



**The Bronx Charter School  
for Better Learning 1**

**2015-16 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

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Dr. Kevin Brennan, Executive Director, Ms. Yashira Maldonado, Assistant Principal, and Dr. Theodore Swartz, Director of Professional Development, with the assistance of consultant Simeon Stolzberg, prepared this 2015-16 Accountability Plan Progress Report on behalf of the school's Board of Trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
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The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 (BBL 1) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. BBL 1 opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1. One grade was added each year thereafter, and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1 – 5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. On January 15, 2008, the State University Trustees granted BBL 1 a full-term charter renewal for 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K – 5 through the 2012-13 school year. BBL 1 added a Kindergarten program in the fall of 2008 and served 345 students in grades K – 5. In 2010-11 the school enrolled 386 students in those same grades. On March 4, 2013, the State University Trustees granted another full five year renewal of the charter for Bronx Charter School for Better Learning. Additionally, on June 4, 2014, the State University Trustees approved a five year charter for the replication of BBL 1 and, in turn, the opening of Bronx Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) for September 2015. Since September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) has governed both charters, i.e., BBL 1 and BBL 2. BBL 1 had an enrollment of 500 students for the 2015-16 school year.

BBL 1 was originally located in a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227th Street in the Bronx, NY. Following the first year of operation, BBL reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which BBL 1 received permission to locate in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx, NY. The school used 3 classrooms and an office in the main building of P.S. 111 for the first time in 2008-09, to accommodate its growth in enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2008-09, replaced by 5th grade in 2009-10. Beginning September 2014, BBL 1 occupied three additional classrooms in the main building and added another two classrooms for the 2015-16 school year.

The mission of the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 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; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

In 2015, BBL 1 was recognized by Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents as a 2014-15 “High Progress Reward School.” The award celebrates BBL 1’s success in supporting educational excellence.

BBL 1:

- is not test-prep driven; as noted, the instructional approach is constructivist: we know children "construct" their knowledge, understanding and skills, so our teaching is guided by their learning and does not dominate it;
- does not have extended school days;
- does not incorporate an extended school year;
- backfills at all grade levels; and
- serves all students, including those eligible for free and reduced lunch, eligible for special education services and/or eligible for support as English Language Learners (ELL).

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

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2011-12	69	69	69	66	61	52								386
2012-13	72	72	70	63	62	56								395
2013-14	89	72	72	72	57	58								420
2014-15	108	93	72	72	72	57								474
2015-16	100	101	93	73	65	66								498

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

### BACKGROUND

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 (BBL 1) continues its focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

During the 2015-16 school year, BBL 1 maintained its strong commitment to ensuring a quality ELA program for all of its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards by:

- Continuing to emphasize the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*;
- Continuing to refine the curriculum to ensure its alignment with the State’s Common Core Standards;
- Continuing to incorporate as part of its reading foundation the use of Reader’s Workshop and Writer’s Workshop throughout the school;
- Continuing to foster a joy for reading through the Growing Great Readers program;
- Continuing to support the increased reading proficiency through the Accelerated Readers program;
- Continuing to make available to all students access to an extensive classroom library and school library;
- Continuing to closely monitor each student’s progress through the use of regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly “Data Day;”
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Identifying a Director of Professional Development to oversee and coordinate teacher development, including the newly expanded Jumpstart Internship Program;
- Raising high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leaders assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level;
- Continuing to provide professional development through our in-house professional development specialists to both teachers and assistants to further ensure each person’s readiness to support the needs of all of our students;

- Continuing to utilize writing rubrics that are aligned with the State’s Common Core Standards; and
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations and “walkthroughs” by administration.

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State English language arts examination for grades 3-8.

**METHOD**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts (“ELA”) assessment to students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2016. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year).

2015-16 State English Language Arts Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>1</sup>				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	72	0	0	0	1	73
4	65	0	0	0	0	65
5	66	0	0	0	0	66
All	203	0	0	0	0	204

**RESULTS**

On the 2015-16 state ELA assessment, 35% of students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency. Nearly 41% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were proficient, with 34% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and 30% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students performing at that level.

Performance on 2015-16 State English Language Arts Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	40.3	72	40.6	69
4	33.9	65	33.9	65
5	30.3	66	30.3	66
All	35.0	203	35.0	200

### EVALUATION

The school did not meet this measure. Overall it fell about 40 percentage points below the goal of 75% reaching proficiency. In addition, proficiency was highest in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

BBL 1's ELA overall performance grew by 4 percentage points from 2014-15 to 2015-16, bringing it closer to the overall goal of 75% proficient. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade performance increased notably from 24% proficient in 2014-15 to 41% proficient in 2015-16. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes decreased slightly.

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	43.5	69	24.2	66	40.6	69
4	49.1	53	34.8	66	33.9	65
5	44.8	58	33.3	57	30.3	66
All	45.6	180	30.7	189	35.0	200

### Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (“PLI”) on the State English language arts exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (“AMO”) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.

### METHOD

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state’s learning standards in English language arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2015-16 English language arts AMO of **104**. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.<sup>2</sup>

### RESULTS

The school’s Performance Index was 117, which exceeds the AMO of 104.

English Language Arts 2015-16 Performance Level Index

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
203	17.7	47.3	31.0	3.9

$$\begin{array}{rcccccccc} \text{PI} & = & 47.3 & + & 31.0 & + & 3.9 & = & 82.3 \\ & & & & 31.0 & + & 3.9 & = & \underline{35.0} \\ & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 117.3 \end{array}$$

### EVALUATION

The school met the measure. It continued to exceed the AMO, this year by 13 points, which is by three points more than last year.

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

### METHOD

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which

<sup>2</sup> In contrast to SED’s Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.



the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>3</sup>

## RESULTS

With 35% of students scoring at the proficient or above level, the school exceeded the district’s performance of 29% proficient or above.

2015-16 State English Language Arts Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	40.6	69	32.2	3232
4	33.9	65	31.7	3139
5	30.3	66	24.0	3203
All	35.0	200	29.3	9574

## EVALUATION

The school met this measure. It exceeded the district’s performance by six percentage points. In addition, each tested BBL grade exceeded the percent proficient of the respective district grade.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bronx Better Learning has consistently outperformed the district’s percent at or above proficiency. This holds for overall performance and individual grades.

English Language Arts Performance of Charter School and Local District  
by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Scoring at or Above Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	43.5	22.4	24.2	21.8	40.6	32.2
4	49.1	22.8	34.8	22.5	33.9	31.7
5	44.8	18.8	33.3	20.4	30.3	24.0
All	45.6	21.4	30.7	21.6	35.0	29.3

<sup>3</sup> Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

### METHOD

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (“Institute”) conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school’s actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar concentration of economically disadvantaged students. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3, or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree, is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2014-15 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

### RESULTS

The school had an overall effect size of 0.79 in 2014-15, which was higher than expected to a meaningful degree.

2015-16 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	85.7	71	27	20.2	6.8	0.47
4	84.3	68	34	20	14	1.03
5	75.0	57	33	21.1	11.9	0.90
All	82.1	196	31.2	20.4	10.8	0.79

**School’s Overall Comparative Performance:**

***Higher than expected to a meaningful degree***

### EVALUATION

The school met this measure by exceeding the target of 0.3. All three grades also individually exceeded this target.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently generated a large, positive effect size for the past three years.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2012-13	3 - 5	76.9	181	33.7	22.2	0.87
2013-14	3 - 5	80.0	187	45.5	22.5	1.70
2014-15	3 - 5	82.1	196	31.2	20.4	0.79

### Goal 1: Growth Measure<sup>4</sup>

Each year, under the state's Growth Model, the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.

## METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2015-16 and also have a state exam score from 2014-15, including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2014-15 score are ranked by their 2015-16 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

## RESULTS

The school's Mean Growth Percentile was 48.

2015-16 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	47	50.0
5	48	50.0
All	48	50.0

## EVALUATION

The school did not meet this measure, falling short of the statewide median by two points.

<sup>4</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school's growth percentile increased from 43 in 2014-15 to 48 in 2015-16, which is improvement but still does not exceed the statewide median of 50.

English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Statewide Median
4	50	41	47	50.0
5	55	45	48	50.0
All	53	43	48	50.0

## SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

The school met three out of five of the measures in this goal. Given the state's realignment of the state tests to Common Core standards, the school was unlikely to achieve the target of 75% proficient, but exceeded the state's annual measurable objective and the district's performance, and, as well, has achieved a significantly positive effect size in comparison to similar schools statewide. In terms of growth, the school was close to, but did not achieve, the state median.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state English language arts exam will meet that year's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2014-15 school district results.)	Achieved
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Did Not Achieve

## ACTION PLAN

Our school's absolute performance on the New York State ELA assessment, across grades 3 through 5, while higher overall than last year by 3.8 percentage points, currently exceeds District 11's overall performance for those same three grades by only 5.6 percentage points. While meeting our objective for that crucial measure, we aim for a substantially greater difference in our favor. Additionally, our overall growth score for the three testing grades misses our targeted objective, now for the second year in a row.

While we did not experience as much growth in our overall ELA scores as we expected, at least relative to students generally in New York City and New York State, we are pleased with the gains made in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, compared to the previous cohort tested during the 2014-2015 school year. The third grade's performance increased by 14% points, which reflects the increased, deliberate collaborative efforts between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teams during the 2015-2016 school year. Additionally, we are heartened that we have reduced, by more than half, the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who scored a Level 1 (25 in SY 2014-2015 vs. 12 in SY 2015-2016). Those improvements in the earliest testing grade bode well for the immediate future, as the cohort moves to 4<sup>th</sup>, then 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

At the same time, we are poignantly aware of the small numbers of students in each of our tested grades who achieved a Level 4 on the ELA assessment, and that has our full attention as we design our strategic plan to enhance further our ELA curriculum, instruction and professional development. As highlighted in our action plan, below, our primary emphasis is on revamping our ELA curriculum, with a number of ancillary actions to support that initiative.

The BBL Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to ensure the improvement of student performance in ELA, including working with the Executive Director to provide all needed resources.

While an ongoing analysis of individual student test results and an item analysis of the New York State ELA assessment will likely lead to additional adjustments in the ELA program as the new school year begins, we have already planned and initiated the following steps, in order to boost student achievement, including an increase in the percentage of our students who score at the Advanced Level:

1. Curriculum Enhancement: Our 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teachers, with support and guidance from our professional development team, have undertaken a complete revision of our ELA curriculum in those grades. They have already accomplished most of the work over the summer months, with a few additional instructional units awaiting revision as the new school year begins. There are three major changes, one of which currently pertains only to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Our purpose throughout is to increase the rigor of the content and the academic challenges we present, significantly "raising the bar" with regard to vocabulary development, sophistication in handling complex texts and improving students' accuracy, clarity and cohesiveness in their writing.

1.1 The first change is creating thematic based units that revolve primarily around rich, compelling and challenging literature, rather than the teaching of skills in a somewhat disconnected and isolated fashion. By creating lessons that center on books, rather than mostly on worksheets and short passages, students will build critical reading and thinking skills, throughout the school year, through their deep study of high quality literature. Having central themes provides a vehicle for them to think deeply about the fictitious or real lives of others, and grounds their thinking as they connect literature to their own perspectives. Tackling advanced vocabulary and analyzing renowned authors' techniques and artistry will maintain a prominent place in our lessons and will convey to our students a heightened expectation regarding their capacity to comprehend complicated, high level texts.

1.2 The second change is strengthening our writing curriculum. That bolstering includes:

- a more specific and comprehensive writing curriculum, with significant attention paid to writing standards.
- exercises to prepare students for “test writing” woven in from the beginning of the school year.
- deliberate scaffolding of test prep writing.
- targeted support and differentiation for students as they go through the stages of the writing process.
- increased published writing pieces in all genres suggested by the Common Core standards, all assessed with rubrics.
- dedicated time in the daily block structure for writing.
- writing benchmark administered in September, assessed with a rubric.
- daily writing prompts planned in advance to give students the opportunity to write in a variety of genres.
- daily writing prompts that incorporate writing challenges (outlined in the lesson sets).
- daily writing prompts complementing and relevant to topics or skills covered in group or independent work.

1.3 Finally, our growth in student enrollment requires our adding an additional class in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade this coming school year, providing us a ripe opportunity to begin melding our ELA curriculum with our Social Studies curriculum. We will have two teams at that grade level, with two pairs of ELA/Social Studies teachers, each pair responsible for two classes of students. Those teams have extensive blocks of time each day, for which they are planning instruction that incorporates Social Studies objectives with those of ELA. Doing so provides a structure for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA/Social Studies instruction in the ensuing years, as our larger cohort of students moves into those higher grades. The folding of Social Studies objectives fully into our teaching of ELA

is a further opportunity to increase rigor, both in reading comprehension and writing, in a seamless and efficient manner.

2. Increased Early Grade Emphasis on Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension: While our core program for early literacy – Words in Color – is designed to support students’ capacity to write and to understand what they read as well as their spoken language allows, we have determined that our ELA instruction in Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade requires adjustment in the following two ways:
  - 2.1 Our K – 2 teachers will incorporate, much more extensively in their lessons, work with students in the Primers and Worksheets that are part of the Words in Color program, but which have remained until this coming school year less a central component than intended. Doing so will prepare students better to meet the increased challenges and expectations awaiting them in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and beyond.
  - 2.1 Our primary grade teachers will reflect in their plans an increased emphasis on “academic” vocabulary.
3. Administrative Support: The new appointment of an Assistant Principal will increase support and feedback for teachers. A refined evaluation schedule will include regularly scheduled “classroom walkthroughs,” with written feedback to teachers targeting student engagement, lesson development, and differentiation.
4. Assignment of the Academic Leaders: We will assign a larger cadre of Academic Leaders to permanent classrooms, where they will participate fully as co-teachers and constant, on-site coaches for less experienced staff, whom they will mentor on a daily basis.
5. Planning Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers will meet at least once every month to discuss differentiation and targeted challenges. Their purpose will be to better prepare the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
6. Lesson Planning Review: Academic Leaders at all grade levels will closely monitor lesson planning to ensure that teachers provide sufficient attention and time to both reading and writing.
7. Expansion of our Guidance Department: We are increasing staff in our guidance department to create in-house behavior interventions for Tier 2 students, in light of the fact that an increase in disruptive, distracting student behavior has accompanied our determination to keep on register all students, regardless of the challenges they present. We will assign our three guidance department staff members to pairs of grades: K-1, 2-3 and 4-5. They will conduct group and individual sessions to help students deal with testing and other anxiety, peer pressure and conflicts, and other academically related struggles.

8. Parent Workshops: We will integrate targeted parent workshops to educate and engage parents in addressing issues like: *Behavior Challenges, Homework Help, Understanding the Test*. We have selected the topics based on parent and teacher feedback. The parent training will occur every semester.
9. Student Support: Our administrative team will review and expand academic support, as necessary, to better meet the needs of underperforming students.
10. Review of Interim Assessments: Our assessment team will review both the schedule and method for monitoring student progress throughout the school year, ensuring an accurate alignment with our revised ELA curriculum and the implementation of assessment criteria that are sufficiently rigorous.

## MATHEMATICS

### Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.

### BACKGROUND

Bronx Better Learning continues its focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities and, in turn, to ensuring the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all of its students by:

- Continuing to review the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Common Core Standards;
- Continuing to maintain a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Continuing to consistently apply the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, to ensure, even in the earliest stages, that students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;



- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to further ensure each person’s readiness to support the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations by administration;
- Continuing to emphasize the development of two essential skills, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in their computation skills and increasing the student’s ability to effectively focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills; and
- Continuing to ensure that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction, throughout the school year, to gather and analyze student performance data to ensure that each student’s individual needs are being addressed.

**Goal 2: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics examination for grades 3-8.

**METHOD**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in April 2016. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

The table below summarizes participation information for this year’s test administration. The table indicates total enrollment and total number of students tested. It also provides a detailed breakdown of those students excluded from the exam. Note that this table includes all students according to grade level, even if they have not enrolled in at least their second year.

2015-16 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>5</sup>				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	72	0	0	0	1	73
4	65	0	0	0	0	65
5	66	0	0	0	0	66
All	203	0	0	0	0	204

## RESULTS

The percentage of continuously enrolled students who scored at the proficient or above level was 64%. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 57% scored at this level, 62% in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 73% in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Performance on 2015-16 State Mathematics Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	56.9	72	56.9	72
4	61.5	65	61.5	65
5	72.7	66	72.7	66
All	63.6	203	63.6	203

## EVALUATION

The school did not meet this measure. Overall, it was 11 percentage points below the target of 75%. However, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade came very close with 73% proficient. In addition, only 4% scored at Level 1 and nearly one-quarter of BBL students scored at Level 4.

<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.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Over the last three years approximately two-thirds of students have been proficient in mathematics each year. Last year's results are slightly lower than the previous two years' outcomes.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	55.1	69	59.1	66	56.9	72
4	83.0	53	72.7	66	61.5	65
5	69.0	58	70.2	57	72.7	66
All	67.8	180	67.2	189	63.6	203

### Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

## METHOD

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state's learning standards in mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2015-16 mathematics AMO of 101. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.<sup>6</sup>

## RESULTS

The school has a PLI of 159 compared to the AMO of 101.

Mathematics 2015-16 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
203	4.4	32.0	40.9	22.7

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 32.0 & + & 40.9 & + & 22.7 & = & 95.6 \\
 & & & & 40.9 & + & 22.7 & = & \underline{63.6} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 159.1
 \end{array}$$

<sup>6</sup> In contrast to NYSED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

## EVALUATION

The school met this measure. Its PLI of 159 exceeded the AMO by 58 points.

### Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

## METHOD

A school compares the performance of tested students enrolled in at least their second year to that of all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>7</sup>

## RESULTS

Overall 64% of students scored at or above the proficient level, compared to 29% of district students in the same grades.

2015-16 State Mathematics Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	56.9	72	29.8	3277
4	61.5	65	31.2	3166
5	72.7	66	26.7	3222
All	63.6	203	29.2	9665

## EVALUATION

The school met this measure. It outperformed the district by approximately 35 percentage points.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently outperformed the district by a large margin. This pattern holds true overall as well as for each individual grade level.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	55.1	29.2	59.1	27.8	56.9	29.8
4	83.0	32.6	72.7	28.0	61.5	31.2
5	69.0	26.8	70.2	31.7	72.7	26.7
All	67.8	29.6	67.2	29.0	63.6	29.2

### Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

## METHOD

The Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to that of demographically similar public schools statewide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school's actual performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar concentration of economically disadvantaged students. The difference between the school's actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3, or performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree, is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state's release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2014-15 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

## RESULTS

The school had an overall effect size of 1.97 in 2014-15, which was higher than expected to a large degree.

### 2014-15 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	85.7	71	59	29.2	29.8	1.56
4	84.3	68	72	28.7	43.3	2.28
5	75.0	57	70	32.0	38.0	2.12
All	82.1	196	66.7	29.8	36.9	1.97

### School's Overall Comparative Performance:

*Higher than expected to a large degree.*

## EVALUATION

The school met this measure.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently generated a large, positive effect size for the past three years, growing each year to 1.97 in 2014-15.

### Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2012-13	3 - 5	76.9	181	44.2	25.4	1.11
2013-14	3 - 5	80.0	187	67.4	31.2	1.88
2014-15	3 - 5	82.1	196	66.7	29.8	1.97

## Goal 2: Growth Measure<sup>8</sup>

Each year, under the state’s Growth Model, the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state’s unadjusted median growth percentile.

## METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2015-16 and also have a state exam score from 2014-15, including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2014-15 score are ranked by their 2015-16 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students’ growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school’s mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

## RESULTS

In 2015-16 the school’s overall mean growth percentile was 54.

2015-16 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	48	50.0
5	60	50.0
All	54	50.0

## EVALUATION

The school met this target. It exceeded the statewide median of 50 by 4 points, overall. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade fell below by two points, while 5<sup>th</sup> grade exceeded the median by ten points.

<sup>8</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently exceeded the statewide median.

Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Statewide Median
4	61	66	48	50.0
5	55	46	60	50.0
All	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>54</b>	50.0

## SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

The school met all but one of the measures in this goal. It came close to meeting the absolute measure of 75% proficient. It far exceeded the performance of the local district and similar schools statewide. Finally, it has demonstrated strong growth compared to the state.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2013-14 school district results.)	Achieved
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Achieved

## ACTION PLAN

Bronx Better Learning continues its commitment to ensuring that all of its students understand mathematics deeply, enjoy its beauty, and perform well in math examinations.



BBL students continue to demonstrate noteworthy achievement throughout the testing grades, but there is always room for improvement. To facilitate the continued growth of our students, the following actions will be taken:

1. Instructional Rigor: The mathematics program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective computational skills for all students through the following actions:
  - In her new role, the Assistant Principal will offer increased support and feedback to teachers. Her schedule will include classroom walkthroughs, followed by written feedback to teachers targeting student engagement, lesson development, and differentiation.
  - The Math Academic Leader has moved to third grade to ensure that the foundation of the upper school math program starts out strong.
  - In grades 3-5, the AP and the Math Academic Leader will collaborate to facilitate the ongoing planning process (begun in the summer), the review of weekly lesson plans and the aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated in the common core standards.
  
2. Data Driven Decision Making:
  - Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
  - The interim assessment tool has been changed from Test Wiz to Achievement Network.
  - Test prep material will be integrated throughout the year.
  - Assessments will be administered more frequently.
  - Homework will be given daily, rather than weekly.
  - Children will be given more opportunities to give each other feedback.
  
3. Spiraling curriculum: Many topics in the curriculum have been broken out so that they re-appear in successive months, with different and often more complex lessons and assessments scheduled for later months. That approach conforms with the gradual nature of learning and iteration ensures that our students' understanding of a topic deepens over the course of the year.
  
4. Focus on At-Risk Students: The mathematics program will continue to give extra support to students identified as being at-risk and/or with special needs, through:
  - the work of support teachers, who in collaboration with the PD specialist in math, will ensure an instructional plan that targets individual student needs.
  - special education instructional options. Special education will continue to include access to a variety of services: cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS (provided as either push-in or pull-out services), along with the related services of speech, occupational therapy and counseling.
  - English Language Learner (ELL) program support. The ELL Coordinator will deliver needed support to eligible students.

5. Professional Development: The PD program will ensure that all teachers are prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
  - Weekly Institutes: The math PD specialist and the math Academic Leader have arranged weekly Institutes that will focus on the continued application of the school's pedagogy.
  - In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to better exemplify the school's approach.

## SCIENCE

### Goal 3: Science

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

#### BACKGROUND

Bronx Better Learning continues its focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to strongly promote effective student mastery of the State's Common Core Curriculum in science by:

- Continuing to implement the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning, incorporating techniques and materials that foster students' active participation in lessons;
- Continuing to implement lessons that emphasize hands-on experimentation and make use of BOCES prepared science kits (Science 21 Program) that complement the school's core pedagogy;
- Continuing to incorporate a problem solving approach that presents students with "real life" problems and working in groups, which analyze data/information to come up with solutions to the problems, all of which leads students to a deeper appreciation of cause and effect relationships; and
- Continuing to provide supplemental support to students who are not progressing as expected.

### Goal 3: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State science examination.

### METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in spring 2015. The school converted each student's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

### RESULTS

In 2015-16, 92% of the school's 4<sup>th</sup> grade students achieved a level 3 or 4 on the NYS Science assessment.

#### Charter School Performance on 2015-16 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	92	65	NA	NA

### EVALUATION

The school met this measure. It far exceeded the target of 75% proficient.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently exceeded its target by a wide margin over the last three years.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	100	57	96	66	92	65

### Goal 3: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

### METHOD

The school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
4	100	NA	96	NA	92	NA

### RESULTS

District Science results are not available.

#### 2015-16 State Science Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	92	65	NA	NA

### EVALUATION

This measure cannot be determined because district Science results are not available.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

District results are not available, making it impossible to evaluate trends over time.

## SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

With 92% of students proficient in Science, the school has met this goal.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	NA

## ACTION PLAN

The students continue to perform exceptionally well on the NYS Science assessment – achieving 92% passing for the 2014-2015 school year. While student performance in Science continues to be laudable, Bronx Better Learning will refine and improve its program through:

1. Instructional Rigor: The science program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective analytical skills for all students through:
  - a. Academic Leaders, who have been placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards.
  - b. Science Curriculum Coordinator: A Science Curriculum Coordinator has been appointed to facilitate instructional planning and curriculum refinement.
  - c. Data Driven Decision Making: Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
2. Focus on At-Risk Students: The science program continues to support students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:
  - a. Experienced Teachers: The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL's most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student's instructional program.
  - b. Special Education Instructional Options: Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services, and related services, e.g., speech, occupational therapy and counseling.

- c. English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support: The ELL Coordinator’s schedule ensures the effective delivery of needed support for students identified as ELL.
- 3. Professional Development: The science program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
  - a. Daily Institutes: The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Academic Leaders have arranged a weekly Institute schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school’s pedagogy throughout the school.
  - b. In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in “real situations” the effectiveness of the school’s approach.

# NCLB

**Goal 4: NCLB**  
The school will make Adequate Yearly Progress.

**Goal 4: Absolute Measure**  
Under the state’s NCLB accountability system, the school’s Accountability Status is in good standing: the state has not identified the school as a Focus School nor determined that it has met the criteria to be identified as school requiring a local assistance plan.

## METHOD

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's learning standards, the federal No Child Left Behind legislation stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet state proficiency standards. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards. The report cards indicate each school’s status under the state’s No Child Left Behind (“NCLB”) accountability system.

## RESULTS

Bronx Better Learning 1 is in good standing.

## EVALUATION

The school has met this measure and achieved the goal.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school has consistently been in good standing.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2013-14	Good Standing
2014-15	Good Standing
2015-16	Good Standing