

Flatbush Ascend Charter School

**2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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2021-22 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Jonathan Masci, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives for Ascend Learning, 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)
Nadine Sylvester	Co-Chair	Academic
Stanley Taylor	Co-Chair	Hiring, Nominating
Shelly Cleary	Treasurer	Academic, Finance
Emmanuel Fordjour	Secretary	Hiring, Nominating
Janai Jeter	Trustee	Academic, Hiring
Gamal Walker	Trustee	Finance
Jackie Wilson	Trustee	Hiring, Nominating

Vanessa Aird has served as the interim principal since July 2022.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Flatbush Ascend Charter School (Flatbush Ascend) opened in 2019. Ascend schools exist to serve every student – to help them embody their inherent excellence by providing rich, joyful learning experiences that unlock a life of boundless choice. Our schools honor, nurture, and challenge the whole child. We foster critical thinking skills and a love of learning through our inquiry-based learning approach, Responsive Classroom model, and anti-racist education. We are deeply committed to advancing educational equity for all of our students. In school year 2021-22 (SY22), Flatbush Ascend served students in grades K-3. As of BEDS Day in SY22, Flatbush Ascend enrolled 168 students.

Flatbush Ascend is located in New York City Community School District 17 (CSD 17). In SY22, 56.5 percent of Flatbush Ascend students were eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch, 96.5 percent were black or Latino, and 14.1 percent were special education students.

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
2019-20	31	14												45
2020-21	46	42	21											109
2021-22	45	53	45	25										168

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Flatbush Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English.

BACKGROUND

Flatbush Ascend implements the Ascend Common Core curriculum, which includes the following English Language Arts components:

Fundations, a program for phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, is used in grades K-2. The program is based on the Wilson Reading System principles, which is supported by multiple studies, including one by Massachusetts’s Lynn Public Schools, of which the student population is composed of 66 percent black or Latino students. The study found that the system expedites grade-level reading improvement among elementary school students who previously struggled to achieve appropriate reading level growth.

Ascend has developed a unique writing program based loosely on the work of Lucy Calkins and The Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University’s Teachers College. Ascend’s writing curriculum is genre-based and rooted in the belief that students need to write frequently. Grammar is strategically embedded in the units of study so that students learn grammar skills explicitly and then apply them immediately to the writing they do in class. The program requires

teachers to provide frequent feedback to small groups of students in writing conferences while other students work independently. Ascend's writing program teaches students that writing is powerful, fun, beautiful, and purposeful.

Interactive Read Aloud sessions with students in grades K-2 occur five times per week. The class gathers on a rug while the teacher reads a carefully selected high-quality text and provides a model of fluent, expressive reading, which helps children recognize the value of reading for pleasure. Read Aloud promotes vocabulary acquisition, models the habits of a skilled reader, and supports deep discussion of texts through "turn and talks." Beginning in SY21, new Read Aloud texts were selected to provide more culturally diverse content, as well as content that pertains to social justice.

Over the next few years, literacy at Ascend will shift towards the Science of Reading, which, supported by years of research, promotes five components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. In the 2022-23 school year, we will pilot three Science of Reading-aligned programs across our lower schools to judge their efficacy in grades K - 2. Flatbush Ascend will not pilot a program this year.

Ascend's Literature Circle program in grades 3 and 4, influenced by a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools and Icahn Charter Schools, promotes student discussion as teachers help students mine the deepest meaning of fine children's literature and develop the habits of excellent readers, all while building skills in reading comprehension and seminar-style discussion. In Literature Circle, each student has a copy of the text, and students read sections of the text both together and independently. Students are also assigned written work as a component of this literacy block.

One of our goals for upper elementary school students is to increase their knowledge of the world to better prepare them for the rigors of middle school social studies. To this end, in school year 2022-23, Ascend third and fourth graders will engage with a humanities program from the Lavinia Group. Insight Humanities uses a multicultural, project-based curriculum that integrates reading, writing, and social studies. Teachers are provided with everything they need to successfully teach: a comprehensive unit overview, writing exemplars, scripted daily lesson plans, project samples, and booklists. All units are thematically linked to the content focus throughout the year and work backward from inquiry-based essential questions.

Guided Reading is taught in small groups of students who are on the same reading level, as determined by the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) Benchmark Assessment System. Teachers serve as skilled facilitators, providing explicit teaching and support for reading increasingly challenging texts. These texts are at students' instructional reading level and students read the whole text. In Guided Reading, teaching is responsive to individual student strengths and needs. Each Guided Reading session addresses skill gaps identified through the previous session, whether in the area of decoding, fluency, or comprehension. Data collected from the F&P Benchmark Assessment is used to inform instruction for each Guided Reading lesson.

In the Shared Text component, implemented in grades 2-8 and modeled after a similar close reading program at Success Academy Charter Schools, the teacher leads students to understand and then write about the deeper meaning of a short, complex text. Students then answer Common Core-style comprehension questions. Texts fall into a range of genres including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

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Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data (RTI) to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, F&P assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allows staff to monitor progress and assess student comprehension, and supports data-driven teacher training and evaluation through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development (TPD), a network-wide program aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, after-school sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

In SY22, all Ascend schools returned to full in-person instruction. We plan to operate fully in-person in SY23 and succeeding years.

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 grade 3 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, 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	21	0	0	0	0	21

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.

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All	21	0	0	0	0	21
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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Flatbush Ascend fell short of the absolute ELA measure this year. Despite this, internal assessment results (discussed below) indicate that our strategic adaptations during SY22 did improve student learning. These adaptations include beginning the school year earlier than usual, increasing small-group instructional time, re-pacing the curriculum to expand opportunities for differentiation, and bolstering our investment in student mental health.

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	52.4%	21	52.9%	17
All	52.4%	21	52.9%	17

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

As the 2021-22 school year was the first in which Flatbush Ascend offered testing grades, we do not have direct comparison data from the prior years of the accountability period.

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

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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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As of the submission of this report, appropriate district comparison data for school year 2021-22 is not yet available. At the direction of the Institute, we are therefore omitting this measure.

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	52.9%	17		
All	52.9%	17		

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

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(s) primarily used the following assessment to measure student growth and achievement in ELA: Internally developed

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](#).

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Ascend used our internal benchmark exams to evaluate student growth in school year 2021-22. Benchmarks at four points during the school year provide both formative and summative data, shaping instructional focus over the course of the year as well as planning for the year to come.

Average percent correct, Ascend internal benchmark assessments, school year 2021-22

<i>Grade</i>	BM 1	BM 2	BM 3	BM 4	<i>BM4 – BM1</i>
3	35.6%	53.5%	53.9%	62.0%	26.4 pp
Flatbush Ascend	35.6%	53.5%	53.9%	62.0%	26.4 pp

Benchmark performance increased by 26.4 percentage points during the 2021-22 school year.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The internal benchmark assessments have a long history of validity. Performance on benchmarks has so closely predicted performance on state exams that Ascend has routinely used benchmark results to establish state test performance projections at the student, school, and network levels. Comparing projections to actual performance since the projection system was first implemented in SY14, the projections have an average absolute error rate of about 1.8 percentage points, providing high confidence in the validity of benchmark performance as a predictor of state test performance.

In addition to state assessments, Ascend also uses F&P assessments to monitor student growth in literacy. The F&P metric reported is the percentage of students reaching their target F&P level. Our internal F&P goal is that at least 85% of kindergarten students will be at or above their target reading level by the end of the year; for grades 1-4, our goal is to increase the percentage of students at or above the target level by at least 10 percentage points from baseline to round 4.

Students meeting grade-level F&P goals

<i>Grade</i>	Round 1	Round 2	<i>Change</i>
K	100%	88%	-13 pp
1	74%	87%	13 pp
2	86%	88%	2 pp

Flatbush met its goal in first grade but not in second grade.

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Though Flatbush Ascend did not meet its absolute ELA measure in SY22, internal benchmarks demonstrate growth during the year. These results indicate Ascend's proactive adaptations to address student need in SY22 have supported student learning. Looking forward to SY23, Ascend will implement a network-wide strategy that will build on these successes by strengthening instruction across six focus areas. These focus areas were chosen to drive improvement in ELA and overall academic performance.

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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.	Not Met
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.	N/A
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

ACTION PLAN

In SY23, Ascend's unified organizational goal is to improve academic achievement for all of our students. Our vision is to see achievement exceed pre-pandemic levels, with gaps closing between our general education students and students in special populations, namely those receiving special education services and our English language learners. To support all students toward increased achievement, we plan a multi-prong strategy focused on instructional management by leaders, intellectual preparation by teachers, people management and accountability, strong hiring, effectively leveraging time on task, and family-school partnerships. To strengthen instructional management across the network, Ascend offered a robust leader institute training series in summer 2022, and will offer ongoing professional development throughout school year 2022-23. Our parallel summer teacher institute furthers the intellectual preparation of Ascend teachers, as will our implementation of outside curricula in select grades and subjects, including three pilots of Science of Reading-based literacy programs.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Flatbush Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in math.

BACKGROUND

Flatbush Ascend implements the Ascend Common Core curriculum. The curriculum includes the following mathematics components, which feature Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI).

In grades K-4, our math program is built on the Launch, Explore, Discuss (LED) model, an inquiry-driven lesson structure that leads students to learn by questioning and discovering. In this

approach, students build enduring conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills by progressing through three stages of learning: concrete (using manipulatives), pictorial (using visual representations and models), and abstract (using equations).

In Number Stories, also deployed in grades K-4 and founded on the tenets of CGI, students spend an entire period studying a single, Common Core-style story-problem that they might encounter in the real world. Students construct their own solutions, defend their thinking, and compare their approaches. The routines that open each Number Stories lesson (approximately 10 minutes per day) also reinforce fluency; students practice math routines to build automaticity in computation.

In math in grades K-8, semi-weekly quizzes assess current content as well as a pre-selected, previously explored (spiraled) standard to constantly appraise knowledge gaps on major cluster standards. Teacher teams study these data points weekly and use them to plan for Response to Data (RTD) instructional periods.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data (RTI) to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, F&P assessments, and other measures of student achievement during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allows staff to monitor progress and assess student comprehension, and supports data-driven teacher training and evaluation through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development (TPD), a network-wide program aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, after-school sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

In SY22, all Ascend schools returned to full in-person instruction. We plan to operate fully in-person in SY23 and succeeding years.

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 grade 3 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

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according to grade level, 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 Mathematics Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ³				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Other reason	
3	21	0	0	0	0	21
All	21	0	0	0	0	21

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Flatbush Ascend fell short of this measure this year. Despite this, internal assessment results (discussed below) indicate that our strategic adaptations during SY22 did improve student learning. These adaptations include beginning the school year earlier than usual, increasing small-group instructional time, re-pacing the curriculum to expand opportunities for differentiation, and bolstering our investment in student mental health.

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	66.7%	21	70.6%	17
All	66.7%	21	70.6%	17

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

As the 2021-22 school year was the first in which Flatbush Ascend offered testing grades, we do not have direct comparison data from the prior years of the accountability period.

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.

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

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

³ 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.

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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.⁴

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As of the submission of this report, appropriate district comparison data for school year 2021-22 is not yet available. At the direction of the Institute, we are therefore omitting this measure.

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	70.6%	17		
All	70.6%	17		

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

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.

Goal 2: Growth Measure

⁴ 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](#).

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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:

Internally developed

Ascend used our internal benchmark exams to evaluate student growth in school year 2021-22. Benchmarks at four points during the school year provide both formative and summative data, shaping instructional focus over the course of the year as well as planning for the year to come.

Average percent correct, Ascend internal benchmark assessments, school year 2021-22

<i>Grade</i>	BM 1	BM 2	BM 3	BM 4	<i>BM4 – BM1</i>
2	37.2%	56.4%	69.6%	-	32.4 pp
3	46.9%	56.0%	49.7%	61.9%	15 pp
Flatbush Ascend	42.1%	56.2%	59.7%	61.9%	19.8 pp

Benchmark performance increased by 19.8 percentage points during the 2021-22 school year, with both second and third grades showing significant improvement.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The internal benchmark assessments have a long history of validity. Performance on benchmarks has so closely predicted performance on state exams that Ascend has routinely used benchmark results to establish state test performance projections at the student, school, and network levels. Comparing projections to actual performance since the projection system was first implemented in SY14, the projections have an average absolute error rate of about 1.8 percentage points, providing high confidence in the validity of benchmark performance as a predictor of state test performance.

In addition to state assessments, Ascend also uses performance on internal assessments to monitor assessment and growth in math.

Students achieving mastery (80% or above) on unit tests

<i>Grade</i>	First Unit Test	Final Unit Test	<i>Change</i>
K	100%	93%	-7 pp
1	62%	91%	29 pp
2	64%	73%	9 pp
3	38%	24%	-14 pp

Mastery across internal assessment varied, with first and second grades showing growth during the year.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

Flatbush Ascend did not meet its absolute math measure in SY22. Looking forward to SY23, Ascend will implement a network-wide strategy that will build on these successes by strengthening instruction across six focus areas. These focus areas were chosen to drive improvement in overall academic performance.

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.	Not Met
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
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.	N/A
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

ACTION PLAN

In SY23, Ascend’s unified organizational goal is to improve academic achievement for all of our students. Our vision is to see achievement exceed pre-pandemic levels, with gaps closing between our general education students and students in special populations, namely those receiving special education services and our English language learners. To support all students toward increased achievement, we plan a multi-prong strategy focused on instructional management by leaders, intellectual preparation by teachers, people management and accountability, strong hiring, effectively leveraging time on task, and family-school partnerships. To strengthen instructional management across the network, Ascend offered a robust leader institute training series in summer 2022, and will offer ongoing professional development throughout school year 2022-23. Our parallel summer teacher institute furthers the intellectual preparation of Ascend teachers, as will our implementation of outside curricula in select grades and subjects.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science
 Flatbush Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in science.

BACKGROUND

Flatbush Ascend implements the Ascend Common Core curriculum, which includes the following science components.

K-8 science units are designed based on the criteria set forth in the New York State P-12 Science Standards and according to the implementation timeline. The curriculum follows a multiyear sequence that helps students develop increasingly sophisticated practices and ideas across grades K-8 and beyond, with a focus on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) and Crosscutting Concepts (CCs).

Designed to engage scholars in inquiry-based tasks that promote a deep conceptual understanding of grade-level standards, science instruction also follows the Launch, Explore, Discuss (LED) model. Data-driven planning enables teachers to tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of students. As students engage with scientific phenomena from kindergarten on, they develop agency as lifelong scientific thinkers.

To harness the power of students' curiosity about the world around them, Ascend's program provides students a range of relevant learning experiences as they engage with scientific phenomena. Examples include inquiry and investigation, evidence-based argument, and application of skills and knowledge in unit projects. Units may also include reading informational texts critically and leveraging scientific knowledge and skills to take action on issues of social justice.

Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data (RTI) to support and enhance learning, and will continue to develop and employ a variety of assessments to measure progress towards mastering standards. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark and mock assessments, unit tests, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allows staff to monitor progress and assess student comprehension, and supports data-driven teacher training and evaluation through access to instant feedback. Teachers and leaders consistently review student work and achievement data and trends, resulting in effective planning for upcoming lessons and timely and purposeful feedback to students.

All Ascend schools participate in Teacher Planning and Development (TPD), a network-wide program aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, after-school sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

In SY22, all Ascend schools returned to full in-person instruction. We plan to operate fully in-person in SY23 and succeeding years.

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.

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METHOD

The school did not administer the New York State Testing Program science assessment as it did not enroll students in grades 4 or 8 in spring 2022.

To assess student achievement and growth in science, Flatbush Ascend used the metric of course performance. Ascend science courses are aligned to New York State science standards, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and employ rigorous instructional methods.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Flatbush Ascend did not administer the state science assessment as the school did not serve any students in grades 4 or 8.

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		
8		
All		

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

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			
8	2018-19			
8	2021-22			

Flatbush Ascend has never served students in grade 8, and therefore has never administered a science Regents exam. To monitor student progress in science, Ascend uses the metric of course performance.

Percent mastery on final unit test

Grade	1	2	3
	77%	89%	86%

Grades 1, 2, and 3 all demonstrated high rates of mastery on the final unit exam.

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.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Moving forward in SY 2022-23, we are confident that our strategy to increase student achievement will empower EBACS students to perform well as third graders take the state exams for the first time.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Flatbush Ascend students demonstrated proficiency on science unit assessments during the school year.

ACTION PLAN

In SY23, Ascend's unified organizational goal is to improve academic achievement for all of our students. Our vision is to see achievement exceed pre-pandemic levels, with gaps closing between our general education students and students in special populations, namely those receiving special education services and our English language learners. To support all students toward increased achievement, we plan a multi-prong strategy focused on instructional management by leaders, intellectual preparation by teachers, people management and accountability, strong hiring, effectively leveraging time on task, and family-school partnerships. To strengthen instructional management across the network, Ascend offered a robust leader institute training series in summer 2022, and will offer ongoing professional development throughout school year 2022-23. Our parallel summer teacher institute furthers the intellectual preparation of Ascend teachers, as will our implementation of outside curricula in select grades and subjects.

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

This measure cannot be assessed as Flatbush Ascend has never been assigned an ESSA accountability status. Flatbush Ascend opened in fall 2019 and thus was not assigned an accountability status for the 2018-19, 2019-20, or 2020-21 school years. Since 2021-22 accountability statuses for all schools are the same as those assigned in 2020-21, Flatbush Ascend likewise does not have an accountability status for the 2021-22 school year.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

N/A

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2019-20	N/A
2020-21	N/A
2021-22	N/A