



2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Julie Fisher, Executive Director, and Erin Solomon, Compliance Specialist, prepared this 2023-24 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's Board of Trustees:

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Julie Fisher has served as the Executive Director (initially Co-Director) since 2006.

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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The NYC Autism Charter School Bronx (NYCACS Bronx or NYCACS BX) is a comprehensive educational program that serves the needs of individuals diagnosed with severe to moderate autism. As such, NYCACS Bronx offers a low student-to-teacher ratio (1:1 in most classrooms) and utilizes a well-rounded, functional curriculum that enables a high level of individualized and differentiated instruction. Data are collected to ensure that learning is taking place and, if not, to allow for timely and focused problem solving. In addition, family involvement is strongly encouraged with school observations (including clinic and planning meetings), home visits, and parent/caregiver training offered to all.

NYCACS Bronx was chartered by the SUNY CSI in August 2016 and opened to serve students in September 2017. The school is approved to serve (at capacity) 32 students with severe to moderate degrees of autism ages 5-16 years in an ungraded setting. The school received a full five-year charter renewal in 2022, in conjunction with NYC Autism East Harlem. NYCACS Bronx reached its full enrollment of 32 students in the 2019-2020 school year. NYCACS Bronx is modeled on its sister school, NYCACS East Harlem, which met its full enrollment of 40 students in the 2018-2019 school year. Both schools operate under the SUNY CSI authorized NYC Autism Charter Schools Education Corporation, which has granted a charter extension through July 31, 2027 for both schools.

NYCACS Bronx is committed to providing an effective, research-based education to each of its students with autism. Autism is characterized by deficits in language and social skills, and by behavioral excesses such as aggression, self-injury, and perseverative or stereotypic behavior. NYCACS Bronx employs only those science-based education and treatment strategies empirically demonstrated to be effective with students on the autism spectrum, all of whom are at risk for academic failure. NYCACS Bronx provides its students with a comprehensive program of academic and support services based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA).

The educational philosophy of NYCACS Bronx is aligned to its mission. It focuses on the treatment of individual students, recognizes the centrality of the environment in shaping behavior, includes the use of the scientific method (observation, collection and recording of data, use of data to inform instruction or interventions), and assumes that progress can be achieved by every student. This philosophy emphasizes the use of small classroom environments and optimal staff-student ratios to provide intensive, individualized instruction as prescribed by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Finally, NYCACS Bronx holds that families are an integral part of the students' education and that parental involvement in the form of classroom observations, regularly scheduled clinic meetings, home and family consultations, annual reviews and transition planning meetings are all highly desired elements of the school's program.

The NYCACS Bronx curriculum is aligned with and cross-walked to the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. The curriculum is comprised of research-based teaching procedures and individualized skill acquisition programs that facilitate the development of skills across 23 curriculum areas, including expressive language, social interaction, reading, mathematics, speech, fine motor, gross-motor, behavior, and self-care. Close to 1200 targeted instructional programs provide clearly defined behavioral objectives, specific teaching procedures, assessment procedures to determine the effectiveness of interventions, and terminal goals to ensure maintenance and generalization. When appropriate, standardized curriculum materials (e.g., Everyday Mathematics, Foundations) may be adapted for use with particular students. Data

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collection informs all decision-making. Educational goals for each student are developed as part of the student's IEP and skill acquisition list (updated quarterly), with voluntary parental input playing an integral role in program design.

NYCACS Bronx students are assessed primarily by examining the percentage of objectives mastered on each student's IEP, and through assessments that are designed specifically for this population and conducted annually. As per their IEP recommendations, NYCACS Bronx students do not take the statewide ELA, math, and science exams given to their typically developing age-matched peers. Instead, once they meet grade three age equivalence, they are assessed using the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for students with severe disabilities. Consequently, most of the metrics requested in this template do not apply to our students.

Instead, the approved NYCACS Bronx Accountability Plan identifies seven goals and 28 measures specifically designed to assess the school's success in meeting the needs of its students with severe to moderate degrees of autism and their families, in addition to an outreach and fiscal soundness goal and ESSA goal. Progress toward each of those goals and measures for the 2023-24 school year is set forth below.

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	Ungraded	Total
2017-18														12	12
2018-19														20	20
2019-20														32	32
2020-21														29	29
2021-22														32	32
2022-23														32	32
2023-24														32	32

PROMOTION POLICY

As an ungraded program, a promotion policy is not applicable.

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GOAL 1: STUDENT PROGRESS IN TARGETED PROGRAMMING

GOAL 1: Students will demonstrate progress in targeted skill acquisition programming.

Measure 1: Progress on IEP Objectives

Annually, at least 75% of NYCACS Bronx students will master a minimum of 85% of the objectives (skill acquisition and behavior reduction) set forth in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review.

METHOD

This measure serves as an indicator of progress on skills contained within each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score is generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review. An IEP objective is considered complete once the student can demonstrate the corresponding skill at a predetermined level (e.g., 90% correct responding or better for at least three consecutive data points).

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Overall, 85%, or 29/34¹ students, mastered a minimum of 85% of their annual IEP objectives, exceeding the 75% target. On average, students also mastered 87% of their objectives, exceeding the target of 85%.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

IEP objective selection is based upon: 1) results from annual assessments (VB-MAPP and/or AFLS), 2) evidence of past learning history and rate of acquisition, and 3) input from parents. Teachers understand the importance of these objectives for each student, and monitor progress through weekly electronic data collection.

Measure 2: Annual Assessments

Annually, at least 75% of NYCACS students assessed using the Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) will increase either their score by a minimum of 3 points across at least two domains. The VB-MAPP is an assessment that is frequently used to assess children on the autism spectrum.

¹ Thirty-four students were evaluated, as two students joined the school mid-year.

METHOD

Assessments are conducted twice each year for the first year of a student's enrollment at NYCACS Bronx—once at the start of the year, and again at the end of the year. After students' first year, these assessments are conducted on an annual basis. Typically, one of two assessments are conducted – the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP), or the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS). The former is focused primarily on assessing language, communication, and academics, and is therefore geared toward younger students and those on the more sophisticated end of the autism spectrum. The latter is focused primarily on life skills, and thus geared toward older students and those on the more profoundly affected end of the autism spectrum. Scores are compared for each student year to year, and a determination is made as to whether there has been an increase that meets or surpasses the criteria set within the assessment accountability measure.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx collects data for each student for each student assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment and highlights the 2022-2023 assessment score or initial assessment score, the current year or final assessment score (2023-24 school year), the difference between the two, and an indication of whether there was progress that met or exceeded the criteria set forth in the assessment accountability measure. **Twenty-five of 27, or 93% of eligible students increased annual assessment scores by the number of points stipulated within the accountability measure, surpassing the target percentage of 75%.** Of the two students who did not meet the improvement criteria, one maintained the same score as last year, and one slightly improved their score this school year.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Annual assessments not only document progress but allow for teachers to identify ongoing areas for growth and development. They are conducted within a timeframe that allows for results to be reviewed with parents at internal planning meetings (meetings scheduled with each family to discuss longer term goals and preparation for future transition) and utilized to inform IEP objective development in advance of annual reviews.

Measure 3: Group Instruction

Annually, 100% of NYCACS students will participate in some amount of group instruction, regardless of classroom ratio, in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills.

METHOD

Despite the 1:1 instructional ratio in most classrooms, NYCACS Bronx prioritizes group instruction in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills. Group instruction includes circle time

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activities, curriculum-based lessons, turn-taking during shared leisure activities, shared chores, and more. To collect data for Measure 3, Clinical Supervisors tracked whether each student received group instruction during the school year using the school's data collection platform and classroom schedules.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2023-24 school year, **34 of 34, or 100% of students participated in group instruction during the school year, meeting the goal.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Despite behavioral challenges, all NYCACS Bronx students were able to meet the measure this year. Group instruction remains an important goal for every student and NYCACS Bronx will continue to prioritize such opportunities to the greatest extent possible.

Measure 4: IEP Goals

Annually, 100% of NYCACS students will have at least three IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and/or increased independence.

METHOD

Prioritizing instruction in the areas of self-care, life skills, and independence is critical to ensure that NYCACS Bronx students develop the skills necessary to care for themselves. Examples of these IEP objectives include bathroom skills (like washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting), cleaning, walking safely in the community, dressing independently, and eating using utensils.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx collects individualized data on how many IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and increased independence for which each student has been focused. **NYCACS Bronx met this goal for 34 of 34, or 100%, of its students. On average, students had nine such objectives included on their IEPs, far exceeding the goal of three.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

While this measure aimed for students to have at least three objectives focused on prioritizing self-care, life skills, and independence, NYCACS Bronx students exceeded the goal with an average of nine such objectives per student. The intentional value placed on these skill areas serves as a means to achieve the best outcomes possible for students. NYCACS Bronx has always worked and will continue to work closely with families to ensure that these skill areas are addressed both at school and at home.

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Measure 5: Student Inclusion in a Less Restrictive Environment

100% of students who have attended NYCACS for at least two school years and who reach a pre-determined performance level in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of the VB-MAPP assessment will participate in some form of inclusion for part of the week.

METHOD

Each school year, most students under the age of 13 are assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment. Performance levels in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of this assessment are used to determine which students will participate in inclusion. If a student meets the criteria, inclusion in a less restrictive environment is planned for the following school year. This measure looks at whether each student who demonstrated readiness criteria in the previous year did, in fact, participate in inclusion during the current year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2023-24 school year, NYCACS Bronx had seven students who met these criteria. **These students participated in inclusion for an average of two hours per week, meeting the goal.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS Bronx had three students who participated in inclusion in the 2022-23 school year, and grew to seven students this school year. NYCACS sees the importance of inclusion for those students on a path to a less restrictive educational setting and will continue to focus on additional inclusion options in the coming years.

Measure 6: Movement to less restrictive environments

In any five-year period, NYCACS will seek to move at least 5% of its students from their NYCACS classroom placement to a less restrictive educational setting.

METHOD

Across a five-year charter period, NYCACS Bronx tracks the number of students who transition to a less restrictive full-time educational setting. Typically, students who participate in inclusion within a less restrictive environment (see Measure 4)—successfully and for increasing amounts of time—will ultimately graduate and transition into a less restrictive educational environment full time.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The table below contains a line for each student who transitioned full-time to a less restrictive educational setting within the current five-year charter period. So far in this five-year period, seven students transitioned, putting NYCACS Bronx on track to meet this Measure.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Most graduates from NYCACS Bronx move to a less restrictive specialized environment, such as an ASD Horizon classroom or an 8:1:1 or 12:1:1 District 75 classroom. NYCACS Bronx looks to create partnerships and consistent pipelines to such settings so that transitions, and the process leading up to them, can be as successful as possible.

² Table includes students who have transitioned through June 30, 2024.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 1: STUDENT PROGRESS IN TARGETED PROGRAMMING

NYCACS Bronx has met all reportable Measures for Goal 1.

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, at least 75% of students will master a minimum of 85% of the objectives (skill acquisition and behavior reduction) set forth in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review.	Met
2. Annually, at least 75% of NYCACS students assessed using the Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) will increase their score by a minimum of three points across at least two domains. The VB-MAPP is an assessment that is frequently used to assess children on the autism spectrum.	Met
3. Annually, 100% of students will participate in some amount of group instruction, regardless of classroom ratio, in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills.	Met
4. Annually, 100% of students will have at least three IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and/or increased independence.	Met
5. 100% of students who have attended NYCACS for at least two school years and who reach a predetermined performance level in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of the VB-MAPP assessment will participate in some form of inclusion for part of the week.	Met
6. In any five-year period, NYCACS will seek to move at least 5% of its students from their NYCACS classroom placement to a less restrictive educational setting outside of NYCACS.	On Track to Meeting

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS Bronx mastered six of six reportable measures set forth under Goal #1.

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GOAL 2: PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCTION OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

GOAL 2: Students will demonstrate reduced levels of challenging behavior (in frequency and/or magnitude). Additionally, staff will work to fade Behavior Intervention Plans in a thoughtful manner, always keeping in mind the safety and well-being of each student and those around them.

Measure 1: Reduction of Challenging Behavior

Annually, 100% of NYCACS students who have had one or more Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) in place to address challenging behavior for at least six months will show a reduction in challenging behavior—either in terms of frequency, magnitude, or both. Data will be collected on all student BIPs daily. Progress will be defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIPs and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior). Progress will be assessed across every BIP, even if more than one is associated with an individual student.

METHOD

NYCACS Bronx collects student Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) data on a daily basis. Student progress is defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIP and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior).

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx tracks challenging behavior reduction for all students who have one or more formal Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs). Each BIP tracks mean and range percentages or occurrences of behavior (depending upon measurement procedures utilized within each plan) from baseline or previous plan, compared to current BIP mean. At NYCACS Bronx in the 2023-24 school year, there were five students with one or more BIPs. **Of these five students, four of five students—or 80%—demonstrated a reduction from previous and/or baseline measures, coming close to meeting the goal.** For the student who was not able to reduce the rate of targeted behavior, NYCACS staff hypothesizes that gastrointestinal issues impacted overall behavioral reduction, and the students' parents have followed up with a Gastroenterologist to address these concerns.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Many NYCACS Bronx students exhibit different forms of challenging behavior at different times during their enrollment as a result of their diagnosis. Neither school has ever suspended or expelled a student since opening in East Harlem in 2005. Rather, NYCACS Bronx has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing levels of such challenging behavior through careful baseline and functional assessment procedures, intervention probes, and formal Behavior Intervention Plans. Parental consent is secured for every step of that process, starting with the baseline and assessment phase. Given how many different forms these plans can take, how long they may be in place, and the general ebb and flow of rates of behavior for this population at

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different times in their lifespan, meaningfully capturing progress can be difficult. NYCACS Bronx will continue to look at how it reports on these data, given the critical nature of this area of programming.

Measure 2: Improvement in Barriers Section

For NYCACS students without BIPs who are assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment, 100% will show improvement in the barriers section.

METHOD

For many students without BIPs, NYCACS Bronx assesses progress in the realm of behavior reduction using the VB-MAPP assessment. NYCACS Bronx aims for 100% improvement in the barriers section on this assessment.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx collects data on all students without BIPs who are assessed using the VB-MAPP. Of these students, their initial barriers score and final barriers score are recorded, and it is determined if they maintain or increase their score. **Of the 20 students who were assessed in the 23-24 school year, 16, or 80%, showed improvement in their score. The three students who did not show improvement maintained their score from last year. All three were participants in a new “Middle School” program which involved moving across classrooms, instructional spaces, and teachers. The barriers tool is not calibrated for such generalization. As such, significant anecdotal gains were not captured within this assessment tool.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

As stated above, reducing levels of challenging behavior and teaching adaptive alternatives is a key aspect of instruction at NYCACS Bronx. Staff are constantly working to ensure that students have access to all of the environments, activities, and opportunities they need and deserve. The presence of behavior challenges can limit that access.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 2: PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCTION OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, 100% of students who have had one or more Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) in place to address challenging behavior for at least six months will show a reduction in challenging behavior— in terms of frequency, magnitude, or both. Data will be collected on all student BIPs daily. Progress will be defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIPs and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior). Progress will be assessed across every BIP, even if more than one is associated with an individual student.	Not Met
2. For NYCACS students without BIPs who are assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment, 100% will show improvement in the barriers section.	Not Met

ACTION PLAN

Behavior Intervention Plans can take many different forms and be in place for varied amounts of time. The nature of autism, paired with changes that come during adolescence and/or the appearance of co-morbid conditions, means that challenging behavior can appear suddenly or change in magnitude and topography at different points. Given how much time, planning, collaborating, and problem-solving goes into managing and reducing challenging behavior, NYCACS will continue to look at ways to capture all of the work that goes on in this arena. Additionally, NYCACS Bronx will continue to explore new ways to address behavior challenges that are safe and effective for students and staff.

GOAL 3: ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

GOAL 3: A Human Rights Committee (HRC) will meet two times per year and judge NYCACS programs and procedures as respecting the human rights of each individual student.

Measure 1: HRC Positive Assessment of Behavior Intervention Plans

A Human Rights Committee will positively respond to at least 80% of assessment items requested for each Behavior Intervention Plan reviewed for NYCACS East Harlem and NYCACS Bronx. Any negative responses will be followed by immediate and documented modifications.

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METHOD

In a typical school year, NYCACS Bronx convenes a Human Rights Committee (HRC) two times per year. This committee consists of individuals from a variety of fields. Over the year, all Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) with any restrictive component (e.g., time out, response cost) are reviewed by the HRC. For each, a history of challenging behavior is provided, as well as results from assessments, baseline data, and a rationale for the current BIP. Details of the BIP are reviewed along with data collected to date. HRC members are given the opportunity to discuss and seek clarification on any aspects of the plan. They are asked a series of questions including “Is there evidence of parental consent?”, “Was a functional behavior assessment conducted?”, and “Is there evidence of reinforcement procedures being utilized?” Committee member “yes” responses are tallied and divided by the total number of questions to determine a percentage of positive responses.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS records the total number of the items assessed at Human Rights Committee meetings, the number of items with a positive response, and the overall percentage of items with a positive response. In the 2023-24 school year, two meetings were convened for three students, who were each assessed on seven total items. **The Human Rights Committee responded positively to 19 of these 21 total items, or 90%, far exceeding the goal of 80%.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The purpose of the Human Rights Committee is to ensure that NYCACS Bronx respects the rights of students who, in many cases, are unable to advocate for themselves. Close work with parents/caregivers around behavior reduction (and all other programming) is also evidence of the importance placed on this issue, as is the extensive training provided to staff on effective and ethical modes of instruction, respect and positivity, confidentiality, and professionalism.

Measure 2: HRC Evidence of Parental Consent

Evidence of parental consent will be demonstrated for 100% of plans reviewed for NYCACS East Harlem and NYCACS Bronx.

METHOD

In a typical school year, NYCACS Bronx convenes a Human Rights Committee (HRC) two times per year. It consists of individuals from a variety of fields. Over the year, all Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) with any restrictive component (e.g., time out, response cost) are reviewed by the HRC. For each, a history of challenging behavior is provided, as well as results from assessments, baseline data, and a rationale for the current BIP. Details of the BIP are reviewed along with data collected to date. HRC members are given the opportunity to discuss and seek clarification on any aspects of the plan. Then they are asked a series of questions. The number of yes responses to the question, “Is there evidence of parental consent?” is divided by the total number of plans reviewed to determine a percentage of plans with parental consent.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Parental consent was provided for three of three, or 100%, of BIPs reviewed.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

See “ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE” section from Measure 1 above. Responses to this particular HRC review item are considered a separate measure, given the importance of documented parental consent for such procedures.

SUMMARY OF GOAL 3: ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Both measures contained within Goal #3 were mastered for the one meeting conducted this school year. The Human Rights Committee positively rated and observed evidence of parental consent in all of the Behavior Intervention Plans reviewed.

Measure	Outcome
1. A Human Rights Committee will positively respond to at least 80% of assessment items requested for each Behavior Intervention Plan reviewed. Any negative responses will be followed by immediate and documented modifications.	Met
2. Evidence of parental consent will be demonstrated for 100% of plans reviewed.	Met

ACTION PLAN

Given the forms of challenging behavior demonstrated by some of the students served— including self-injury, aggression, property destruction – NYCACS Bronx must focus on ensuring the safety of students and staff at all times. The school’s primary focus is and has always been on using antecedent management strategies whenever possible (arranging a student’s schedule, environment, reinforcement system, etc.) to minimize the occurrence of challenging behavior. However, there are times when instances of extreme and dangerous behavior occur which require responses that may be restrictive in nature in order to ensure the safety of all. Building in BIP reviews by a Human Rights Committee (in addition to parental consent at every step of the BIP process and ongoing dialogue with parents as rates of challenging behavior are monitored) ensures students are protected. NYCACS Bronx will continue this important practice, assessing if the number of restrictive BIPs ever exceeds the number that can be reviewed within its two annual meetings and, if that is the case, lengthening meetings and/or increasing the number each year (this has not been an issue to date).

GOAL 4: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

GOAL 4: Families will be actively involved in their children’s education program, gain a broader understanding of autism-related issues and how best to address them, and prepare for life after school has ended. They will express satisfaction with the NYCACS Bronx educational program and judge it to be effective in achieving these goals.

Measure 1: Individualized Parent Training

Annually, 85% of parents/guardians whose children are 12 years old or younger will participate in a minimum of 10 hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning on an annual basis. 85% of parents/guardians whose children are 13 years old or older, or whose children are in a reduced ratio classroom (i.e., not 1:1), will participate in a minimum of 5 hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning.

METHOD

The NYCACS Bronx educational philosophy holds that families are an integral part of the students' education, and that parental involvement is a highly desired element of the school's programs. While no action is taken against parents, or children of parents, who do not choose to participate, NYCACS Bronx has established a variety of initiatives and activities to engage parents in training focused on school, home and/or community for which participation hours are logged. These include the following: clinic meetings in which family members participate with clinical staff in reviewing, problem-solving, and enhancing educational programming; scheduled observations that allow parents to observe specific educational activities, some of which may take place off-site in the community; access to Home and Family Consultation by NYCACS Bronx personnel and/or visits by parents to NYCACS Bronx to develop specific skill acquisition and behavior reduction programs that improve quality of life for the child and their family outside of the school setting; and annual planning meetings in which future goals in the areas of work, living, and community participation are discussed.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx logs the number of clinic/school observation hours, the number of home consultation hours, and the total number of hours of such training activities for each student. **Overall, 0/34—or 0%—of parents/guardians met the required number of training hours as determined by their child’s age.** While falling below the goal for all students, NYCACS BX still reached an average of 6.6 hours per student.

NYCACS has had to adjust this requirement for two key reasons: 1) Such a dense schedule of meetings for the families of younger students has proven challenging for parents who are dealing with various issues (e.g., inflexible job schedules) that make attendance, even remote participation, difficult; 2) The amount of time required of senior level staff to prepare for and run such a dense schedule of meetings means that

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they have less time for critical staff training and supervision functions. For this reason, we have asked SUNY CSI to adjust to quarterly clinic meetings rather than monthly for all students. Parents may still choose not to participate, but staff will still be expected to find alternate ways of engaging parents in the requisite number of training hours. The school remains committed to maximizing family engagement – particularly given the importance of training and education for parents of children on the autism spectrum, and their involvement in their child’s education and future planning. However, we must be mindful not to add burden to already overburdened families.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Minutes of all clinic sessions, home consultation visits, and annual planning meetings are maintained in each student’s file and attest to the quality and value of these activities, all aimed at helping parents and family members gain a broader understanding of 1) autism-related issues, 2) how best to address them as they relate to their child(ren), and 3) how to prepare for their child’s life ahead.

While the school continues to face challenges to in-person hours, NYCACS staff found that parents were more open to and available for virtual home consultation hours, leading to more accessibility for some who struggled with scheduling. This finding will continue to inform the structure of what parent training looks like moving forward.

Measure 2: NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey

Annually, 85% of parents/guardians who complete the annual NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey will rate the school’s education program as effective. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate.

METHOD

Annually, NYCACS Bronx conducts an internally designed NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey to determine parent satisfaction with the school. The survey consists of 24 statements applicable to NYCACS. Statements are scored using a Likert five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Comments and open-ended questions were solicited as well. The survey is distributed anonymously using the Qualtrics platform, and is made available in both English and Spanish.

RESULTS and EVALUATION

Twenty of 33³ families responded to the NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey, with a response rate of 60%, which falls below the target of 75%. The lower-than-normal response rate can be attributed to survey fatigue, as many of these families have received this survey every year, for many consecutive years. The survey was also distributed around the same time as the NYC DOE Learning Environment survey, so two separate surveys were requested of parents within a short timeframe.

³ Thirty-three families completed the program effectiveness survey, as this is how many families were a part of the school when it was administered.

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NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey Response Rate 2023-24		
Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
20	33	60%

When asked about satisfaction with their child’s program, 100% of parents indicated satisfaction. In response to the question “Overall, the school program is effective,” 100% of parents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed.

NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results 2023-24	
Item	Percent Satisfied
“Overall, the school program is effective.”	100%

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The Parent Program Effectiveness Survey offers open ended questions, including the following: “Please list important skills your child has learned at NYCACS this year.”; “Please list strengths of the school and leadership team.”; and “Please provide feedback about the support your family has received, as well as the quality of the individualized instruction for your child.”

Comments and anecdotes reinforced numerical findings from this and other surveys. A few responses to open-ended questions include the following:

- [My child has learned skills such as] communication, trying non-preferred activities and food, following rules, completing tasks.
- [My child] has surpassed potty training expectations and has continued with age-appropriate tasks.
- A trained, communicative staff, involved with the family to work together, is totally involved in the progress and learning of each student individually. It is an organized and responsible school where children are in a safe environment.
- [The school has] great communication, able to help solve issues we bring to their attention, friendly, professional, and maintains a safe environment for my child.
- The staff is very supportive with any concerns we have. They are able to come up with different solutions that are suited to the way our child is able to learn and succeed.
- We receive all kinds of support for everything from day to day goals and advancement to more individual academic goals. I am constantly in awe of all the new things my child learns, the knowledge she acquires and how quickly she is developing within the program.
- Totally grateful that this school exists for children on the autism spectrum, because it gives families the knowledge that children have access to a school where their physical and emotional integrity is respected, and where they obtain tools that strengthen their abilities. ..Skills so that they can interact

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in society in a more independent and comprehensive way. Thank you to all the staff for this magnificent opportunity that you give children and families to be able to move up to a quality school.

Measure 3: Parent Observation Form

After every instruction focused visit at school, home, or in the community across the year, at least 85% of parents/guardians will indicate overall satisfaction with the quality of education provided to their child.

METHOD

Parents/guardians are asked to complete an NYCACS Observation Form immediately following a visit or training session at school or in the community. Questions are presented in a yes/no format and request feedback on student engagement, instructional interaction, appropriateness of learning tasks, communication, learning environment, clarity of student performance data, safety, and overall satisfaction with the quality of education observed. Open-ended questions solicit further feedback on successes, concerns, and recommendations. Observation Forms are then reviewed by the Clinical Supervisor and Head of School. Translation support is provided where needed.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of participating families, 100% of those families expressed overall satisfaction with the quality of education observed, surpassing the goal of 85%. However, one family was unable to complete their instruction-focused visits: there has been a communication barrier due to several reported layers of hardship that this family is experiencing, as well as active ACS involvement. These factors have impacted parent engagement.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The observation forms are valuable in providing immediate feedback following instruction-focused visits/training sessions. The forms are straightforward and give parents a voice in the continued development and shaping of instruction. Results now go directly to the Head of School (rather than a paper/pencil form given to classroom staff) so that each parent/caregiver can be as comfortable as possible sharing both positive and critical feedback about their child's classroom staff and programming. The Head of School will continue to ensure that any concerns are promptly considered and addressed. Despite this adjustment, not all families completed forms after every training/observation. NYCACS Bronx will continue to work toward an increased rate of completion.

Measure 4: NYC School Survey

Annually, NYCACS parents/guardians will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey on which the school will receive scores of 75% or higher on each of the domains surveyed as designated by the NYC DOE. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate on the survey.

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METHOD

The NYC School Survey is distributed to all parents/guardians of NYCACS Bronx students and anonymously solicits parent/guardian responses to a variety of statements designed to measure parent satisfaction across the following domains: Effective School Leadership, Strong Family-Community Ties, and Trust. The survey can be completed by hand or online, and is available in multiple languages as needed. By design, the survey's questions are general in nature so as to pertain to schools citywide. The survey was distributed to all families.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Parents/guardians expressed exceptionally high satisfaction with NYCACS East Harlem across domains and at a participation rate of 74%⁴. This comes close to the 75% participation rate.

NYC School Survey Response Rate 2023-24		
Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
25	34	74%

Across the three delineated areas – Inclusive School Leadership, Outreach to Parents and Trust—98% of parents responded positively, on average. This far exceeds the target of a 75%.

NYC School Survey Parent Satisfaction on Key Results 2023-24	
Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
Inclusive School Leadership	96%
Outreach to Parents	99%
Parent Involvement in School	100%
Trust (Parent-Principal)	100%
Trust (Parent-Teacher)	97%

⁴ Please note that the results are embargoed at the time of this report submission.

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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The NYC School Survey holds value as a generic measure of parent satisfaction in areas held in common with schools across the city. It is best appreciated in conjunction with the NYCACS- specific surveys that measure satisfaction in areas related to the unique educational program provided to NYCACS students. These measures combined reflect an exceptionally high level of parent satisfaction with the education their children receive.

Measure 5: Parent Alumni Survey (LRE)

100% of parents or caregivers of children who have transitioned out of NYC Autism Charter Schools to attend a less restrictive environment (LRE), and who complete a biennial survey, will positively rate their experience at NYC Autism Charter Schools and the impact it had on their children.

METHOD

During the 2023-24 school year, NYCACS conducted a Parent Alumni Survey of families whose children transitioned out of NYC Autism Charter Schools. Of the three families who responded, two families aged out of NYCACS, and one family responded "other." Therefore, NYCACS cannot fully analyze the results for this Measure.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

While none of the families who responded to the 23-24 alumni family survey transitioned out to a less restrictive environment, of those families who responded, 100% indicated that they strongly agree with the statement, "While at NYCACS, I felt that my child was part of a positive and supportive environment."

NYCACS Parent Alumni Survey Satisfaction Rate 2023-24		
Total Responses	Total Moved to LRE	Satisfaction Rate
3 ⁵	0	100%

⁵ Of the three alumni responses, two students from NYCACS EH aged out, and the remaining family did not specify where the student transitioned.

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Measure 6: Parent Alumni Survey (MRE)

100% of parents or caregivers of children who have transitioned out of NYC Autism Charter Schools to attend a more restrictive environment (MRE), and who complete a biennial survey, will positively rate their experience at NYC Autism Charter Schools and the impact it had on their children.

METHOD

See Method description under Measure 5 above.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

While none of the families who responded to the 23-24 alumni family survey transitioned out to a more restrictive environment, of those who responded, 100% indicated that they strongly agree with the statement, "While at NYCACS, I felt that my child was part of a positive and supportive environment."

NYCACS Parent Alumni Survey Satisfaction Rate 2023-24		
Total Responses	Total Moved to MRE	Satisfaction Rate
3	0	100%

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 4: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, 85% of parents/guardians whose children are 12 years old or younger will participate in a minimum of 10 hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning on an annual basis: 85% of parents/guardians whose children are 13 years old or older will participate in a minimum of five hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning.	Not Met
2. Annually, 85% of parents/guardians will rate the NYCACS education program as effective in the annual Program Effectiveness Survey. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate.	Partially Met
3. After every instruction focused visit at school, home, or in the community across the year, at least 85% of parents/guardians will indicate overall satisfaction with the quality of education provided to their child.	Met
4. Annually, parents/guardians will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school will receive scores of 75% or higher in each of the domains surveyed as designated by the NYC DOE. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate on the survey.	Partially Met
5. 100% of parents or caregivers of children who have transitioned out of NYC Autism Charter Schools to attend a less restrictive educational setting (LRE), and who complete a biennial survey, will positively rate their experience at NYC Autism Charter Schools and the impact it had on their children.	Not Enough Data
6. 100% of parents or caregivers of children who have transitioned out of NYC Autism Charter Schools to attend a more restrictive educational setting (MRE), and who complete a biennial survey, will positively rate their experience at NYC Autism Charter Schools and the impact it had on their children.	Not Enough Data

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS Bronx demonstrates high levels of parent engagement and satisfaction across measures. The school will continue to work with students, parents and the broader community to enrich satisfaction and to better identify, prepare for, and transition its adolescent students to (and ready their families for) post-school adult services. NYCACS Bronx looks forward to utilizing the new ways of communicating with and involving families, now into the future.

GOAL 5: STAFF PROFICIENCY AND SATISFACTION

GOAL 5: NYCACS Teachers and Instructors will demonstrate proficiency in interventions and terminology related to applied behavior analysis and will judge the NYCACS educational program to be effective.

Measure 1: Staff understanding of training concepts

Annually, post-test measures of NYCACS staff understanding of concepts presented within training segments will show a minimum of 80% accuracy.

METHOD

NYCACS Bronx teachers and instructors complete an intensive training program designed to enable them to effectively identify and meet the instructional and behavior management needs of special education students on the severe to moderate end of the autism spectrum, and to assist families in implementing appropriate strategies at home and in the community. Training combines small group presentations as well as online training modules developed by Rethink Autism, each culminating in post-tests to ensure the content is learned. Training components include the following: Understanding Autism; Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis; Relationship Building; Discrete Trial Instruction; Response Chains; Data Collection; Prompting; Stimulus Control; Shaping; Incidental Teaching; Generalization and Maintenance; Describing Behaviors; Common Interventions; and Functional Assessment of Problem Behavior. An overall post-test score is calculated across components with a criterion of at least 80% required for mastery.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS Bronx recorded the average post-test scores compiled for 11 staff members who joined during the 2023-24 school year and indicated whether they met the criteria of at least 80% mastery. **100%, or 11 of 11 staff members, surpassed the 80% post-test criterion, with a post-test score of 90%+ across the group.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The training summarized above represents only one component of the training program for new (and more seasoned) staff. All didactic training is accompanied by observation and practice of skills in the classroom with real time feedback and correction to ensure understanding, consistency of instruction, and reliability of data collection.

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Measure 2: Key Learning Points

Annually, an average of 80% of NYCACS staff surveyed will indicate that they acquired valuable information as a result of attending staff development meetings.

METHOD

NYCACS Bronx teachers and instructors are asked to complete brief surveys at the conclusion of some of the staff development meetings held throughout the year. Part of this survey includes a question indicating whether they have acquired valuable information as a result of attending the staff development meeting.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS BX collects data on staff ratings for each professional development session, and summarizes what percentage of staff rate information from staff development meetings as valuable. **Across staff development meetings, 99.1% of staff in attendance rated the information as valuable, surpassing the target of 80% for the measure, and surpassing last year's rating of 98%.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The structure of staff development meetings changed during the pandemic, with professional development (PD) sessions conducted remotely ever since. This has allowed for staff from both schools to blend together and benefit from each other's comments and questions. Additionally, PD has been leveled, with different tracks for different levels of staff expertise. NYCACS Bronx will continue to work to ensure that virtual professional development is high quality and functional.

Measure 3: Performance Proficiency Standards

Of instructional staff invited to return for the upcoming school year, 100% will show proficiency in teaching techniques and satisfactory execution of job requirements as assessed through the NYCACS performance evaluation rubric. Evaluations are comprised of information gathered across the school year as part of regular supervision (varied formats include in vivo observation, video review, and written feedback), and aggregated annually for each staff member.

METHOD

NYCACS utilizes a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of teacher and instructor performance to assess proficiency in teaching techniques and satisfactory execution of job requirements. All teachers and instructors receive an initial three-month and then comprehensive end-of-year performance evaluations annually, with mid-year evaluations conducted for certain roles. Data regarding each staff's performance of pivotal teaching skills are collected. The evaluations employ objective measures, including the following:

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frequency of behavior-specific praise; levels of engagement and on-task behavior of both students and staff; ability to implement a variety of teaching strategies; ability to follow and implement a written behavior intervention plan; and ability to use and understand behavioral terminology. Data are collected on clearly defined areas (e.g., discrete trial instruction, incidental teaching, professionalism with colleagues) that are further broken down into many discrete instructional skills. Within discrete trial instruction, for example, subcomponents include ensuring attending prior to presenting instruction, providing effective prompts, and delivering appropriate levels of reinforcement. Points are assigned to each area according to a Likert Rating Scale ranging from Ineffective, to Developing, to Effective, to Highly Effective. Proficiency is defined as a rating of effective or above. To be invited to return the following year, staff must obtain a performance rating between Developing and Highly Effective.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of instructional staff invited to return for the upcoming school year, 15 of 22, or 68%, were invited to return in the 2024-2025 school year, and demonstrated proficiency in teaching techniques and satisfactory execution of job requirements.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The majority of the staff who did not show proficiency on the evaluation rubric were first-year staff, most of whom were also working with the school's adolescent students. The different nature of instruction in classrooms serving those students could have led to the development of skills that weren't directly reflected in the evaluation rubric. In the upcoming year, NYCACS Bronx will focus on additional training opportunities using Behavioral Skills Training, and utilizing the Direct Observation packet on a more dense schedule. The school has also adjusted the caseload of Clinical Supervisors to ensure they have sufficient time to complete staff training. Additionally, the school will focus on enhancing Head Teacher fluency and effectiveness in completing staff training, which will provide additional opportunities for feedback and learning for newer employees.

Measure 4: Teacher Survey

Annually, teachers will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school will receive scores of 75% or higher in each of the applicable surveyed domains. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate on the survey.

METHOD

The NYC School Survey is distributed to all NYCACS Bronx teachers and instructors and anonymously solicits their responses to a variety of statements designed to measure teacher satisfaction and perception of the school. The survey is completed online. By design, the survey's questions are general in nature so as to pertain to schools citywide. Note: NYCACS students, unlike students in a typical school, do not take the survey due to their disability.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Teachers expressed exceptionally high satisfaction with NYCACS Bronx across domains and at a participation rate of 100%, representing seven instructional staff. This exceeds the target of a 75% participation rate.

NYC School Survey Survey Response Rate 2023-24		
Number of Responses	Number of Instructional Staff	Response Rate
7	7	100%

While the school did not receive scores of 75% or higher across *all* domains, overall satisfaction was 94%.

NYC School Survey Teacher Satisfaction on Key Survey Results 2023-24	
Domain	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
Academic Press	100%
Classroom Behavior	70%
Cultural Awareness	98%
Innovation and Collective Responsibility	94%
Instructional Leadership	100%
Outreach to Parents	100%
Peer Collaboration	100%
Preventing Bullying	100%
Program Coherence	100%
Quality of Professional Development	100%
Quality of Student Discussion ⁶	53%
Safety	92%
School Commitment	100%
Teacher Influence	63%
Teacher-Principal Trust	100%
Teacher-Teacher Trust	100%

⁶ This indicator has been removed from overall average, as it is not applicable to NYCACS' student population.

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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

The NYC School Survey has value as a generic measure of teacher satisfaction in areas held in common with schools across the city. It does NYCACS a disservice, however, when assessing performance that is directly impacted by our students' disabilities. The scores across the above-mentioned domains reinforce the conclusion that NYCACS Bronx is perceived to be a highly positive environment overall. The school leadership will consider these survey results as it shapes the environment for staff for the 24-25 school year.

Measure 5: ABA and SPED Certification

Annually, at least 10% of instructional staff across both sites will be working toward certification in Applied Behavior Analysis (with supervision hours provided by NYCACS licensed staff) or certification in Special Education.

METHOD

The Board Certification in Behavior Analysis is a graduate level certification in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Certification requires: 1) the completion of a graduate degree in a related field, 2) the completion of a defined period of supervised practical experience and 3) passing the BCBA certification exam. NYCACS offers qualifying supervision hours, provided by a board certified NYCACS staff member, to experienced staff who are working toward their BCBA credential. Hours of supervision are documented according to the requirements of the Behavior Analysis Certification board. NYCACS also records staff working towards SPED certification, and provides tuition assistance to staff seeking either of these credentials.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of total instructional staff, nine of 69, or 13%, were working toward or completed their ABA or SPED certification in the 2023-24 school year, meeting the target. The NYCACS instructional program is strongly enhanced by the expertise brought by its Board Certified Behavior Analysts. To the extent that the school is able to support staff who are working toward their BCBA, both the program and staff retention are stronger.

Working Toward ABA or SPED Certification 2023-24	
School	Percent of Instructional Staff Toward ABA or SPED Certification
NYCACS East Harlem	7 of 32, or 22%
NYCACS Bronx	2 of 37, or 5%

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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS Bronx prides itself on attracting and retaining high-caliber ABA-trained instructors and teachers. Given post-pandemic changes in thinking around work-life balance and career priorities for young professionals, as well continued, intermittent staff turnover (leading to many more first year employees – many just out of college), there has been a drop in the number of staff ready to commit to a graduate certificate program. NYCACS will continue to offer and encourage use of the tuition assistance program, as well as BCBA supervision, as a means of further improving the caliber of teaching at NYCACS and benefitting the broader autism community.

Measure 6: Tuition Assistance

Annually, at least 30% of staff will take advantage of the NYCACS tuition assistance program to further their education in a relevant field.

METHOD

NYCACS prides itself on offering a tuition assistance program to help staff members further their education in a relevant field. This not only benefits NYCACS, but also the broader autism community as it provides staff with critical skills they will take with them and use in all of the settings in which they ultimately work. As such, NYCACS set a goal of at least 30% of staff taking advantage of this program.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of East Harlem staff, eight of 32 (25%) participated in the tuition assistance program. Of Bronx staff, seven of 37 (19%) participated in the tuition assistance program, falling below the goal at the individual school level. **Overall, 15 of 69—or 22%—of staff participated, falling slightly below the goal across both schools.** However, this is four additional staff members (a 4% increase) compared to the 2022-23 school year, which indicates growth over time.

Staff Participating in Tuition Assistance 2023-24		
	Total Staff Members Who Participated in Tuition Assistance	Total Staff Members
East Harlem	8	32
Bronx	7	37
Total	15	69

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ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS Bronx works hard to attract and retain high-caliber instructors and teachers. Given post-pandemic changes in thinking around work-life balance and career priorities for young professionals, as well as continued, intermittent staff turnover, there has been a drop in utilization of tuition assistance. NYCACS will continue to offer and encourage use of the tuition assistance program as a means of further improving the caliber of teaching at NYCACS and benefitting the broader autism community.

Measure 7: Alumni Satisfaction

Of staff who are no longer employed by NYCACS and who complete a biennial alumni survey, 90% will report having learned valuable skills during their time at NYCACS that support their current work.

METHOD

During the 2023-24 school year, NYCACS conducted a Staff Alumni Survey with questions related to their time at NYCACS, current employment status, how NYCACS influenced their career path, and what they took away from their time at NYCACS. Using a Yes or No response, the survey asks alumni staff to respond to the statement, "During my time at NYCACS, I learned valuable skills that support my current work."

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of respondents who are still working in the field of autism, 100%--or 14 out of 14--answered "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" to learning valuable skills at NYCACS that support their current work, meeting the goal.

Alumni Staff School Ratings 2023-24	
Total Staff	Percent Learned Valuable Skills at NYCACS
14	100%

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

In addition to the incredibly high satisfaction rate of staff, it is the comments that continue to give even more insight into the critical skills and sensibilities that they gained from working at NYCACS. Some highlights include the following:

- There are too many [memories] to list! Baseball Day, Piano Recital....but more significantly to me, making a breakthrough with my students like teaching them to tie shoes, do math, get dressed, brush teeth, use the bathroom independently.... those are things that comes to mind and make me smile! And just having professional co-workers who worked so well together and became life long friends.... This job will hold a special place in my heart forever!
- I often think about what I learned while being hands on with students and the feedback and models I received from my supervisors....I find I often think about the soft-skills and professionalism learned at NYCACS I believe you rarely get anywhere else -- parent interactions, hard and honest conversations with staff and families, teaching meaningful skills in natural ways, and presenting to a group of professionals.
- The piano recital and Baseball Day were some of the most special moments for me at NYCACS. The students and staff all worked so hard leading up to those events and it was a wonderful opportunity to see it come to fruition and show families all the effort that their kids put in.
- NYCA was the best job I've ever had. It is the most special group of people and it quite literally changed the way that I do my job today. I am so grateful to have been a part of the NYCA family and I hope I'm making them proud!!
- I loved every minute at NYCACS and was so sad to leave. The friendships I made and relationships I had with my students and their families was very important to me. I truly felt like part of the NYCACS family and I felt comfortable sharing that with the families.
- Working with autism can be challenging at times, but those moments where the students are laughing and having genuine fun with you are always so rewarding. All the events with my coworkers are looked back on as great memories. Moreover, the appreciation and the love from all the families make you appreciate what you're doing even more and help you to see you are truly making a positive impact on their lives.

NYCACS will continue to examine responses to these surveys (as well as exit interviews) more closely to determine any potential adjustments.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 5: STAFF PROFICIENCY AND SATISFACTION

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, post-test measures of staff understanding of concepts presented within training segments will show a minimum of 80% accuracy for each staff member.	Met
2. Annually, an average of 80% of staff surveyed will indicate that they acquired valuable information as a result of attending staff development meetings.	Met
3. Of instructional staff invited to return for the upcoming school year, 100% will show proficiency in teaching techniques and satisfactory execution of job requirements as assessed through the NYCACS performance evaluation rubric. Evaluations are comprised of information gathered across the school year as part of regular supervision (varied formats include in vivo observation, video review, and written feedback), and aggregated annually for each staff member.	Not Met
4. Annually, teachers will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school will receive scores of 75% or higher in each of the applicable surveyed domains. The school will obtain a 75% participation rate on the survey.	Partially Met
5. Annually, at least 10% of instructional staff across both sites will be working toward certification in Applied Behavior Analysis (with supervision hours provided by NYCACS licensed staff) or certification in Special Education.	Met
6. Annually, at least 30% of staff will take advantage of the NYCACS tuition assistance program to further their education in a relevant field.	Not Met
7. Of staff who are no longer employed by NYCACS and who complete a biennial alumni survey, 90% will report having learned valuable skills during their time at NYCACS that support their current work.	Met

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS Bronx will continue its highly successful staff development, supervisory and evaluation practices and continue to seek ways to enhance the satisfaction and well-being of its staff. The school will work to ensure all staff receive adequate training, support, and supervision. Many of the successful adaptations to professional development necessitated by the pandemic will continue to be carried forward into the future.

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GOAL 6: COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH

GOAL 6: NYCACS will share practices with the broader community (including personnel, students, participants, and employees at other schools, organizations, and businesses) and raise awareness about autism and autism education. This is done through internships, training, observations, workshops, peer mentoring, conference presentations, and more.

Measure 1: Open Houses and Professional Observations

At least 50 people will participate in NYC Autism Charter Schools' live or virtual open houses each year across both sites, during which parents and professionals from outside of NYCACS have the opportunity to hear a description of the NYCACS educational model and (if in person) observe students receiving instruction in their classrooms, shared space, or community based instruction sites.

METHOD

NYCACS welcomes visits by professionals from other schools, autism service providers, community organizations, charitable organizations, university students and international visitors seeking to learn more about effective autism education and the NYCACS program. NYCACS also reaches out to representatives from schools and adult services programs that may serve its students in the future, programs or enterprises that are potential resources for community based instruction, potential collaborative partners, and foundations interested in supporting autism initiatives. Finally, NYCACS actively reaches out to the NYC DOE, community representatives, and government leaders to educate and advocate for high quality services for students with autism.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

This school year, NYCACS was able to offer both in-person and virtual observations and open houses, providing parents and professionals the opportunity to learn about the schools. Throughout the school year, 659 parents and professionals participated, far surpassing the goal of 50 participants. Of participants of the virtual open house, 35 were professionals and 520 were parents.

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Open House/Professional Development 2023-24			
Date	Number of Attendees	Name/Organization	Purpose
3/7/24	8	Prospective Parents	In Person Open House - East Harlem
3/7/24	55	Prospective Parents	Information Session
3/14/24	6	Prospective Parents	In Person Open House - Bronx
3/14/24	35	Prospective Parents	General Information Session
Throughout the Year	555	N/A	555 people viewed the virtual open house posted on the website across the year

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS was able to provide both in-person and virtual observations and open houses for both parents and professionals in the 2023-24 school year.

Measure 2: Student Interns

During non-expansion years, a minimum of two student interns will be placed within NYCACS classrooms each year. Interns will be provided both didactic and hands-on training related to autism and how the principles of applied behavior analysis are used to educate students with autism.

METHOD

In a typical school year, student interns from surrounding colleges and universities are placed at NYCACS for either a series of observations and/or a hands-on training and practice period. NYCACS has formed working relationships with several sending institutions. Student interns are interviewed and are expected to meet all professional standards. The internship placements are competitive and highly sought after.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2023-24 school year, there were two student interns placed, meeting the goal.

Student Interns 2023-24	
Intern	Participating Dates
Intern 1	December 2023 - March 2024
Intern 2	May 2023 - August 2023

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS is pleased to offer student interns the opportunity to observe and work with students on the autism spectrum. For many of the college and university student interns, it is their first exposure to children with autism and to applied behavior analysis. NYCACS is, at times, fortunate to be able to hire former interns when they complete their programs.

Measure 3: Peer Mentors

During non-expansion years, a minimum of four peer mentors will participate in a peer mentor program. Peers will be provided with didactic instruction, an opportunity to observe instruction, and hands-on training to learn how to interact effectively with NYCACS students. Pre- and post-test measures and/or written summaries of their experience will show understanding of concepts and of the disorder.

METHOD

Historically, the NYCACS Peer Mentoring Program introduces public school students to autism through highly structured training sessions. The peers then become mentors to NYCACS students, working under the supervision of the NYCACS Peer Mentoring Coordinator and classroom teachers. Mentors must apply for the position, make a commitment to attend the sessions, be on time, be professional in their interactions with NYCACS students, and share what they learn with their own classmates, friends and family.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

While this year was a non-expansion year, NYCACS Bronx did not implement a peer mentoring program, and so this goal was not met. During last school year, the school experienced the departure of its Director of Transition and Community Outreach, who had been spearheading this program for years, and this position has not been filled. The broader NYCACS organization is also in the process of an internal planning project—with the help of external consultants—that has led to a pause on replacing this position as the organizational structure is being reconsidered and potentially revised. Additionally, NYCACS experienced difficulties obtaining buy-in from co-located and other school partners. This shift in sentiment seemed

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related to the push to mitigate learning loss stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving these schools with less time for activities that are not tied to “typical instruction.”

Measure 4: Autism Awareness

NYC Autism Charter Schools will conduct a minimum of five autism awareness outreach efforts across both sites, reaching at least 100 people annually. These efforts will be aimed at increasing awareness of autism and, in some cases, providing information related to effective instructional practices (e.g., managing challenging behavior, inclusion).

METHOD

NYCACS conducts autism awareness outreach efforts reaching a variety of parent, community and school audiences with the intent of informing, educating, and networking. Sessions are a result of outreach by NYCACS and requests from interested groups. Attendance logs are maintained to verify the audiences reached.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS conducted 15 autism awareness sessions in the 2023-24 school year across both sites, exceeding the goal of five. NYCACS Autism Awareness outreach efforts reach a broad range of audiences, and address autism generally, as well as topics of specific relevance to the particular attendees. Topics included managing challenging behavior, offering on-site consultations, introduction to classroom observations, and an introduction to the NYCACS school model. Outreach partners include local district schools, NYU Child Study Center, Weil Cornell Psychiatric Residency Program, The Equity Project Charter School, and Sarah Lawrence College Genetic Counseling Program.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

NYCACS autism awareness efforts are beneficial not only to the students and families of NYCACS, but to the broader autism community. The more educated the general public is about autism, the more likely individuals on the autism spectrum will be treated with respect and compassion, and the more opportunities they may be offered moving forward. These efforts have a secondary benefit of contributing to NYCACS student recruitment efforts. The school’s lottery open houses and information sessions also have the effect of raising autism awareness. NYCACS plans to continue outreach efforts during the 2023-24 school year.

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Measure 5: Conference Presentation

Staff from one or both of the NYC Autism Charter Schools will present annually at a minimum of one local, national or international conference, sharing research and/or best practice strategies around educating students with autism.

METHOD

Typically, NYCACS staff submit proposals to present research and best practices or speak on panels at national, state, and city professional conferences for professionals in the field of autism education and applied behavior analysis.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2023-24 school year, NYCACS staff did not present at a conference. However, as described above, NYCACS far exceeded the goal of sharing best practices with local schools and organizations through professional development.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS

Conference presentations give NYCACS the opportunity to share practices with other educators and clinicians. This has a positive impact on the broader autism community. NYCACS looks forward to presenting at conferences again starting in the 2024-2025 school year, after pausing on presentations this school year.

2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY OF GOAL 6: COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH

Measure	Outcome
1. At least 50 people will participate in NYC Autism Charter Schools' live or virtual open houses each year across both sites, during which parents and professionals from outside of NYCACS have the opportunity to hear a description of the NYCACS educational model and (if in person) observe students receiving instruction in their classrooms, shared space, or community based instruction sites.	Met
2. During non-expansion years, a minimum of two student interns will be placed within NYCACS classrooms each year, at each school. Interns will be provided both didactic and hands-on training related to autism and how the principles of applied behavior analysis are used to educate students with autism.	Met
3. During non-expansion years, a minimum of four peer mentors will participate in a Peer Mentor program. Peers will be provided with didactic instruction, an opportunity to observe instruction, and hands-on training to learn how to interact effectively with NYCACS students. Pre- and post-test measures and/or written summaries of their experience will show understanding of concepts and of the disorder.	Not Met
4. NYC Autism Charter Schools will conduct a minimum of five outreach efforts across both sites annually. These efforts will be aimed at increasing awareness of autism and, in some cases, providing information related to effective instructional practices (e.g., managing challenging behavior, inclusion).	Met
5. Staff from one or both of the NYC Autism Charter Schools will present annually at a minimum of one local, national or international conference, sharing research and/or best practice strategies around educating students with autism.	Not Met

ACTION PLAN

NYC Autism Charter Schools' commitment to outreach to professionals, communities, and parents has been part of its mission since the school's founding in 2005 and will remain so. As NYCACS Bronx enters the 2024-25 school year, the school will remain focused on maintaining the high caliber of programming for which it is known while also seeking opportunities to disseminate information and share practices.

2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

GOAL 7: FISCAL SOUNDNESS

Goal 7: Fiscal Soundness

NYCACS will establish and adhere to effective financial controls and policies that assure that it will consistently operate within its budget.

METHOD

NYCACS has established and continuously monitors all internal financial control practices and procedures necessary to operate in a fiscally sound and compliant manner. Separation of responsibilities and oversight by the NYCACS Board of Trustees and its Finance Committee are ongoing. The annual independent financial audit for the fiscal year ending June 2024 is currently underway and will be submitted together with all additional required documentation by November 1, 2024.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Awaiting completion of Independent Fiscal Audit.

GOAL 8: ESSA

Goal 8: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

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

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The NYS Annual Report Card indicates NYCACS Bronx is in Good Standing.

2023-24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2020-21	Good Standing
2021-22	Good Standing
2022-23	Good Standing
2023-24	Local Support and Improvement+

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

NYCACS Bronx has been in Good Standing each year since its inception in 2016.