check-ins, community circle celebrations, and a minimum of one fun night per month (themed dance night, SEL check-in, STEAM night, trivia, etc.) These events were critical opportunities for scholars to continue socializing with peers and feeling a sense of belonging in school. Teachers also hosted daily morning meetings and closing circles which further allowed for opportunities to tend to scholar social-emotional needs.

PPA maintained strong communication with families throughout the year, and was able to meet changing needs as they arose. We provided all scholars with a school-issued device and provided hot spots and internet service to any family in need. We were also a food site through Buffalo Public Schools which allowed our families to receive a meal box each week. For families who did not have access to transportation or who had underlying health concerns, we coordinate drop off of this food, supplies and written work throughout the year. We also hosted a number of family events throughout the year that included food bags around the holidays, a holiday pennant program for necessities in December (pajamas, sheets, winter jackets, etc.), uniform giveaway, and at-home learning kits. We worked even more closely with certain families who expressed a greater need due to loss of income, death in the family, etc. and were able to provide more regular support for food, clothing and mental health support.

Despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we made a strong commitment to revamping our literacy program in the 2020-2021 school year. This process was grounded in our desire to fully align our literacy approach with the Science of Reading research, and included frequent

collaboration and training with both The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and the Lavinia Group. More details about our shift can be found in the ELA goals portion of this report.

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														
2017-18														
2018-19	55	47												102
2019-20	54	58	58											170
2020-21	54	56	58	57										225

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Students will be proficient in English Language Arts.

Specific goals aligned to the administration of the NWEA MAP assessment:

- Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent according to the most recent linking study comparing NWEA Growth to New York State standards.
- Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3rd through 8th grade students will be greater than 50.
- Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3rd through 8th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.
- Each year, the median growth percentile of 3rd through 8th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3rd through 8th grade general education students at the school.

BACKGROUND

As previously mentioned, we operated during the year under both hybrid and virtual modes of instruction. We offered hybrid instruction August-early October, were fully virtual mid-October through December, and returned to hybrid in January for the remainder of the year. By the end of March, approximately 75% of our student population was enrolled in our hybrid model, which consisted of an alternating schedule of one week in-person and one week virtual. Both our in-person and virtual instruction featured a 30 minute synchronous foundations block, a 30 minute synchronous Humanities

block and small group guided reading and phonics (minimum of 20 minutes daily). Scholars also had access to Lexia and were required to complete at least 45 minutes per week.

We made two major shifts in our literacy program for the 2020-2021 school year that worked to align our program to the Science of Reading research. The first was the addition of a daily Foundations block that focuses on grade level foundational reading skills for all scholars. This block will be in addition to small group phonics and guided reading groups at each individual scholar's level. We worked with partners at The New Teacher Project (TNP) through their Good to Great training model to develop the scope & sequence for this block, high leverage instructional activities, observation and feedback, as well as scholar work analysis. This foundational skills block aligned to the word recognition piece of Scarborough's Reading Rope.

The second major shift in our literacy program was the implementation of the Insight Humanities Curriculum, developed by the Lavinia Group. This content-rich curriculum supported the Language Comprehension piece of Scarborough's Reading Rope. Prior to our COVID-19 closure, in light of academic results reflection and teacher feedback, our instructional team prioritized the selection and implementation of a consistent ELA curriculum as a priority for the coming school year. We conducted comprehensive research of 5 different curricular programs, and ultimately selected the Insight Humanities program from the Lavinia Group for the following reasons:

- **Strong partner with proven results:** The content and leadership expertise offered by the Lavinia Group makes this curriculum more desirable. The curriculum developers are seasoned urban elementary teachers and leaders with proven strong academic results for students. One of their core areas of focus is teacher intellectual prep which directly aligns with our Year 3 instructional priority. Our teachers and leaders would benefit immensely from the opportunity to partner with such a strong national partner to improve our craft. We know that the quality of teacher in the classroom is the number one factor that will impact the academic outcomes of our scholars and want to continue to invest resources to develop our staff.
- **Academic rigor:** In addition to its cultural relevancy, the curriculum is highly rigorous and aligned to Common Core Standards. There is strong vertical alignment across grade level and integration of subject areas (reading, writing and history) to ensure that scholars build true and lasting background knowledge on a variety of topics. The curriculum also encompasses multiple project opportunities and field trips/field experiences for scholars to put their learning into action in a variety of ways.
- **Focus on Teacher Intellectual Prep:** Each unit is set-up in an easy to digest format with clear objectives, learning targets, core vocabulary and essential knowledge and habits. The units also feature a section for teachers to "Build Their Content Knowledge" with a list of readings, articles, etc. to ensure teachers are fully set-up to teach the content. We will work with our consultants from the Lavinia Group to help teachers develop a process for launching a unit, internalizing a scripted lesson plan, and addressing student misconceptions.
- **Social justice/focus on cultural relevancy:** Now, more than ever before, it is imperative that our instruction is culturally relevant and allows our scholars to see their history and stories represented in our learning. The Insight Humanities team developed this curriculum with this focus in mind, and have encompassed books with protagonists and authors of color, history told from a variety of perspectives, engaging teaching strategies, and frequent opportunities for scholars to demonstrate their learning/ become advocates through project-based learning and presentations.

METHOD

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

Persistence Prep administered the nationally-normed NWEA MAP Assessment in September, January and June. This assessment provided us data on scholar progress across the year and allowed us to compare the progress of our scholars to their peers around the country. Scholars who were enrolled in hybrid instruction took the assessment in school, to the extent possible. We prioritized devices to be sent home for at-home learning early in the year while we awaited a shipment of more devices, and were only able to assess a portion of scholars in Reading in the Fall. All hybrid scholars took both the Winter and Spring MAP administrations. We attempted a virtual administration in September for our fully virtual scholars, but ran into many challenges with device compatibility and parental interference and assistance. In order to gather baseline data for planning for the 2021-2022 school year, we required all fully virtual scholars to come into school for an in-person administration in June.

Persistence Prep also utilized the Strategic Teaching & Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment to progress monitor reading growth over the course of the year. The STEP assessment is a nationally-normed, research-based assessment out of the University of Chicago that monitors developmental reading growth across the K-3 spectrum. The assessment was given 4 times throughout the year (October, January, March, June), with teachers engaging in a data analysis and planning day after the conclusion of each round. The University of Chicago was able to adapt the assessment for virtual administration, allowing us to assess the majority of scholars in all four rounds.

Additionally, teachers utilized frequent formative assessments to monitor scholar progress, and also administered a phonics skills check in January to better inform our intervention groups for the remainder of the year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Due to the limited number of scholars who were able to take the NWEA MAP assessment throughout the year, it is difficult to fully and validly analyze our results. Our most reliable growth data took place between the Winter 2021 and Spring 2021 assessment windows, during which our scholars, especially those with disabilities, exhibited strong levels of growth. We had low levels of proficient scholars as measured by the year end RIT score, but had many scholars within close range of proficiency. With more consistent administration and familiarity with the test format, as well as consistent implementation of our curriculum, we believe we will see stronger scores and rapid growth in the 2021-2022 school year.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

NWEA

2020-21 NWEA MAP [ELA/Mathematics] Assessment End of Year Results

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 rd through 8 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	25 *Fall to Spring	33	No
			27 *Winter to Spring	50	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.	Low initial achievers	55	21 *Fall to Spring	33	No
			22 *Winter to Spring	51.5	No
Measure 3: Each year, the median growth percentile of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities	33 *Fall to Spring	3	69	Yes
			50 *Winter to Spring	5	68
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 8 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent according to the most recent linking study comparing NWEA Growth to New York State standards.	2+ students	75%	52	15%	No

End of Year Performance on 2020-21 NWEA MAP ELA Assessment By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
2	2%	55	3%	47
3	15%	52	15%	52
All	8%	107	9%	99

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 NWEA MAP ELA Assessment By All Students

Grades	Median Growth Percentile	Number Tested (in both Fall & Spring)	Percent with Valid Fall & Spring scores who Met Projected Growth	Median Growth Percentile	Number Tested (in both Winter & Spring)	Percent with Valid Winter & Spring scores who Met Projected Growth
K	No data	0	N/A Fall administration not completed	33	25	40%
1		0		52	21	62%
2		0		35	33	36%
3	33	25	40%	50	27	52%
All		25	40%		106	46%

STEP Assessment Data

June 2021 Administration- STEP Level of scholars at each grade level:

KINDERGARTEN STEP ASSESSMENT DATA: PERCENT DEMONSTRATING MASTERY AT EACH STEP LEVEL (JUNE 2021)							
	BPR	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
BC (K)	22% (6)	19% (5)	22% (6)	33% (9)	0% (0)	4% (1)	0% (0)
HOWARD (K)	7% (2)	19% (5)	15% (4)	30% (8)	19% (5)	7% (2)	4% (1)
K TOTAL	15% (8)	19% (10)	19% (10)	32% (17)	9% (5)	6% (3)	2% (1)

STEP ASSESSMENT DATA: PERCENT DEMONSTRATING MASTERY AT EACH STEP LEVEL (JUNE 2021)									
	BPR	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7
CORNELL (1 ST)	0%	0%	3% (1)	40% (12)	13% (4)	13% (4)	17% (5)	0% (0)	13% (4)
UB (1 ST)	0%	0%	4% (1)	19% (5)	23% (6)	15% (4)	27% (7)	8% (2)	4% (1)
1 ST TOTAL	0%	0%	4% (2)	30% (17)	18% (10)	14% (8)	21% (12)	4% (2)	9% (5)

STEP ASSESSMENT DATA: PERCENT DEMONSTRATING MASTERY AT EACH STEP LEVEL (JANUARY 2021)											
	BPR	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9
SPELHOUSE (2 ND)				3% (1)	7% (2)	17% (5)	21% (6)	21% (6)	17% (5)	10% (3)	3% (1)
CANISIUS (2 ND)				0% (0)	10% (3)	7% (2)	35% (10)	3% (1)	45% (13)	0% (0)	0% (0)
2 ND TOTAL				2% (1)	9% (5)	12% (7)	28% (16)	12% (7)	31% (18)	5% (3)	2% (1)

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

STEP ASSESSMENT DATA: PERCENT DEMONSTRATING MASTERY AT EACH STEP LEVEL (JUNE 2021)

	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9	STEP 10	STEP 11	STEP 12
Buff State 3 rd Grade			0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	11% (2)	26% (5)	26% (5)	11% (2)	11% (2)	0% (0)	16% (3)	0% (0)
Hampton 3 rd Grade			0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (1)	5% (1)	15% (3)	35% (7)	5% (1)	5% (1)	20% (4)	10% (2)	0% (0)
Stanford 3 rd Grade (ICT)			11% (2)	0% (0)	6% (1)	28% (5)	33% (6)	17% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
3 rd TOTAL	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (2)	0% (0)	4% (2)	14% (8)	25% (14)	26% (15)	5% (3)	5% (3)	9% (5)	9% (5)	0% (0)

GROWTH ANALYSIS (2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR)

	NO GROWTH	1 STEP GROWTH	2 STEPS GROWTH	3 STEPS GROWTH	3+ STEPS GROWTH
HOWARD	11% (3)	33% (9)	26% (7)	15% (4)	15% (4)
BOSTON COLLEGE	33% (9)	19% (5)	22% (6)	26% (7)	0% (0)
KINDERGARTEN TOTAL	22% (12)	26% (14)	24% (13)	20% (11)	7% (4)
UB	15% (4)	15% (4)	31% (8)	31% (8)	8% (2)
CORNELL	17% (5)	27% (8)	23% (7)	23% (7)	10% (3)
FIRST GRADE TOTAL	16% (9)	21% (12)	27% (15)	27% (15)	9% (5)
SPELHOUSE	3% (1)	10% (3)	40% (11)	34% (10)	14% (4)
CANISIUS	3% (1)	14% (4)	41% (12)	24% (7)	17% (5)
SECOND GRADE TOTAL	3% (2)	12% (7)	40% (23)	29% (17)	16% (9)
STANFORD	6% (1)	22% (4)	39% (7)	28% (5)	6% (1)
HAMPTON	0% (0)	30% (6)	25% (5)	35% (7)	10% (2)
BUFF STATE	0% (0)	16% (3)	32% (6)	32% (6)	21% (4)
THIRD GRADE TOTAL	2% (1)	23% (13)	32% (18)	32% (18)	12% (7)
SCHOOL TOTAL	11% (24)	20% (46)	31% (69)	27% (61)	11% (25)

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Full analysis of our MAP data this year is difficult to the fact that we do not have scores from all three windows for the majority of our scholars. Our Fall administration was largely impacted by our delayed delivery of compatible devices and the large number of scholars who were learning virtually at that point in the year. By the time we had enough devices to administer the assessment, we had to make a shift to fully virtual instruction in light of multiple positive cases in our school community. This limited the number of scholars for whom we have Fall assessment scores. While we did attempt a virtual administration, we found that many devices were not compatible with the NWEA MAP site, and that many families signed off of Zoom and assisted their child with the assessment. We made direct outreach to these families, but had difficulty in having scholars retake the assessment independently. To ensure we had accurate data for all scholars headed into next school year, all fully virtual scholars were required to come to the school for the Spring EOY assessment.

The STEP assessment was administered one-on-one both virtually and in-person. We had more success in ensuring scholars independently completed this assessment, but ran into a few audio hurdles with our fully virtual scholars. We also struggled to have our persistently truant virtual scholars log on with fidelity during their assigned testing windows.

Since our teachers taught both virtually and in-person in our model, the length of time given to our Foundations and Humanities blocks had to be shortened. While teachers worked diligently to preserve the core instructional activities, opportunities for scholar practice and application were often cut shorter than we would have liked. In the 2021-2022 school year, we will return to a full 40 minute Foundations block and 85 minute Humanities block.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Due to the disruption to learning in the 2020-2021 school year, we have not yet been able to fully analyze the impact of our implementation of the Insight Humanities curriculum and Foundational Reading skills block. In our more formative assessment data, we have seen ELA data strengthen, especially for scholars who were able to learn in person for a portion of time. We believe that our weaker NWEA MAP data is due to time restrictions on synchronous instruction that limited scholar practice and opportunities to read aloud and practice decoding. We firmly believe we have made the correct shifts in our literacy program and will continue to work to fully align to the Science of Reading. The utilization of the DIBELS 8 and mClass intervention suite in the coming year will offer more frequent checkpoints for us to pause and assess the impact of our ELA program, adjusting course where needed.

ACTION PLAN

Based on both our NWEA MAP and STEP data from the 2020-2021 school year, we know that raising academic achievement is our number one priority for the year ahead. Our School Leadership Team has spent the 2021 Summer analyzing all of our academic data, reflecting on our practice, and identifying key areas of improvement. We have also attended many workshops on COVID learning loss (TNTP and RELAY, among others) and the critical need for academic acceleration in the year(s) ahead, with specific emphasis on ensuring that all scholars have access to grade-level content, as well as targeted supports to close their demonstrated gaps.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Our Head of School has developed a three-year strategy to fully align all aspects of PPA’s literacy program to the Science of Reading research. This strategy includes shifts in core instruction and intervention instruction, the purchase of new, high-quality curricular materials, a new assessment system and the necessary outside training for our team. This plan is a living document that will continue to be refined in collaboration with our partners at TNTP, the Lavinia Group, as well as based on demonstrated staff and student need.

Among many of the steps we are taking (more details provided in the analysis table below) is the implementation of a stronger diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring tool. Since our founding, we have largely relied upon the STEP assessment as our benchmark for literacy, but feel it no longer aligns to our commitment of grounding our literacy program in the Science of Reading research, and does not provide teachers with enough actionable data to inform their instruction. To that end, we will be purchasing and implementing Amplify’s mClass assessment system (DIBELS 8) and mClass intervention. Both of these tools will provide a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and areas for growth of each scholar, as well as provide teachers with support on grouping scholars and instructional activities that will target prioritized skills. The implementation of this assessment program was a direct recommendation from our consultants at TNTP who spent the past year working with our school and teachers around the implementation of our Foundational Skills block.

Another key action step is the creation of a daily acceleration block for all scholars. This time will be consistent across grades K-2 and grades 3-4 to allow for the fluid movement of scholars to get the instruction that they need at that time. These blocks will be an “all hands on deck” time of the day with up to 22 people providing targeted small group instruction at one time. Groups will be capped at no more than 5 scholars to ensure ample opportunity for scholar practice and participation. Teachers will largely utilize lessons from the mClass suite and Lexia CORE 5’s resource hub to deliver this small group instruction.

TOP LINE ANALYSIS	ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS	BOARD INVOLVEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2021 administration will be telling as test formats are once again consistent and all components are scored • Need for mindset shift towards learning acceleration- scholars, particularly those in person, were receiving too much remediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space in Summer 2021 PD to analyze data and dive into successes and problems of practice that held us back • Shift for 21-22 SY to develop systems that invest scholars in their academic learning and growth • Implementation of Amplify mClass screener (DIBELS 8), instructional grouping and activities, as well as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2021 PD for staff/ leadership around addressing learning loss and accelerating learning • Utilization of ESSER funding to purchase Amplify mClass and

<p>that held them back from access to grade level material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth is happening with our highest need scholars (2nd & 3rd grade) with only 3 scholars not demonstrating growth (all extreme attendance concerns) • 21-22 priority around working with teachers to better progress monitor between STEP rounds and connect instructional practices to what they are seeing in the data 	<p>mClass Intervention suite to support our most striving readers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of additional assessments to complement/replace STEP and better align to Science of Reading; working with ANet to create assessment vision and comprehensive approach • Creation of daily acceleration block across grade levels for scholars to “get what they need” academically and acquire the pre-requisite knowledge to access grade level content • Schoolwide trainings on learning acceleration, how to structure and plan an intervention, etc. (including training City Year staff) • Empowering families with strategies to understand their child’s data and work with child at home to support specific areas of growth 	<p>mClass intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for 3 year strategic plan around Science of Reading alignment
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GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will be proficient in Mathematics.

Specific goals aligned to the administration of the NWEA MAP assessment:

- Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent according to the most recent linking study comparing NWEA Growth to New York State standards.
- Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3rd through 8th grade students will be greater than 50.
- Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3rd through 8th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.

- Each year, the median growth percentile of 3rd through 8th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3rd through 8th grade general education students at the school.

BACKGROUND

As previously mentioned, we operated during the year under both hybrid and virtual modes of instruction. We offered hybrid instruction August-early October, were fully virtual mid-October through December, and returned to hybrid in January for the remainder of the year. By the end of March, approximately 75% of our student population was enrolled in our hybrid model, which consisted of an alternating schedule of one week in-person and one week virtual. Both our in-person and virtual instruction featured a 30 minute synchronous Mathematics block, a 30 minute synchronous Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) block and small group guided math (minimum of 20 minutes daily). Scholars also had access to Zearn and were required to complete at least 45 minutes per week.

For our direct instruction, we implemented the Everyday Mathematics Curriculum across K-2, and the EngageNY modules in grade 3 (we will continue to use the modules as we grow towards 8th grade). Our Cognitively Guided Instruction scope and sequence was guided by the book *Children's Mathematics: Cognitively Guided Instruction* (Carpenter, Fennema, Franke, Levi, Empson 2015). Our CGI blocks allowed scholars dedicated time to engage with varying types of story problems and solve in a way that makes sense to them. This block also featured a mathematical discourse during which scholars were able to explain their thinking to their peers.

Given the challenges of the COVID-19 landscape, our teachers spent a lot of time collaboration as a Math department to understand the vertical alignment of standards, necessary pre-requisites to access grade level content, and the priority standards for their respective grade levels. Teachers utilized Achieve the Core's coherence map and priority instruction document, as well as guidance from ANet to inform their instructional decisions and pace.

METHOD

In addition to regular exit tickets and unit assessments, Persistence Prep utilized the Summary Review assessments provided by Everyday Mathematics (every other unit), as well as the nationally-normed NWEA MAP assessment to track progress across the year. Scholars who attended school hybrid were able to take assessments on paper, while virtual scholars completed assessments through the PearDeck platform. Teachers utilized staff data days and coaching meetings to analyze this data, reflect on instructional practices, and tweak instruction. We also employed a fulltime RtI Mathematics teacher who provided Tier 2 services to approximately 20% of scholars across the year.

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Due to the limited number of scholars who were able to take the NWEA MAP assessment throughout the year, it is difficult to fully and validly analyze our results. Our most reliable growth data took place between the Winter 2021 and Spring 2021 assessment windows, during which our scholars, especially those with disabilities, exhibited strong levels of growth. We had low levels of proficient scholars as measured by the year end RIT score, but had many scholars within close range of proficiency. With more consistent administration and familiarity with the test format, as well as consistent implementation of our curriculum, we believe we will see stronger scores and rapid growth in the 2021-2022 school year.

NWEA

2020-21 NWEA MAP Mathematics Assessment End of Year Results					
Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 rd through 8 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	25 *Winter to Spring	60	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.	Low initial achievers	55	22 *Winter to Spring	58	Yes
Measure 3: Each year, the median growth percentile of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities	60	4 *only 4 3 rd graders with disabilities had valid winter & spring scores	69	Yes
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 8 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the RIT score proficiency equivalent according to the most recent linking study comparing NWEA Growth to New York State standards.	2+ students	75%	52	4%	No

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

End of Year Performance on 2020-21 NWEA MAP Mathematics Assessment By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient ¹	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
K				
1				
2	4%	50	5%	43
3	4%	52	4%	51
All	4%	102	4.5%	94

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 NWEA MAP Mathematics Assessment By All Students

Grades	Median Growth Percentile *Winter to Spring	Number Tested	Percent with Valid Fall & Spring scores who Met Projected Growth	Percent with Valid Winter & Spring scores who Met Projected Growth
K	47	20	N/A (no Fall Scores for Math)	53%
1	80	17		76%
2	40	22		45%
3	60	25		64%
All		84		59%

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Full analysis of our MAP data this year is difficult to the fact that we do not have scores from all three windows for the majority of our scholars. Our Fall administration was largely impacted by our delayed delivery of compatible devices and the large number of scholars who were learning virtually at that point in the year. By the time we had enough devices to administer the assessment, we had to make a shift to fully virtual instruction in light of multiple positive cases in our school community. This limited the number of scholars for whom we have Fall assessment scores. While we did attempt a virtual administration, we found that many devices were not compatible with the NWEA MAP site, and that many families signed off of Zoom and assisted their child with the assessment. We made direct outreach to these families, but had difficulty in having scholars retake the assessment independently. To ensure we had accurate data for all scholars headed into next school year, all fully virtual scholars were required to come to the school for the Spring EOY assessment.

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.

Since our teachers taught both virtually and in-person in our model, the length of time given to our Mathematics blocks had to be shortened. While teachers worked diligently to preserve the core instructional activities, opportunities for scholar practice and application were often cut shorter than we would have liked. In the 2021-2022 school year, we will return to a full 60 minute Math block, 15 minutes of fluency, 30 minutes of CGI and a daily acceleration block (minimum of 20 minutes in Math small group).

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Due to the disruption to learning in both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, we have not yet been able to fully analyze the impact of our implementation of the Everyday Mathematics and EngageNY curriculums. In our more formative assessment data and on unit exams, we have seen Math data strengthen, especially for scholars who were able to learn in person for a portion of time. We believe that our weaker NWEA MAP data is due to time restrictions on synchronous instruction that limited scholar practice and application of concepts. We saw the strongest growth data in our first grade scholars, a group of students who began with the Everyday Mathematics curriculum beginning in Kindergarten. This leads us to believe that, when we are able to teach with fidelity, we will continue to see growth and higher levels of achievement in Mathematics.

ACTION PLAN

Based on both our NWEA MAP data from the 2020-2021 school year, we know that raising academic achievement is our number one priority for the year ahead. Our School Leadership Team has spent the 2021 Summer analyzing all of our academic data, reflecting on our practice, and identifying key areas of improvement. We have also attended many workshops on COVID learning loss (TNTP and RELAY, among others) and the critical need for academic acceleration in the year(s) ahead, with specific emphasis on ensuring that all scholars have access to grade-level content, as well as targeted supports to close their demonstrated gaps.

For the 2021-2021 school year, we will be bringing back an outside consultant, Debra Fuentes, for comprehensive CGI training and support. This support will include a CGI 101 training for all new team members, and a booster course for all returning staff, as well as support around key instructional activities of counting, money and array jars. We also sent our 3rd and 4th grade teachers to EngageNY workshops, through Great Minds, around how to customize the modules to your student needs, work through word problems, build fluency, and prioritize the core standards of the grade level. Our entire math staff also completed the Build Math Minds number sense course to better understand the trajectory of developing number sense and key instructional activities to support this development (i.e. use of rekenreks, subitizing with quick look cards, etc.)

Our Math teachers will continue to have collaborative planning time as grade level teams and a department as a whole, and will be coached by our new Director of Curriculum & Instruction. Each grade level will meet for 3 hours each week to dive into scholar work analysis, analyze unit and summative assessment data, and work to develop just-in-time interventions for our scholars for upcoming units (utilizing Achieve the Core's Coherence Map to understand vertical alignment of standards). As previously mentioned, we will have a daily Acceleration block for all grade levels that will also include targeted Math small groups. Teachers will utilize small group lesson plans from the Zearn math

curriculum to support these groups. All scholars will also have a Zearn account and will be required to complete at least 45 minutes of instruction each week. Scholars exhibiting additional needs will work with our dedicated Rtl Mathematics teacher in small group pull-out sessions. She utilizes the Bridges Intervention Curriculum to support this instruction.

In order to collect data and monitor progress throughout the year, teachers will use the assessments provided in both the Everyday Mathematics and EngageNY curricula. Everyday Mathematics also provides quarterly summative review assessments that offer spiral review and mastery progression across the year. In addition to this assessment data, teachers will monitor Zearn usage and mastery and administer daily exit tickets. In the event that we shift to virtual instruction, teachers will utilize PearDeck to administer assessments and EdLight to collect authentic student work.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will be proficient in Science.

BACKGROUND

Persistence Prep utilized the FOSS Curriculum to support our Science instruction in the 2020-2021 school year. Scholars participated in a STEAM class every other day (in-person/hybrid) and at least once per week virtually. Scholars also experienced Science integration across other content areas.

METHOD

For the 2020-2021 school year, progress in Science was assessed through exit tickets, informal class assessments and unit projects/explorations. In the 2021-2022 school year we will begin to utilize the nationally-normed NWEA MAP Science assessment to further assess progress and mastery in grades 3 and 4.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Due to the multiple changes in instructional mode throughout the year, we do not have concrete growth or absolute data to share as it relates specifically to Science instruction. Anecdotally, the addition of a dedicated STEAM class increased scholar understanding and mastery of the Next Generation Science Standards, and increased collaboration and integration as our STEAM teacher worked closely with classroom teachers to design complementary lessons. Collecting valid and reliable scholar data in Science is a priority for the 2021-2022 school year.

ACTION PLAN

In the 2021-2022 school year, we will be making a curricular change in Science to Amplify Science. We came to this decision after extensive research, discussion with other school leaders, and piloting

various modules with our current scholars. We have hired a full-time Science teacher who will teach a 45-minute daily Science class to all 3rd and 4th grade classes and STEAM enrichment weekly to all K-2 scholars. We will also continue working with teachers on integrating Science across content areas, especially in the area of Mathematics.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Goal 4: 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

Persistence Prep’s Accountability status was determined using a self-assessment process because the school had an insufficient number of continuously enrolled students to assign a Composite Performance.

Accountability Status by Year

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

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Goal 5: Enrollment

Persistence Prep is fully enrolled, with high levels of attendance and re-enrollment.

Goal 5: Absolute Measure

- The school will meet projected enrollment targets, and will maintain at least 90% of the is enrollment over the course of the year.
- Of the students who successfully complete the year, 90% will reenroll for the following year.
- Each year, the school's chronic absenteeism rate will be lower than that of the local district.

METHOD

Persistence Prep utilizes the SchoolRunner SIS to track daily attendance. Teachers take attendance each morning during breakfast, the Office Manager verifies and updates as tardy scholars arrive and then contacts families of any absent scholars. SchoolRunner provides a daily dashboard of attendance data for analysis. Families for whom attendance was a problem attended a meeting with our Head of School or Dean of Culture to develop an attendance plan. As needed, the Head of School completed a home visit to stress the importance of school attendance.

RESULTS

Reenrollment

2019-20 Student Retention Rate

2019-20 Enrollment	Number of Students Who Graduated in 2019-20	Number of Students Who Returned in 2019-20	Retention Rate= 2020-21 Re-enrollment ÷ (2019-20 Enrollment – Graduates)
170	0	165	97%

While this report does not encompass our 2021-2022 school data, we have begun the year with 219 of 225 scholars returning to Persistence Prep, for a continued reenrollment rate of 97%.

Attendance

Attendance, especially in the landscape of COVID-19, remains a key area of focus for our school team.

2020-21 Attendance

Grade	Average Daily Attendance Rate
K	81%
1	85%
2	85%
3	88%
4	n/a
5	n/a
6	n/a
7	n/a
8	n/a
Overall	85%

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The above table captures the attendance rates for the 2020-2021 school year. Attendance was taken once for scholars on in-person days, and three times for virtual scholars (ELA, Math, Afternoon Small Groups). To be considered fully present, scholars needed to be present at all synchronous classes.

EVALUATION

While we predict that we did meet our goal of maintaining a persistently truant rate lower than that of the district, we have continued to flag improvement in our attendance rate as a continued priority for the 2020-2021 school year. Our attendance team is beginning the school year with a caseload of 5 families each who have been chronically truant over the last two years, with specific emphasis on those who had inconsistent virtual attendance. We also offered summer learning academy this year, and prioritized scholars with poor attendance for this in-person summer opportunity. PPA staff members will proactively work with these identified families to develop and implement attendance improvement plans.

While we are preparing for a 5-day, fully in-person school schedule, we are also prepared for cases of quarantine of a small group of students and/or a full transition back to virtual instruction. We have a class set of devices set aside and programmed to immediately be signed out in the event of a positive case and mandated quarantine. We are also purchasing additional devices with our ESSER funding to maintain our status as a 1:1 technology school.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Year	Average Daily Attendance Rate
2018-19	92%
2019-20	93% *up until COVID closure
2020-21	85%