

Empower Charter School

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT

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By: Explore Schools Inc.

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EMPOWER

CHARTER SCHOOL

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Empower Charter School prepared this 2021-22 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the charter school’s board of trustees:

Trustee’s Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g., chair, treasurer, secretary)	Committees (e.g., finance, executive)
Hank Mannix	Chair	COVID-19
Angie Brice Thomas	Member	Accountability, DEI
Lindsay Danon	Member	Accountability
Lindsay Matovich	Treasurer	Finance, DEI
Shawn Jenkins	Member	DEI
Nekeisha Afful	Parent Representative	Finance
Tiffany Curtis	Member	
Kevin Bryant	Member	

Jonathan Carrington and Janel Samuel- Baker have served as the Co-Principals since 2020 and 2022 respectively.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Empower Charter School is a K–8 public charter school in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Empower opened in 2010 and graduated its first class of 8th graders in 2016 to some of the top college-preparatory high schools in New York City. While Empower’s mission continues to be to provide students with the academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college-preparatory high school, we have honed the vision and priorities for how we go about achieving that mission. Our vision for instruction includes:

- We view excellent curriculum and instruction as a pathway to equity and a response to the opportunity gap by providing our scholars with access and opportunities to succeed
- Our curriculum is culturally responsive, rigorous, and standards aligned
- We believe children are natural problem solvers, and so we value teaching that balances critical thinking with learning new skills and knowledge
- We cultivate student investment by nurturing curiosity, providing high-quality feedback, and using data to drive our decision making

In the 2021-22 school year, Empower served 441 students as of BEDS Day (October 6, 2021).

For the 2021-22 school year, Empower Charter School was fully in person. The focus for the year was on ensuring school was a supportive, welcoming, and joyful learning environment for all students. Staff focused on implementing a comprehensive plan to address unfinished learning and other new challenges brought on by the pandemic. One key tenant of the plan to address unfinished teaching was the idea of acceleration. Using data, teachers identified the gaps in student knowledge needed for the current unit of instruction and proactively built addressing those gaps into daily lessons. Internal assessments were used to measure growth throughout the year.

Empower introduced new family and student satisfaction surveys to gain insight into how families were managing the return to in-person learning as well as to ensure the new initiatives being introduced were aligned with what families and students wanted. Finally, new student culture programs were implemented to focus on restorative justice thus decreasing suspension rates.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2017-18	59	63	58	61	60	62	56	54	57	530
2018-19	54	59	58	62	58	59	59	51	49	509
2019-20	43	59	55	53	63	48	62	59	50	492
2020-21	46	43	54	55	53	64	55	60	59	489
2021-22	29	47	37	50	51	51	64	52	60	441

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

BACKGROUND

For the 2021-22 school year, Empower Charter School continued to use the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Skills and Knowledge Strands for grades K–2 and Expeditionary Learning in grades 3–8. In addition, the school reserved a block for independent reading, and students who are reading below grade level received targeted instruction using mCLASS intervention, Just Words, Wilson or Leveled Literacy Intervention. Students who are Multi-Lingual Learners (MLLs) were offered SIOP. Additionally, Empower’s students received four intensive periods of Close Reading where they read short grade-level texts and analyzed how the craft and structure moves the author used in service of the main idea and deepest meaning of the text. Students were taught to closely read a cold text, identify the genre and central idea, and then analyze the text throughout all subject areas. ESL’s Program Team continued to provide support directly to Empower’s leaders and teachers.

For the youngest students, Empower used the mCLASS DIBELS 8 assessment as the central literacy assessment in K-2. Data from the assessment was used to inform responsive instruction across core content blocks and SGI. Empower also continued use of Amplify Reading to provide personalized instructional support. Amplify Reading is an interactive, game-based platform that targets specific literacy skills for students based on their performance on the DIBELS 8.

Empower continued to use mCLASS Intervention as an additional curricular structure to provide enhanced support for students in response to mCLASS data. The mCLASS Intervention program groups students into SGI groups based on the highest-leverage skill they need support on, and provides teachers with detailed scope and sequence and lessons for 2 weeks of intensive instruction with embedded progress monitoring.

For 3-8 students, Empower administered i-Ready diagnostic assessments during the beginning of the year, middle of the year and end of the year. These assessments determined beginning of the year RTI groups and well as informed small group intervention and cross curricular differentiated supports throughout the year.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State English language arts examination for grades 3-8.

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts (“ELA”) assessment to students in 3rd through 8th grades in spring 2022. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level at the time of the exam, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year).

2021-22 State English Language Arts Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Other reason	
3	44	0	0	0	4	48
4	52	0	0	0	3	55
5	49	0	0	0	0	49
6	59	0	0	0	4	63
7	53	0	0	0	1	54
8	58	0	0	0	1	59
All	315	0	0	0	14	328

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on 2021-22 State English Language Arts Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	47.7%	44	45.9%	37
4	23.1%	52	19.5%	41
5	22.4%	49	20.0%	40
6	49.2%	59	51.0%	51
7	49.1%	53	50.0%	44
8	63.8%	58	63.0%	54
All	43.2%	315	43.1%	267

Students in at least their 2nd year at Empower did not meet this absolute measure. Students at Empower missed this measure by 31.9 percentage points. While Empower did not achieve this measure, the results were similar to the most recent state exam data in 2018-19, suggesting that the learning loss caused by the pandemic has been addressed. Additionally, upper school students in grades 6 through 8 all made gains over their 2018-19 results.

¹ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Although students enrolled in at least their second year at Empower did not meet this absolute measure, they did produce results comparable similar to the previous year for which there is data, 2018-19. We believe the multiple changes implemented in recent years, including our adoption of Expeditionary Learning modules and the updates we have subsequently made to the curriculum along with strengthening our approach to Close Reading have had a positive impact on achievement overall despite the impact of the pandemic. Leading up to and through the pandemic, we used data and targeted feedback to ensure the implementation and updates to the new EL curriculum best met the needs of our students. Lastly, we have focused on teachers being very clear on the evidence of students thinking (CFS = Criteria for Success) they are looking for in student work and giving targeted and actionable feedback, prevented a drop in proficiency.

In order to ensure student proficiency grows from this year to next, please see the Action Plan section where we address the lack of explicit instruction around taking the NY State Exams in our program this year and we go into details on the differences this year.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index ("PI") on the State English language arts exam will meet that year's state Measure of Interim Progress ("MIP") set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.

The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.

METHOD

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.²

² Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

We cannot provide narratives until district scores are released.

2021-22 State English Language Arts Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	45.9%	37	TBD	TBD
4	19.5%	41	TBD	TBD
5	20.0%	40	TBD	TBD
6	51.0%	51	TBD	TBD
7	50.0%	44	TBD	TBD
8	63.0%	54	TBD	TBD
All	43.1%	267	TBD	TBD

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

The Institute conducts a comparative performance analysis which compares the school's performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. Given the timing of the state's release of data necessary to produce this analysis, the 2021-22 results are not yet available.

As such, The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

Goal 1: Growth Measure

Each year, under the state's Growth Model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.

The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

INTERNAL EXAM RESULTS

During 2021-22, in addition to the New York State 3rd- 8th grade exams, the school primarily used the following assessment to measure student growth and achievement in ELA: i-Ready

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2021-22 i-Ready ELA Assessment End of Year Results

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.	All students	100%	325	130%	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.	Low initial achievers	110%	158	147%	Yes
Measure 3: Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities ³	140% ⁴	64	70%	No

End of Year Performance on 2021-22 i-Ready ELA Assessment By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested
3	22.9%	48	25.0%	40
4	30.2%	53	23.3%	43
5	14.9%	47	10.5%	38
6	14.1%	64	14.6%	55
7	14.8%	54	13.6%	44
8	17.0%	59	16.4%	55
All	18.8%	325	17.1%	275

³ Target should reflect the median percent of progress to Annual Typical Growth for all general education students. In the case that the school elects to measure the achievement of a different subpopulation, the target should reflect the median percent of progress to Annual Typical Growth of all students at the school not included in that subpopulation.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

End of Year Growth on 2021-22 i-Ready ELA Assessment By All Students

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	112%	48
4	77%	53
5	93	47
6	208%	64
7	153%	54
8	133%	59
All	130%	325

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

For iReady there are three additional measures. Empower Charter School met two of the three measures, including the growth goals for all students and students starting the year two or more grade levels behind. With regard to all students, Empower set a goal for median percent progress toward annual growth of 100% or greater. Empower exceeded this goal with 130% median progress toward annual growth. For students who started the year 2 or more grade levels behind, this was even higher at 147%.

Empower did not meet the third measure. The third measure focuses on students with disabilities making the same growth as general education students.

Goal 1: Additional Measure: Growth

85% of students in KG-2 will reach or exceed their mCLASS growth goal, or meet/exceed their grade level benchmark from 21-22 Beginning of Year to 21-22 End of Year.

METHOD

Using the mCLASS assessment hosted by Amplify, students are tested regarding their early literacy skills at various points throughout the school year. Growth goals are determined by the platform based on beginning of year assessment/diagnostic and results are gathered in the spring as part of an end of year assessment.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on mCLASS EOY By All Students

Grades	All Students	
	Met Measure	Number Tested
KG	81.3%	32
1	82.6%	46
2	94.3%	35
All	85.8%	113

Empower met this measure overall, including particularly strong results in 2nd grade. Kindergarten and 1st grade both came within 4 percentage points of meeting the measure.

Goal 1: Additional Growth Measure

When comparing internal dress rehearsal data (multiple choice questions only), we will see schoolwide growth between 18-19 and the same assessment administered in 21-22.

METHOD

Students in grades 3-8 are tested on a simulated state test assessment focusing on multiple choice responses. This assessment was administered in both 18-19 and 21-22 to measure growth and trends between the years.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on ELA Dress Rehearsal By All Students in 18-19 and 21-22

Grades	All Students in 18-19		All Students in 21-22	
	Met Measure	Number Tested	Met Measure	Number Tested
3	24.1%	58	8.0%	50
4	10.5%	57	11.1%	54
5	30.9%	55	26.0%	50
6	1.6%	57	14.3%	63
7	12.2%	49	13.2%	53
8	10.2%	49	20.7%	58
All	15.1%	325	15.5%	328

Empower met this measure overall, including particularly strong growth in 6th and 8th grade. There are opportunities for improvement in several other grades, where the percent proficient was either similar or slightly below 18-19 levels (no individual grade was lower by more than 17 percentage points).

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Overall, of the six measures that could be evaluated given current data, Empower met four of them while falling short in two others. The outcome of the comparative measure regarding district scores will be determined once city and statewide data is released later this year.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Meet
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate PI on the state’s English language arts exam will meet that year’s state MIP as set forth in the state’s ESSA accountability system.	N/A
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	TBD
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.	N/A
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.	N/A
Growth	Each year, the school’s median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3rd through 8th grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.	Met
Growth	Each year, the school’s median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.	Met
Growth	Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Did Not Meet
Growth	85% of students in KG-2 will reach or exceed their mCLASS growth goal, or meet/exceed their grade level benchmark from 21-22 Beginning of Year to 21-22 End of Year.	Met
Growth	When comparing internal dress rehearsal data (multiple choice questions only), we will see growth between 18-19 schoolwide and the same assessment administered in 21-22.	Met

ACTION PLAN

Curriculum

Empower’s early literacy curriculum focuses on developing phonological awareness, building content knowledge and vocabulary, and developing comprehension skills. Empower uses the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program as the main curriculum. CKLA has

two program strands: Knowledge and Skills. CKLA's two strand program is research-based and provides extensive support for students as they become critical readers and writers.

According to CKLA, the **Knowledge** Strand emphasizes comprehension skill development in a language- and knowledge-rich context. The primary instructional activity is a read-aloud that exposes students to complex texts, related to a systematically ordered set of topics, or domains. The materials are designed to build knowledge in areas of history, science, literature, and geography. The lesson activities emphasize vocabulary acquisition, build comprehension skills through interactive discussions during and after reading, and use writing to extend and explore the texts and their content. The **Skills** strand is a comprehensive, explicit, and systematic phonics program designed to build decoding, fluency, and writing/spelling skills.

In addition to the CKLA Program, Empower's K-2 literacy program also includes: Independent Reading, Small Group Instruction, Play Labs, and Interactive Read Aloud as supplemental supports for comprehension development, skill practice, and discourse.

In 22-23, Empower is piloting K-2 literacy programs designed to maximize students' practice in service of their literacy and language development. The purpose of this initiative is to support adjusting K-2 curricular programming and the resulting student experience to be better aligned with the mission and vision at Explore Schools. This shift will provide students with more resources representative of their backgrounds, provide explicit writing instruction with sustained opportunities for engaging in writing across genres, and elevate critical thinking and comprehension skills. To ensure success, mCLASS Dibels 8 will be used to measure expected increases in student proficiency and growth. In addition, we will continue to use the mCLASS Intervention program to inform targeted, small group instruction across the grade band based on our benchmark assessment results, as well as leverage our personalized digital reading program Amplify Reading.

3-8

Our literacy program is designed to help our students become successful readers and life-long learners who are prepared to thrive in college-preparatory high school programs and beyond.

Specifically, Empower uses Expeditionary Learning (EL) as the primary resource for teaching literacy in grades 3-8. Expeditionary Learning includes both reading and writing instruction as well as explicitly imbedding the Speaking and Listening Standards. The curriculum is designed to address the three key components of the standards: (1) regular practice with complex text and its academic language, (2) reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from both literary and informational text, and (3) building knowledge through content-rich non-fiction. Based on the latest research supporting the power of background knowledge, EL modules are designed around topics that help students build background knowledge. Modules also include a blend of fiction and non-fiction complex texts. In each module, students have the opportunity to dig deeply into a high-interest topic by analyzing complex, grade-level texts and then completing performance tasks and assessments aligned to the standards. In addition, we offer students four periods per week of Close Reading where they read short grade-level texts, dissect the main ideas and craft and structure

moves in order to build independence as readers. In 21-22, Empower also used i-Ready as a diagnostic assessment tool as well as to progress monitor RTI and small group instruction.

Writing will be a major focus for the 2022 – 23 school year. We are improving our approach to writing both within our EL curriculum and across content areas. This will help us utilize EL to its full capacity, highlighting the writing instruction it already contains as well as supplementing when needed. This will all be in service of improving collaboration and consistency in writing across content areas and throughout data cycles.

In the 22-23 school year, we are focusing on improving the quality of texts students engage with daily, providing more prescriptive and detailed guidance around teaching craft and structure, and providing more structure around strategic reading plan instructions. Similarly, to improvements in K – 2, it is important our students see themselves reflected in the texts they read. We are also making updates to our Craft and Structure guidance because we know that being able to identify craft and structure moves improves students' ability to both read and write. Finally, by improving instruction around the strategic reading plan, our students will be able to consistently implement their strategic reading plan effectively, with any text.

Special Populations of Students (MLLs, Students with Disabilities):

During 2021-22 Explore School's used small group instruction periods, integrated co-teaching, and SETSS to support students with disabilities and multilingual learners. The primary resource for SGI in grades K–2 is mCLASS intervention. This intervention provides data-based targeted instruction and embedded progress monitoring for students in need of targeted support in reading, aligned to the mCLASS assessment. In grades 3-8, Leveled Literacy Intervention, (LLI) and Wilson are the primary intervention resources for decoding and comprehension for students who are below grade level in reading. In addition, small group instruction includes targeted close reading groups and groups aligned with iReady data based on student need.

In the 22-23 school year, we are focusing on amplifying universally designed learning to remove barriers so that rigorous content is accessible for all students. Additionally, aligned with this goal, we are focusing on ensuring that all co-taught classrooms are characterized by parity, shared vision, intentional instructional delivery, and shared planning and data analysis. We are continuing to utilize research-based interventions such as mCLASS, LLI, Just Words, and Wilson during small group instruction and are focusing on utilizing progress monitoring data aligned to the programs and assessments to ensure students are adequately progressing towards their growth goals.

Approach to data-driven instruction

In the 2021-22 school year, we implemented numerous data systems and structures to provide school leaders and teachers with actionable data to accelerate student learning. We've continued using a comprehensive data platform, PowerBI, to provide school leaders earlier access to assessment data that can be analyzed and compared across grades, schools, terms, and years. We use a set of common benchmarks and measures for student performance in ELA and math. In collaboration with the school's leadership, the network sets End of Year (EOY) measures tied to official assessments. They include:

- Math and ELA EOY Interim Assessments
- iReady
- mClass, and
- NYSESLAT

We did not name the ELA and Math NYS exams as a an EOY measure for 21-22, in service of focusing on unfinished learning through the end of. This will change in 22-23.

Aligned to the EOY measures, the network also sets cycle measures that identify intervals for improvement on internal assessments in order to be on track to meet EOY measures. In the 2022-23 school year, we will use our Interim Assessments for math in place of unit tests.

Moving into the 2022-23 school year, we will prioritize the following End of Year (EOY) measures:

- the mathematics and English language arts state exams (returning to this in 22-23),
- mCLASS
- iReady (Reading)
- Reading Quizzes
- Math Interim Assessments
- Bi-weekly math Quizzes

Progress toward benchmarks is tightly monitored, through bi-weekly data tracking of student outputs aligned to each measure, and through teacher observations, feedback, and professional development aligned to a focused set of teacher inputs. Almost all network-driven professional development and resource creation is aligned to the benchmarks with student outputs and teacher inputs identified termly. Student outputs are defined as observable student behaviors that indicate progress toward achieving the cycle and EOY measures. Teacher inputs are defined as observable strategies and actions teachers can take that will lead to the student outputs.

In 2022-2023, there is a renewed commitment to professional development and oversight of data driven planning. Teachers and leaders facilitate formal data driven planning around key assessments. This planning includes reflection on progress toward measures, studying the assessment results to determine what students already know and what they don't yet know, data driven lesson planning to close gaps, reassessment and reflection.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

BACKGROUND

Empower's approach to math instruction prioritizes the three key elements of the standards: 1) Deep dive into few topics, 2) Coherence: linking topics and thinking across grades, and 3) Rigor: pursuing conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application with equal intensity. Empower implements research-based curricular resources that best support this vision for mathematical instruction. In grades K–8, Empower uses Navigator math. ESI's Program Team continued to provide support directly to Empower's leaders and teachers.

In the 2021-22 school year, Empower focused on prioritizing the most important work of the grade while tackling unfinished learning using “acceleration,” the process of identifying student gaps in understanding relevant to the upcoming unit and building in “just in time” instruction to help close learning gaps in real time. In service of this approach, Empower made significant changes to our pacing calendars, assessment strategies, and our approach to test prep. Instead of using interim assessments, Empower switched to unit tests for the first time. While unit tests allowed teachers to build “just in time” instruction, it did not give staff a clear idea of how students were performing in comparison to previous years. However, the unit tests did provide access to comparison with the Navigator cohort of peer institutions. The comparison data consistently showed Empower students outperforming the average by at least 10 percentage points. In order to build in additional instructional time, Empower did not provide weekly quizzes or any formal test prep leading up to the state exams. Instead, this extra time was used to directly address the unfinished learning caused by the pandemic. It was clear this approach would result in a dip on the math state exam and the intention was to use the internal EOY exam to measure progress. In support of all these changes, ESI’s Program Team worked to ensure Empower leaders had the tools, resources, and access to high-quality trainings for math instruction.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State Mathematics examination for grades 3-8.

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program Mathematics assessment to students in 3rd through 8th grades in spring 2022. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level at the time of the exam, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year).

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2021-22 State Mathematics Exam Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁵				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Other reason	
3	45	0	0	0	4	49
4	53	0	0	0	3	56
5	49	0	0	0	0	49
6	64	0	0	0	2	66
7	52	0	0	0	1	53
8	59	0	0	0	1	60
All	322	0	0	0	11	333

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on 2021-22 State Mathematics Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	68.9%	45	67.6%	37
4	26.4%	53	11.9%	42
5	16.3%	49	15.0%	40
6	32.8%	64	32.7%	55
7	28.8%	52	34.9%	43
8	20.3%	59	21.8%	55
All	31.4%	322	29.8%	272

Overall, Empower students in at least their 2nd year did not meet this measure for Math. Empower missed this measure by 45.2 percentage points. While 7th grade saw significant growth of 2nd year students compared to the general student population, most grade levels saw comparable scores, with 4th grade being an outlier where 2nd year students underperformed the general student population.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index ("PI") on the state mathematics exam will meet that year's state Measure of Interim Progress ("MIP") set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.

⁵ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.

METHOD

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the public school district of comparison. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.⁶

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

2021-22 State Mathematics Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at or Above Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	67.6%	37	TBD	TBD
4	11.9%	42	TBD	TBD
5	15.0%	40	TBD	TBD
6	32.7%	55	TBD	TBD
7	34.9%	43	TBD	TBD
8	21.8%	55	TBD	TBD
All	29.8%	272	TBD	TBD

We cannot provide narratives until district scores are released.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

The Institute conducts a comparative performance analysis which compares the school's performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. Given the timing of the state's release of data necessary to produce this analysis, the 2021-22 results are not yet available.

As such, The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

⁶ Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Goal 2: Growth Measure

Each year, under the state’s Growth Model, the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.

The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

INTERNAL EXAM RESULTS

During 2021-22, in addition to the New York State 3rd- 8th grade exams, the school(s) primarily used the following assessment to measure student growth and achievement in mathematics: Curriculum based

2021-22 Math Interim (IA) EOY Results

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: 85% of students will increase their 21-22 EOY Math IA % correct by at least 30 points over their 20-21 EOY Math IA or meet the grade level benchmark.	All students	85%	414	40.6%	No

Performance on Math IA EOY

By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Met Measure	Number Tested	Met Measure	Number Tested
KG	37.5%	32	NA	NA
1	42.9%	42	14.3%	29
2	47.1%	34	50.0%	30
3	52.4%	42	55.9%	34
4	17.8%	51	11.9%	42
5	31.8%	44	29.0%	38
6	54.1%	61	56.6%	53
7	55.1%	49	58.1%	43
8	28.8%	59	29.1%	55
All	40.6%	414	41.7%	324

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Empower did not meet the internal measure of 85% of students increasing their 21-22 EOY Math IA % correct by at least 30 points over their 20-21 EOY Math IA (or meet the grade level benchmark). Though we fell short by 44.4 percentage points, we also recognized that the goal of 85% was a very ambitious goal and is being reevaluated for the 22-23 school year.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Goal 2: Additional Growth Measure

When comparing internal dress rehearsal data (multiple choice questions only), we will see growth between 18-19 and the same assessment administered in 21-22.

METHOD

Students in grades 3-8 are tested on a simulated state test assessment focusing on multiple choice responses. This assessment was administered in both 18-19 and 21-22 to measure growth and trends between the years.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on Math Dress Rehearsal
By All Students in 18-19 and 21-22

Grades	All Students in 18-19		All Students in 21-22	
	Met Measure	Number Tested	Met Measure	Number Tested
3	48.3%	58	42.0%	50
4	36.4%	55	16.7%	54
5	48.2%	56	20.0%	50
6	35.1%	57	38.1%	63
7	51.0%	49	56.6%	53
8	44.9%	49	39.7%	58
All	43.8%	324	35.7%	328

EVALUATION

Empower did not meet this measure overall, and fell short by 8.1 percentage points. However, individual grades, specifically 6th and 7th outperformed their 18-19 results in the 21-22 school year. There are opportunities for growth in the lower grades, which all fell short of the measure to some degree.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Overall, Empower did not meet any of the three measures that could be evaluated given current data. The outcome of the comparative measure regarding district scores will be determined once city and statewide data is released later this year.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State Mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Meet
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate PI on the state's mathematics exam will meet that year's state MIP as set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.	N/A

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	TBD
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.	N/A
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the target of 50.	N/A
Growth	85% of students will increase their 21-22 EOY Math IA % correct by at least 30 points over their 20-21 EOY Math IA or meet the grade level benchmark.	Did Not Meet
Growth	When comparing internal dress rehearsal data (multiple choice questions only), we will see growth between 18-19 and the same assessment administered in 21-22.	Did Not Meet

ACTION PLAN

To address the dip in performance on the math state exam, Empower is making the following changes in the 2022-23 school year:

- Empower is shifting the scope and sequence to ensure that all tested standards are covered prior to the state exams. This restructuring of the scope and sequence will make sure that the content on the state exam is not new or unfamiliar to students.
- Empower will use its interim assessments from previous years to benchmark student progress. As described above, Empower moved away from using the interim assessment to measure progress in favor of shorter, more frequent unit assessments. However, as described previously, those assessments did not provide staff the means to measure year-over-year growth. Returning to the interim assessments will better inform Empower on student progress and allow for more accurate data driven instruction.
- Returning to all network bi-weekly quizzes in grades 3-8. This will give teachers and leaders frequent data points to ensure they are on the right track and can adjust as needed. These quizzes will inform small group math instruction.
- With support and resources from ESI, Empower will provide a more explicit approach to teaching problem solving called the "strategic math plan," which is rooted in visible behaviors observable in student work. This shift will help students understand and internalize math problems and then be able to make a plan for how to solve them.
- Finally, Empower will provide opportunities for students to practice testing, including stamina and pacing.

With the adoption of the Navigator curriculum, Explore elevated the level of rigor in math instruction for its students. Below, we outline the additional steps Explore took by grade band to continue to improve the quality of math instruction this past year:

- **Grades K–4:** In 2021-22 and 2022-23, Empower continued implementation of Achievement First's Math Stories curriculum in grades K–4. Math Stories is a curriculum that uses strategically designed routines to help students develop a deep number sense and flexibility with numbers in order to support complex problem solving. Math Stories also provides

students with an access point into basic math operations by using real life topics familiar to students.

- **Grades 3–8:** Empower’s 3–8 grade math teachers participated in robust training designed to deepen their understanding of the math content and the critical thinking work students must engage with to show mastery of the standards. In addition, Empower offered additional math intervention blocks to allow teachers to further assess student needs and employ timely and effective interventions in the 2021-22 school year. Interventions ensure students struggling with grade-level standards continue to get exposure to grade-level content while still remediating lagging skills.
- **Special Populations:** During the 2021-22 school year, Empower’s Special Populations team continued to focus on responsive math groups to provide small group instruction. The aim was for small group instruction and SETSS to be aligned to the current classroom curriculum and aligned to data. To support remediation, Empower will be using Goal Book which uses vertical progression, allowing teachers to scaffold to reach the priority skills while also providing additional practice for students. Empower also focuses on using the aspect of rigor in the standard and the concrete, pictorial, abstract pathways to provide targeted support. In 2022-23, we will be piloting intervention programs designed to provide additional supports for students who need it.

Approach to data-driven instruction

In the 2021-22 school year, we implemented numerous data systems and structures to provide school leaders and teachers with actionable data to accelerate student learning. We’ve continued using a comprehensive data platform, PowerBI, to provide school leaders earlier access to assessment data that can be analyzed and compared across grades, schools, terms, and years. We use a set of common benchmarks and measures for student performance in ELA and math. In collaboration with the school’s leadership, the network sets End of Year (EOY) measures tied to official assessments. They include:

- Math and ELA EOY Interim Assessments
- iReady
- mClass, and
- NYSESLAT

We did not name the ELA and Math NYS exams as a an EOY measure for 21-22, in service of focusing on unfinished learning through the end of. This will change in 22-23.

Aligned to the EOY measures, the network also sets cycle measures that identify intervals for improvement on internal assessments in order to be on track to meet EOY measures. In the 2022-23 school year, we will use our Interim Assessments for math in place of unit tests.

Moving into the 2022-23 school year, we will prioritize the following End of Year (EOY) measures:

- the mathematics and English language arts state exams (returning to this in 22-23),
- mCLASS
- iReady (Reading)
- Reading Quizzes
- Math Interim Assessments

- Bi-weekly math Quizzes

Progress toward benchmarks is tightly monitored, through bi-weekly data tracking of student outputs aligned to each measure, and through teacher observations, feedback, and professional development aligned to a focused set of teacher inputs. Almost all network-driven professional development and resource creation is aligned to the benchmarks with student outputs and teacher inputs identified termly. Student outputs are defined as observable student behaviors that indicate progress toward achieving the cycle and EOY measures. Teacher inputs are defined as observable strategies and actions teachers can take that will lead to the student outputs.

In 2022-2023, there is a renewed commitment to professional development and oversight of data driven planning. Teachers and leaders facilitate formal data driven planning around key assessments. This planning includes reflection on progress toward measures, studying the assessment results to determine what students already know and what they don't yet know, data driven lesson planning to close gaps, reassessment and reflection.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

BACKGROUND

In 2021-22, we employed full-time K–5 and 6-8 science teachers. Empower's science curriculum is designed to promote inquiry, problem solving skills, and exposure to 21st century learning and skills. Science teachers develop their own lessons based on best practices in the field, and they partnered with school leaders to ensure the lessons were rigorous and aligned to NYS standards.

Empower introduced piloted programs in specific grades to measure the alignment of potential science curricula. Following the piloting phase, Empower prepared to introduce a fully aligned K–5 curriculum for the 22-23 school year.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State science examination.

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4th and 8th grade in spring 2022. The school converted each student's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Charter School Performance on 2021-22 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency of Students in At Least 2 nd Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	53.7%	41
8	23.5%	51
All	37.0%	92

Empower did not meet this measure. Empower 4th and 8th grade students in at least their 2nd year achieved 37% proficiency. However, many 8th grade students did not take the 8th grade science exam, and instead sat for the Living Environment Regents, to great success, which will be elaborated on in the additional measures section.

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.

The Institute does not require charters to report on this measure for 2021-22.

Goal 3: Additional Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested 8th grade students will perform at proficiency on the New York State Living Environment Regents.

METHOD

A subset of students in 8th grade received high school Living Environment curriculum throughout the 21-22 school year and sat for the June 2022 Living Environment Regents. Proficiency is defined by scoring a 65% or higher.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Performance on a Regents Science Exam Of 8th Grade All Students by Year

Grade	Year	Regents Exam	Percent Passing with a 65	Number Tested
8	2017-18	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	2018-19	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	2021-22	Living Environment	100%	10

We are proud that we have met our goals on the Living Environment Regents. Looking toward the 22-23 school year, we are looking for a greater percentage of students earning a mastery score of at

least 80% and increasing the percent of students prepared to sit for the Living Environment Regents at the end of year.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Overall, of the two measures that could be evaluated given current data, Empower met one of them while falling short of the other.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State science examination.	Did Not Meet
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the school district of comparison.	N/A
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested 8th grade students will perform at proficiency on the New York State Living Environment Regents.	Met

ACTION PLAN

Science education has become a central focal point of Explore School’s strategic planning. In a world that has become so complex, science knowledge and skills are a necessity for comprehending current events and making informed decisions. Science is at the center for our abilities to innovate, lead and create in a world that is evolving quickly.

We are striving to support our students to develop scientific knowledge, skills, and thinking. We will do this by:

- Increasing the time and frequency of science coursework across K–5 to allow for developing and deepening of scientific learning.
- Adopting a NGSS science standards aligned science curriculum in K–5 to support the three dimensions of science learning: disciplinary core ideas (content), scientific and engineering practices, and cross-cutting concepts. Using NGSS science standards and the 5E method to teaching science as the shared framework for teaching and learning.
- Creating shared learning experiences for teachers to develop content and pedagogical practice with the three dimensions of science teaching and learning.
- Leveraging shared materials, resources, and assessments to support students having similarly rich, standards-aligned learning across all campuses.

For our 6–8 program, Empower is continuing to build a robust, high-quality science program that gives students a 21st century science experience. Empower Upper will continue to use Amplify Science, a high-quality curriculum that blends hands-on investigations with literacy rich tools to support students. Also rated highly by ED Reports, we expect that Amplify Science will help support Empower teachers in providing high-quality instruction in science. All 8th grade students at Empower will have the opportunity to take the Living Environment course, culminating with the Regents exam for qualifying students. In 2022-23, all science teachers will continue to participate in

network-wide professional development sessions during our staff in-service days. Additionally, Living Environment teachers will participate in periodic collaborative planning meetings to prepare for each unit of instruction.

In our K-5 program, we are introducing a shared science curriculum and vision that will yield:

- Students having access, time, and experiences with NGSS science standards-aligned teaching and learning.
 - Increasing science in grades K – 2 to four times a week for half a year
 - Increasing science in grades 3 – 5 to four times a week for a full year
- Explicit alignment of teaching and learning to NGSS science standards with a shared science curriculum implemented with common pedagogical practices that incorporate the three dimensions of science learning.
- Proficiency of grade-level science content and performance as demonstrated on (and not limited to) written assessments, practices, and presentations

We will measure the success of our curricular implementation through the following measures:

- Growth on our observation checklist rubric ratings from far from approaching to approaching.
- 100% of students who sit for Living Environment Regents pass
- 75% class average on unit assessments
- Culminating network-wide science fair projects.

The network will support Empower with leadership coaching, resource development, biweekly PLCs, and assessment creation and analysis.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent changes to the state's testing, accountability, and federal reporting requirements, the 2021-22 school accountability statuses are the same as those assigned for the 2020-21 school year. Assigned accountability designations and further context can be found [here](#).

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

2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school's status under the state accountability system.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

We have met this measure; Empower Charter School has been in good standing with ESSA for at least the last 3 school years where data is available.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2019-20	Good Standing
2020-21	Good Standing
2021-22	Good Standing