



## **DREAM Charter School Highbridge**

# **2022-23 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

September 15th, 2023

By: Shannel Richardson, Principal

1501 Jerome Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

646.968.9558

## 2022-23 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The school leadership team 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)
Ashish Doshi	Chair	Finance/Audit
Michele Joerg	Vice Chair/Secretary	
Jonathan Schmerin	Treasurer	Finance/Audit
Peter Daneker	Trustee	
Vik Sawhney	Trustee	
Don C. Sawyer III	Trustee	

**Eve Colavito served as the Chief of Schools at DREAM Charter School from 2009 through the 2018-19 school year, the Chief Education Officer from 2019-2021, and currently serves as Co-Chief Executive Officer at DREAM. Shannel Richardson has served as the Elementary School Principal since the school opened in 2022.**

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

DREAM Charter School Highbridge is a replication of DREAM Charter School, which began in East Harlem in 2008 and currently serves students in Pre-K - 12th grades. The intent of our replicating schools was to further the successes of DREAM Charter School by replicating our most prominent characteristics of a successful first decade. We continue to engage families, offer exceptional instruction and use data to make important decisions that will bring the South Bronx the same academic results DREAM Charter School East Harlem students have been receiving since 2008.

The School opened in the fall of 2022 to students in Kindergarten. Going forward, grades will be added each year with authorizer approved enrollment as reflected in the table below:

Charter Year	Grades	Enrollment
Year 1	K	60
Year 2	K-1	120
Year 3	K-2, 6	292
Year 4	K-3, 6-7	468
Year 5	K-4, 6-8	630

The mission of all DREAM Charter Schools is to level the field by empowering all children to recognize their potential and realize their dreams.

DREAM Charter Schools’ key design elements are:

- An innovative, research-based curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, conceptual understanding, criticality, and curiosity
- A co-teaching model that reduces the teacher-to-student ratio and integrates special needs students into the general school population
- A robust data cycle that uses data to inform all aspects of teaching and learning
- A whole child approach to teaching and learning that deeply integrates social-emotional competencies, health, wellness, music and the arts into the overall school program
- An extended day and an extended year model that maximizes learning hours
- An active family engagement program that fosters parent/guardian participation, leadership and

advocacy

- A focus on teacher motivation, development, and retention
- A universal Pre-kindergarten program that ignites learning in children

### *Educational Philosophy*

Since the school's inception in 2008, DREAM Charter Schools' (DCS) curriculum has strived to center student-led learning through a constructivist pedagogy. The curriculum draws from published programs and materials modified or created by DCS. Students receive a rich educational experience driven by the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLs), academic excellence, and social-emotional health. All curricular materials are rooted in a constructivist approach to learning in which students struggle through problems and questions in order to gain a deeper, lasting understanding of the content. Over the course of DREAM Charter Schools' operation, the Network has continuously updated all core curricula to ensure close alignment with the NYSLs.

### *Instructional Planning*

In operation for 15 years, DREAM Charter Schools has refined its model and developed a set of best practices that provide instructional norms and a system for data-based planning, while allowing for teacher creativity. DCS currently provides normed scope and sequencing, assessments, and lesson plans across all schools, grades, and content areas. This ensures that every student is on track for success, teachers have access to vetted and effective planning materials, and that school academic culture is consistent across campuses. In addition to these norms, teachers are encouraged to adjust lesson plans based on coaching from academic deans and on the data they are receiving about growth in individual students and cohorts. DCS is committed to students receiving the individualized support they need to succeed. Encouraging teachers to adjust lesson plans means that special education teachers and general education classroom teachers are providing the individualized attention necessary for their students and classrooms. In tandem, if teachers are struggling with content or their general practice, coaching from academic deans and access to exemplar lesson plans provide the necessary tools for professional growth and instructional effectiveness.

### *New York State Learning Standards Alignment and Effectiveness Review*

DREAM Charter Schools aims to provide vertical and horizontal alignment across schools and grades and to ensure that the curriculum is NYSLs-aligned and supports academic growth. To achieve this, DCS uses the following approaches:

- **Intellectual Preparation:** At least once a week teachers participate in lesson study, data study, unit preview, or unit review protocols.
- **Weekly Professional Development:** DCS leadership provides weekly professional development

time for teachers and academic deans to build teacher skill in prioritized areas and review student data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in each unit, subject, and grade.

- To prioritize community building and deliver explicit social emotional instruction, all K-5 students participate in a 25 minute Morning Meeting daily.

## ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

BEDS Day enrollment:

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2022-23	53													

Enrollment of Subgroups (%):

Economically Disadvantaged (ED): 96.2%

English Language Learner (ELL): 5.7%

Students with Disabilities (SWD): 22.6%

## GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students at DREAM Charter School Highbridge will become proficient in reading and writing of the English language.

#### BACKGROUND

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

At DREAM Charter Schools (DCS), we believe in a structured literacy approach that equips students with automatic and fluent word recognition skills in each strand of Scarborough’s Reading Rope: phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition. The work of teaching students to learn to read in grades K-2 must be systematic, explicit, cumulative, diagnostic, responsive, and multisensory. It must be grounded in high quality, comprehensive instructional materials. CKLA Skills, the program DREAM uses to address word recognition, systematically and explicitly teaches foundational skills throughout kindergarten, first grade, and second grade.

It is our belief that great language comprehension programming prioritizes content-rich, increasingly complex, appropriately challenging, culturally and historically responsive texts and provides access to these texts for ALL students. Instruction in language comprehension builds students' vocabulary, background knowledge, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge. Students are able to monitor their comprehension, relate sentences to one another, and relate sentences to the things they already know--and they must demonstrate increasing skill in reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening.

Our lessons are not "skills-driven," but rather "meaning-driven." Teachers pose deep text-dependent and text-specific questions, facilitate rigorous evidence-based discussion grounded in text, and provide high-quality feedback on writing to accelerate learning for all students--particularly those with learning differences. Our vision for the language comprehension block is that students become increasingly independent readers and writers who spend the majority of the lesson engaging with the texts collaboratively and independently. Implementing Wit & Wisdom in grades K-5, our language comprehension curriculum, will provide students with opportunities to engage in meaning-driven learning experiences.

In grades K-2, DCS administers NWEA MAP Growth assessments in both ELA and Math. The NWEA MAP assessments in Math and ELA are aligned with NYSLs (as are the NYS tests) and nationally benchmarked. Both aspects allow for everyone at DCS—from head of school to the student—to understand how students (individually and collectively) are progressing toward success on grade level standards. Next year (school year 2023-24), K-2 students will take the iReady Diagnostic in place of NWEA MAP Growth assessments and we will implement NWEA MAP Fluency as a universal screener and oral reading fluency assessment to replace Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in our K-2 literacy assessment strategy.

### METHOD

DREAM Charter School administered the Spring 2023 NWEA ELA MAP to all participating Kindergarten students in 2022-23.

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

45% of DREAM Charter School Highbridge scholars performed at or above the 50th percentile on the Spring 2023 NWEA ELA MAP Assessment.

In school year 2022-23, DREAM took steps to better align our K-5 literacy program with the science of reading by implementing two new curricula - CKLA Skills for phonics and Wit & Wisdom for language comprehension. The focus and priority for school year 2022-23 was strong implementation of our phonics curriculum, CKLA Skills. In school year 2023-24 we will shift our focus to strengthening Wit & Wisdom implementation which we believe will improve our end of year results in this area.

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### Goal 2: Mathematics

All students at DREAM Charter School Highbridge will become proficient in Mathematics.

#### BACKGROUND

To develop scholars' in-depth mathematical understanding, DREAM Charter Schools uses an inquiry-based math curriculum built on the belief that scholars need to understand problems and develop their own problem-solving strategies. Scholars are challenged to reflect upon and defend their strategies, analyze the strategies of others, and explain mathematical concepts and ideas. DCS achieves this through three mathematics blocks per day: Story Problem, Math Workshop, and Math Routines. Within each block, teachers facilitate meaningful discussion through careful questioning to help scholars develop and solidify their own understandings about math. The math curriculum is rooted in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), which builds students' intuition and number sense. Portions of Investigations are also used to guide math instruction and supplemented with in-house materials and alterations.

#### METHOD

During 2022-23, the school primarily used the following exam to assess K-2 student growth and achievement in mathematics: NWEA MAP Growth

#### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

67% of DREAM Charter School Highbridge scholars performed at or above the 50th percentile on the Spring 2023 NWEA mathematics MAP assessment.

## GOAL 3: SCIENCE

### Goal 3: Science

All students at DREAM Charter School Highbridge will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

#### BACKGROUND

DREAM Charter School Highbridge opening in fall 2022 with two Kindergarten sections. Due to resource constraints, science instruction was delivered by classroom teachers using Wit and Wisdom which has thematic units in Science and Social Studies.

Beginning with the school year 2023-24, DREAM Charter School Highbridge will have a full-time science teacher who delivers science lessons from an inquiry-based curriculum.

Method

DREAM Charter School Highbridge Kindergarten students were not assessed in science in the school year 2022-23.

## GOAL 4: ESSA

### Goal 4: ESSA

The school will remain in good standing according to the state’s ESSA accountability.

#### 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

DREAM Charter School Highbridge achieved this measure.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2020-21	n/a
2021-22	n/a
2022-23	Good Standing