



BRILLA
Public Charter Schools

Brilla Pax Charter School

**2022-23 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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By Brilla Pax Team

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2022-23 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Michael Carbone (Chief Schools Officer), Margaret Rippe (Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Schools), Shingi Mutasa (Brilla Pax Principal) and David Morales (Senior Director of Data) prepared this 2022-23 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)
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SHINGI MUTASA (BRILLA PAX) has served as the school leader since 2020-21.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Brilla Public Charter Schools are classically inspired schools with a mission to help students grow intellectually, socially and physically into young men and women of good character and spirit, and to be prepared for excellence in high school, college and beyond. The name “Brilla” means “shine” in Spanish, and speaks to the beacon of hope and opportunity we are working to build in the communities we serve.

The founding Brilla school opened its doors in the fall of 2013 in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx in NYC’s Community School District 7. Brilla Pax Elementary, opened in Fall of 2020 with Kindergarten, with the intention to expand by one grade per year. In the 2022-2023 School year, the school served students in grades K-2. Our school population closely mirrors that of our surrounding community: in the 2022-23 school year, our student population was 70.1% Latino and 18.8% Black/African American; and 1% Asian; 90.2% of our students were economically disadvantaged; 10.3% received Special Education services and 37.1% were designated as English Language Learners.

We seek to educate students to lead lives of excellence, virtue and purpose. We do this by leveraging the best instructional practices of model charter schools – a longer school day and year, utilizing technology-based blended learning to deliver individualized instruction, intensively supporting and coaching teachers—and combining this with a robust character education program, centered around our core virtues of courage, justice, wisdom and self-control.

Our approach is rooted in the following cornerstones:

- **High Expectations.** Because we believe in the inherent dignity and potential of every child, we have high expectations for our students’ academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on their background or socio-economic status.
- **Lead with Character.** Good character makes for a meaningful life, produces lasting personal and social happiness and contributes to academic success. The development of the virtues of Courage, Justice, Wisdom, and Self-control in students is central to our educational mission.
- **Results Matter.** Brilla relentlessly focuses on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures because we hold ourselves accountable for preparing students personally and academically in ways that will enable them to succeed at the best high schools and colleges.
- **Choice & Commitment.** Students, their parents, faculty and staff of Brilla College Prep make a choice to participate in our unique and innovative program. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.
- **More Time.** There are no shortcuts. Only with an extended school day and year will students have the time to acquire the academic knowledge, skills and habits that will prepare them for success in college and in life.
- **Teach the Best Content.** All Brilla students learn math and science while also becoming familiar with the classics of Western Civilization, because of the way the traditional liberal arts convey truth, beauty, and goodness, and because students need the world’s best

content in order to become good citizens and be competitive globally.

Due to the immense challenges presented by the global pandemic, Brilla spent 2021-2022 enhancing counseling services, providing direct support to families in need, and prioritizing a re-thinking of in-person schooling best practices for the vast majority of the school year. Students returning full-time to the classroom for the first time needed additional support to ensure a healthy and successful return to learning. This coupled with the transition to revised state testing standards provided a unique challenge. We instituted a robust targeted literacy intervention and began a revision to our literacy curriculum K-8 while piloting a new math pedagogy to ensure strong factual knowledge in the younger grades.

Some key supports we expanded this year were implementing a high dosage tutoring program to serve our scholars who are most in need. This program was executed in Intervention Block and utilized Foundations (Wilson/Orton Gillingham) programming to enhance reading capabilities for young people. This year, we will add Math tutoring alongside this programming to continue supporting students. Other supports to learning that we added this year were in-house speech and language pathologists to best serve our young people in need of this service, personalized professional development workshop opportunities for staff (and an enhanced and honed onboarding experience for this upcoming summer), and learning walks for leadership and junior leadership to support learning across the network.

Brilla Pax successfully welcomed Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade students to school in the fall of 2022 in a safe and personalized way.

Addressing students' unfinished learning in literacy was a top priority for the school. Students in all grades received daily literacy instruction through the Targeted Literacy Block, which included small group guided reading focused on a specific goal, daily phonics practice through word work, and the use of our blended learning program which included Amplify's Boost reading program. While daily literacy blocks targeted grade level standards and curriculum, our intervention block allowed for more differentiation and personalization in order to meet students at their instructional level. In all grades, we rolled out a new Brilla Math Curriculum, grounded in Eureka Math, with elements of classical content and Context for Learning and a visual mathematics program based in Illustrative Mathematics and Math Jar. This implementation will be deepened this year through an external partnership. In its pilot year we were successful in articulating our vision for math and providing a curriculum aligned to that vision, teachers are emergently internalizing and utilizing the new curricula. Similar to literacy, we partnered with the Lavinia Group for additional instructional coaching and support to math leadership and instruction. Similar to our approach in literacy, we will be adopting a targeted math block structure this coming year to ensure a more personalized and aggressive approach to mathematics foundational knowledge and fluency. We are enthusiastic that the curricular amendments coupled with clear, practical training, both in house and through our external partners, will yield rapid growth for students in 23-24.

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
2020-21	95													95
2021-22	69	87												156
2022-23	53	68	85											206

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Brilla students will possess reading and writing skills at or above grade level.

BACKGROUND

Brilla believes that effective, high quality English Language Arts instruction does not solely rely on the assumption and discernment of interconnected skills, but believes that the skills instruction must be embedded within engaging, complex content. Knowledge is essential to our literacy approach. At Brilla the utilization of the New York Next Generation State Standards for Language Arts serves as the foundation for our English Language Arts programming which is then thoughtfully combined with the powerful content of the Core Knowledge curriculum (K-4) and Wit and Wisdom curriculum (5-8). In order to ensure that students are learning a variety of literacy skills – oracy, language use, literary analysis, nonfiction analysis, foundational skills, and writing – Brilla has aligned the curriculum to ensure consistency and an opportunity for deeper engagement within content. Through this explicit work done over the course of the past three years, Brilla has aligned domains of standards and content that allow students authentic interaction and opportunities to represent mastery in multiple ways while also ensuring their preparedness for the state assessments. To ensure our vision of literacy comes to life, this year we are partnering with myEducationist to assess the full efficacy of our literacy curriculum K-8.

Core Knowledge and Wit and Wisdom both align with the classical inspiration of the Brilla model – allowing students to interact and learn from both a historical and contemporary perspective grounded in complex texts and topics. Further, both of these curricula form a spiraling foundation of knowledge and literacy skills that is consistently built upon over the course of a Brilla student’s career. This spiraled approach ensures that students enter each new year with the requisite knowledge and skills to immediately interact with more complex tasks and content. Since June 2021, Brilla’s Senior Director of Curriculum and Assessment and Brilla’s Manager of Curriculum and Instruction worked with both select in-house curriculum writers and also external consultants to ensure deeper alignment between Reading, Writing, Science & Social Studies and the Arts. These revisions allow students to engage in content and skill building with depth and focus, while exposing

them to a variety of genres about a similar topic. This coherence was further improved with the revision and addition of curricular unit plans – critical documents that allow teachers to unpack the purpose, skills, standards, and criteria for mastery of content – in order to improve their instruction and student outcomes. Along with these unit plans, teachers continued to engage in a unit unpacking protocol to ensure deep understanding and mastery by teachers before implementation with students. With a more sequenced and content-heavy curriculum, teachers also engage in regular lesson studies to deepen specific understandings of content and pedagogy each week. After a review of feedback from our staff, these protocols have been revised to include more targeted skill-building for teachers on differentiation strategies and deepening understanding of the rigor within the next Generation Standards.

Moreover, one of the strongest programmatic components of the Core Knowledge materials is its holistic, scientifically-grounded Foundational Skills curriculum and materials. As Brilla is grounded in the classical tradition, a tradition which is deeply vested in the intense literary abilities across history, the foundation of the K-2 literacy program is exceptionally important. The Core Knowledge Skills curriculum provides students an opportunity to practice and demonstrate mastery of critical standards while still interacting with comprehensive content. Explicit phonics instruction was similarly reinforced K-8 with the Foundations Program (K-2) and Wilson’s Reading Program (3-8) during the intervention block.

At Brilla the development of a high-impact literacy program is essential to our model. Brilla’s literacy program has several components – Read Aloud, Writing, Nonfiction Studies (Science and Social Studies), Close Reading, Phonics & Skills, and Targeted Literacy.

- **Read Aloud:** During Read Aloud, scholars practice active listening, build their understanding of how language works, and appreciate the beauty of an author’s craft. Specifically, they build a rich vocabulary and broad knowledge of history and science topics by being exposed to carefully selected, sequenced, and coherent read aloud texts. Read Aloud lessons allow teachers to model fluent reading, anchored in a skills-based objective. Scholars end each lesson with an analysis and discussion of the texts through discourse and reflection.
- **Nonfiction Studies (Science and Social Studies):** During nonfiction studies, students deepen their understanding of the history and science introduced during Read Aloud through experiential learning opportunities, projects, and planned Socratic Dialogue. In some instances students also engage with additional texts, such as nonfiction articles, in order to improve their depth of interaction with literary analysis and content knowledge.
- **Writing:** During the writing block, scholars study how authors of rich mentor texts use voice, organization, ideas, conventions, word choice, and sentence variety to convey meaning. Scholars apply these techniques to craft and publish original writing pieces, including, opinion, informational, and narrative. Teachers group scholars by need and determine individual goals to focus on with each scholar. Goals are determined based on need in the above six traits of writing.
- **Targeted Literacy:** The essential building blocks of reading include both explicit teaching of strategies and authentic opportunities to practice the strategies. As part of Brilla’s goal to guarantee 90% of students are reading on grade level by the end of second grade, Brilla worked with the Lavinia Group, a respected early literacy third party to help design a literacy block that includes Guided Reading, Independent Reading, and Literacy Circles differentiated across grade levels. During Targeted Literacy students read independently – practicing the

reading behaviors specifically aligned to their needs and practiced with coaching during Guided Reading lessons. Students interact with both pre-selected, high-engagement texts during Guided Reading and build a love of reading by choosing high interest texts on their independent reading level. Libraries consist of classically aligned, content rich, and culturally relevant fiction and non-fiction leveled texts. Students are homogeneously grouped (groups no larger than eight) depending on a triangulation of STEP achievement data, NWEA MAP data and individual conferencing data during Targeted Literacy. This small grouping allows students to grow at faster rates than traditional reading programs. Throughout the year, scholars build reading stamina and work to accomplish individual reading goals, set collaboratively with the teacher based on analysis of achievement data and ongoing progress monitoring. Teachers coach students to achieve their goals during one-on-one conferring sessions anchored in their comprehension, accuracy, or fluency.

- **Close Reading:** During Close Reading, scholars read and analyze a myriad of engaging poems, informational and narrative texts both independently and with the support of their teacher. Scholars develop a deep understanding of genre and use knowledge to make meaning of what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences grounded in evidence. Teachers facilitate discourse around the central ideas or themes of a text and analyze the author's use of specific craft and structure moves and how they support the main idea.
- **Phonics & Skills:** During Literacy Skills, scholars develop the phonics, grammar, and penmanship skills needed to make and convey meaning across all disciplines. Scholars learn through repetition, memorization, and phonetic and grammatical analysis of the English language. Literacy Skills is a part of Brilla's literacy program in grades K-2. By 3rd and 4th grade, the grade majority no longer needs direct instruction in this area, as they are reading to learn, rather than learning to read. Instead, 3rd and 4th graders receive additional intervention and independent reading with conferring to ensure students have the necessary foundational elements for successful reading.
- **Blended Learning:** Scholars receive adaptive, individualized instruction from our blended program for at least 20 minutes per day. In grades K-5, students participate in Boost Reading (formerly Amplify Reading), an online reading program that delivers the skills practice and supports they need to become proficient readers.

The Targeted Literacy Block continues to be an innovative approach to strategic reading development for the 2022-2023 school year. Targeted Literacy allows teachers to become experts of specific reading levels and focus on strategies and differentiated techniques to grow students. Students will transition across classrooms depending on their reading level to receive this specialized instruction through Guided Reading small groups, Independent Reading with conferring, and Literacy Circles with facilitated discussion. This block was designed to simultaneously support Brilla's large MLL and SPED population as well as students above grade level expectations in developmentally-appropriate small groups.

In response to the needs presented by students following remote learning, Brilla introduced a daily intervention block for students. In Kindergarten - 2nd grade, this instruction was done through Wilson's Foundations program. This program, aligned with Science of Reading research and literacy best practices, is personalized and was implemented in small group instruction.

Brilla uses a combination of summative and formative assessments to measure efficacy of both the curricula used, and teachers' instructional practices. These assessments include network-developed assessment instruments, and standardized assessments, including the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). MAP uses computer-based adaptive assessments to evaluate individual students' proficiency levels. Students' scores are generated immediately, and full performance data with detailed information about specific concepts is available within 24 hours. At the end of each trimester, all students take a Mock Exam to evaluate their mastery of the standards taught throughout the marking period. This data is used to inform future instruction, including the identification of students for remediation or enrichment services, and to measure any instructional discrepancies.

In addition to summative assessments, a variety of formative assessments occur with greater frequency to inform instruction day-to-day. These assessments and means of data collection include:

- Daily questioning during instruction to gauge student thinking and understanding
- Standards-based rubrics to evaluate students during writing assignments or projects
- Computer based assessments from blended learning programs. This data provides snapshots of student achievement that teachers can use weekly to inform instruction, partners for peer work, and groupings
- Reading comprehension / running records to assess scholars' reading skills
- Monthly (K-4) and unit (5-8) assessments include a variety of question types (multiple choice, open response, etc.) to specifically assess standards mastery covered in the week/unit

The instructional program of Brilla Schools is facilitated by the academic leadership team, which consists of the Chief Schools Officer, Assistant Superintendents, Senior Directors of Curriculum & Assessment and Instruction, and central schools team members alongside School Principals, Assistant Principals and Instructional Coaches. Professional development is facilitated through an ongoing cycle of clarifying roles and responsibilities, setting clear expectations and goals, coaching and monitoring, and evaluating. This cycle is primarily operationalized through bi-weekly, formal observations followed by one-on-one meetings to set related goals, and action steps to develop teacher practice as well as ongoing "live coaching" which occurs on at least a weekly basis.

Additional professional development is provided through a variety of platforms:

- Regular professional development workshops centered around: data and assessment, school culture, curriculum, instructional practice, etc.
- Collaborative planning and lesson/unit studies in which a group of grade-level teachers meet to unpack and internalize lessons and units before implementation in order to norm criteria for success and high-impact instruction
- External trainings facilitated by industry experts, including a continued partnership with Lavinia Group trainers
- High level walk-throughs and learning walks facilitated by top level leadership, to gauge the overall quality of the instructional program; including instructional priority alignment

To support teachers with executing literacy lessons our campus Instructional Leadership Teams facilitated bi-weekly team development meetings that provided grade teams the opportunity to come together to look at data and student work in order to make instructional adjustments. The

effectiveness of these meetings was evident in the progress scholars made each round they took the STEP assessment. Teachers were responsible for planning lessons for a specific STEP level or range. This allowed for further personalization of student learning. To ensure all scholars could receive comprehensive literacy instruction our network is blending Read Aloud and Nonfiction Studies in elementary school and reallocating those instructional minutes to the targeted literacy block.

During the 2022-2023 school year teachers were provided a wide variety of literacy resources to support differentiated student ability. This included a bank of new texts for each grade level in classroom libraries, a streamlined approach to blended learning programs, and external training from University of Chicago STEP and Lavinia Group.

METHOD

During the 2022-2023 school year, Brilla utilized the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for all students in reading. The assessment was given three times over the course of the year, in the fall, winter, and spring. MAP Growth reveals how much growth has occurred between testing events and, when combined with NWEA norms, shows projected proficiency. Educators can track growth through the school year and over multiple years. Every question on a MAP Growth assessment is calibrated to a proprietary RIT scale, which is one of the most reliable in the industry. Because the equal-interval scale is continuous across grades, educators can trust it to track longitudinal growth over a student's entire career. NWEA uses anonymous assessment data from over 10.2 million students to create national norms. Educators can compare their students' performance against norms to evaluate programs and improve instruction—in individual classrooms and throughout school systems. The assessment was given via computer to both in-person and fully remote students.

During the 2022-2023 school year, Brilla administered the fall, winter, and spring NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment to all grade levels. Brilla is reporting on the spring results for students performing over the 50th percentile. While the 50th percentile is considered by national reference standards to be on grade level, Brilla, based on triangulation and correlative data, believes that students over the 65th percentile are most likely to be college and career ready by the time they exit the program.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As the school was in its third year of founding and serving only grades K-2 in the 2022-2023 school year, there are currently no New York State assessment scores available to report on. Overall at Pax, 73% of all students met their Fall to Spring Projected NWEA growth goal. In Kindergarten, 82% of students met their projected proficiency, 54% met their projected proficiency in first grade and 83% met projected proficiency in second grade. These results demonstrate that two grades surpassed Brilla's target of 75% of students reaching their projected growth from Fall to Spring.

Brilla Pax's kindergarten cohort saw marked improvement from the prior school year. The mean achievement percentile on the Spring NWEA in Kindergarten was 56, above the national grade level norm, with 57% of students performing at or above the 50th percentile. In comparing kindergarten performance to the year prior, Pax realized a 22 point percentile increase on the Spring NWEA assessment. By the Spring, the Kindergarten cohort had increased the number of students above

the 50th percentile by 31 points. Similarly, in second grade, 51% of students performed above the 50th percentile, growth of 20 points when comparing this cohort of students to the year prior on the same measure and growth of 25 points from the Fall. The growth and overall achievement in Kindergarten and second grade is the result of the concerted efforts in literacy to accelerate student achievement in student's foundational literacy skills. This included shifts made to the structures of the targeted literacy instruction outlined above.

Brilla's Pax's first grade cohort remained consistent with 29% of students above the 50th percentile in both Fall and Spring. First grade saw a slight 2 point increase in the mean percentile from Fall to Spring, ending at a mean percentile of 35. While first grade did not have the same absolute achievement, with over 54% of students meeting their NWEA projected Spring goal, they did demonstrate above average growth, when compared to national averages. We attribute the lower absolute achievement in these grade levels to the prolonged effect of lower kindergarten achievement in the prior school year. Further work needs to be done with this cohort of students to strengthen their foundational literacy skills, while also accelerating students' comprehension skills as they enter into second grade.

Overall, Pax made considerable progress toward Brilla's ambitious goals of having 75% of students reach their growth goal and 60% of students performing at or above grade level (the 50th percentile). The emphasis developing teachers' content knowledge of foundational literacy skills, including supporting their understanding of the Science of Reading, and utilizing instructional resources aligned to the Science of Reading helped to build urgency around mastery of phonics. Targeted groupings and a refined High Dosage Tutoring program allowed for greater personalization and intentionality around individual student needs that propelled student growth and achievement. Entering the new school year, Brilla Pax will work to build off the solid foundation set in kindergarten, while propelling student growth in the other cohorts to close remaining gaps in phonics, fluency and comprehension.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

According to the Brilla Schools' Network ELA Goal, we did not meet our target goal of at least seventy percent of students achieving at the 50th percentile or above. 45% of Brilla Pax scholars achieved in the 50th percentile or above, indicating that while students are making faster than average growth, more work must be done to catch students up to grade level standards. In the University of Chicago STEP reading assessments, student performance varied. At the end of the year, 50% of students in Kindergarten ended the year on grade level, while only 23% in first and 7% of second grade performed on grade level. As with NWEA, Pax scholars did demonstrate growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, with the percentage of students on target growing by 9%. In Kindergarten, the percentage of students on target grew by 39% from the beginning of the year to the end of year. The differences in growth and achievement mirrors NWEA and highlights both the strides our comprehensive literacy program has made, specifically in Kindergarten, while also identifying linger challenges in getting students to grade level in reading.

ACTION PLAN

In summer of 2019, innovated around a differentiated, encompassing approach to literacy development in our younger grades (K-2) through Targeted Literacy. This block, conceived in partnership with the Lavinia Group, sought to ensure sustained growth and achievement in literacy development to prepare students for the rigor of our third and fourth grade curriculum. This program does not replace our Core Knowledge curriculum, but enhances and complements it through the inclusion of reading best practices and small group instruction utilizing a variety of junior classic texts. During the 2020-2022 school years, a series of teacher trainings and workshops was developed and implemented to ensure the high quality fidelity and high impact expectations of this block is realized. In the 2022-2023 school year, we were able to more robustly provide training and on-the-ground support from our Lavinia consultants to better respond to the challenges of navigating the new and urgent student needs that were presented after COVID. Consultants partnered with school leadership in walkthroughs and individualized support. In this 2023-2024 school year, we will be further expanding our focus on this content block of the day, introducing cross-grade groupings, hiring campus-based literacy coaches, and expanding our high dosage tutoring program. Additionally, we've instituted a revised Learning Walk structure to continually support instructional best practices. These visits coupled with these cross-grade groups will allow for more targeted instruction for students across the school.

In 2021-2022, in recognition of the expertise needed to improve and sustain a high performing school, we expanded our staff capacity to focus on continued improvement of our ELA program by adding a Senior Director of Instruction, a Senior Director of Curriculum & Assessment, and a Director of Academic Interventions. (Further, in 2019-2020 the instructional leadership team conducted a Learning Walk Protocol, modeled after Instructional Rounds, to develop a deeper approach to the collection and analysis of instructional moves based on differentiated data points, add coherence and structure to the professional development of school and grade level leaders, and provide ongoing content and instruction support around promising practices to all Brilla schools. While paused during remote and hybrid learning, these Learning Walks are now fully implemented and will provide centralized staff the opportunity to create responsive teacher and leader workshops to ensure fidelity and quality in implementation of the literacy program. As indicated above, Lavinia will join to further enhance these supports.) In the 2022-2023 school year, an Elementary Curriculum writer was added to support the revision of the K-2 literacy program along with an expanded partnership with MyEducationist consultants. Additionally, a Director of Elementary Student Services provided leadership capacity to our growing Student Services staff and a focus on the alignment and execution of academic interventions for students identified as requiring services and students transitioning in our intervention cycle.

In the 2023-2024 school year, a full restructure to the academics and schools team has occurred so that our Chief Schools Officer oversees both academics and school management functions to better align support and improve coherence between resources. The instruction team has added four instructional specialists and a Director of Strategic Initiatives role has been created to support literacy and humanities work within the Curriculum & Assessment team. Additionally, Brilla has identified programmatic weaknesses in the development of vocabulary for our Multi-Language Learners through multiple data sources. Given the large population of MLLs the school serves, and the success of our K-2 MLL program, we need to improve our upper elementary and middle school

success for English Language Learners. By ensuring that all elementary schools and middle schools now have at least one MLL Specialist on their campus, our MLL students will be able to receive consistent, targeted intervention instruction. These team members will be supported by both our student services team and our new Director of Intervention. In summary, we have doubled the Student Services support team and we have added an intervention program and director of intervention.

Professional development of teachers continues to be a focus for the 23-24 school year. Across all grades, development will focus on execution practices of literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading. Standardized Unit and Lesson plans with expectations for completion have been normed through Staff Onboarding and then specific coaching around planning will take place on a bi-weekly basis. The planning will focus on teachers internalizing the Next Generation Standards and ensuring that the lessons are connected to the learning objectives. Teachers will also receive feedback on their questioning with a focus on higher order thinking to promote student discourse. Finally, teachers will also receive feedback on their level of student-led activities throughout units and lessons with a goal of students driving the instruction in literacy classrooms. Instructional feedback will also be given throughout a weekly basis, whenever possible, through live coaching for immediate implementation. Teachers will be observed in lessons for which they were given lesson plan feedback. They will make adjustments to future lessons based on feedback and data they collect during instruction, as we will routinely, consistently monitor young people's progress. Consistent progress monitoring has been standardized to ensure student data collection in order to inform individual student goals, teacher goals, and an evaluation of learning.

Through professional development, systems and procedures, teachers and Brilla staff will develop a deep understanding of their curriculum and content. One way we aim to achieve this is through unit studies prior to the launch of a new unit along with intellectual prep protocols. Approximately two weeks before the beginning of a new unit, teachers will analyze the upcoming unit by looking at the standards addressed, identify a rigorous and engaging essential question, complete the end of unit assessment to understand what student mastery looks like, and break down the key content and knowledge goals of the unit. On a daily basis, teachers will complete lesson internalization guides, which aim to accomplish similar objectives as the unit study, on a more micro level. These lesson internalization guides will prompt teachers to think about the standards, objective, task/activity, and end of lesson assessment (exit ticket), ensuring that all four components are aligned. These guides will also prompt teachers to identify the most crucial questions that will promote student mastery to ask during the lesson, with scripted, exemplar responses. Through coaching and feedback from the principal, assistant principal, and/or academic content lead, these unit maps and lesson internalization guides are one way Brilla intends to promote and develop content knowledge.

Further, 2023-2024 will focus on weekly "Looking at Student Work" meetings. These meetings allow teachers to, on an interim basis, check for the quality of student work during the unit to determine corrections and increase opportunities for mastery demonstration and complexity in literacy. Finally, teachers engage trimesterly in a Beautiful Work Protocol where they examine work across grade levels to determine what work is exemplary and what work needs improvement. This normed vision of beautiful work will raise the quality of work expected and will help develop teachers' classical lens through a look at the transcendental beauty within what students create. With this deeper

understanding of beauty, teachers will better be able to cultivate student understanding in their literacy class.

In the 2021-2022 school year, Brilla introduced a new intervention and tutoring program that allowed each student to receive corrective instruction to support young people's progress after learning loss incurred during the pandemic. For the 2023-2024 school year, a revised structure for intervention and high dosage tutoring is going to be utilized. Recognizing the challenges campuses were facing with training and monitoring the quality of the intervention program, a Director of Academic Intervention role was created to ensure that there was consistent oversight of the program. New systems, which are data-informed and clearly defined, will be implemented to allow for teachers to more flexibly and nimbly respond to student needs. Additionally, schools will be using Amplify's mClass for literacy intervention in grades K-4, an intervention program aligned to the Science of Reading to better support students' foundational skills. Building off the success of the Targeted Literacy Block, we will also implement Targeted Literacy during literacy four days per week. This will allow for students to get highly differentiated instruction on the reading fluency and comprehension skills they need to reach grade level proficiency in all elementary grades

Tutoring will resume at a greater scale with each school supporting at least 3 high dosage tutors for students who need more support. *For all students*, schedules for all grades have been made intentionally to ensure as many highly qualified adults as possible are available to teach small groups during the intervention block. All staff teaching intervention groups will collect data weekly, which will be analyzed about every six weeks at scheduled intervention planning meetings. At those meetings, staff will move students into different groups as needed based on the data. In addition, Students in K-3 will receive an extended skills block to work on language skills and foundational reading strategies - allowing students, especially language learners, and teachers to dive deeper into literacy at their level and cater to their needs. Schools also overhauled classroom libraries, introducing 1,000 new texts into each classroom to address literacy needs at a variety of levels and for a range of reading interests. These robust classroom libraries, which are leveled, should provide a wonderful resource to enhance literacy instruction and students' desire to be readers.

In 2021-2022, Brilla hired a cohort of part-time tutors at each campus to provide direct High Dosage Tutoring (HDT) services to small groups of students in literacy utilizing the Wilson Foundations model. This tutoring program was overseen by an independent consultant, Dr. Nina Zaragoza, an early literacy expert, who has worked closely with Brilla prior to this engagement and provided direct coaching and support to the tutoring cohort. Students who scored in the 20-25th percentile on NWEA spring reading were placed in the HDT model. Midway through the year, Brilla proactively planned for an expansion of the HDT model. In the revised structure, during school year 23-24, Brilla plans to have a minimum of three tutors per campus who are directly coached by the Tutoring Instructional Coach and the Director of Academic Intervention. This will allow for a greater number of students to receive the needed intervention services.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Brilla students will possess mathematics skills at or above grade level.

BACKGROUND

As with ELA, New York State has adopted the Next Generation State Standards. Brilla believes these Core Mathematics Standards build upon each other in a logical way that develops students' conceptual understanding of math. As such, the curriculum Brilla has chosen to use aligns to these standards.

Specifically, Brilla (K-4) uses Eureka Math, a Singapore-style curriculum from Great Minds (formerly EngageNY). Brilla has implemented a coherent mathematics program beginning in kindergarten by using Eureka math. The curriculum emphasizes incremental learning and extensive practice; major concepts are broken down into discrete components, put together over time, and then continuously reviewed and expanded upon. Students are exposed to abstract concepts, in a manner that breaks each down and makes them accessible. Each concept starts with a concrete, tangible representation, and then progresses to a pictorial representation, and finally moves to an abstract, numerical representation. In having scholars begin with concrete representations, teachers are able to develop deep, conceptual understanding in all students. In 2020-2021, Brilla contracted with an external expert to revise its K-2 math curriculum for the 2021-2022 school year and worked with the Lavinia Group to implement it. This revised curriculum includes a more holistic approach to mathematics coupled with explicit skills and routines to develop numeracy fluency at an accelerated rate.

This decision was made when Brilla noticed the lagging of this foundational strand and because it aligns with our classically inspired approach. Additionally, Brilla also anticipated a potential "lag of traction" for these practices and a possible impact on overall math achievement as inquiry-based approaches to conceptual mathematics often takes time to establish the mathematical mindsets of students – as seen in other successful, conceptual-focused networks.

In the 2022-2023 school year, the Lavinia Group supported us in the implementation of a now K-4 revised math curriculum. Additionally, we incorporated Math Story Problems for even deeper conceptual understanding in K-2, and we have adopted Illustrative Math for grades 5-8 Math to enrich and deepen middle school math. The emphasis in middle school is for as many young people as possible to end with Algebra I, and we had another highly successful section this year of students who took and passed the Algebra Regents, and we seek to have two successful sections in the 2023-2024 year.

Eureka Math is a curriculum published by Great Minds, a nonprofit organization that seeks to ensure that all students receive a content-rich education, underscoring our commitment to a classically inspired experience and teaching the best content. The material upon which Eureka Math is based was originally created through a partnership with the New York State Education Department and differs from other programs in that, rather than being an update to existing material, it was

designed specifically for the common core. In a 2022 Consumer Reports style review for instructional materials by the nonprofit EdReports.org, Eureka Math was reviewed and far surpassed all other curricula evaluated. Eureka Math presents mathematics in a logical progression from PK through Grade 12. This coherent approach allows teachers to know what incoming students already have learned and ensures that students are prepared for what comes next. By using Eureka Math in Elementary School, Brilla hopes to reduce gaps in student learning, instill persistence in problem solving, and prepare students to understand advanced math. Eureka Math goes beyond simply teaching students to know the process for solving a problem. Eureka maintains that students need to understand why that process works so they will have the ability to generalize their learning and apply it to problems across settings. Teaching mathematics as a story, Eureka Math builds students' knowledge logically and thoroughly to help them achieve deep understanding.

Though Eureka Math affords us a curriculum through Grade 12, we made the decision to pivot our middle school math curriculum to be anchored in Illustrative Math after a comprehensive yearlong curriculum revision and rewriting process with a team of external math curriculum experts. The new middle school math curriculum is designed to increase rigor, discourse, agency, and exploration for middle school students, while also increasing user-friendliness for our teachers. The transition pulls our curriculum more deeply into conceptual-based mathematics, and our middle school math priorities are now the continuous development of staff content knowledge and the high quality implementation of the curriculum. The new middle school math curriculum is also designed to shift a greater number of our eighth grade students into an Algebra One course within the next couple of years, and the curriculum aligns very closely with what our scholars will see at the high school level, particularly given the high percentage of competitive high schools our scholars matriculate into.

Blended learning, as with ELA, is also a key component to mathematics instruction at Brilla. Scholars receive adaptive, individualized instruction from our suite of computerized blended learning time for at least 20 minutes per day. Students at Brilla use Zearn Math (K-4) and ALEKS (5-8). Both programs are adaptive and assignable programs that ensure each student receives targeted instruction, and were identified through a year of collaborative research and demos among multiple Brilla stakeholders.

For math assessment, Brilla uses a combination of summative and formative, standardized and teacher-developed assessment instruments, including the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). At the end of each trimester, all students take an Interim Assessment to evaluate them against the standards taught throughout the trimester. This data is used to inform future instruction, including the identification of students for remediation or enrichment services, and to measure any instructional discrepancies.

In addition to summative assessments, a variety of formative assessments occur with greater frequency to inform instruction day-to-day. These assessments and means of data collection include:

- Daily questioning during instruction to gauge student thinking and understanding

- Computer based assessments from blended learning programs. This data provides snapshots of student achievement that teachers can use weekly to inform instruction, partners for peer work, and groupings
- Unit assessments (5-8) graded using a rubric developed by Eureka Math
- Daily exit tickets that are reviewed and analyzed to inform instruction and form groups.

As with literacy, the mathematics instructional program of Brilla is facilitated by the schools leadership team, which consists of the Chief Schools Officer, Senior Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Senior Director of Instruction, the central Academics Team, and the School Principals, Assistant Principals and Content Leads (Instructional Coaches). Professional development is facilitated through an ongoing cycle of clarifying roles and responsibilities, setting clear expectations and goals, coaching and monitoring, and evaluating. This cycle is primarily operationalized through bi-weekly, formal observations followed by one-on-one meetings to set related goals, and action steps to develop teacher practice. Additional professional development is provided through a variety of platforms:

- Weekly professional development meetings centered around data and assessment, school culture, curriculum, instructional practice, etc.
- High level walk-throughs and learning walks facilitated by leadership and Lavinia Group
- Math-specific content team meetings by grade-level and across grade-level

METHOD

During the 2022-2023 school year, Brilla continued to utilize the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for all students in math. The assessment was given three times over the course of the year, in the fall, winter, and spring. MAP Growth reveals how much growth has occurred between testing events and, when combined with NWEA norms, shows projected proficiency. Educators can track growth through the school year and over multiple years. Every question on a MAP Growth assessment is calibrated to a proprietary RIT scale, which is one of the most reliable in the industry. Because the equal-interval scale is continuous across grades, educators can trust it to track longitudinal growth over a student's entire career. NWEA uses anonymous assessment data from over 10.2 million students to create national norms. Educators can compare their students' performance against norms to evaluate programs and improve instruction—in individual classrooms and throughout school systems. The assessment was given via computer to both in-person and fully remote students.

During the 2022-2023 school year, Brilla administered the fall, winter, and spring NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment to all grade levels. Brilla is reporting on the spring results for students performing over the 50th percentile. While the 50th percentile is considered by national reference standards to be on grade level, Brilla, based on triangulation and correlative data, believes that students over the 65th percentile are most likely to be college and career ready by the time they exit the program.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Due to Pax moving into its second year of founding, there are currently no New York State assessment scores available to report on. However, when comparing students to the Brilla NWEA targets, 73% of students met their Fall to Spring growth goal. This is a 34% increase from the year

prior. Growth rate varied by grade level: 85% of kindergarten students, 58% of first grade students, and 77% of second grade students met their NWEA Fall to Spring growth goals. This means that two grades surpassed Brilla's goal of seventy percent of students meeting their NWEA goal. The growth of students from the beginning of the year to the end of the year can be attributed to the implementation of the Math Stories block during the day, which helped to build students' conceptual understanding and problem solving, as well as the introduction of a daily spiraled math concept routine, which helped to remediate student misconceptions. Overall, 42% of students achieved in the 50th percentile or above on the Spring Math NWEA assessment, up from 29% at the beginning of the year. Kindergarten had 62% of students performing above the 50th percentile at the end of the year with a mean percentile of 60. Every grade level saw an increase in the mean percentile from the fall to Spring, with Kindergarten growing by 23 points, first grade by 2 points, and second grade by 13 points. First and second grade students had a mean average percentile falling below the 50th percentile, at 35 and 44 respectively. This data tells us that Pax must continue to move at an accelerated growth rate to ensure that gaps in students' mathematical knowledge are addressed in a way that yields absolute achievement. The introduction of the targeted math block this year, as well as daily math routine practice, will help to ensure that students are getting instruction that intentionally develops the individualized needs of each student while solidifying students' basic numeracy skills and fluency with math facts.

ACTION PLAN

Brilla has made a commitment to strengthening its mathematics program in the 2023-2024 school year. In the 2021-2022 school year, each elementary school fully implemented the revised K-2 math curriculum in order to ensure consistent exposure and mastery opportunities of foundational operations and thinking skills. In the 2022-2023 school year, a revised 3-4 math curriculum was implemented in each elementary school to ensure greater clarity, fluency and conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts. An additional math block, Math Story Problems, was implemented in K-2 across each elementary school. The Math Stories block was designed to build conceptual understanding and flexible problem solving skills through the use of a rigorous story problem that students grapple and discourse over. Moreover, the continued implementation of differentiated, small group instruction in mathematics in elementary school, we expect to make considerable gains. Additionally, our character-based initiatives programming will continue to include elements of mathematics in our regular morning meeting and advisory classes to ensure students are getting at-bats with grade-level standards. (And as indicated above, our middle school program moved to a new curriculum, Illustrative Math.)

In recognition of the expertise needed to improve and sustain a high performing school, we are designing and implementing a Targeted Mathematics Block in alignment with our innovative Targeted Literacy Block to assist students and teachers participate in personalized, differentiated and accelerated instruction opportunities across math standards. Additionally, we will be evaluating our 4th grade math curriculum to incorporate elements of Illustrative Mathematics to better prepare a route to Algebra-One-for-All by 8th grade. For the coming year we have hired a network STEM specialist and campus-based STEM instructional coaches to facilitate the execution and readiness of mathematics in our schools. In the 2023-2024 school year, we will continue to utilize these personnel as a key resource for development for our staff in math content. This team will

observe math instruction across each math block, assist school leaders in analyzing data and creating action plans and provide necessary development for coaches and teachers.

As part of our Intervention program, students who need Tier 3 academic support will continue to receive high dosage tutoring in the 2023-2024 school year and the general Targeted Math Block will support all students in mathematics, based on their performance data. The Student Services Team at each campus will also create differentiated materials to supplement our Tier 1 mathematics program that ensures inclusion and acquisition of numeracy skills is both related to the core content as well as ensuring these students make gains. Additionally, Brilla has identified programmatic weaknesses in the development of our Multi-Language Learners through multiple data sources. By ensuring that the schools have at least one MLL Specialist a more purposeful approach to programming can be implemented. Further, the instructional leadership team implemented a Learning Walk Protocol, modeled after Instructional Rounds, to develop a deeper approach to the collection and analysis of instructional moves based on differentiated data points, add coherence and structure to the professional development of school and grade level leaders, and provide ongoing content and instruction support around promising practices to all Brilla schools. These Learning Walks, now fully implemented, will provide centralized staff the opportunity to create responsive teacher and leader workshops to ensure fidelity and quality in implementation of the mathematics program.

Staff are receiving math curricular training and math intervention program training during summer onboarding, and will continue to receive targeted math professional development throughout the year. In order for students to have access to high-quality instruction that will lead to significant academic progress, teachers need to deeply understand the curriculum and content. It is critical that teachers have an understanding of the Next Generation Standards and are able to access resources that help break down the standards. Teachers need to be able to identify the difference between a core foundational standard for the grade from those standards that are simply 'supporting' or 'additional' standards. A depth of content knowledge also better prepares teachers to anticipate misconceptions, understand student pathways of learning, and allows teachers to better shift the cognitive load to students. While growth was made in this area last school year, in 2023-2024 the focus will be to deepen teachers' understanding of inquiry, questioning, and mastery in mathematics through revised, enhanced, and more deeply implemented intellectual preparation.

In 2023-2024, Brilla will increase mathematics instructional minutes across the week to better meet the needs of our students. During the intervention block students will receive 1:1 and small group instruction as well spend time working with adaptive blended learning (Zearn in elementary, Aleks Math in middle school). Data will be collected and analyzed on 3-week cycles and students will progress through a standard progression to accelerate their opportunities to be ready for on-grade-level instruction. Additionally, Brilla has added extra capacity in the Student Services department across both the elementary and middle school so that each grade level has its own learning specialist to assist in tiered interventions.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Brilla students will possess science skills at or above grade level.

BACKGROUND

At the elementary level (K-4), science curriculum is aligned to the Core Knowledge Sequence that drives ELA instruction. This alignment allows for scholars to delve into thematic units and to experience connections across contents. The Science curriculum has a commitment to engage scholars through inquiry and experiential, hands-on learning. This approach encourages scholars to think critically about the world around them by exposing them to lessons that force them to analyze and assess real world and historical content. Science lessons, while primarily project-based, include:

- **Experiments:** in these lessons, scholars follow the Inquiry Cycle to explore different problems and work to formulate conclusions and/or possible solutions. Scholars have the opportunity to conduct experiments as a whole class, in small groups, and individually.
- **Hands-on:** Scholars engage in lessons where the purpose is to learn through experience. They will create projects that challenge and engage their thinking to work, over time, toward a final project, while simultaneously utilizing math and literacy skills. To create these projects, scholars work on their process skills to take a project from start to finish. They work both independently and collaboratively on projects to also build up their communication and socialization skills.
- **Didactic (teacher-led instruction):** Scholars engage in didactic lessons where they are first taught information by an instructor or instructive material. They then continue the lesson by practicing or applying the concepts taught individually, with a partner, or in a small group.
- **Socratic Seminars:** During Socratic seminar lessons, students engage in thoughtful, critical-thinking based discussions that reinforce habits of discussion learned in other content areas. The teacher/student asks a question and then “steps back” from the discussion and allows for the students to drive the conversation.

Many science units culminate in a summative assessment that measures scholar mastery of the content from the unit. For some units, an experiential task, graded on a rubric score that is defined prior to the start to the unit and aligned to standards, serves as the ultimate measure of content and standard mastery. Teachers also utilize writing pieces or multiple-choice assessments to measure scholar learning.

Brilla’s middle school uses Amplify Science - a curriculum aligned to the Core Knowledge Sequence. The Core Knowledge Sequence spirals each year through topics in biology, chemistry, physics and earth science. Our students have been working with this curriculum since the beginning of kindergarten. Throughout elementary years, students are given a breadth of knowledge about the different fields of science. As they enter middle school, students begin to apply and analyze this knowledge through discussion, models and experimentation. The Core Knowledge Sequence is aligned with the science concepts outlined in the NYS standards for science and prepares students to deepen understanding in high school when they’re exposed to higher-level concepts in biology, chemistry and physics. The Core Knowledge sequence also aligns with Brilla’s focus on writing and literacy skills – ensuring students are exposed to a variety of nonfiction sources. This year was the first year Brilla equipped all students to take the Living Environments Regents examination in 8th grade where nearly 78% of students passed.

Brilla is cognizant of the need to ensure wide coverage of New York state science standards and works to supplement units that align to the New York State Science Standards, so scholars can be adequately prepared for the state Science Exams. The New York State Science Standards clearly outline the different knowledge students need to be successful in understanding the variety of science fields.

In 5th-8th grade, scholars are exposed to a curriculum that aligns to the Core Knowledge Sequence called Amplify Science. This curriculum emphasizes the following techniques to teaching science:

- **Do:** first-hand investigations are crucial in developing scientific understanding.
- **Talk:** student-to-student discourse and full class discussions are an integral part of the program.
- **Read:** students read age-appropriate books or scientific articles, focusing their reading activities on searching for evidence related to their hands-on investigation.
- **Write:** following real-world practices, students write scientific arguments based on evidence they've collected.

Each grade (5th-8th) takes unit assessments at the conclusion of each science unit. Additionally, experiments are graded on a rubric assessing demonstration of science knowledge as well as group work. Just as in math and ELA, other daily formative assessment tools, such as questioning and exit tickets, are also employed.

As with literacy and mathematics, professional development is led by the school's academic leadership team. While didactic instruction and content delivery was accomplished by leveraging our technology resources, all content delivery in the elementary schools was intermittent due to the revised school structures for literacy and math achievement. Middle school students still received daily science instruction.

In the 2022-2023 school year the decision to continue to prioritize literacy and math at the elementary school level remained the same. Moving into the 2023-2024 school year, the need to audit and revise the science program for K-4 is recognized and will begin. In the 5-8 science program, our model has shifted to prioritize science Living Environment in Grade 8, so, in parallel to Math, students can have an elevated Science experience with the goal of as many students as possible taking the Living Environment Regents exam. This will require us to revise our scope and sequence beginning in middle school and spiraling backwards through elementary school over the next two years.

METHOD

Brilla chose to prioritize mathematics and literacy assessment during the 2022-2023 School Year therefore did not administer any internal science assessments in grades K-2 (the grades that Brilla Pax currently serves). In the 2023-2024 school year, all students will be introduced to Science Interim Assessments as an opportunity to evaluate their learning and for teachers to target instruction.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

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ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

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ACTION PLAN

Brilla reinstated a full science curriculum and assessment cycle in the 2023-2024 school year as outlined in school years prior to the pandemic. The Brilla science curriculum will be executed and supportive of literacy initiatives to ensure student needs are being met in multiple domains throughout the day. Brilla has hired elementary and middle school STEM instructional coaches to support the ongoing work of revising the science curricula to ready students for 8th grade Living Environments Regents and to better support the teaching practices within the schools.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Goal 4: ESSA

The school will be in good standing with the state’s ESSA accountability system

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. More information on assigned accountability designations and context can be found [here](#).

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Brilla continues to be a standout school in our community and our local district.

Year	Status
2020-21	Good Standing
2021-22	Good Standing
2022-23	Good Standing

