



## **DREAM Charter School Highbridge**

# **2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

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## 2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The school's leadership team prepared this 2023-24 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	Committees (e.g. finance, executive)
Ashish Doshi	Chair	Finance/Audit
Michele Joerg	Vice Chair/Secretary	
Peter Daneker	Trustee	
Zainab Ali	Trustee	
Adam Miller	Treasurer	
Vikrant Sawhney	Trustee	
Don C. Sawyer III	Trustee	
Jonathan Schmerin	Trustee	
Vicki Zubovic	Trustee	

**Shannel Richardson has served as the Elementary School Principal since the school opened in 2022.**

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

DREAM Charter School Highbridge is a replication of DREAM Charter School East Harlem, which opened in 2008 and currently serves students in Pre-K - 8th grades. The intent of our replicating schools was to further the successes of DREAM Charter School East Harlem by replicating our most prominent characteristics of a successful first decade. We continue to engage families, offer exceptional instruction and use data to make important decisions that will bring the South Bronx the same academic results DREAM Charter School East Harlem students have been receiving since 2008.

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

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

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

DREAM Charter Schools' key design elements are:

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

- A universal Pre-kindergarten program that ignites learning in children (*DREAM Charter School Highbridge intends to apply to the next UPK RFP released by NYCDOE*)

### ***Educational Philosophy***

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

### ***Instructional Planning***

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

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

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

- **Intellectual Preparation:** At least once a week teachers participate in lesson study, data study, unit preview, or unit review protocols.
- **Weekly Professional Development:** DCS leadership provides weekly professional development time for teachers and academic deans to build teacher skill in prioritized areas and review student data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in each unit, subject, and grade.
- To prioritize community building and deliver explicit social emotional instruction, all K-5 students participate in a 25 minute Morning Meeting daily.

## ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

### *BEDS Day Enrollment*

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2022-23	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
2023-24	52	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	104

### *Enrollment of Subgroups (%):*

Economically Disadvantaged (ED): 93.7%

English Language Learner (ELL): 6.3%

Students with Disabilities (SWD): 20%

## GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

#### BACKGROUND

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

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

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

In grades K-2, DCS administers iReady Diagnostic as a universal screener assessment which replaced Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in our K-2 literacy assessment strategy. This assessment allows for everyone at DCS– from head of school to the student - to understand how students (individually and collectively) are progressing toward success on grade level standards.

### METHOD

DREAM Charter School Highbridge administered the Spring 2024 iReady ELA Diagnostic Assessment to all participating kindergarten and first grade students in May 2024.

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

This school year we shifted our focus from strong implementation of our phonics curriculum, CKLA Skills to strengthening Wit & Wisdom implementation which we believed would improve our results in this area.

As a result, 51% of DREAM Charter School Highbridge scholars performed at the ‘mid grade level’ or ‘above grade level’ proficiencies on the Spring 2024 iReady ELA Diagnostic Assessment.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

During the first year (SY23-24) of implementing iReady and a new curriculum, 6% of students scored at the ‘mid grade level’ or ‘above grade level’ proficiencies at the beginning of the year and improved to 51% by the end of the school year - a strong indication that the revised curriculum is further addressing student needs and supporting students towards English Language Arts proficiency.

### ACTION PLAN

In order to continue improving in English Language Arts, DREAM Charter School Highbridge is setting ambitious targets and making bold investments for SY24-25:

- Improve the percentage of K-2 students who score at the ‘mid grade level’ or ‘above grade level’ proficiencies to 59%
- Hire a full-time Associate Director of Elementary Literacy

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### Goal 2: Mathematics

All students at DREAM Charter School Highbridge will demonstrate proficiency in Mathematics.

#### BACKGROUND

To develop scholars' in-depth mathematical understanding, DREAM Charter Schools uses an inquiry-based math curriculum built on the belief that scholars need to understand problems and develop their own problem-solving strategies. Scholars are challenged to reflect upon and defend their strategies, analyze the strategies of others, and explain mathematical concepts and ideas.

DCS achieves this through multiple mathematics blocks per day: Story Problem, Illustrative Mathematics, and Math Routines in Elementary School (K-5) and Problem Solving and Illustrative Mathematics in Middle School (6-8). Within each block, teachers facilitate meaningful discussion through careful questioning to help scholars develop and solidify their own understandings about math. The math curriculum is rooted in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), which builds students' intuition and number sense, particularly in the Story Problem and Problem Solving blocks. Illustrative Mathematics, a highly-rated, evidence-based external curriculum is used during the core Math block in Grades K-8.

#### METHOD

During 2023-24, the school primarily used the following exam to assess K-2 student growth and achievement in mathematics: iReady Mathematics Diagnostic

#### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

55% of DREAM Charter School Highbridge scholars performed at the 'mid grade level' or 'above grade level' proficiencies on the Spring 2024 iReady mathematics diagnostic assessment.

## GOAL 3: SCIENCE

### Goal 3: Science

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

#### BACKGROUND

DREAM believes that scholars should learn science in a hands-on, interactive way. As scientists, DREAM scholars ask questions, make hypotheses, conduct experiments and draw conclusions based on their results. Elementary school and middle school science lessons come from the highly-rated, evidence-aligned, standards-aligned, and phenomena-based Amplify Science curriculum, which provides students a chance to construct scientific knowledge through real-world, context-based phenomena, and rich, complex text.

The elementary and middle school curricula are supplemented with multiple technology-based platforms that encourage development of digital citizenship and computer science skills. In elementary school, students learn an integrated scope from across the physical, life, and Earth and space sciences, while each course in middle school is aligned to one of those domains.

**METHOD**

During 2023-24, no standardized science assessments were implemented for kindergarten and first grade students.

**ACTION PLAN**

In SY24-25, DREAM Charter School Highbridge is adopting the Network’s use of the Amplify science curriculum and utilizing the associated unit assessments. Additionally, DREAM has hired an Associate Director of STEM and made an internal promotion for its Mathematics director to a STEM director.

Science is assessed at the State level in 5th and 8th grades and DREAM Charter School Highbridge’s long-term objective is to prepare students to excel in those assessments.

**GOAL 4: ESSA**

**Goal 4: ESSA**

DREAM Charter School Highbridge will remain in good standing according to the state’s ESSA accountability.

**Goal 4: Absolute Measure**

Under the state’s ESSA accountability system, the school is in good standing: the state has not identified the school for comprehensive or targeted improvement.

**METHOD**

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's performance standards, the federal statute stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. As New York State, like all states, is required to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Each year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school’s status under the state accountability system.

**RESULTS AND EVALUATION**

DREAM Charter School Highbridge was in “Good Standing” under ESSA for the 2023-2024 school year. New York State has not identified the school for comprehensive or targeted improvement.

## 2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2021-22	N/A
2022-23	Good Standing
2023-24	Good Standing