

Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2007-08 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 3rd through 8th grade, science tests to the 4th and 8th grades, and social studies tests to the 5th and 8th 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

2007-08 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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Dr. Ted Swartz and Mr. Jason Sarsfield prepared this 2007-08 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Ms. Kimberly Morgan	Chair; Complaint Review Committee; Teacher Employment Committee; Policy/Governance Committee
Mr. Marvin Waldman	Vice Chair; Teacher Employment Committee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Dr. Marilyn Maye	Treasurer; Finance/Audit Committee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Mr. William Bernhardt	Secretary; Teacher Employment Committee
Mr. Jefferyson A. Barnes, Sr.,	Trustee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Ms. Lavette Bills	Trustee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Dr. Paula Hajar	Teacher Representative; Complaint Review Committee
Mr. Lowell Lifschultz	Trustee; Policy/Governance Committee
Mr. Daniel Fergus Tamulonis	Teacher Representative; Complaint Review Committee
Ms. Prema Thompson	Parent Representative; Complaint Review Committee; Teacher Employment Committee
Mr. Everett Wallace	Trustee, Finance/Audit Committee; Teacher Employment Committee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Ms. Crystal Williams	Teacher Representative; Policy/Governance Committee
Mr. Alan R. Wolfert	Trustee, Finance/Audit Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning (Bronx Better Learning) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. Bronx Better Learning opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1, added one grade each year thereafter, and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1 – 5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. Bronx Better Learning will add kindergarten for the 2008-09 school year and projects a total enrollment of 345 students in Grades K – 5. On January 15, 2008 the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York granted Bronx Better Learning a full-term charter renewal for a period of 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K – 5 through the 2012-13 school year. This renewal decision was also approved by the Board of Regents on May 20, 2008.

Bronx Better Learning was originally located at a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227th Street in the Bronx. Following the first year of operation, a shared space agreement was reached with the New York City Department of Education in which Bronx Better Learning was granted permission to locate the school in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx. The school remains at this location.

The mission of the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning is as follows:

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
2003-04		50												50
2004-05		51	51											102
2005-06		54	54	54										162
2006-07		57	57	57	58									229
2007-08		60	59	57	58	51								285

2007-08 Characteristics of Student Population

Characteristic	Percent	Number
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.7%	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0
Black	86.0%	245
White	0.0%	0
Hispanic or Latino	6.0%	17
Economically Disadvantaged	75.4%	215
Special Education	2.8%	8
Limited English Proficient	0.0%	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, “Portals to Reading,” and Writer’s Workshop 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 3rd through 5th 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 – 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 scaled 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 (first Wednesday in October) and score at Levels 3 and 4. During the week of January 7 – 11, 2008, Bronx Better Learning’s 3rd – 5th grade teachers administered the New York State English Language Arts Assessment to all of its 3rd – 5th graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures. No students identified as English language learners (ELL) or students with disabilities were exempted from taking this ELA examination.

**007-08 State ELA Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	58	0	0	0	58
4	58	0	0	0	58
5	49	0	0	0	49
All	165	0	0	0	165

Results

The following table presents the New York State ELA examination results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 58 students tested in Grade 3, 51 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 51 continuously enrolled 3rd graders, 66.7% (34 of 51) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. Of the 58 students tested in Grade 4, 48 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 48 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 70.8% (34 of 48) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. All of the 49 students tested in Grade 5 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of these 49 5th graders, 75.5% (37 of 49) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. In total, 148 of the 165 students tested in Grades 3- 5 were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 70.9% (105 of 148) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 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	3.4	31.0	60.3	5.2	65.5	58
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	2.0	31.4	60.8	5.9	66.7	51
4	All Students	5.2	27.6	62.1	5.2	67.2	58
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	4.2	25.0	65.6	6.3	70.8	48
5	All Students	0.0	24.5	71.4	4.1	75.5	49
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	24.5	71.4	4.1	75.5	49
All	All Students	3.0	27.9	64.2	4.8	69.1	165
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	2.0	27.0	65.5	5.4	70.9	148

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

Evaluation

Since the attained percent for students enrolled in at least their second year is below 75%, but above 70%, Bronx Better Learning came close to meeting its objective for this outcome measure. The overall disparity for all students in Grades 3 – 5 is 4.1 percentage points. Students in 5th grade met the measure with 75.5% proficient, while students in Grades 3 and 4 did not meet this measure with a disparity of 8.3 and 4.2 percentage points, respectively. The relatively weaker performance by the 3rd and 4th grade cohorts correlate to a consistent pattern in New York State ELA test scores statewide, which reflects a slight increase in the percentage of students at Level 3 or above as students progress from Grades 3 – 5. Nevertheless, Bronx Better Learning takes note of an additional factor that may have impacted this trend. In 2007-08, the school implemented the Writer’s Workshop instructional model across all grades tested with some success. The frequency in which this program was implemented increased as did grades; therefore 5th grade students received this instructional method more so than did 4th grade students, which received it at a higher frequency than did 3rd grade students.

Additional Evidence

As the chart below indicates, there are three years’ worth of state examination data available, and only two grade levels with the possibility of a year-to-year absolute measure comparison. The small difference, from 2006-07 to 2007-08, between the percentages of continuously enrolled 3rd graders achieving a Level 3 or above (3.4 percentage points), suggests that the performance at this grade level has remained relatively consistent. However, the rather large difference, from 2006-07 to 2007-08, between the percentages of continuously enrolled 4th graders achieving a Level 3 or above (11.7 percentage points) suggests that the effectiveness of the instructional program at this grade level has improved. Furthermore, when all continuously enrolled students at the school are taken into account, a 9.6 percentage point increase has occurred between 2006-07 and 2007-08, suggesting that the overall effectiveness of the Bronx Better Learning instructional program for English language arts is improving over time.

**ELA Performance
by Grade Level and School Year²**

Grade	Percent of Students, at Levels 3 and 4					
	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3 (All tested)	64.2	53	66.7	57	65.5	58
3 (2+ years)	64.4	45	63.3	49	66.7	51
4 (All tested)			59.6	57	67.2	58
4 (2+ years)			59.1	44	70.8	48
5 (All tested)					75.5	49
5 (2+ years)					75.5	49
Total (All tested)	64.2	53	63.2	114	69.1	165
Total (2+ years)	64.4	45	61.3	93	70.9	148

² 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.

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.

Results

Of the 165 students tested, 27.9% attained Level 2, 64.2% attained Level 3 and 4.8% attained Level 4. The attained aggregate Performance Index on the ELA exam in 2007-08 was 165.9.

Calculation of 2007-08 ELA Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3 – 5	3.0	27.9	64.2	4.8	165

$$\begin{array}{rcccccc}
 \text{PI} & = & 27.9 & + & 64.2 & + & 4.8 & = & \\
 & & & & 64.2 & + & 4.8 & = & 165.9
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

New York State’s NCLB 2007-08 target Annual ELA Measurable Objective for Grades 3 – 8 was 133. Since the Bronx Better Learning attained aggregate performance index value was 165.9, the school met the objective for this outcome measure, by a wide margin of 32.9 points.

Additional Evidence

Given the limited amount of comparative data presented in the chart below, there is consistency in the distinctly positive aggregate levels of performance over the first three years, with a small increase in each year (+ 2.0 point increase from 2005-06 to 2006-07 and a + 6.9 point increase from 2006-07 to 2007-08).

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
2007-08	3-5	165	27.9	64.2	4.8	165.9	133

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 students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 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 Grades 3 - 5 results with those of District 11.

Results

The following table presents the results for Grades 3, 4, and 5 separately, along with the aggregate comparative data. The percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning who performed at Level 3 or higher on the New York State ELA examination in Grades 3, 4, and 5 individually, were 66.7%, 70.8% and 75.5%, respectively. The matching results for District 11 were: 58.3%, 57.3% and 65.3%. The aggregate percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning in Grades 3 – 5 who performed at Level 3 or higher was 70.9%, compared to 60.3 percent of all students within these same grades in New York City District 11.

**2007-08 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 nd Year		All District 11 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	66.7	51	58.3	3084
4	70.8	48	57.3	3153
5	75.5	49	65.3	3151
All	70.9	148	60.3	9388

Evaluation

Since the percentages of continuously enrolled Bronx Better Learning students at or above Level 3 at each grade level 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 on the ELA exam by 8.4 percentage points in Grade 3, 13.8 percentage points in Grade 4, and 10.2 percentage points in Grade 5, and by an aggregate difference of 10.2 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 three 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 in each year of the comparison, as follows: a disparity of plus 7.2 percentage points in 2005-06, plus 9.2 in 2006-07, and plus 10.2 in 2007-08. This evidence suggests that Bronx Better Learning continues to widen the difference in their English language arts achievement from their New York District 11 counterparts as measured by the state ELA examination.

**2007-08 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					
	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Bronx Better Learning	NYC District 11	Bronx Better Learning	NYC District 11	Bronx Better Learning	NYC District 11
3	64.0	56.8	63.3	51.9	66.7	58.3
4			59.1	52.4	70.8	57.3
5					75.5	65.3
All	64.0	56.8	61.3	52.1	70.9	60.3

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 2007-08 was not available at the time of the preparation of this report, the previous year’s (2006-07) results are presented.

Results

As noted in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for ELA in the 2006-07 school year, for Grades 3 and 4 were 0.23 and -0.37, respectively. The aggregate Effect Size for both grades combined was -0.07.

2006-07 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	NA	57	66.7	63.7	2.9	0.23
4	NA	57	59.7	64.4	- 4.8	- 0.37
All	48.0	114	63.2	64.1	- 0.9	-0.07

School's Overall Comparative Performance:
About the Same as Expected

Evaluation

Since the attained Effect Size for Grades 3 and 4, the only grades participating in the 2006-07 administration of the New York State ELA examination, was +0.23 and -0.37 respectively, and particularly the aggregate Effect Size for both grades was -0.07, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure.

Additional Evidence

As evident in the following table, there are currently only two years of data available, relevant to this outcome measure. While the objective was not met in 2006-07 and only missed by a mere difference of .05 in the first year of the comparison, overall achievement has not declined. Rather, the percentage of the school's students eligible for Free Lunch declined by 9.4 percentage points, thus increasing the school's predicted level of achievement.

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
2006-07	3 and 4	48.0	114	63.2	64.1	-0.07

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.

There were only two cohorts available for a value added analysis of the state ELA examination results in 2007-08. Since the percent of both applicable cohorts (4th and 5th graders in 2007-08) during the 2006-07 school year was below the 75% absolute proficiency threshold, the target required reducing by one-half the gap between this threshold and performance in 2006-07. Therefore, the targets for the 2007-08 cohorts were 72.5% and 68.1% for the 4th and 5th grade cohorts respectively, while the aggregate target was 70.4%.

Results

The percentage of students in the Grade 4 cohort that performed at Level 3 or above in 2007-08 remained the same (70.2%) as in 2006-07, thus this cohort did not meet the target. However, the percentage of students in the Grade 5 cohort that performed at Level 3 or above in 2007-08 increased by 14.3 percentage points (61.2% to 75.5%) from 2006-07, which surpassed the target. The aggregate percentage of students that performed at Level 3 or above for both cohorts increased by 7.0 percentage points (65.7% to 72.7%), surpassing the established target.

Cohort Growth on State ELA Exam from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Change	Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08		
4	50	70.0	72.5	70.0	0.0	NO
5	49	61.2	68.1	75.5	+ 14.3	YES
All	99	65.7	70.4	72.7	+ 7.0	YES

Evaluation

Since only one of two available cohorts met the established growth target, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. However, when considering the aggregate performance of students in these cohorts, Bronx Better Learning not only met its value added target for this measure, but surpassed it by 2.3 percentage points. Therefore, Bronx Better Learning has identified performance on this goal as “close to being met.”

Additional Evidence

As the table below indicates, limited two year trend data demonstrates some progress toward meeting this outcome measure. In 2006-07, the single cohort under analysis experienced growth of minus 6.4 percentage points, thus not meeting the target. However, in 2007-08 one cohort (Grade 4) experienced no growth, while the other (Grade 5) experienced a positive change of 14.3 percentage points, with an aggregate growth of 7.2 percentage points.

**Cohort Performance on State English Language Arts Exam
Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2006-07	4	0	1
2007-08	4, 5	1	2

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. Since the average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) of the 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade cohorts was above 50 in June 2007, this goal required an increase of 0.1 from the previous year’s performance. In Grade 3, since the cohort’s performance in the previous year was below 50, the target was 49.4. The 1st grade modified cohort was tested in the fall and spring of the 2007-08 school year in order to obtain baseline information, and performed below NCE of 50 in the fall, therefore had a 48.4% performance target.

Results

As reflected in the following table, there were positive changes in the 3rd and 4th grade cohort scores in 2007-08, producing increases in the average NCE of 1.6 and 3.1, respectively and therefore meeting their established targets. The 2nd and 5th grade cohorts experienced NCE decreases of 5.5 and 0.3, respectively; however, each cohort remained above an average NCE of 50 at the end of the 2007-08 year. The first grade modified cohort experienced a positive fall – to – spring gain of 12.0 NCE points.

Cohort Growth on TerraNova (Reading) from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Change	Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08		
1 ³	57	46.8	48.4	58.8	12.0	Yes
2	46	62.3	62.4	56.8	-5.5	No
3	53	48.8	49.4	50.4	1.6	Yes
4	50	51.8	51.9	54.9	3.1	Yes
5	47	51.6	51.7	51.3	-0.3	No

Evaluation

Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this measure, with only 2 of 4 regular cohorts reaching their respective performance targets. However, all cohorts (including the modified 1st grade cohort) ended the 2007-08 year with a mean NCE above 50.

SUMMARY

As delineated in the following table, during the 2007-08 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its second and third measures for Goal 1, came close to meeting the first and fifth measures and did not meet the fourth (which actually represented performance in 2006-07) and sixth measures.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome
			2007-08
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.	Close to Meeting
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
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
4	Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Did Not Meet (2006-07)
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.	Close to Meeting
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.	Did Not Meet

³ The Grade 1 modified cohort analysis uses a fall – to – spring value added measure as opposed to the required spring – to – spring analysis because the fall administration serves as the baseline for the school's students. Therefore, traditional "summer loss" is not accounted for.

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. Bronx Better Learning will increase our cadre of on-site Professional Development Specialists from an FTE of 2.4 to 3.0, with the increase specifically coming by way of the transition of the current Executive Director and founding lead applicant to a .6 Professional Development Specialist. He is an expert in the school's pedagogical approach, specifically the use of *Words in Color* in the teaching of reading. Additionally, the Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees has already contracted for the services of Charlotte Balfour, an expert in the subordination of teaching to learning, for 60 days during the 2007-08 school year, as had been done in the previous year.
2. The Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees has added an FTE of 1 administrative position to its organizational structure for the 2008-09 school year. This position, the Supervisor of Instruction, has been filled by an experienced instructional leader who will be responsible for guiding the school's strategic professional development plan. This will include institutionalizing the existing efforts of Professional Development Specialists within a framework for improving teaching at the school. In addition, the Supervisor of Instruction will focus heavily on the kindergarten instructional program, which will be added for the first time in 2008-09. By doing so, she will ensure a strong foundation of skills in the English language, thus improving performance in this goal area over time.
3. Bronx Better Learning has made a strategic decision to increase the number of Basic Skills teachers from an FTE of 2.0 to 3.5. In addition, these teachers will be assigned a grade level and will focus their attention on students that have not yet mastered the English language arts skills expected, thereby improving performance within this goal area.
4. Bronx Better Learning will avoid assigning to a given grade level a group of teachers who all lack teaching experience with the school's pedagogical approach. Moving forward into the 2008-09 school year and beyond, the school 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. In addition, beginning in 2008-09 the Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees will provide an additional stipend for a teacher in each grade to serve as grade-level lead teacher. Lead teachers will be responsible for facilitating the daily planning sessions within each grade and for compiling curricular materials to institutionalize the instructional program at each grade level.
5. Bronx Better Learning will continue to more fully implement the Writer's Workshop instructional method within all tested grades. This will include more structured professional development opportunities for teachers in using this method, including modeling of the approach such that the teachers will assume the role of student to improve their own writing skills.

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 3rd through 5th 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 – 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 scaled 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 (first Wednesday of October) of the previous school year and score at Levels 3 and 4. During the week of March 3 - 7, 2008, Bronx Better Learning's 3rd - 5th grade teachers administered the New York State Mathematics Assessment to all of its 3rd - 5th grade students, in strict accord with all test administration procedures.

**2007-08 State Mathematics Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁴			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	59	0	0	0	59
4	58	0	0	0	58
5	48	0	0	0	48
All	165	0	0	0	165

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 59 students tested in Grade 3, 52 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 52 continuously enrolled 3rd graders, 92.3% (48 of 52) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination. Of the 58 students tested in Grade 4, 48 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 48 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 91.7% (44 of 48) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination. All of the 48 5th graders tested were enrolled in at least their second year. Of these students, 81.3% (39 of 48) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination. In total, 148 of the students tested in Grades 3 - 5 were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 88.5% (130 students) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 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	0.0	10.2	62.7	27.1	89.8	59
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	7.7	65.4	26.9	92.3	52
4	All Students	0.0	13.8	58.6	27.6	86.2	58
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	8.3	62.5	29.2	91.7	48
5	All Students	0.0	18.8	60.4	20.8	81.3	48
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	18.8	60.4	20.8	81.3	48
All	All Students	0.0	13.9	60.6	25.5	86.1	165
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	11.5	62.8	25.7	88.5	148

⁴ 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

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. In fact, the school surpassed this outcome measure by 13.5 percentage points. The margin in which each grade surpassed this target declined with each successive grade (17.3 percentage points in Grade 3, 16.7 percentage points in Grade 4, and 6.3 percentage points in grade 5). This pattern correlates to a 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. However, Bronx Better Learning slightly outperformed this statewide average (89.9% in Grade 3, 83.8% in Grade 4, and 83.2% in Grade 5) in each grade tested.

Additional Evidence

As the table below indicates, there are only three years’ worth of data available, and only two grade levels with the possibility of a year-to-year absolute measure comparison. Mathematics performance in Grade 3 has increased consistently during the three year comparison (80.0% in 2005-06, 83.3% in 2006-07, and 92.3% in 2007-08). Performance has also increased in Grade 4 from 2006-07 to 2007-08 (79.5% to 91.7%). Similarly, aggregate performance of all students has increased over the last three years (80.0% in 2005-06, 81.5% in 2006-07, and 88.5% in 2007-08). Bronx Better Learning has not only met this measure consistently, but has continued to increase the margin in which the measure is surpassed, which provides additional evidence of the success of the school’s instructional program in mathematics.

**Mathematics Performance
by Grade Level and School Year⁵**

Grade	Percent of Students, at Levels 3 and 4					
	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3 (All tested)	81.5	54	84.2	57	89.8	59
3 (2+ years)	80.0	45	83.3	48	92.3	52
4 (All tested)			78.9	57	86.2	58
4 (2+ years)			79.5	44	91.7	48
5 (All tested)					81.3	48
5 (2+ years)					81.3	48
Total (All tested)	81.5	54	81.6	114	86.1	165
Total (2+ years)	80.0	45	81.5	92	88.5	148

⁵ 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.

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 165 students tested on the New York mathematic examination in 2007-08, 13.9% attained Level 2, 60.6% attained Level 3 and 25.5% attained Level 4. The school’s attained aggregate Performance Index on the test was 186.1.

Calculation of 2007-08 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3-5	0.0	13.9	60.6	25.5	165

$$\begin{array}{rcccccc}
 \text{PI} & = & 13.9 & + & 60.6 & + & 25.5 \\
 & & & & + & 60.6 & + & 25.5 & = & \mathbf{186.1}
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

New York State’s NCLB 2007-08 target Annual Mathematics Measurable Objective for Grades 3 – 8 is 102. Since the Bronx Better Learning attained aggregate performance index value was 186.1, the school met the objective for this outcome measure, by a very wide margin of 84.1 points.

Additional Evidence

Given the limited amount of comparative data, there is consistency in the general positive aggregate levels of performance over the last three years, with a slight decrease in 2006-2007 versus 2005-2006. However, the school’s attained performance index increased by 9.1 points in 2007-08.

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
2007-08	3-5	165	13.9	60.6	25.5	186.1	102

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 3rd, 4th, and 5th 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 examination. Aggregate results were also analyzed, comparing Bronx Better Learning’s combined 3rd – 5th grade results with those of District 11.

Results

The following table presents the results for Grades 3, 4, and 5, separately, along with the aggregate data. Bronx Better Learning’s percentages for Grades 3, 4, and 5, individually, and for these three grades combined were 92.3%, 91.7%, 81.3%, and 88.5% respectively. The matching results for District 11 were: 85.4%, 78.6%, 77.6%, and 80.5%.

**2007-08 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 nd Year		All District 11 Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	92.3	52	85.4	3130
4	91.7	48	78.6	3213
5	81.3	48	77.6	3193
All	88.5	148	80.5	9536

Evaluation

Since the percentages of continuously enrolled Bronx Better Learning students at or above Level 3 at each grade level 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 6.9 percentage points in Grade 3, 13.1 percentage points in Grade 4, 3.7 percentage points in Grade 5, and experienced an aggregate difference of 8.0 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 three years that Bronx Better Learning administered the State mathematics examination. The school experienced an improvement in the percentage difference between its aggregate scores and District 11’s in each year as follows: plus 3.5 % percentage points in 2004-05,

plus 4.5 percentage points in 2006-07, and plus 8.0 percentage points in 2007-08. This evidence suggests that Bronx Better Learning continues to widen the difference between their performance in mathematics from their New York District 11 counterparts, as measured by the state assessment.

**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					
	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	80.0	76.5	83.3	82.4	92.3	85.4
4			79.5	71.4	91.7	78.6
5					81.3	77.6
All	80.0	76.5	81.5	77.0	88.5	80.5

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 2007-08 was not available at the time of the preparation of this report, the previous year’s (2006-07) results are presented.

Results

As noted in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for mathematics in the 2006-07 school year, was .09 and .14 for Grades 3 and 4, respectively, and .11 when both grades were computed together as an aggregate.

2006-07 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	NA	57	84.2	83.1	1.1	0.09
4	NA	57	79.0	77.2	1.7	0.14
All	48.0	114	81.6	80.2	1.4	0.11

School's Overall Comparative Performance:
About the Same as Expected

Evaluation

Since the attained Effect Size was 0.09 for Grade 3, 0.14 for Grade 4, and +0.11 for the aggregate of both grades in 2006-07, Bronx Better Learning has not met its objective for this outcome measure.

Additional Evidence

As evident in the following table, there are currently only two years of data available, relevant to this outcome measure. The objective was met 2005-06, and was not met in 2007-08. Although actual performance remained consistent (only a gain of .1 percentage points), the percentage of students eligible for free lunch declined by 10.6 percentage points, thus decreasing the school's predicted level of performance.

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
2006-07	3 and 4	48.0	114	81.6	80.2	0.11

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 cohorts of students who took the New York State mathematics examination while on the register of Bronx Better Learning for both the March 2007 and the March 2008 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.

There were only two cohorts (4th and 5th graders in 2007-08) available for a value added analysis of the state mathematics test scores, as well as an aggregate total for both grades combined. The performance of each cohort and the aggregate in the previous year (2006-07) was above the 75% absolute proficiency threshold (86.3% for the 4th grade cohort, 83.3% for the 5th grade cohort, and 84.8% in the aggregate), therefore each target represented an increase of .1 percentage points.

Results

In 2007-08, the 4th grade cohort increased their performance by 3.9 percentage points (86.3% to 90.2%), thus meeting the target. Conversely, the performance of the school’s 5th grade cohort declined by 2.0 percentage points (83.3% to 81.3%), and failed to meet the respective target. The aggregate performance of both cohorts combined increased by 1.1 percentage points (from 84.8 to 85.9), thus meeting the target.

Cohort Growth on State Mathematics Exam from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent at Levels 3 and 4			Change	Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08		
4	51	86.3	86.4	90.2	+ 3.9	YES
5	48	83.3	83.4	81.3	- 2.0	NO
All	99	84.8	84.9	85.9	+ 1.1	YES

Evaluation

Since there was a drop of 2.0 percentage points for the 5th grade cohort in 2007-08, rather than a rise of .1 percentage points, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. However, due to the significant increase of 3.9 percentage points in the 4th grade cohort, contributing to the positive change of 1.1 percentage points in the aggregate, Bronx Better Learning has identified performance on this measure for 2007-08 as “close to meeting.”

Additional Evidence

As the table below indicates, some progress toward this outcome measure was noted in 2007-08. In the previous year, the single cohort under analysis (Grade 4) did not the target and actually experienced a decrease in performance of 4.2 percentage points. However one of two cohorts met the target for this outcome measure in 2007-08, as well as the aggregate of both grades combined.

**Cohort Performance on Mathematics Exam
Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2006-07	4	0	1
2007-08	4, 5	1	2

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. Since the average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) of the 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade cohorts was above 50 in June 2007, this goal required an increase of 0.1 from the previous year’s performance. In Grade 3, since the cohort’s performance in the previous year was below an NCE of 50, the target was 48. The 1st grade modified cohort was tested in the fall and spring of the 2007-08 school year in order to obtain baseline information, and performed below NCE of 50 in the fall, therefore had a 41.7% performance target.

Results

As reflected in the following table, there was a positive change in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade cohort scores, producing average NCE increases of 3.9, 7.2, and 5.0, respectively. There was a 1.9 decrease in the average NCE score for the 5th grade cohort. The first grade modified cohort experienced a positive fall – to – spring change of 15.2 NCE points. All grade level cohorts ended the 2007-08 year with an average NCE over 50, with the exception.

Cohort Growth on TerraNova (Math) from 2006-07 to 2007-08

Grade	Cohort Size	Average NCE			Change	Target Achieved
		2006-07	Target	2007-08		
1 ⁶	57	33.4	41.7	48.6	15.2	Yes
2	46	51.3	51.4	55.2	3.9	Yes
3	53	46.7	48.4	53.8	7.2	Yes
4	50	56.5	56.6	61.5	5.0	Yes
5	47	55.4	55.5	53.5	-1.9	No

Evaluation

Bronx Better Learning came close to meeting its objective for this outcome measure with 3 of 4 regular cohorts meeting their performance targets.

⁶ The Grade 1 modified cohort analysis uses a fall – to – spring value added measure as opposed to the required spring – to – spring analysis because the fall administration serves as the baseline for the school’s students. Therefore, traditional “summer loss” is not accounted for.

SUMMARY

As delineated in the following table, during the 2007-08 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first, second, and third outcome measures for Goal 2, came close to meeting the fifth and sixth measures, and did not meet the fourth measure (which actually represented performance in 2006-07).

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome
			2007-08
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
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
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
4	Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Not Met (2006-07)
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.	Close to Meeting
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

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. Bronx Better Learning will increase our cadre of on-site Professional Development Specialists from an FTE of 2.4 to 3.0, with the increase specifically coming by way of the transition of the current Executive Director and founding lead applicant to a .6 Professional Development Specialist. He is an expert in the school's pedagogical approach and will assist teachers to improve their instructional skills. Additionally, the Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees has already contracted for the services of Charlotte Balfour, an expert in the subordination of teaching to learning, for 60 days during the 2007-08 school year, as had been done in the previous year.
2. The Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees has added an FTE of 1 administrative position to its organizational structure for the 2008-09 school year. This position, the Supervisor of Instruction, has been filled by an experienced instructional leader who will be responsible for guiding the school's strategic professional development plan. This will include institutionalizing the existing efforts of Professional Development Specialists within a framework for improving teaching at the school. In addition, the Supervisor of Instruction

will focus heavily on the kindergarten instructional program, which will be added for the first time in 2008-09. By doing so, she will ensure a strong foundation of mathematics skills, thus improving performance in this goal area over time.

3. Bronx Better Learning has made a strategic decision to increase the number of Basic Skills teachers from an FTE of 2.0 to 3.5. In addition, these teachers will be assigned a grade level and will focus their attention on students that have not yet mastered the English language arts skills expected, thereby improving performance within this goal area.
4. Bronx Better Learning 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 2008-09 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. In addition, beginning in 2008-09 the Bronx Better Learning Board of Trustees will provide an additional stipend for a teacher in each grade to serve as grade-level lead teacher. Lead teachers will be responsible for facilitating the daily planning sessions within each grade and for compiling curricular materials in an attempt to institutionalize the instructional program in use at each grade level.

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 4th 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 spring of 2008, Bronx Better Learning’s 4th grade teachers administered the New York State Science Assessment to all of its 4th graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures.

**2007-08 State Science Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁷			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
4	58	0	0	0	58

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 58 students tested in Grade 4, 48 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 48 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 87.5% (42 of 48) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State science examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 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	1.7	15.5	39.7	43.1	82.8	58
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	0.0	12.5	39.6	47.9	87.5	48

Evaluation

Since the attained percent at Level 3 or above on the New York State science examination for students enrolled in at least their second year is above 75%, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure. In fact, the school surpassed this outcome measure by 12.5 percentage points.

⁷ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam

Additional Evidence

As the table below indicates, there are only two years’ worth of data available, and only one grade level tested for this goal area, therefore only allowing a single year-to-year absolute measure comparison. Science performance in Grade 4 has increased from 2006-07 to 2007-08 (75.0% to 87.5). Bronx Better Learning has not only met this measure for the first two applicable years, but has continued to increase the margin in which the measure is surpassed, which provides additional evidence of the success of the school’s instructional program in science.

**Science Performance
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Second Year at Levels 3 and 4			
	2006-07		2007-08	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	75.0	44	87.5	58

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, data was not available at the time of the issuance of this report to determine progress toward the two measures within this goal area.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome
			2007-08
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.	Yes
2	Comparative	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.	N/A

ACTION PLAN

1. 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 2006-07 school year – to all grade levels.
2. Bronx Better Learning will implement a grade-level lead teacher model for the first time in

2008-09 as discussed in previous action plans for English language arts and mathematics in an effort to institutionalize its practices related to the implementation of the science curriculum.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Goal 4: Social Studies

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

Background

The school's social studies 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.

Goal 4, Measure 1: Absolute Proficiency

Each year, 75 percent of 4th 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.

Method

New York State administers an annual social studies examination to students in Grade 5. That examination is a cumulative assessment measuring student mastery of skills and knowledge, as determined by the New York State social studies examination. 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 November 14-15, 2008, Bronx Better Learning's 5th grade teachers administered the New York State Science Assessment to all of its 49 5th graders, in strict accord with all test administration procedures.

2007-08 State Social Studies Exam Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁸			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
5	49	0	0	0	49

Results

The following table presents the New York State social studies examination results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. All of the 49 students tested were

⁸ 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

enrolled in at least their second year. Of these students, 81.6% (40 of 49) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2007-08 State Social Studies 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	
5	All Students	4.1	14.3	59.2	22.4	81.6	49
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	4.1	14.3	59.2	22.4	81.6	49

Evaluation

Since the attained percent scoring at Levels 3 and 4 for students enrolled in at least their second year is 81.6%, Bronx Better Learning has met its objective for this outcome measure by surpassing the target by 6.6 percentage points. The 2007-08 school year was the first in which the school had a 5th grade, therefore no trend data are available.

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: Statewide New York State social studies 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 2007-08 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first outcome measure for Goal 4. 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.

Measure	Type	Description	Outcome
			2007-08
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
2	Comparative	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.	N/A

ACTION PLAN

1. In order to increase academic achievement of grade level social studies concepts, and thereby continue to meet Goal 4, Bronx Better Learning has hired an experienced social studies teacher to a position that is comprised of FTE .5 Basic Skills and FTE .5 social studies, both at the 5th grade level. As a result, attention will be paid to preparing students in this grade for the New York State examination in social studies and the school will continue to examine the

articulation of its social studies curriculum from grade to grade.

2. Bronx Better Learning will implement a grade-level lead teacher model for the first time in 2008-09 as discussed in previous action plans for English language arts and mathematics in an effort to institutionalize its practices related to the implementation of the science curriculum.

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 2005-06 Accountability status was: Charter School In Good Standing

The school's 2006-07 Accountability status was: Charter School In Good Standing

The school's 2007-08 Accountability status was: Not Available