



**Sisulu-Walker Charter School
of Harlem**

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY
PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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INTRODUCTION

Principal Michelle Haynes prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	committees (e.g. finance, executive)
Martez Moore	Chair	Finance, Real Estate, and Grievance
Minnie Goka	Vice Chair	Academic and Grievance
Jeremy Harris	Trustee	Finance and Governance and Legal Affairs
Monique Ware	Trustee	Development
Rita Hanes	Trustee	Academic and Development
Erika Ewing	Trustee	Academic and Development
Joseph Drayton	Trustee	Finance and Grievance

Michelle Haynes has served as Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem principal since 2011.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Established in 1999, The Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem, New York State's first charter school, is named for two great human rights leaders, Walter Sisulu and Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, and their wives. Walter Sisulu, former Secretary General of the African National Congress, worked closely with Nelson Mandela and was at the forefront of the struggle against South African apartheid for over five decades. Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, a renowned pastor, author, lecturer, and advocate for human rights, served as the Chief of Staff to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during critically important years of the American Civil Rights Movement.

The mission of the school is to prepare K-5 students living in and around Central Harlem for matriculation to outstanding public, private and parochial middle and high schools by nurturing their intellectual, emotional, artistic and social development. The school is accomplishing this by offering a rigorous and challenging academic curricula taught by a highly prepared and committed cadre of professional educators. Beginning in kindergarten, we prepare our students for college and a lifetime of achievement, honor and service. Sisulu-Walker is achieving this in a small and supportive learning environment that sets high expectations for all of our students and encourages strong parental and community involvement.

Despite the devastating effect that COVID-19 has had on our community, SWCS, through the concerted effort of our academic and operational teams, was able to meet the educational needs of our students and families. From September 14th-18th we operated under a remote learning model. In-person instruction commenced on September 21st. Using grant funds from multiple sources, as well as funds from our operational budget, SWCS was able to buy a new device for each student for the 2020-2021 academic year. To ensure that there were no issues with electronic devices, each week a technician came to address all performance deficiencies.

We worked with families to ensure that they had access to the free internet which local providers offered to students in response to COVID-19. For students who did not have access to free internet services, we provided hot spots and internet plans. To further address the digital divide, SWCS shifted to paperless instruction with the goal of reducing our reliance on printed materials by at least 75%. This provided students with additional opportunities to become proficient users of different computer programs.

In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker provided in person learning for all but one week. During this time the school practiced federal, state, and local safety protocols to ensure our students, their families, and members of the school's staff felt comfortable.

During the 2020-21 academic year, SWCS' English Language Arts period was 180 minutes. 45 minutes for intervention was built into the existing block. We continued to utilize the 45-minute guided reading period to divide students into homogenous groups for targeted skills-based instruction. In addition, the 45 minutes allocated to textual analysis in grades 3-5 was used to provide targeted skills-based instruction based on the results of the *Beginning of Year Assessment* that was given in each grade. We extended the ELA block by 15 minutes to add to

the preexisting 30-minute period allocated for writing, bringing the total time allocated for literacy to 180 minutes each day. In grades K-2, the 45 minutes previously allocated to morning routines and phonics instruction was used to re-teach foundational concepts from the previous grade.

45 minutes per day was allocated to content literacy instruction. Teachers alternated between social studies and science topics with an emphasis on interdisciplinary learning opportunities. In addition, the textual analysis period for grades 3-5 emphasized nonfiction texts that built background knowledge on topics related to novels students read.

Previously, students had special area classes for 90 minutes per day and 60 minutes for lunch and cooperative play. We restructured this time to include additional opportunities for students to engage in computer-based instruction to make up for lost instructional time.

- 45 minutes for lunch (in class to limit the amount of contact that students had with other students throughout the day).
- 45 minutes of physical education. Each class had 45 minutes of physical activity. It was critical that students engaged in some form of physical activity each school day because they were confined to their classrooms.
- 60 minutes of computer-based instruction occurred at the end of each day whether students were in-person or remote (some families opted for remote only instruction). 30 minutes was allocated for English Language Arts and 30 minutes was allocated for Mathematics instruction. Teachers assigned specific tasks for students to complete on MobyMax and/or created tasks for students to complete using Google Classroom.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2016-17	39	32	26	32	54	42	225
2017-18	46	37	35	26	28	48	220
2018-19	30	52	40	40	29	29	220
2019-20	29	31	44	41	36	29	210
2020-21	28	29	32	44	31	38	199

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students at the school will become proficient in reading and writing of the English language.

BACKGROUND

At SWCS, our mantra is “Literacy is Everything and Everywhere.” We believe that children learn to read and write by reading and writing daily for information and enjoyment. Students are required to read books on or above their independent reading level across content areas and demonstrate mastery of all content through writing. Writing is embedded across the curriculum through reading, social studies, science and mathematics. As a result, literacy is taught across the curriculum using a comprehensive balanced literacy approach. Balanced Literacy is an all-inclusive framework that encompasses all the research-based best practices for literacy instruction as outlined by the National Reading Panel (2000). This literacy model comprises two distinct elements. Students learn to read during the traditional literacy block and read to learn during the social studies and science blocks. Additionally, opportunities for reading or being read to are integrated into the mathematics block. The gradual release method is employed to ensure student mastery of concepts as well as a workshop model. The Literacy Block is 180 minutes. The block is organized into four forty-five-minute periods. The chart below illustrates the breakdown of each block by grade level.

Block	K-2	3-5
ELA I	Vocabulary/Read-aloud	Guided Reading
ELA II	Word Work/Writing	Vocabulary/Novel
ELA III	Guided Reading	Text Analysis/Writing
ELA IV	Writing	Writing

Writing is anchored in the reading process as students write about what they read and use mentor texts that are read to write in a variety of genres. Opportunities for independent reading and writing are incorporated in the literacy framework during the guided reading/ small group instructional period; when students are not working with a teacher, they engage in independent reading and writing. The framework for instruction for social studies and science instruction includes opportunities for students to develop and refine questioning skills, increase content vocabulary, and read and respond to nonfiction texts.

The literacy curriculum is organized into thematic units that include wide reading of prose and poetry that encompasses reading during the traditional literacy period as well as during the social studies and science blocks. Thematic units include an emphasis on balancing fiction and nonfiction texts. All unit plans are standards based and aligned to the New York State Next Generation Standards.

The Principal and an Instructional Coach (former Assistant Principal) provided coaching to teachers. Teachers were placed in coaching cycles based on the number of years of experience that they have. The cycles were short in duration to start to cycle through all teachers early in the year since teaching in a hybrid format was new to all teachers and many teachers were new to the grade level they taught this year (teachers looped with their classes in order to offer social and emotional support to students and families and to make the transition back to school smoother).

Coaching included the analysis of videos for in-person instruction and observing teachers during remote instruction by joining Zoom sessions. After the first coaching cycle, teachers that required additional support were placed on 6-week coaching cycles for the remainder of the year. Coaching meetings were conducted on Fridays. Written feedback was given to teachers on the day that observations occur.

Cycle I

Cohort	Years of Experience	Timeframe
A	2 years or less	September 14th-October 2nd
B	3-5 years	October 5th -October 23rd
C	5+years	October 26th-November 13th

All teachers regardless of the cohort they were in received ongoing feedback and support. Within the first month of school, all teachers were required to record a lesson for video analysis.

METHOD

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

Sisulu-Walker administers *Rally Benchmark Assessments* that are combined with previously released NYS questions in grades 3-5 and teacher generated assessments in grades K-2. Performance level assessments are administered four times a year: at the beginning of the school year, in the winter, in the spring, and at the end of the year.

Interim Assessments in all grades measure reading, writing, and language standards. Tests in grades 3-5 use multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response questions and all questions are based on close reading of informational and literary texts, including paired texts.

Interim Assessments in grades 3-5 follow the *NYS Testing Blueprint* (see table below) and cover all content that students are supposed to master by the end of the year beginning with the first exam. The exam consists of 6-8 fictional and informational passages. In grades K-2, teachers only include content that has been taught to date. In addition, the exams measure foundational reading skills. K-1 teachers allocate 90 minutes for testing each day. To get a true measure of how students perform in grades 2-5, we mimic NYS testing conditions and as a result, tests are untimed (students must be actively working the entire time). The exams are administered over two consecutive days in all grades. Additionally, in all grades we adhere to IEP and 504 accommodations when administering tests.

Components	Third	Fourth	Fifth
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Passages	6	7	8
Multiple-Choice Questions	24	24	35
Short Response Questions	6	6	6
Extended Response Questions	1	1	1

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Percentage of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Students Achieving Proficiency on the School's English Language Arts Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	N/A	37%	71%	30%	37%
1	61%	82%	46%	46%	43%
2	61%	77%	56%	50%	46%
3	18%	56%	27%	33%	19%
4	3%	44%	41%	17%	11%
5	12%	58%	7%	28%	7%

In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker's third and fourth grades had a higher percentage of students achieving proficiency on the end of the year English language arts assessment when compared to the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the baseline assessment. The percentage of third grade students achieving proficiency grew by one percentage point, while in fourth grade the percentage of students achieving proficiency grew by eight points. The school's first, second, and fifth grade experienced a decline in the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the school's English language arts assessment exam between the baseline assessment and the end of year assessment. However, these declines are consistent with reports showing a decline in the proficiency among the student populations the school serves on English language arts assessments in the year and a half of learning affected by COVID-19. *See, e.g., Megan Kuhfeld, et al., Learning During COVID-19: Initial Findings on Students' Reading and Math Achievement and Growth, November 2020, available at <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/11/Collaborative-brief-Learning-during-COVID-19.NOV2020.pdf> (finding that declines in English language arts scores were "concentrated disproportionately among Hispanic and Black students . . .").*

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Median Raw Score on the School's English Language Arts Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY

K	N/A	30%	85%	67.5%	65%
1	87%	85%	72%	73%	71%
2	76%	75%	75%	78%	68%
3	52.5%	61%	65%	68%	61.5%
4	56%	44%	65%	60%	50%
5	44%	60%	36.5%	53%	51%

The chart above shows the median raw score for each assessment exam Sisulu-Walker administered during the 2020-21 school year. Three of the school's grades, kindergarten, third, and fifth had an increase in the median raw score between the first assessment administered and the end of year assessment. Although the fourth grade's baseline assessment median raw score was higher than the end of year assessment, the end of year median raw score was a six-percentage point improvement over the fourth grade's lowest median raw score, which occurred on the fall assessment.

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem's Special Education Students' Median Raw Score on the School's English Language Arts Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	N/A	15%	100%	70%	50%
1	80%	65%	68%	48%	50%
2	53%	80%	52.5%	78.5%	64%
3	44%	56%	30%	52.5%	64%
4	28%	28%	45%	35%	37.5%
5	44%	30.5%	30%	32.5%	39%

Sisulu-Walker's special education students in kindergarten, second grade, third grade, and fourth grade all experienced an increase in the median raw score on the English language arts assessment between the first administered exam and the end of year exam. The median raw score in kindergarten improved 35-percentage points between the fall English language arts assessment and the end of year assessment. In the second, third, and fourth grade, the median raw score improved 11, 20, 9.5 percentage points respectively between the baseline English language arts assessment and the end of year assessment. Although the first and fifth grade did not experience an increase in the median raw score between the baseline and end of year English language arts assessment, the median raw score on the end of year assessment was an improvement from each grade's lowest median raw score during the school year; a two-percentage point increase in the first grade and a nine-percentage point increase in the fifth grade.

Levels of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem on the End of Year English Language Arts Exam Who Tested at Level One on the Baseline Exam						
Grade	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Not Tested
1	2	0	2	0	0	0
2	3	0	0	2	0	1

3	16	3	8	1	0	4
4	13	5	3	1	0	4
5	22	10	5	1	3	3

Among students testing at level one on the English language arts baseline assessment, a significant number were able to increase their achievement level by the end of year assessment exam. In the first grade, both students who tested at level one had moved up to level two by the end of the year assessment. Similarly, in the second grade, two of the students who previously tested at level one moved up to level three by the end of year assessment and the third second grade student who tested at level one on the baseline did not take the end of year assessment.

Only three of the 16 third grade students testing at level one on the baseline exam remained at that level on the end of year exam, with eight students rising to level two, one raising to level three, and four not taking the end of year exam. Both the fourth and fifth grade had a significant number of students test out of level one between the baseline and end of year assessment exam.

Number of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Testing at Each Performance Level on the English Language Arts Exam from the Benchmark Assessment Compared to the End of Year Assessment												
Grade	BOY 1	EOY 1	Diff.	BOY 2	EOY 2	Diff.	BOY 3	EOY 3	Diff.	BOY 4	EOY 4	Diff.
1	2	6	+4	9	9	0	2	6	+4	15	6	-9
2	3	6	+3	7	7	0	11	9	-2	4	2	-2
3	16	10	-6	15	20	5	5	4	-1	2	3	+1
4	13	10	-3	16	14	-2	0	2	-2	1	1	0
5	22	15	-7	8	10	+2	4	2	-2	0	5	+5

The chart above shows the number of students testing at each level on the beginning of the year English language arts baseline assessment compared to the end of year assessment (the green boxes show positive results – a decline in the overall number of students testing a level one and maintaining or increasing the number of students testing at level 2 and above – and the red boxes show negative results – an increase in students testing at level one and a decrease in the number of students testing at levels two through four). The school’s third, fourth, and fifth grades all experienced a decline in the number of students testing at level one between the baseline and end of year assessment. The most impressive gains occurred in the fifth grade, where the number of students testing at level 4, the highest assessment level, increased from zero to five students between the baseline and end of year assessment. Similarly impressive was the increase in first grade students performing at level 3, where there was a four-student increase between the baseline and end of year assessments.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Percentage of Students Enrolled In At least Their Second Year at Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Testing at Proficiency on the English Language Arts Assessment Exam

Grade	2018-19				2019-20				2020-21			
	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	82.1%	69.0%	72.0%	53.3%	58.6%	60.0%	69.0%	70.4%	37%	71%	30%	37%
1st	71.4%	74.0%	79.2%	78.0%	87.1%	62.5%	77.4%	85.7%	82%	46%	46%	43%
2nd	27.5%	30.0%	28.9%	33.3%	22.7%	50.0%	25.6%	24.4%	77%	56%	50%	46%
3rd	5.3%	5.9%	10.5%	8.8%	5.3%	2.7%	8.6%	13.8%	56%	27%	33%	19%
4th	3.4%	11.1%	11.5%	16.0%	0.0%	17.6%	18.5%	40.0%	44%	41%	17%	11%
5th	3.4%	16.0%	23.1%	40.7%	16.0%	14.8%	28.0%	61.1%	58%	7%	28%	7%

The chart above shows Sisulu-Walker’s English language arts interim assessment results for the last three school years. In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker’s kindergarten classes had the same percentage of students testing at proficiency on the first assessment compared to the end of year assessment. Although the percentage of kindergarten students testing at proficiency rose significantly between the fall and winter assessments, those gains were lost between the winter and spring assessment, with the percentage of students performing at proficiency dropping below the fall assessment. Between the spring and end of year assessment, the percentage of Sisulu-Walker’s kindergarten students testing at a proficient level increased seven percentage points, resulting in the same percentage of students testing at proficiency at the beginning of the year and the end of the year.

In the 2020-21 school year, the school’s kindergarten had the lowest percentage of students achieving proficiency on the interim English language arts assessment compared to the kindergarten classes in the previous two years. However, this decline in students achieving proficiency on English language arts assessment exams is consistent with results from other schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. A report released by the federal Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights found “that the pandemic has negatively affected academic growth, widening pre-existing disparities” and in core subject areas like reading “there are worrisome signs that in some grades students might be falling behind pre-pandemic expectations.” United States Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, *Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America’s Students*, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>.

When comparing the results of Sisulu-Walker’s 2020-21 end of year English language arts assessment exam to the 2019-20 end of year assessment results, two grades, second and third, experienced an increase in the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the school’s English language arts assessment. The school’s second grade experienced a nearly 22 percentage point increase, while the third grade had an increase of over five percentage points. Similarly, both grades experienced an increase in the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the end of year assessment when comparing the 2020-21 school year with the 2018-19 school year.

Sisulu-Walker students also showed longitudinal growth despite the difficulties that have arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking at the cohort of students who took the fall English language arts assessment in the 2019-20 school year as 2nd graders, the percentage testing at proficiency increased over 22 percentage points when they took the fall assessment as 3rd graders in the 2020-21 school year. Similarly, there was remarkable growth among the cohort of students who took the fall English language arts assessment as 3rd and 4th grade students in the fall of the 2019-20 school year, when they took the fall assessment as 4th and 5th graders in the 2020-21 school year, an increase of nearly 39 and 58 percentage points, respectively, in proficiency. There was also significant growth in those performing at proficiency among these student cohorts from the end of year English language arts assessment in the 2019-20 school year compared to the fall assessment in the 2020-21 school year, increases of 31.6, 30.2, and 18 percentage points respectively. This growth is particularly noteworthy considering the last three months of instruction in the 2019-20 school year was disrupted by uncertainties caused by COVID-19.

While the school's kindergarten, first, fourth, and fifth grades experienced declines in the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the English language arts exam between the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, as noted above, the COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental effects on student achievement, particularly among the student population Sisulu-Walker serves. "[A]cademic progress for students of color appears to 'have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.'" United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, *Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students*, at p. 5, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>. Indeed, a report for Renaissance Star issued in the middle of the 2020-21 school year noted, "[S]tudents of color were even further from meeting pre-pandemic growth expectations that they were in the beginning of the school year," warning, "'students with slower-than-typical within-year growth rates' . . . were all disproportionately 'at-risk for falling farther behind.'" *Id.* at pp. 16-17.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker showed impressive results on its internally developed English language arts assessment, given the complications that have arose in the last 18-months because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the school develops its own assessment exam, it is not possible to compare the school's results to other schools. However, beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the school will begin administering i-Ready assessment exams. This will allow the school to measure its growth in English language arts against nationwide norms.

ACTION PLAN

Each class will have three team members assigned to the class. An assistant teacher will be assigned to kindergarten and intervention teachers will be assigned to grades 1-5. The additional team member in each class will allow us to provide targeted intervention to students in small groups and more individualized instruction. The benefits of having two teachers and an

additional team member to provide academic support in a classroom cannot be understated. Some benefits include:

- Increased options for flexible grouping of students.
- Help in classroom and lesson preparation.
- Help with classroom management.
- Reduced student/teacher ratio.
- Increased instructional options for all students.
- Diversity of instructional styles.
- Greater student engagement time and levels of participation.

We will continue to allocate 180 minutes for English Language Arts instruction and will not revert to the pre-pandemic time allocation of 165 minutes. The priority will be to provide instruction in small groups instead of teaching to the whole class. We will also continue to allocate 30 additional minutes for computer-based intervention in place of having a traditional specials period during study hall. At this time, students will receive individualized instruction using i-Ready.

We will have a Dean of Academics to work closely with teachers to use data from i-Ready and internally developed assessments (we will continue to develop our own tests in addition to using i-Ready) to address instructional gaps. In addition, our afterschool program will be open to students in all grades and will run for 160 days. During afterschool, students will receive literacy support in small groups or individually.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

All students at the school will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematics computation and problem solving

BACKGROUND

At Sisulu-Walker, we believe that MATH IS ALL AROUND US! In this, we define that math involves abstraction, logical reasoning, counting, calculation, measurement, and systematically studying shapes and motions of physical objects. Math is an essential tool in many fields including science, engineering, medicine and social science. As a result, we apply math in daily life through numeration (counting, calculating, estimating), examination, and analysis of patterns, numbers, space, quantities, shapes, etc.

The math curriculum is organized into thematic units. Math instruction is composed of the following components to ensure content/skill development, investigation/manipulative-based methodologies, and incorporation of data to drive student achievement:

- QQ/Do Now
 - Quick Questions are data driven spiraled review questions and/or activities. This can include daily routines in grades K – 1 (calendar, counting, attendance, class survey) and standards-based questioning from what students have demonstrated mastery of.
- Hook
 - The lesson hook is the explanation or example of real-world relevancy, which brings students to be engaged in the content and brings the content to life.
- Direct Instruction/Modeling
 - The modeling component shows students the strategy/process utilized to problem solve. Students are taught and then practice a variety of strategies, then ultimately choose the best strategy for them.
- Guided Instruction
 - Guided instruction, as with the gradual release methodology of instruction, allows students to practice the daily skill with direction from the teacher through directing the teacher (“puppeteering”), responding to teacher questions, sharing and discussion with classmates.
- Independent Practice
 - Students practice a series of scaffolding questions related to the skill to ensure that application of the skill is developed in accordance to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking.
- Checks for Understanding
 - The teacher incorporates various methodologies to collect data on student progress of understanding and learning of the day’s lesson objective through use of whiteboards for students to show what they know, a sign-language system, turn and talks and teacher questioning.
- Other Cumulative Review/Centers
 - Centers are designed to develop the application of the day’s skill in a variety of other contexts: word problems, real life scenarios, and remediation/differentiation. Students work through various centers in small groups to collaborate and get small group instructional support.
- Lesson Closing

Teachers must close the loop with students to ensure students have an opportunity to articulate what they’ve understood/learned from the day’s instruction.

Our math block is 90 minutes. Teachers taught new content during the first 45 minutes and retaught concepts during the second half of the block. A *Bridge Unit* for the month of September was generated using the priority standards from the previous grade as well as the standards that were taught during the remote learning period during the 2019-20 academic year in grades 1-5. At the end of September, students took an assessment that measured their proficiency on standards from the *Bridge Unit*. Thereafter, students were divided into groups for 15 minutes each during the re-teach block. At that time, priority standards from the *Bridge Unit* and new concepts from grade-level standards were retaught to specific groups of students based on the data collected from the *Beginning of Year Assessment* and exit tickets from daily lessons. 30 minutes were added to instruction by taking 30 minutes previously allocated to the Study Hall period. At that time, students utilized the MobyMax program for individualized instruction in addition to other assignments generated by teachers.

METHOD

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

Sisulu-Walker administers *Rally Benchmark Assessments* combined with previously released NYS test questions. Performance level assessments are administered four times a year: at the beginning of the school year, in the winter, in the spring, and at the end of the year.

In all grades, students are required to apply mathematical understandings and mathematical practices gained in the classroom to answer three types of questions: multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response. All questions are aligned to NYS math standards.

Interim Assessments in grades 3-5 follow the *NYS Testing Blueprint* (see table below) . In each grade, the exams cover content that has been taught to date. K-1 teachers allocate 90 minutes for testing each day. In order to get a true measure of how students perform in grades 2-5, we mimic NYS testing conditions and as a result, tests are untimed (students must be actively working the entire time). The exams are administered over two consecutive days in all grades. Additionally, in all grades we adhere to IEP and 504 accommodations when administering tests.

Components	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Multiple-Choice Questions	33	38	38
Short Response Questions	6	6	6
Extended Response Questions	1	1	1

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Percentage of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Students Achieving Proficiency on the School's Mathematics Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	N/A	54%	68%	68%	72%
1	52%	33%	67%	44%	56%
2	69%	62%	67%	63%	72%
3	35%	27%	17%	17%	5%
4	0%	14%	17%	25%	22%
5	9%	16%	10%	19%	12%

In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker’s first, second, fourth, and fifth grades had a higher percentage of students achieving proficiency on the end of the year mathematics assessment exam compared to the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the baseline assessment. The percentage of first grade students achieving proficiency grew by four points, the percentage of second grade students achieving proficiency grew by three points, the percentage of fourth grade students achieving proficiency grew by 22 points, and the percentage of fifth grade students achieving proficiency grew by three points. Between the fall and end of year assessment, the percentage of kindergarten students achieving proficiency on the mathematics assessment grew by 18-percentage points.

While the school did experience a decline in the percentage of third grade students achieving proficiency in mathematics between the baseline and end of year assessment, the school’s overall results are impressive when considering reports that have shown a decline in the number of students achieving proficiency in mathematics, specifically among the student populations the school serves, in the year and a half of learning that has been affected by COVID-19. Megan Kuhfeld, et al., *Learning During COVID-19: Initial Findings on Students’ Reading and Math Achievement and Growth*, Nov. 2020, available at: <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/11/Collaborative-brief-Learning-during-COVID-19.NOV2020.pdf> (In math “[S]tudent achievement was 5 to 10 percentile points lower than the pre-COVID-19 performance by same-grade students last fall, and students showed lower growth in math across grades 3 to 8 relative to peers in the previous, more typical year.”)

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Median Raw Score on the School's Mathematics Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	N/A	80%	82.5%	75%	85%
1	79%	60%	85%	69%	73%
2	86%	80%	90%	80%	85%
3	70%	71%	51%	48%	53%
4	35%	60%	60%	52.5%	44%
5	32%	46%	51%	48%	46%

The chart above shows the median raw score for each assessment exam Sisulu-Walker administered during the 2020-21 school year. Three of the school's grades, kindergarten, fourth, and fifth had an increase in the median raw score between the first assessment taken and the end of year assessment. Although the first and second grade baseline assessment median raw score was higher than the end of year assessment, the end of year median raw score was higher than the lowest median raw score in each grade during the 2020-21 school year, thirteen and five percentage points, respectively.

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem's Students with Disabilities' Median Raw Score on the School's Mathematics Assessment Exam in 2020-21					
Grade	Baseline	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	N/A	80%	80%	75%	75%
1	64%	45%	79%	63%	58%
2	83%	80%	75%	92.5%	67.5%
3	67%	65%	45.5%	38%	48.5%
4	30%	45%	24.5%	28.5%	33%
5	21%	42%	34%	33%	39%

Among Sisulu-Walker's fourth and fifth grade students with disabilities population, there was an increase in the median raw score on the mathematics assessment between the first administered exam and the end of year exam. The median raw score in fourth grade students with disabilities increased three percentage points between the baseline mathematics assessment and the end of year assessment. In the fifth grade, the median raw score improved 18 percentage points between the baseline mathematics assessment and the end of year assessment among students with disabilities. Although students with disabilities in the first and third grades did not experience an increase in the median raw score between the baseline and end of year mathematics assessment, the median raw score on the end of year assessment was an improvement from the lowest median raw score each grade scored during the school year; a 13-percentage point increase in the first grade and a nine-and-a-half-percentage point increase in the third grade.

Levels of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem on the End of Year Mathematics Exam Who Tested at Level One on the Baseline Exam						
Grade	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Not Tested
1	3	0	2	0	1	0
2	1	0	0	0	0	1
3	10	6	2	0	0	2
4	21	10	5	1	1	4
5	26	13	5	1	1	6

Among students testing at level one on the mathematics baseline assessment, a significant number were able to increase their achievement level by the end of year assessment exam. In the first grade, all three students who tested at level one increased levels by the end of the year, two to level

two and one to level four. In the fourth grade of the 21 students who tested at level one on the baseline assessment, by the end of year assessment five tested at level two, one tested at level three, and one tested at level four. In the fifth grade of the 26 students who tested at level one on the baseline assessment, by the end of year assessment five tested at level two, one tested at level three, and one tested at level four.

Number of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Testing at Each Performance Level on the Mathematics Exam from the Benchmark Assessment Compared to the End of Year Assessment

Grade	BOY 1	EOY 1	Diff.	BOY 2	EOY 2	Diff.	BOY 3	EOY 3	Diff.	BOY 4	EOY 4	Diff.
1	3	2	-1	10	10	0	4	3	-1	10	12	+2
2	1	3	+2	7	4	-3	3	5	-2	15	13	-2
3	10	14	+4	16	22	+6	5	2	-3	9	0	-9
4	21	13	-8	10	8	-2	0	4	+4	0	2	+2
5	26	16	-10	3	7	+4	3	1	-2	0	2	+2

The chart above shows the number of students testing at each level on the beginning of the year mathematics baseline assessment compared to the end of year assessment (the green boxes show positive results – a decline in the overall number of students testing a level one and maintaining or increasing the number of students testing at level 2 and above – and the red boxes show negative results – an increase in students testing at level one and a decrease in the number of students testing at levels two through four). The school’s first, fourth, and fifth grades all experienced a decline in the number of students testing at level one between the baseline and end of year assessment. The most impressive gains occurred in the third grade, where the number of students testing at level two increased from 16 to 22 students between the baseline and end of year assessment. Similarly impressive was the increase in fifth grade students testing at level 2 and fourth grade students testing at level three, where there was a four-student increase between the baseline and end of year assessments at each grade level.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem Interim Assessment Data – Percentage of Students Testing at Proficiency in Mathematics

Grade	2018-19				2019-20				2020-21			
	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY	Fall	Winter	Spring	EOY
K	93.1%	92.9%	93.1%	92.9%	93.1%	92.9%	93.1%	66.7%	70%	68%	68%	72%
1st	62.7%	87.0%	62.7%	87.0%	62.7%	87.0%	62.7%	88.2%	64%	67%	44%	56%
2nd	56.4%	40.0%	56.4%	40.0%	56.4%	40.0%	56.4%	37.1%	72%	67%	63%	72%
3rd	24.4%	13.9%	24.4%	13.9%	24.4%	13.9%	24.4%	17.1%	69%	17%	17%	5%
4th	33.3%	11.5%	33.3%	11.5%	33.3%	11.5%	33.3%	36.0%	54%	17%	25%	22%
5th	41.4%	39.1%	41.4%	39.1%	41.4%	39.1%	41.4%	53.6%	49%	10%	19%	12%

The chart above shows the results of Sisulu-Walker’s mathematics interim assessments for the last three school years. In the 2020-21 school year, the school’s kindergarten experienced a two-percentage point increase in students testing at proficiency between the fall and end of year mathematics assessment and the percentage of second grade students achieving proficiency did not change from the fall assessment compared to the end of year assessment. When comparing the end of year assessments from the 2020-21 school year to the 2019-20 school year, there was an increase in proficiency in kindergarten and second grade. Additionally, the percentage of students achieving proficiency in the cohort of students who took the end of year assessment as third graders in the 2019-20 school year increased nearly five percentage points when they took the end of year assessment as fourth graders in the 2020-21 school year. However, given reports that have been issued on academic achievement during COVID-19 instruction, the school’s mathematics results are particularly impressive. United States Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, *Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America’s Students*, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>. (“This and other early reports suggest that trends may vary by subject, with math skills generally slipping more than reading, perhaps substantially so.”).

Indeed, a July 2021 report by McKinsey & Company found that on average, the pandemic left students five months behind in math. The report further noted that “The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest. In math, students in majority Black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning, students in low-income schools with seven.” McKinsey & Company, *COVID-19 and Education: The Lingering Effects of Unfinished Learning*, July 27, 2021, available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>.

Sisulu-Walker students showed longitudinal growth despite the difficulties that have arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking at the cohort of students who took the fall mathematics assessment in the 2019-20 school year as 2nd graders, the percentage testing at proficiency increased nearly 13 percentage points when they took the fall assessment as 3rd graders in the 2020-21 school year. Similarly, there was remarkable growth among the cohort of students who took the fall mathematics assessment as 3rd and 4th grade students in the fall of the 2019-20 school year, when they took the fall assessment as 4th and 5th graders in the 2020-21 school year, an increase of nearly 19.6 and 15.7 percentage points, respectively, in proficiency. There was also significant growth in those performing at proficiency among these student cohorts from the end of year mathematics assessment in the 2019-20 school year compared to the fall assessment in the 2020-21 school year, increases of 31.9, 36.9, and 13 percentage points respectively. This growth is particularly noteworthy considering the last three months of instruction in the 2019-20 school year was disrupted by uncertainties caused by COVID-19.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

In the 2020-21 school year, Sisulu-Walker showed impressive results on its internal mathematics assessment, given the complications that have arose in the last 18-months because of the COVID-

19 pandemic. Because the school develops its own assessment exam, it is not possible to compare the school's results to other schools. However, beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the school will begin administering i-Ready assessment exams. This will allow the school to measure its growth in mathematics against nationwide results.

ACTION PLAN

An analysis of the grade-level standards for each grade was conducted. Teachers and the new Dean of Academics determined the priority standards for *Mathematics*. The priority standards were used to create a reteach unit for grades 1-5 for mathematics that will be used during the intervention period to ensure that the scope and sequence for each grade level can be covered (there will be a new content and reteach block).

Our math block is 90 minutes. Teachers will teach new content during the first 45 minutes and re-teach concepts during the second half of the block. The *Bridge Unit* that will be taught during the month of September was generated using the priority standards from the previous grade for review and to combat the infamous summer slide. At the end of September, students will take an assessment that will measure their proficiency of standards from the *Bridge Unit*. Thereafter, students will be divided into groups for 15 minutes each during the re-teach block. At this time, priority standards from the *Bridge Unit* and new concepts from grade-level standards will be retaught to specific groups of students based on the data collected from the *Beginning of Year Assessment* and exit tickets from daily lessons. In addition, 30 of the 60 minutes allocated for study hall (asynchronistic learning) at the end of the day will be used to provide students with targeted math intervention using i-Ready and other resources.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

All students at the school will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

BACKGROUND

Sisulu-Walker uses an interdisciplinary approach to teach science that is student-centered, and inquiry based. The science curriculum for each grade is composed of units of study in Life Science, Earth Science, and Physical Science that are aligned to the New York State Next Generation Standards. All grade levels start with a unit on inquiry followed by three to four specific units.

The instructional strategy behind each lesson concept is ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN, EXTEND/APPLY and EVALUATE. These are researched and proven strategies for having

students develop deeper understanding of science concepts. We further support scientific understanding by reading and writing about science content as part of the science block. In addition to leveled readers, teachers have additional trade books to support the science curriculum. Our science curriculum provides the hands-on experience, inquiry, and investigation opportunities needed to educate students with multiple experiences to construct their own understanding, and science knowledge and apply what they learn to the real world. In addition to thematic units of study, each grade observes and investigates a live animal during the year. Teachers are encouraged to have classroom pets as well.

METHOD

Sisulu-Walker does not administer interim assessments in science. As a result, this assessment cannot be measured for the 2020-21 school year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Sisulu-Walker does not administer interim assessments in science. As a result, this assessment cannot be measured for the 2020-21 school year.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Sisulu-Walker does not administer interim assessments in science. As a result, this assessment cannot be measured for the 2020-21 school year.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Sisulu-Walker does not administer interim assessments in science. As a result, this assessment cannot be measured for the 2020-21 school year.

ACTION PLAN

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem will begin administering end of unit assessments in science for all grades. In addition, we will administer a science exam in the spring to fourth grade students using previously published science test questions for the written test only since they will take the science exam as fifth graders the following year. To address the performance component of the exam, we will provide opportunities for students to participate in science experiments throughout the year using a station teaching format.

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

The school met its goal of good standing for the 2020-21 school year.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Sisulu-Walker has been in good standing in each of the last three school years.

Accountability Status by Year

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