

# Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2006-07 School Year

## Reader's Guide

### *SUNY Authorized Charter Schools*

As set forth in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees*, the single most important factor that the Charter Schools Institute and the State University Board of Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school's record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, **each charter school that the State University Board of Trustees authorizes is required to enter into an accountability agreement, known as an Accountability Plan**, which ultimately becomes part of its charter.

**The Charter Schools Institute closely monitors each school's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in its Accountability Plan.**

In addition, as part of its annual reporting requirements, **each SUNY authorized charter school must submit an Accountability Plan Progress Report which, from its vantage point, addresses each of the goals and outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan.**

The information presented in these Progress Reports constitutes important evidence that a school is keeping its promises to its students, parents and community, and is critical to making its case for renewal at the end of its charter period. The most important parts of Progress Reports are student achievement results on state exams and other assessments. However, not all schools will have tested grade levels for a particular state exam. Each year, the state administers English language arts and mathematics tests to 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, science tests to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and social studies tests to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Important Note: **The Accountability Plan Progress Report is authored by the charter school.** In reporting school progress toward meeting the outcome measures set forth in the Accountability Plan, schools are encouraged to build a case for the effectiveness of their program, and to lay the groundwork for writing a Renewal Application and ultimately for charter renewal. **The school's evaluation of its own progress does not necessarily reflect the conclusions of the Institute.** Further, the Institute does not affirm the completeness or accuracy of the report's data and may not endorse the school's characterization of the progress it has made toward achieving its Accountability Plan goals. Throughout the life of the school's charter, the Institute will visit each school, generating Institute School Visit Reports, and at the end of each charter period, a Renewal Report (select the <back> button in your browser to return to the school profile to see any/all available reports). These reports include detailed summaries of the Institute's observations of the school, as well as its evaluation of student performance and progress toward meeting the academic subject goals in its Accountability Plan.

**BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL  
FOR BETTER LEARNING**

**2006-07**

**ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to:  
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State University of New York  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning was awarded a charter on March 25, 2003. As noted in the table, below, enrollment has steadily increased, with a projected 285 students, grades 1 through 5, for the 2007-2008 school year. The mission of the school has remained unchanged:

*The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning provides its students with a solid foundation for academic success, through achievement that exceeds citywide averages and meets or exceeds New York State standards and national norms in all curriculum areas tested, especially in mathematics and language arts. Our teaching constantly adjusts to the needs of our students, leading to independence, autonomy, responsibility and a sustained love of learning, all of which contribute directly to high academic achievement.*

To fulfill its mission, the school’s teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons; assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child’s high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students’ work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students’ use of what they know to master new content; encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

**School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year**

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2002-03														
2003-04		50												50
2004-05		51	51											102
2005-06		54	54	54										162
2006-07		57	57	57	58									229

**2006-07 Characteristics of Student Population**

Characteristic	Percent	Number
American Indian, Alaskan, Asian or Pacific Islander	.4%	1
Black	93%	213
White		0
Hispanic	6.6%	15
Low-Income	74.2%	177
Special Education	1.3%	3
Limited English Proficient		0

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### **Goal 1: English Language Arts**

Students will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.

#### **Background**

The school's English Language Arts curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates, especially in the early grades, materials and techniques that constitute the "Words in Color" program, for instruction in English Language Arts. That program addresses all five elements of scientifically-based approaches to reading and writing instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension. As students progress through the grades, more traditional materials, including, for example, Junior Great Books and "Portals to Reading," are incorporated into instructional activities to ensure that students are (1) able to read effectively and efficiently in all genres and subjects, (2) afforded sufficient practice in refining their skills, including demonstrating those skills on New York State examinations and standardized tests of academic achievement, and (3) exposed to a wide range of activities that will prepare them for continued academic success in more conventional school settings. Regardless of the materials used, Bronx Better Learning teachers are expected to implement the school's pedagogical approach; therefore, extensive and intensive professional development is provided to them, including available daily in-class support.

#### ***Goal 1, Measure 1: Absolute Proficiency***

Each year, 75 percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.

#### **Method**

New York State administers an annual English Language Arts (ELA) examination to students in Grades 3 through 8. That examination is a cumulative assessment measuring student mastery of skills and knowledge at each grade level, as determined by the New York State ELA Standards. Individual student performance is reported as a scale score and a performance level is determined by the state. Performance levels range from 1 to 4, with Level 3 being proficient and Level 4 being advanced. Evaluation of this outcome measure is based on the percentage of students who are enrolled in at least their second year, that is, students who have been enrolled since at least BEDS day of the previous school year and score at Levels 3 and 4. During the week of January 8 – 12, 2007, Bronx Better Learning's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers administered the New York State English Language Arts Assessment to all of its 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures. One 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student was allowed extra time to complete the assessment, as delineated in that student's Individualized Education Program's section on required testing accommodations.

**2006-07 State ELA Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>1</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	57	0	0	0	57
4	57	0	0	0	57
All	114	0	0	0	57

**Results**

The following table presents the New York State ELA test results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 57 students tested in Grade 3, 49 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 49 continuously enrolled 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, 63.3% (31 of 49) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. Of the 57 students tested in Grade 4, 44 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 44 continuously enrolled 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 59.1% (26 of 44) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. In total, 93 of the 114 students tested altogether were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 61.3% (57 students) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2006-07 State ELA Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
3	All Students	1.8	31.6	59.6	7.0	66.7	57
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	2.0	34.7	55.1	8.2	63.3	49
4	All Students	7.0	33.3	56.1	3.5	59.6	57
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	9.0	31.9	54.6	4.5	59.1	44
All	All Students	4.4	32.5	57.9	5.3	63.2	114
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	5.4	33.3	54.8	6.5	61.3	93

**Evaluation**

Since the attained percent for students enrolled in at least their second year is below 75%, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. The disparity overall is 13.7 percentage points, with a somewhat larger difference in fourth grade vs. third grade: 11.8 percentage points vs. 15.9 percentage points, respectively. The relatively weaker performance by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort correlates to an unfortunate, but consistent pattern in New York State ELA test scores statewide, which reflects a drop in percentage of students at Level 3 or above as students move to higher grade levels. Nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning takes note of an additional, perhaps more influential factor in its efforts to understand the difference in the performance of its 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders: 2 of the 4 teachers responsible for ELA instruction in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had taught for one year previously at Bronx Better Learning, whereas none of the 4 teachers responsible for ELA instruction

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

in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (3 classroom and 1 Basic Skills) had the benefit of that experience, along with the ambitious program of professional development that it entails.

**Additional Evidence**

There are only two years’ worth of data available, and only one grade level with the possibility of a year-to-year absolute measure comparison. The small difference, from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, between the percentages of continuously enrolled 3<sup>rd</sup> graders achieving a Level 3 or above (minus 1.1%), along with the small difference, from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, between the percentages of all tested 3<sup>rd</sup> graders achieving a Level 3 or above (plus 2.5%), suggests that the level of performance on Outcome Measure 1 of Goal 1 has initially remained consistent.

**ELA Performance  
by Grade Level and School Year<sup>2</sup>**

Grade	Percent of Students, at Levels 3 and 4					
	2003-04 & 2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3 (All tested)			64.2	53	66.7	57
3 (2+ years)			64.4	45	63.3	49
4 (All tested)					59.6	57
4 (2+ years)					59.1	44
Total (All tested)			64.2	53	63.2	114
Total (2+ years)			64.4	45	61.3	93

***Goal 1, Measure 2: Absolute Proficiency***

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State ELA exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.

**Method**

Under federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation, the New York State Education Department sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will be proficient in the state’s learning standards in ELA by 2013-2014. To meet the standard of progress toward that goal, all tested students in a school must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds the year’s established AMO in ELA. The PI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of students at Level 2 and above with the sum of the percent of students at Level 3 and above.

<sup>2</sup> Note: caution should be used in comparing year to year results because each grade is a different group of students each year and overall results may include different grade levels from year to year.

**Results**

Of the 114 students tested, 32.5% attained Level 2, 57.9% attained Level 3 and 5.3% attained Level 4. The attained aggregate Performance Index on the test was 159.

**Calculation of 2006-07 ELA Performance Index (PI)**

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3 and 4	4.4	32.5	57.9	5.3	114

$$PI = 32.5 + 57.9 + 5.3 = 159$$

**Evaluation**

New York State’s NCLB 2006-2007 target Annual ELA Measurable Objective for Grades 3 through 8 is 122. Since our attained aggregate performance index value was 159, we met our objective for this outcome measure, by a wide margin: 37 points.

**Additional Evidence**

Given the limited amount of comparative data, there is consistency in the distinctly positive aggregate levels of performance over the first two years, with a small increase in 2006-2007 over 2005-2006.

**ELA Performance Index (PI) and Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year**

Year	Grades	Total N Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			PI	AMO
			Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2003-04							
2004-05							
2005-06	3	54	28.3	60.4	3.8	157	122
2006-07	3 and 4	114	32.5	57.9	5.3	159	122

***Goal 1, Measure 3: Comparative Proficiency***

Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each grade tested will be greater than that of the local school district.

**Method**

An analysis was conducted, comparing the percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning, who achieved a minimum of Level 3 on the State ELA examination, with the percent of total students tested in those grades in New York City School District 11 who achieved a minimum of Level 3 on the State ELA assessment. Aggregate results were also analyzed, comparing Bronx Better Learning’s combined 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade results with those of District 11.

**Results**

The following table presents the results for Grades 3 and 4, separately, along with the aggregate data. Bronx Better Learning’s percentages for Grades 3 and 4, individually, and for those two grades combined were 63.3%, 59.1% and 61.3%, respectively. The matching results for District 11 were: 51.9%, 52.4% and 52.1%.

**2006-07 State ELA Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students in at least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District 11 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	63.3	49	51.9	3183
4	59.1	44	52.4	3124
All	61.3	93	52.1	6307

**Evaluation**

Since the percentages of continuously enrolled Bronx Better Learning students at or above Level 3 at both grade levels tested and in the aggregate exceeded the corresponding percentages for all students enrolled in those grades in District 11, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure. Bronx Better Learning considerably surpassed District 11 by 11.4 percentage points in Grade 3, by 6.7 percentage points in Grade 4 and by an aggregate difference of 9.2 percentage points.

**Additional Evidence**

While year-to-year comparative data are limited, it is evident in the table below that the results are consistent over the first two years that Bronx Better Learning administered the State ELA examination. The school experienced a small improvement in the percentage difference between its aggregate scores and District 11’s, from a disparity of plus 7.2 percentage points in 2005-2006 to a difference of plus 9.2 percentage points in 2006-2007.

**ELA Performance of Charter School and Local District  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Compared to All District Students in the Same Tested Grades							
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3					64.0	56.8	63.3	51.9
4							59.1	52.4
All					64.0	56.8	61.3	52.1

**Goal 1, Measure 4: Comparative Proficiency**

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State ELA exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

**Method**

To address this measure, the Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis which is sent to schools it has authorized. In it, a regression analysis is conducted to determine the predicted percentage of students scoring at Levels 3 and 4 on the state ELA examination, controlling for the percent of students eligible for free lunch in all public schools statewide. Each charter school’s actual performance is compared to the level of performance predicted for a school with that particular level of poverty. An Effect Size is then determined by dividing the difference between the predicted and actual level of performance by the standard deviation. An Effect Size is calculated for each grade level and then an aggregate Effect Size is computed for the overall performance of the school. It is the aggregate Effect Size that pertains directly to this outcome measure. This measure is met if a school’s Effect Size is equal to or greater than 0.3, which is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree. Since the regression analysis for this year is not available at the time of the preparation of this report, the previous year’s results are presented.

**Results**

As noted in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for ELA in the 2005-2006 school year, identical for the aggregate and Grade 3, since that was the single grade tested, was .25.

**2005-06 ELA Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	58.6	53	64.2	59.4	4.8	.25
All	58.6	53	64.2	59.4	4.8	.25

<b>School’s Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
About the Same as Expected

**Evaluation**

Since the attained Effect Size for Grade 3, the only grade participating in the 2005-2006 administration of the New York State ELA examination, was .25, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure.

**Additional Evidence**

As evident in the following table, there is currently only one year of data available, relevant to this outcome measure. While the objective was not met, the effect size was positive and missed the targeted effect size by a very small amount, .05.

**ELA Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2003-04						
2004-05						
2005-06	3	58.6	53	64.2	59.4	.25

***Goal 1, Measure 5: Value Added***

Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State ELA exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

A value added analysis was conducted, utilizing data only for the cohort of students who took the New York State ELA examination while on the register of Bronx Better Learning for both the January 2006 and the January 2007 administrations of the examination. With a value added measure, the outcome is expressed as the year-to-year difference (i.e., change) between pre-test and post-test scores of the same students. To show added value requires giving a test on two occasions and looking at the progress of the same group (or grade-level cohort) of students from one administration of the test to another. Since the percent of the cohort during the 2005-2006 school year was below 75%, at 63.8%, the target for 2006-2007 was an increase of 5.6 percentage points, to 69.4% of students at or above Level 3.

**Results**

There was only one cohort available for a value added analysis of the state ELA test scores. The percentage of students in the cohort at or above Level 3 dropped from 63.8% to 57.4%.

**Cohort Growth on State ELA Exam from 2005-06 to 2006-07**

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Change	Target Achieved
		2005-06	Target	2006-07		
4	47	63.8	69.4	57.4	-6.4	NO
All	47	63.8	69.4	57.4	-6.4	NO

**Evaluation**

Since there was a drop of 6.4 percentage points, rather than a rise of 5.8 percentage points, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. As noted in the Evaluation section in response to Outcome Measure 1, the relatively weaker performance by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort correlates to an unfortunate, but consistent pattern in New York State ELA test scores statewide, which reflects a drop in percentage of students at Level 3 or above as students move to higher grade levels. Nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning again takes note of an additional, perhaps more influential factor in its efforts to understand the drop in the performance of its cohort that was tested in both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades: all of the 4 teachers responsible for ELA instruction in 4<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2006-2007 school year were serving as classroom teachers in the school for the first time and therefore only had the benefit of a few months of training in the school’s pedagogical approach.

**Goal 1, Measure 6: Value Added**  
 Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the TerraNova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

A value added analysis was conducted, utilizing data from Bronx Better Learning’s annual, June administration of the TerraNova standardized assessment in reading. The test was administered to all grade levels, in strict accord with test administration procedures developed by the publisher. One 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student was allowed extra time to complete the assessment, as delineated in that student’s Individualized Education Program’s section on required testing accommodations. Since the average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade cohort was 41.9 in June 2006, and, therefore, below 50, an average NCE cohort increase of 4.1 in June 2007 was needed to achieve the target for that grade level. For 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, the targeted cohort increases were both .1, since the average NCE scores for those grade levels were each above 50 in June 2006.

**Results**

As reflected in the following table, there was a positive change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohort scores, producing average NCE increases of 7.6 and 2.0, respectively. There was a 5.3 decrease in the average NCE score for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort.

**Cohort Growth on TerraNova from 2005-06 to 2006-07**

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Change	Target Achieved
		2005-06	Target	2006-07		
2	48	41.9	46.0	49.5	7.6	YES
3	50	50.1	50.2	52.1	2.0	YES
4	49	56.2	56.3	50.9	-5.3	NO

**Evaluation**

Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure in two of the three grades. The margins, by which the objective was met in Grades 2 and 3, were 3.5 and 1.9, respectively. The 5.3 decline in 4<sup>th</sup> grade was consistent with the results obtained for outcome measures 1 and 5 and is thus similarly understood, at least with respect to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade instructors’ lack of prior experience, as teachers, with the school’s pedagogical approach.

**Additional Evidence**

Examining the grade-to-grade and total cohort performance over the course of our first four years of operation provides additional useful information. While the June administration of the TerraNova test in 1<sup>st</sup> grade is of course essential to providing cohort data in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Bronx Better Learning has consistently administered the test near the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> grade as well (end of September/early October). That practice of intra-year retesting can produce an artificially high fall-to-spring increase in cohort scores (as appears to have occurred during our first two years of operation), with the concomitant risk of a following June-to-June decrease; nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning has sustained the Grade 1 intra-year testing in order to obtain baseline information and objective, if on occasion inflated data, regarding students’ academic growth during their first year in the school. Therefore, cohort average NCE increases of fall-to-spring 1<sup>st</sup> grade TerraNova reading test administrations are presented, along with the outcomes of all of the subsequent spring administrations of the test, in the table below:

**Year-to-Year Cohort Growth on TerraNova Reading for All Grades from First Year of Attendance**

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4		
	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N
Fall: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending	50.0 vs. 59.1	+ 9.1	55	34.0 vs. 42.2	+8.2	50	29.5 vs. 56.2	+26.7	46	45.0 vs. 59.8	+14.8	49
Spring: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Attending				41.9 vs. 49.5	+7.6	49	56.1 vs. 48.5	-7.7	48	58.2 vs. 51.5	-6.7	45
Spring 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Attending							50.1 vs. 52.1	+2.0	51	52.4 vs. 56.3	+3.9	43
Spring: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring: 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Attending										56.2 vs. 50.9	-5.3	49
Totals		+9.1			+15.8			+21.0			+6.7	

Any single year-to-year change in a given grade level’s cohort score should be considered as tentative evidence of the overall effectiveness of the school’s instructional program, since such a change may reflect the temporary effects of the placement of all new teachers in the same grade, or the bounce that can occur with intra-year testing or the subsequent year’s negative rebound in reaction to an especially high bounce. Bronx Better Learning’s longer range trends reflected in the totals for each grade level, especially since they emerge across grade levels (+9.1 for Grade 1, +15.8 for Grade 2, +21.0 for Grade 3 and +6.7 for Grade 4), is a much more reliable source of evidence, indicating that the school’s instructional program, overall, has managed to raise student achievement in reading.

Since the totals reflected in the Year-to-Year Cohort Growth table, immediately above, combine the data for different cohort group comparisons each year, except, of course, for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, a further analysis of the data was conducted. The table immediately below presents growth patterns for cohorts in each grade level who actually were on the school’s register during the fall of the school’s

administration of the TerraNova test to the grade level when it was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and who remained on the school’s register during the most recent, Spring 2007 administration of the test. Grade 1 data, though unchanged, are repeated from the previous table.

**Original Fall of First Attendance-to-Spring 2007 Cohort Growth  
on TerraNova Reading for All Grades**

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4		
	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N
Fall: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending	50.0			34.0			29.2			45.6		
Spring 2007	59.1	+9.1	55	49.9	+15.9	44	49.5	+20.3	41	47.7	+2.1	34

The pattern of positive change across the grades remains (+9.1 for Grade 1, +15.9 for Grade 2, +20.3 for Grade 3 and +2.1 for Grade 4), providing additional evidence that the school’s instructional program has managed to raise student achievement in reading.

While Bronx Better Learning’s Accountability Plan does not include a measure related to TerraNova achievement test data in the area of language, the following table presents original fall of first attendance-to-Spring 2007 cohort growth results for that subject area too, since Goal 1 addresses both reading and writing. Once again, evidence emerges to support the conclusion that the school’s instructional program has raised student achievement (+8.6 for Grade 1, +21.0 for Grade 2, +16.8 for Grade 3 and +9.3 for Grade 4).

**Original Fall of First Attendance-to-Spring 2007 Cohort Growth  
on TerraNova Language for All Grades**

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4		
	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N
Fall: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending	46.8			35.2			36.0			48.2		
Spring 2007	55.4	+8.6	55	56.2	+21.0	44	52.8	+16.8	41	57.5	+9.3	34

**SUMMARY**

As delineated in the following table, during the 2006-2007 school year, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its first and fifth outcome measures for Goal 1, came close to meeting the fourth and sixth measures and did meet the second and third measures. During the 2005-2006 school year, when State testing data for the school first became available, Bronx Better Learning did not meet the first objective, met the second and third objectives and came close to meeting the fourth and sixth. Since the school had no prior year State testing data, measure five was not applicable.

Based on the evidence overall, for the current and previous school year – the two years covered by its most recently revised Accountability Plan – Bronx Better Learning is close to meeting its first long range goal, that its students will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome	
			2006-07	2005-06
1	Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Did Not Meet	Did Not Meet
2	Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Met	Met
3	Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Met	Met
4	Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Close to Meeting	Close to Meeting
5	Value Added	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State ELA exam.	Did Not Meet	N/A
6	Value Added	Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the TerraNova, a nationally-normed reading test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring.	Close to Meeting	Close to Meeting

**ACTION PLAN**

Bronx Better Learning will undertake the following steps to improve academic achievement in the reading and writing of the English Language, and thereby fully meet Goal 1:

1. We will increase our cadre of on-site Professional Development Specialists from an FTE of 2 to 2.4, with the increase specifically devoted to English Language Arts instruction in grades 4 and 5, through the hiring of a consultant for 60 days during the 2007-2008 school year. The Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees has already contracted for those services with Charlotte Balfour, an expert in the subordination of teaching to learning, in the areas of reading and writing.
2. We are doubling our Basic Skills teaching staff, from one to two.

3. We will avoid assigning to a given grade level a group of teachers who all lack teaching experience with our pedagogical approach. Moving forward into the 2007-2008 school year and beyond, we will maintain as a high priority the assignment of at least one teacher with that experience in each grade level. Besides the immediate advantage to the students who have the more experienced teacher, our deep-rooted practice of requiring several joint planning sessions each week, among teachers in a grade level, promotes the effective and efficient training of the newer teachers when at least one of them is experienced in implementing the subordination of teaching to learning. Fortunately, we have reached a point where our retention rate of teachers is very encouraging: 12 of the 17 teachers with whom we have contracts for the 2007-2008 school year, as classroom teachers, have at least one year of experience teaching in our school. That ratio, or 71%, compares very favorably with those we encountered when we entered our 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> years of operation: 50%, 29% and 40%, respectively.

In addition to the stated enhancements, Bronx Better Learning will continue to implement key elements of its professional development program, specifically:

- frequent planning sessions
- team planning
- professional development workshops and seminars
- frequent on-site assistance/intervention
- close, collaborative scrutiny of actual lessons planned and executed
- training for the trainers

## MATHEMATICS

### **Goal 2: Mathematics**

Students will demonstrate mastery of grade level mathematical concepts.

### **Background**

The school's Mathematics curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates, especially in the early grades, materials and techniques that constitute the "Gattegno Mathematics" program, for instruction in mathematics. That program relies heavily on the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, to ensure, even in the earliest stages, that students develop models for thinking mathematically, thereby providing them with a sound basis for accomplishing two essential objectives: becoming swift and accurate in their computation skills while focusing on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills. The approach is particularly well suited to mastery of the student proficiencies outlined in New York State's mathematics standards, since its implementation involves frequent exercises requiring students to demonstrate, not just the correct answers, but also awareness of the mathematical processes that lead to them. As students progress through the grades, more traditional materials, including, for example, Math Steps and Scott Foresman Mathematics workbooks are incorporated into instructional activities to ensure that students are (1) able to solve effectively and efficiently

mathematical problems of all types relevant to their grade level, (2) afforded sufficient practice in refining their skills, including demonstrating those skills on New York State examinations and standardized tests of academic achievement and (3) exposed to a wide range of activities that will prepare them for continued academic success in more conventional school settings. Regardless of the materials used, Bronx Better Learning teachers are expected to implement the school’s pedagogical approach; therefore, extensive and intensive professional development is provided to them, including available daily in-class support.

**Goal 2, Measure 1: Absolute Proficiency**

Each year, 75 percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.

**Method**

New York State administers an annual mathematics examination to students in Grades 3 through 8. That examination is a cumulative assessment measuring student mastery of skills and knowledge at each grade level, as determined by the New York State mathematics Standards. Individual student performance is reported as a scale score and a performance level is determined by the state. Performance levels range from 1 to 4, with Level 3 being proficient and Level 4 being advanced. Evaluation of this outcome measure is based on the percentage of students who are enrolled in at least their second year, that is, students who have been enrolled since at least BEDS day of the previous school year and score at Levels 3 and 4. During the week of March 5 - 9, 2007, Bronx Better Learning’s 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers administered the New York State Mathematics Assessment to all of its 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures. One 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student was allowed extra time to complete the assessment, as delineated in that student’s Individualized Education Program’s section on required testing accommodations.

**2006-07 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>3</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	57	0	0	0	57
4	57	0	0	0	57
All	114	0	0	0	57

**Results**

The following table presents the New York State mathematics test results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 57 students tested in Grade 3, 48 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 48 continuously enrolled 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, 83.3% (40 of 48) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination. Of the 57 students tested in Grade 4, 44 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 44 continuously enrolled 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 79.5% (35 of 44) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics

<sup>3</sup> Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam

examination. In total, 92 of the 114 students tested altogether were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 81.5% (75 students) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2006-07 State Mathematics Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
3	All Students	1.8	14.0	52.6	31.6	84.2	57
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	2.0	14.6	52.1	31.3	83.4	48
4	All Students	7.0	14.0	64.9	14.0	78.9	57
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	6.8	13.6	63.6	15.9	79.5	44
All	All Students	4.4	14.0	58.8	22.8	81.6	114
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	4.3	14.1	57.6	23.9	81.5	92

**Evaluation**

Since the attained percent for students enrolled in at least their second year is above 75%, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure. The disparity overall is 6.5 percentage points, with a somewhat larger difference in third grade vs. fourth grade: 8.4 percentage points vs. 4.5 percentage points, respectively. The relatively weaker performance by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort correlates to an unfortunate, but consistent pattern in New York State mathematics test scores statewide, which reflects a drop in percentage of students at Level 3 or above as students move to higher grade levels. Nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning takes note of an additional, perhaps more influential factor in its efforts to understand the difference in the performance of its 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders: 2 of the 4 teachers responsible for mathematics instruction in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had taught for one year previously at Bronx Better Learning, whereas none of the 4 teachers responsible for mathematics instruction in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (3 classroom and 1 Basic Skills) had the benefit of that experience, along with the ambitious program of professional development that it entails.

**Additional Evidence**

There are only two years' worth of data available, and only one grade level with the possibility of a year-to-year absolute measure comparison. The small difference, from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, between the percentages of continuously enrolled 3<sup>rd</sup> graders achieving a Level 3 or above (plus 3.3%), along with the small difference, from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, between the percentages of all tested 3<sup>rd</sup> graders achieving a Level 3 or above (plus 1.5%), suggests that the level of performance on Outcome Measure 1 of Goal 1 has initially remained consistent.

**Mathematics Performance  
by Grade Level and School Year<sup>4</sup>**

Grade	Percent of Students, at Levels 3 and 4					
	2003-04 & 2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3 (All tested)			81.5	54	84.2	57
3 (2+ years)			80.0	45	83.3	48
4 (All tested)					78.9	57
4 (2+ years)					79.5	44
Total (All tested)			81.5	54	81.6	114
Total (2+ years)			80.0	45	81.5	92

**Goal 2, Measure 2: Absolute Proficiency**

Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State mathematics exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.

**Method**

Under federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation, the New York State Education Department sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will be proficient in the state's learning standards in mathematics by 2013-2014. To meet the standard of progress toward that goal, all tested students in a school must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds the year's established AMO in mathematics. The PI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of students at Level 2 and above with the sum of the percent of students at Level 3 and above.

**Results**

Of the 114 students tested, 14% attained Level 2, 58.8% attained Level 3 and 22.8% attained Level 4. The attained aggregate Performance Index on the test was 177.

**Calculation of 2006-07 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)**

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3 and 4	4.4	14.0	58.8	22.8	114

$$\begin{array}{rccccccccc}
 \mathbf{PI} & = & 14.0 & + & 58.8 & + & 22.8 & & & & \\
 & & & & + & 58.8 & + & 22.8 & = & \mathbf{177} & 
 \end{array}$$

<sup>4</sup> Note: caution should be used in comparing year to year results because each grade is a different group of students each year and overall results may include different grade levels from year to year.

**Evaluation**

New York State’s NCLB 2006-2007 target Annual Mathematics Measurable Objective for Grades 3 through 8 is 86. Since our attained aggregate performance index value was 177, we met our objective for this outcome measure, by a very wide margin: 91 points.

**Additional Evidence**

Given the limited amount of comparative data, there is consistency in the distinctly positive aggregate levels of performance over the first two years, with a slight decrease in 2006-2007 versus 2005-2006.

**Mathematics Performance Index (PI) and Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year**

Year	Grades	Total N Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			PI	AMO
			Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2003-04							
2004-05							
2005-06	3	54	16.6	68.5	13.0	179	86
2006-07	3 and 4	114	14.0	58.8	22.8	177	86

***Goal 2, Measure 3: Comparative Proficiency***

Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Mathematics exam in each grade tested will be greater than that of the local school district.

**Method**

An analysis was conducted, comparing the percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning, who achieved a minimum of Level 3 on the State mathematics examination, with the percent of total students tested in those grades in New York City School District 11 who achieved a minimum of Level 3 on the State mathematics assessment. Aggregate results were also analyzed, comparing Bronx Better Learning’s combined 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade results with those of District 11.

**Results**

The following table presents the results for Grades 3 and 4, separately, along with the aggregate data. Bronx Better Learning’s percentages for Grades 3 and 4, individually, and for those two grades combined were 83.4%, 79.5% and 81.5%, respectively. The matching results for District 11 were: 82.3%, 71.5% and 77.0%.

**2006-07 State Mathematics Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students in at least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District 11 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	83.4	48	82.3	3227
4	79.5	44	71.5	3152
All	81.5	92	77.0	6379

**Evaluation**

Since the percentages of continuously enrolled Bronx Better Learning students at or above Level 3 at both grade levels tested and in the aggregate exceeded the corresponding percentages for all students enrolled in those grades in District 11, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure. Bronx Better Learning surpassed District 11 by a small nine-tenths of a percentage point in Grade 3, and by a wider 8 percentage points in Grade 4 and an aggregate difference of 4.5 percentage points.

**Additional Evidence**

While year-to-year comparative data are limited, it is evident in the table below that the results are consistent over the first two years that Bronx Better Learning administered the State mathematics examination. The school experienced a small improvement in the percentage difference between its aggregate scores and District 11's, from a disparity of plus 3.5 percentage points in 2005-2006 to a difference of plus 4.5 percentage points in 2006-2007.

**Mathematics Performance of Charter School and Local District  
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Compared to All District Students in the Same Tested Grades							
	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3					80.0	76.5	83.3	82.4
4							79.5	71.4
All					80.0	76.5	81.5	77.0

***Goal 2, Measure 4: Comparative Proficiency***

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State Mathematics exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

**Method**

To address this measure, the Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis which is sent to schools it has authorized. In it, a regression analysis is conducted to determine the predicted percentage of students scoring at Levels 3 and 4 on the state mathematics examination, controlling for the percent of students eligible for free lunch in all public schools statewide. Each charter school’s actual performance is compared to the level of performance predicted for a school with that particular level of poverty. An Effect Size is then determined by dividing the difference between the predicted and actual level of performance by the standard deviation. An Effect Size is calculated for each grade level and then an aggregate Effect Size is computed for the overall performance of the school. It is the aggregate Effect Size that pertains directly to this outcome measure. This measure is met if a school’s Effect Size is equal to or greater than 0.3, which is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree. Since the regression analysis for this year is not available at the time of the preparation of this report, the previous year’s results are presented.

**Results**

As noted in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for mathematics in the 2005-2006 school year, identical for the aggregate and Grade 3, since that was the single grade tested, was .48.

**2005-06 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	58.6	54	81.5	73.0	8.5	.48
All	58.6	54	81.5	73.0	8.5	.48

<b>School’s Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
Higher Than the Expected Level

**Evaluation**

Since the attained Effect Size for Grade 3, the only grade participating in the 2005-2006 administration of the New York State mathematics examination, was .48, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure.

**Additional Evidence**

As evident in the following table, there is currently only one year of data available, relevant to this outcome measure. The objective was met, with the achieved effect size exceeding the targeted effect size by .18.

**Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2003-04						
2004-05						
2005-06	3	58.6	54	81.5	73.0	.48

**Goal 2, Measure 5: Value Added**

Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State Mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

A value added analysis was conducted, utilizing data only for the cohort of students who took the New York State mathematics examination while on the register of Bronx Better Learning for both the March 2006 and the March 2007 administrations of the examination. With a value added measure, the outcome is expressed as the year-to-year difference (i.e., change) between pre-test and post-test scores of the same students. To show added value requires giving a test on two occasions and looking at the progress of the same group (or grade-level cohort) of students from one administration of the test to another. Since the percent of the cohort during the 2005-2006 school year was above 75%, at 81.3%, the target for 2006-2007 was an increase of .1 percentage points, to 81.4% of students at or above Level 3.

**Results**

There was only one cohort available for a value added analysis of the state mathematics test scores. The percentage of students in the cohort at or above Level 3 dropped from 81.3% to 77.1%.

**Cohort Growth on State Mathematics Exam from 2005-06 to 2006-07**

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Change	Target Achieved
		2005-06	Target	2006-07		
4	48	81.3	81.4	77.1	-4.2	NO
All	48	81.3	81.4	77.1	-4.2	NO

**Evaluation**

Since there was a drop of 4.2 percentage points, rather than a rise of .1 percentage points, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. As noted in the Evaluation section in response to Outcome Measure 1, the relatively weaker performance by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort correlates to an unfortunate, but consistent pattern in New York State mathematics test scores statewide, which reflects a drop in percentage of students at Level 3 or above as students move to higher grade levels. Nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning again takes note of an additional, perhaps

more influential factor in its efforts to understand the drop in the performance of its cohort that was tested in both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades: all of the 4 teachers responsible for mathematics instruction in 4<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2006-2007 school year were serving as teachers in the school for the first time and, therefore, only had the benefit of a few months of training in the school's pedagogical approach.

**Goal 2, Measure 6: Value Added**

Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the TerraNova, a nationally-normed mathematics test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

**Method**

A value added analysis was conducted, utilizing data from Bronx Better Learning's annual, June administration of the TerraNova standardized assessment in mathematics. The test was administered to all grade levels, in strict accord with test administration procedures developed by the publisher. One 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student was allowed extra time to complete the assessment, as delineated in that student's Individualized Education Program's section on required testing accommodations. Since the average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohorts were 35.1 and 48.6, respectively, in June 2006, and, therefore, both below 50, average NCE cohort increases of 7.5, for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and .7, for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, in June 2007 were needed to achieve the targets for those grade levels. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the targeted cohort increase was .1, since the average NCE score for that grade level was above 50 in June 2006.

**Results**

As reflected in the following table, there was a positive change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohort scores, producing average NCE increases of 14.1 and 7.4, respectively. There was a 2.6 decrease in the average NCE score for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade cohort.

**Cohort Growth on TerraNova from 2005-06 to 2006-07**

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Change	Target Achieved
		2005-06	Target	2006-07		
2	48	35.1	42.6	49.2	14.1	YES
3	50	48.6	49.3	56.0	7.4	YES
4	49	56.7	56.8	54.1	-2.6	NO

**Evaluation**

Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure in two of the three grades. The margins by which the objective was met in Grades 2 and 3 were 6.6 and 6.7, respectively. The 2.6 decline in 4<sup>th</sup> grade was consistent with the results obtained for outcome measures 1 and 5 and is thus similarly understood, at least with respect to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade instructors' lack of prior experience, as teachers, with the school's pedagogical approach.

**Additional Evidence**

Examining the grade-to-grade and total cohort performance over the course of our first four years of operation provides additional useful information. While the June administration of the TerraNova test in 1<sup>st</sup> grade is of course essential to providing cohort data in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Bronx Better Learning has consistently administered the test near the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> grade as well (end of September/early October). That practice of intra-year retesting may produce an artificially high fall-to-spring increase in cohort scores, with the concomitant risk of a following June-to-June decrease; nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning has sustained the Grade 1 intra-year testing in order to obtain baseline information and objective, if on occasion inflated data, regarding students’ academic growth during their first year in the school. Therefore, cohort average NCE increases of fall-to-spring 1<sup>st</sup> grade TerraNova mathematics test administrations are presented, along with the outcomes of all of the subsequent spring administrations of the test, in the table below:

**Year-to-Year Cohort Growth on TerraNova Mathematics for All Grades  
from First Year of Attendance**

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4		
	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N
Fall: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending	34.4 vs. 48.5	+14.1	55	29.7 vs. 33.8	+4.1	50	23.9 vs. 50.1	+26.2	45	32.7 vs. 52.7	+20.0	49
Spring: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Attending				35.1 vs. 49.2	+14.1	49	49.6 vs. 46.3	-3.3	48	54.9 vs. 48.4	-6.5	44
Spring 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Attending							48.6 vs. 56.0	+7.4	51	49.1 vs. 56.9	+7.7	43
Spring: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Attending vs. Spring: 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Attending										56.7 vs. 54.1	-2.6	49
Totals		+14.1			+18.2			+30.3			+18.6	

Any single year-to-year change in a given grade level’s cohort score should be considered as tentative evidence of the overall effectiveness of the school’s instructional program, since such a change may reflect the temporary effects of the placement of all new teachers in the same grade, or the bounce that can occur with intra-year testing or the subsequent year’s negative rebound in reaction to an especially high bounce. Bronx Better Learning’s longer range trends reflected in the totals for each grade level, especially since they emerge across grade levels (+14.1 for Grade 1, +18.2 for Grade 2, +30.3 for Grade 3 and +18.6 for Grade 4), is a much more reliable source of evidence, indicating that the school’s instructional program, overall, has managed to raise student achievement in mathematics.

Since the totals reflected in the Year-to-Year Cohort Growth table, immediately above, combine the data for different cohort group comparisons each year, except, of course, for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, a further analysis of the data was conducted. The table immediately below presents growth patterns for cohorts in each grade level who actually were on the school’s register during the fall of the school’s administration of the TerraNova test to the grade level when it was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and who remained on the school’s register during the most recent, Spring 2007 administration of the test. Grade 1 data, though unchanged, are repeated from the previous table.

**Original Fall of First Attendance-to-Spring 2007 Cohort Growth  
on TerraNova Mathematics for All Grades**

	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4		
	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N	MNCE	Change	N
Fall: 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Attending	34.4			31.1			23.7			32.1		
Spring 2007	48.5	+14.1	55	50.2	+19.1	44	53.2	+29.5	40	52.2	+20.1	34

Again, there is a pattern across the grades of positive change (14.1 for Grade 1, 19.1 for Grade 2, 29.5 for Grade 3 and 20.1 for Grade 4), providing additional evidence that the school’s instructional program has managed to raise student achievement in mathematics.

**SUMMARY**

As delineated in the following table, during the 2006-2007 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first, second, third and fourth outcome measures for Goal 2, came close to meeting the sixth measure and did not meet the fifth measure. During the 2005-2006 school year, when State testing data for the school first became available, Bronx Better Learning met the first four objectives and came close to meeting the sixth. Since the school had no prior year State testing data, Measure 5 was not applicable.

Based on the evidence overall, for the current and previous school year – the two years covered by its most recently revised Accountability Plan – Bronx Better Learning is meeting its second long range goal, that its students will demonstrate mastery of grade level mathematical concepts.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome	
			2006-07	2005-06
1	Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Met	Met
2	Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Met	Met
3	Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Met	Met
4	Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Met	Met
5	Value Added	Each year, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s State mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s State mathematics exam.	Did Not Meet	N/A
6	Value Added	Each year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the TerraNova, a nationally-normed mathematics test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring.	Close to Meeting	Close to Meeting

## **ACTION PLAN**

Bronx Better Learning will undertake the following steps to sustain academic achievement in the mastery of grade level mathematical concepts, and thereby fully meet Goal 2:

1. We are doubling our Basic Skills teaching staff, from one to two.
2. We will avoid assigning to a given grade level a group of teachers who all lack teaching experience with our pedagogical approach. Moving forward into the 2007-2008 school year and beyond, we will maintain as a high priority the assignment of at least one teacher with that experience in each grade level. Besides the immediate advantage to the students who have the more experienced teacher, our entrenched practice of requiring several joint planning sessions each week, among teachers in a grade level, promotes the effective and efficient training of the newer teachers when at least one of them is experienced in implementing the subordination of teaching to learning. Fortunately, we have reached a point where our retention rate of teachers is very encouraging: 12 of the 17 teachers with whom we have contracts for the 2007-2008 school year, as classroom teachers, have at least one year of experience teaching in our school. That ratio, or 71%, compares very favorably with those we encountered when we entered our 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> years of operation: 50%, 29% and 40%, respectively.

In addition to the stated enhancements, Bronx Better Learning will continue to implement key elements of its professional development program, specifically:

- frequent planning sessions
- team planning
- professional development workshops and seminars
- frequent on-site assistance/intervention
- close, collaborative scrutiny of actual lessons planned and executed
- training for the trainers

**SCIENCE**

**Goal 3: Science**  
 Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

**Background**

The school’s science curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates techniques and materials that foster students’ active participation in lessons. For that reason, hands-on experimentation with commercially prepared science kits has been encouraged, first through the Foss Science program and more recently with the Science 21 program.

**Goal 3, Measure 1: Absolute Proficiency**  
 Each year, 75 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.

**Method**

New York State administers an annual science examination to students in Grade 4. That examination is a cumulative assessment measuring student mastery of skills and knowledge, as determined by the New York State Science Standards. Individual student performance is reported as a scale score and a performance level is determined by the state. Performance levels range from 1 to 4, with Level 3 being proficient and Level 4 being advanced. Evaluation of this outcome measure is based on the percentage of students who are enrolled in at least their second year, that is, students who have been enrolled since at least BEDS day of the previous school year and score at Levels 3 and 4. During the week of April 23 - 27, 2007, Bronx Better Learning’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers administered the New York State Science Assessment to all of its 57 4<sup>th</sup> graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures.

**2006-07 State Science Exam  
 Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>5</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
4	57	0	0	0	57

**Results**

The following table presents the New York State Science test results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 57 students, 44 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 44 continuously enrolled 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 75% (33 of 44) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.

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

**Charter School Performance on 2006-07 State Science Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
4	All Students	5.3	24.6	54.4	15.8	70.2	57
	Students in At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	6.8	18.2	54.5	20.5	75	44

**Evaluation**

Since the attained percent for students enrolled in at least their second year is 75%, Bronx Better Learning just met its objective for this outcome measure.

***Goal 3, Measure 2: Comparative Proficiency***

Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Science exam will be greater than that of the local school district.

Note: Statewide New York State Science examination results were not available at the time of the submission of this report; therefore, compared proficiency with the local school district could not be determined.

**SUMMARY**

As delineated in the following table, during the 2006-2007 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first outcome measure for Goal 3. Since comparative data were not available at the time of the preparation of this report, attainment of the second outcome measure could not be determined.

Based on the evidence available, Bronx Better Learning is meeting its third long range goal, that its students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome	
			2006-07	2005-06
1	Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Met	N/A

**ACTION PLAN**

In order to increase academic achievement of grade level science concepts, and thereby continue to meet Goal 3, Bronx Better Learning is expanding its use of the Science 21 program – piloted in Grade 4 during the 2006-2007 school year – to all grade levels.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Goal 4: Social Studies**

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social studies concepts.

#### ***Goal 4, Measure 1: Absolute Proficiency***

Each year, 75 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies examination.

#### ***Goal 4, Measure 2: Comparative Proficiency***

Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Social Studies exam will be greater than that of the local school district.

Note: Goal 4, Measures 1 and 2, become effective in 2007-2008.

## **NCLB Accountability**

### **Goal 5: NCLB Accountability**

Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year.

The school's 2005-2006 Accountability status was: Charter School In Good Standing

The school's 2006-2007 Accountability status was: Charter School In Good Standing