



**Grand Concourse Academy  
Charter School**

**2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

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## 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Ira K. Victor, Executive Director, Maureen Howard, Vice Principal, Evelyn Velez, Assistant Principal, Michael Simonetti, Director and Jen Pasek, Pasek Consulting prepared this 2019-20 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Arlene Waisburd Hall	Chairperson
Howard Banker	Treasurer
Linda Manley	Secretary
Richard Conley	Trustee
Jaye Fox	Trustee
Veronica De Jesus	Trustee
Lucia Mariani	Trustee

**Ira K. Victor has served as Executive Director since 2004.**

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The mission of the Grand Concourse Academy Charter School (GCACS) is to create a challenging learning environment that addresses and meets the learning needs of students in New York City, especially those at risk of academic failure.

In a concentrated effort to prepare our students for entry into the very best high schools in New York City, GCACS seeks to foster a sense of strong character, ethics, and personal responsibility, as well as, high expectations for academic success.

GCACS places a strong emphasis on the CORE subject areas, as well as, offering focused enrichment in sports, music, dance, Greek studies, art, drama, STEM activities, and critical thinking skills. The Grand Concourse Academy Charter School diligently seeks to prepare students to meet and/or exceed New York State Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The school aligns and adjusts student learning to State Standards and uses a variety of ongoing cyclical assessments to measure student progress in skills and content learning.

GCACS provides multiple opportunities professional development opportunities aligned to the instructional program, and diligently seeks and encourages active parental involvement and participation in the academic goals of the student. In addition, the school will engage a variety of community organizations and community leaders as partners in obtaining needed resources to help ensure the academic success of every student. In addition, GCACS students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate advanced skills in the arts.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

The fundamental belief at the Academy is that ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN. All children have the right to attend schools in which they can achieve and learn. They shall have differentiated opportunities to learn equally rigorous content. We hold our school accountable to the same standards as those of the highest performing schools in our state.

GCA encourages teachers to engage in a “Performance-based/Mastery Instructional Model”, so that our students master both basic skills, as well as, the higher-level thinking skills they will need after graduation. Performance-based classes are designed for learning not teaching, and students learn through multiple demonstrations and explanations. Children learn by doing. Mastery learning requires pedagogues to create multiple opportunities for numerous and varied teaching approaches to guarantee successful student outcomes. Students are required to prove, through their projects and presentations, that they have mastered knowledge and skills in language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. Therefore, learning maps are provided to allow these opportunities to

take place with a six (6) to seven (7) week learning cycle. Students are informally tested frequently to ensure learning takes place.

Our school slogan is *“Young children...Great Visions...Extraordinary Achievements”*

As young adolescents transition out of the elementary phase of their educational life, a smooth transition into the Middle School years has a profound effect on the social, emotional, and cognitive life of the student. Therefore, it is necessary to develop special instructional, curricular, and administrative changes. GCA provides a safe-school environment, student-initiated learning with a meaningful curriculum, and enables students to share roles in decision-making, and provide strong adult role models.

The 2019-2020 school year proved to be exciting, as well as motivating, as children began the school year in our brand new, state-of-the art 45,500 square foot new school building! We were able to provide our students with many opportunities for discovery in our new Science Lab, and to develop academic, critical thinking strategies, advanced reasoning skills, as well as, leadership, and organizational skills in new bright, airy classrooms, art rooms and music rooms. Students continued their study of Greek language, culture and mythology. A large gymnasium provided students with new fun experiences, both indoors and out, or in one of our two new playgrounds, and walked or jogged the ¼ mile school track. We were in the process of setting up our new Library when the pandemic hit.

We expanded “Responsive Classrooms” school-wide as our path to merging cognitive growth with social interactions. A core team of staff members attended an intensive week of training during the summer of 2019. and trained all staff in August. Our focus is further cooperation, empathy, responsibility, and self-control among our students through knowing our students and their families, demonstrating that adults work collaboratively, convening “Morning Meetings” of various styles according to grade level, and using simple gestures to gain students’ attention and to regain control and/or redirect behavior. Adults and students collaboratively developed a tight set of rules with logical consequences in an active learning environment that enabled students to work in flexible groups and as independent learners. The Guidance Counselor met with at-risk students individually, and in groups, to help students develop strategies and ways to solve problems in a healthy manner.

Every kindergarten class had a full-time teacher and a full-time certified Teacher Assistant. The Kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching class also had an additional teacher most of the day, as well as a Teacher Assistant for support throughout the week. During the first two weeks of school, Kindergarten teachers administered a one to one baseline assessment to determine the child’s basic knowledge (writing name, counting to twenty, identifying capital and lowercase letters, and sight words). Teachers were able to form instructional groups by the end of September in order to meet the diverse academic needs of the children through grouping.

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The Grade 1 Integrated Co-Teaching class had a Special Education Teacher full time and a second Teacher most of the school day. Children had many opportunities for healthy outdoor and indoor play, as there are two outdoor playgrounds, and a large indoor gymnasium in the building. Outdoor play areas provided a rich arena for natural exploration and physical development. Grades 2-8 Integrated Co-Teaching classes also had two teachers (one General Education Teacher and one Special Education Teacher) for at least three hours a day. Additionally, we created an “at-risk” Grade 1 class of approximately fifteen (15) students with a teacher and a Teaching Assistant for part of the day to address deficits in academics, and to provide additional support for students with developmental delays, disabilities, and/or behavioral issues. The teacher assigned to this class has had experience in addressing students’ needs in these areas.

Grade 2 is the “transition” year in which teachers support children making the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” A second teacher was assigned to each grade 2 class for reading instruction.

Teachers in Grades 1-8 administer Baseline Reading and Math assessments to determine instructional groups at the onset of the school year.

There is an Integrated Co-Teaching class on every grade from K-8. In Grades K-8, a teacher is assigned for Academic Intervention Services in Literacy and Math.

GCA is committed to educating the whole child through the arts and extracurricular clubs. Two (2) part-time visual arts teachers and two (2) music teachers, and a Greek studies teacher provide all students with at least one (1) period of music or visual arts instruction per week. Students have many opportunities to perform in programs that will highlight student achievement in the arts (galleries, performances, chorus, etc.). Participation in the arts helps to promote creativity, imagination, self-confidence, multicultural awareness and a love for those opportunities that allow these interests to get the recognition they deserve. Every child needs the chance to explore his or her ability to draw, paint, sing, dance or sculpt with clay.

It is imperative for a successful school to have strong collaboration among, staff, parents, and students. Parents are integral partners in our school community. The Parent Liaison conducts ongoing parent outreach, and parents are notified through our digital and telecommunications Messenger service, as well as, through Jupiter, our online grading and teacher record-keeping system. Parent Workshops are scheduled throughout the year to ensure our graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders are afforded the opportunity to attend the best high schools.

For the 2019-2020 school year, we scheduled an afterschool program from mid-October, 2019 through May, 2020 for three days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) from 3:30-5:30 PM for grades 3-8. Experienced instructional staff provided support for academics and students have the opportunity to engage in enrichment activities such as art, chorus, physical education, and music.

Students in Grade 8 were scheduled to attend a three-day, nature-based/team-building workshops at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) to participate in authentic STEM activities that are aligned with New York State Standards and will provide students opportunities to engage in real-world critical thinking and authentic writing through problem-solving. We have identified critical thinking and problem solving as an area of need, and the experiences at PEEC support students in achieving mastery in these areas.

### **THEN THE PANDEMIC STRUCK!**

Though distance learning is a viable solution to the current pandemic New York State is facing, we have reviewed and assessed several factors that proved to be challenging while implementing distance learning. During the initial intensive implementation phase—during which we only had two to three days to research effective distance program methodologies and train teachers—we faced several challenges but found many solutions and remedies. The program had to be flexible and open to modification as we experienced real-time issues and implemented corrective solutions.

#### **We faced the following challenges:**

- Two to three days was insufficient time to research effective distance learning programs and train teachers. It was also not sufficient time to video tape authentic, instructional lessons and provide directions to families.
- Many children did not have technology to participate and even if we distributed Chromebooks and Tablets many families did not have internet bandwidth to participate. We distributed more than 400 Chromebooks and Tablets to our families.
- Many families did not have the technological knowledge experience to negotiate the various websites or applications. Some of our parents work full-time jobs and left their children in daycare environments where technology and/or support was not readily available. However, we subsequently opened online learning opportunities after 4 pm daily.
- We are a diverse school where our parents speak over 13 languages other than English in their homes. Parents may not have the proficiency to properly support their child(ren) and/or may not be available during the times online lessons were posted.
- We are committed to delivering meaningful, high-impact, real-time feedback to students and wanted to ensure the highest quality of work

We were committed to delivering high-impact direct instruction and meaningful real-time feedback to students to ensure the highest level of learning. The more time staff and students spent participating in Distance Learning, the more proficient they became. Learning outcomes continually improved.

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In light of the school closure, Grand Concourse Academy Charter School took all necessary steps to continue to provide high-quality education to students. Therefore, the following contingency plans were implemented:

We provided training to each teacher on how to navigate Google Classroom and the Zoom platforms so they became fully equipped with all necessary resources to provide quality instruction through on-line teaching. However, the longer staff and students participated in distance learning the more proficiency they became, so subsequent outcomes improved. We also

- Set up Google accounts for each child to remote access lessons, coursework and assignments.
- Distributed Chromebooks and Fire tablets to all students who did not have devices that allowed them to participate in Distance Learning.
- We provide detailed tutorials on our website.
- We scheduled videoed lessons that were posted on Google Classrooms for students to access in the evenings
- Provided every student with an email account so he/she could register to join a virtual Google Classroom.
- Teachers monitored student participation and attendance daily. If students were not present, teachers were asked to reach out to parents on Jupiter Ed, notifying them that their child was absent for that day's lesson. This ensured accountability and parental support. Students were able to use their emails and/or Jupiter to communicate with staff.

### **Beginning March 16, 2020**

- Students began participation in Distance Learning using the work packets distributed to all students in Grades K-8 that aligned with each day's lesson so students had the assignments based on what the teacher taught that day. Each packet was readily available on the school's website to download and print. The packets distributed include an entire week's classwork and homework in both literacy and mathematics,
- Provided additional instruction to Students with Disabilities by a certified Special Education teacher. In addition to participating in General Education Google Classrooms, students requiring mandated services had the ability to join additional classrooms where the school made every effort to maintain continuity of services as mandated on their Individualized Educational Program.
- Assigned additional coursework, as needed, such as book reports, projects, etc. through Google Classrooms.
- Several instructional staff including Directors, Coaches and Teachers were assigned as "points of contact" to provide support to any student in need of assistance while they completed their work from home. Support staff checked emails daily and provided guidance and feedback.
- All students were provided with a GCA email account so they could make immediate contact with any staff.
- Provided on-line and paper instructional packets to student.

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- Provided Grab and Go breakfast/lunches to students between the hours of 7:30 – 1:30 weekdays, through NYC School Food.
- All parents were provided with their child's log-in credentials including detailed instructions, in English and Spanish, on how to register/access distance learning.
- Elementary and Middle School class schedules for distance-learning were created and distributed to teachers and parents.
- All SETSS and related Services and ENL support was available between 1 PM and 3PM.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has caused significant hardships on families and children. Society is dealing with the extraordinary challenges of sickness, death, loss of employment, social isolation, anxiety and depression. People are coping with difficulties most have not experienced in this lifetime. As educators and leaders, we must recognize these obstacles and develop solutions to ensure learning continues while prioritizing the health and safety of all children. To that extent, Grand Concourse Academy Charter School is modifying its current educational plan to safely reopen the school for the 2020-2021 school year and ensure a successful instructionally-enriched, emotionally-supportive, and socially-sensitive school-wide academic program. We have created several contingency plans which include a combination of in-person instruction and remote-learning depending on the health and safety requirements / restrictions of our local community. While we provide education in the brick and mortar building, we will adhere to all safety guidelines for social distancing, small group gatherings, using personal protective equipment, hand sanitization, and increased disinfecting of all commonly-touched surfaces.

We will return for the 2020 – 2021 school year smarter, more sensitive to emotional and physical needs, and with an increased knowledge of the support technology can provide. Education will never be the same. The lessons learned during this pandemic, out of necessity, have advanced education to a level that addresses all modalities of learning and provides opportunities for educators, parents and students alike to think outside the box, see, hear and be sensitive to all school community members' needs, as well as, forging a solid partnership for a common cause. We, at GCA, had the opportunity to experiment, take risks, adjust and expand our instructional strategies, approaches, and resources to provide a more well-rounded research-based, problem-solving approach to learning. Our overriding belief in mastery learning, through direct instruction, takes on a refreshed look as a more focused, student-centered exploratory learning modality, infused with remote learning that fosters a sense of independence and discovery.



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### ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2015-16	101	68	67	65	74	81	44			499
2016-17	68	98	69	70	56	70	70	37		536
2017-18	68	72	74	63	62	61	50	56	38	544
2018-19	63	74	85	76	60	60	63	50	52	583
2019-20	84	84	88	67	65	60	50	53	40	591

# 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

## GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Summary of changes to the Elementary ELA Goal due to the Covid-19 school closure:

- Schools will be unable to report state test proficiency rates, PIs, district comparisons, effect sizes, or mean growth scores.
- However, in the absence of state test results, schools should report relevant results from internally developed assessments, national norm-referenced tests, and/or any other evaluation method below. When possible, schools report tabular data aligned to the narrative.

#### Goal 1: English Language Arts

All students at the Grand Concourse Academy Charter School (GCACS) will become proficient in reading and writing of the English Language.

### BACKGROUND

For the 2019-2020 school year, we changed our reading program to a research-based design for Grades K-5 by Houghton Mifflin: **Into Reading**. This program includes Big Books for Shared Reading in lower grades, phonemic awareness and letter recognition in Kindergarten, phonics and handwriting in Grades K-5, daily opportunities for Close Reading, and levelled classroom libraries. The instructional design of **Into Reading** promotes a culture that cultivates student choice and fosters literacy motivation through high-quality engaging text sets, small group lessons, with assessments that provide ongoing insights into students' proficiency levels in Foundational Skills, Reading, Language, Writing and Research, Listening and Viewing. Digital access to all program components provided a rich opportunity for blended learning.

We continued to use **Collections** in Grades 6-8 with additional focused instruction on the supplemental components of Close Reading and Performance Assessments, with more rigorous emphasis on research, essays and informational, narrative, and persuasive writing. **Collections** provides the opportunity for Middle School students to engage in rigorous and relevant instructional materials supporting proficient and powerful readers.

Curriculum Maps/Pacing Charts developed by teachers encompasses six cycles, reflecting six to seven weeks of instruction. Assessments are administered at the end of each cycle for all grades, except Kindergarten who are not assessed again formally until after Cycle 2. Grades 3-8 cycle tests were developed to assess skills and strategies taught during the cycle in order to determine which students have not mastered those skills/strategies.

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Grades 5-8 departmentalized for double blocks of Literacy and Math and for Science and Social Studies. Integrated Co-Teaching classes in Grades 5 and 6 remained intact and support varied throughout the day as Special Ed teachers pushed into the class for IEP-mandated instructional areas.

From the onset of the school year, new and struggling teachers were identified for ongoing professional development which included demonstration lesson modeling by a teacher mentor, a peer, or the Senior Director Literacy Specialist. Teachers were provided feedback, in class small group support, behavior interventions for disruptive students, architecture of a 90-minute Literacy Block, mini-lessons, support for ENL students, differentiation and modifications for Students with Disabilities, guided reading, test sophistication, lesson planning and the necessary resources needed for success. Components of the Literacy Program were discussed at monthly Grade Common Planning meetings with a focus on literacy modules, skills, strategies and analysis of cycle test data. Teachers were also given support in developing SMART goals in literacy for struggling students and students at risk of academic failure.

All Teachers and Teacher Assistants in Grades K-5 received comprehensive training in the components of Into Reading at the onset of the school year in providing support for ELLs, differentiation, lesson planning, and all digital components. The digital component of this program was a key element in teaching live on Zoom during the pandemic, where teachers could share the screen with the pages of the books, assign leveled readers, view videos for background knowledge, chapter books, and skills/practice pages on Google Classroom, and administer assessments. Teachers were also able to assign practice pages through the child's personal Ed Learning account, and administer tests online. Teachers were able to move through the modules as if they were still in "brick and mortar" school.

The McGraw Hill Social Studies program for Grades 3-8 was a second opportunity for reading in the content area, conduct research, compile presentations, and reinforce skills that are specific to nonfiction reading. This program also had a viable digital component that roved critical to live Zoom teaching.

READY ELA New York edition is a skills/strategies supplemental reading resource for students in Grades 2-8 with a focus on direct instruction, modeling, guided instruction and independent practice with a focus on one (1) skill/strategy at a time. The READY ELA book also has a digital component with interactive videos and quizzes that are engaging and were easily adaptable to the live Zoom classroom.

The Collections Program for Grades 6-8 has a digital component also, and teachers were able to transition easily to live Zoom instruction during the pandemic. All components of this program are online, including quizzes and tests.

From the moment that it was advised that school would be closing, we set in motion a schedule of intensive training sessions with Zoom; sharing screens, Google Classroom, assigning a technology point person for staff development in refining access to the academic digital platforms for teachers,

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parents, and students (Pearson for Math and Science, McGraw Hill for Social Studies and Houghton Mifflin for reading), and taking advantage of all services offered by our vendors in this time of COVID crisis.

Teachers created ELA packets for students to ensure activities until online classes were securely scheduled. Over 400 Chrome Books were distributed at GCA and Students with Disabilities were able to pick up Tablets from New York City Department of Education to ensure online related services (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Counseling) were provided by the city and available on their platforms.

Subsequent online professional development was scheduled: April 10 for *Into Reading* and *Collections* training, and April 17 for McGraw-Hill Social Studies. Teachers in Kindergarten and Grade 1 were trained through Zoom on administering Running Records 1:1 in order to assess the reading levels of struggling students and readiness for the next grade.

### METHOD

ELA Cycle tests were administered across the grades (K-8) throughout the school year, based upon what was taught in the curriculum modules (K-5) or units (6-8). However, in January, 2020, we administered the New York State 2018 ELA TEST to Grades 3-8 in its entirety and had time to score the written (Day 2) and assigned 70% value to Multiple Choice questions and 30% to Written part. In late February, we administered the 2019 New York State ELA test, also in its entirety, but did not have time before the pandemic mandated school closure to score all of the written (Day 2), and enter into the data charts with the 70/30 split. See the attached Chart #1. At that time, we were at 67% school-wide (Grades 3-8) at Levels 3 and 4, without the written part (which is where we usually score high).

In order to determine overall student progress, charts, such as Chart #2, were created to note Cycle Test results in ELA and Math, as well as ELA and Math finals that were administered in small groups in “Breakout Rooms” on Zoom.

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CHART #1 ELA Data 2019-2020

CHART #1 ELA Data 2019-2020									
Class	Base Sept.	Mid Cycle 1	Cycle 1	Mid Cycle 2	Cycle 2	Simulation #1	Cycle 3/ Simulation #2	COVID-19 School Closure	
K-1 ICT	N/A	X	89%	X	63%	X	69%	X	X
K-2	N/A	X	87%	X	71%	X	81%	X	X
K-3/ELL	N/A	X	91%	X	74%	X	65%	X	X
K-4 /ELL	N/A	X	91%	X	91%	X	88%	X	X
						Kindergarten Cycle 3 Average: 91%			
1-1 ICT	82%	X	79%	X	80%	X	83%	X	X
1-2/ELL	83%	X	95%	X	86%	X	100%	X	X
1-3/ELL	52%	X	76%	X	50%	X	73%	X	X
1-4 At risk	71%	X	38%	X	36%	X	27%	X	X
						Grade 1 Cycle 3 Average: 71%			
2-1 ICT	12%	X	37%	X	78%	X	79%	X	X
2-2	20%	X	35%	X	83%	X	74%	X	X
2-3/ELL	24%	X	26%	X	71%	X	71%	X	X
2-4/ELL	24%	X	25%	X	72%	X	74%	X	X
						Grade 2 Cycle 3 Average: 75%			
3-1 ICT	11%	X	17%	X	36%	4%	30%	X	X
3-2/ELL	34%	X	23%	X	27%	35%	37%	X	X
3-3/ELL	17%	X	10%	X	32%	14%	55%	X	X
						Grade 3 Cycle 3 Average: 41%			

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Class	Base Sept.	Mid Cycle 1	Cycle 1	Mid Cycle 2	Cycle 2	Simulation #1	Cycle 3/ Simulation #2	COVID-19 School Closure	
Grades 4-8 Baseline data represents Spring 2019 NYS Test Scores									
4-1 ICT	81%	X	43%	X	30%	25%	43%	X	X
4-2	88%	X	68%	X	84%	44%	80%	X	X
4-3/ELL	78%	X	42%	X	30%	14%	37%	X	X
						Grade 4 Cycle 3 Average: 53%			
5-1 ICT	72%	X	67%	X	62%	67%	77%	X	X
5-2	94%	X	79%	X	70%	83%	85%	X	X
5-3	54%		50%	X	88%	65%	65%	X	X
						Grade 5 Cycle 3 Average: 76%			
6-1 ICT	50%	X	28%	X	54%	63%	59%	X	X
6-2	52%	X	38%	X	100%	67%	87%	X	X
						Grade 6 Cycle 3 Average: 73%			
7-1 ICT	58%	X	41%	X	32%	36%	84%	X	X
7-2	76%	X	29%	X	32%	46%	77%	X	X
						Grade 7 Cycle 3 Average: 81%			
8-1 ICT	59%	X	42%	X	95%	88%	65%	X	X
8-2	76%	X	39%	X	95%	84%	84%	X	X
						Grade 8 Cycle 3 Average: 75%			

CHART #2 CYCLE ASSESSMENTS in ELA/MATH/SCIENCE (SAMPLE)									
4 <sup>th</sup> grade Student	ELA Sim. Jan	ELA Sim. Feb	ELA Final June	ELA Average	Math Sim. March	Math Final June	Math Average	Science Final	New Class
Sample Student 1	85	85	95	88	96	81	89	87	5-2
Sample Student 2	70	75	95	80	96	80	88	100	5-3
Sample Student 3	69	75	95	80	100	89	95	100	5-2
Sample Student 4	56	85	80	74	65	88	77	70	5-1
Green = 90% +									
Blue = 70-89%									
Yellow= 60-69%									
Red= Below 60%									

## RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Our goal was to meet or exceed 75% at Levels 3 and 4 in ELA for Grades 3-8. As of March 13, 2020, Grades 3-8 were 67% at Levels 3 and 4. 76% of students in the Middle School (Grades 5-8) achieved Levels 3 and 4 by February 2020, without the written part of the simulation scored.

The new *Into Reading* program for Grades K-5 proved to be far more rigorous than the previous program (Reading Street) and that is why a decision was made to transition to a program with more authentic literature and an alignment with Next Gen Standards with higher order questioning. It was easier for Kindergarten to Grade 2 to make the transition, as they already had a strong base of

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foundational skills with support from *Explode the Code* for decoding, and standards-based writing expectations. Grade 2 students were introduced to the *READY ELA* book with focused instruction on reading skills and strategies.

Third and fourth graders were not exposed to the intense foundations, expectations, and rigor of Next Gen Standards of the prior grades, as the two programs are misaligned. Overall, the third grade came in very low on the baseline which assessed skills from the prior program and appeared to make minimal progress, or even regress. We had planned for “all hands on deck”, with the second reading teachers, special teachers, and administrators taking small groups daily from February to April, and on Saturdays to support students and focus on reading and writing skills and strategies leading up to New York State testing. But then the Pandemic hit!

### English Language Arts End of Year - 2020 Cumulative Final Exam

Grade	Total Tested	IEP Tested	ELLs Tested	Absent	Grade Average or % 3s and 4s
3	66	9	11	0	91%
4	66	4	2	1	80%
5	56	5	4	1	77%
6	47	8	0	0	70%
7	52	5	2	0	88%
8	38	2	0	0	82%
ALL	325	33	19	2	81%

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The past two NYS test administrations and this year’s ELA final grades have been strong in terms of reaching 75% proficiency in ELA.



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ELA Performance by Grade Level and Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency				School Created EOY Exam/Proficiency	
	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	58%	48	80%	56	91%	66
4	65%	46	70%	50	80%	66
5	47%	66	51%	51	77%	56
6	43%	56	79%	47	70%	47
7	68%	38	78%	49	88%	52
8			88%	34	82%	38
All	<b>55%</b>	254	<b>74%</b>	287	<b>81%</b>	325

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

GCA has purchased the iREADY digital platform for reading. The assessment piece has a diagnostic test for Grades K-8 to be administered at the onset of the school year. Subsequent testing throughout the school year measures progress and teachers can create Pre- and post-tests for units/chapters that are aligned with the Next Gen Standards and with the *Into Reading* and *Collections* programs. There is also a “personalized path of instruction” which adapts the lessons to the students’ needs. Growth-monitoring ensures that students are on track to make progress by customizing materials to individual student’s strengths and weaknesses.

### ACTION PLAN

School will be different or the 2020-2021 school year, but we made every attempt to provide our students with all the educational tools necessary for success, no matter the platform the parent chooses: full time in school five days a week (Kindergarten through Grade 2, ICT, ENLs, and children of Essential Workers were offered), full time remote, or a hybrid model (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in school and Monday and Friday remote). However, we will make every effort to provide the same quality of instruction for all students, including Students with Disabilities and English Language learners. Student who are at risk of academic failure were placed in very small classes of ten (10) to twelve (12) in order to address any deficiencies that might have prevented children from growing academically during the pandemic. Title I monies will pay for certified teacher salaries.

Our internal goal is to meet or exceed 75% of students in Grades 3-8 at Levels 3 and 4 by Spring 2021.

**Instruction:** Teachers will wear masks and maintain social distancing from the children within their classroom. They will be stationed at the front of the room and use the Promethean Smart Board to project lessons to students in the classroom as well as those learning remotely from home. Each classroom is equipped with High Definition cameras focused on the teacher and Promethean Board only, to allow them to broadcast lessons to students who attend remotely. These cameras will also allow administrators to observe lessons, evaluate performance and provide supervisory guidance. Each classroom is also equipped with two-way intercoms making it a convenient way for teachers, staff and administrators to communicate throughout the day. The school will prohibit other adults from entering the room to limit exposure and spread of germs. In an effort to limit the transmission of germs through collecting papers, children will be required to scan and upload completed work assignments to virtual google classrooms. The school will purchase and supply every child with a chrome-book, tablet or other device for learning. Teachers will train students how to properly scan and upload documents and the school will offer technical support for parents who need to assist younger children from home.

Every curricular area has a digital component, as well as books for each child:

- **Into Reading Grades K-5:** Each child will receive a consumable reader/workbook and a supplemental Skills Practice Book. All leveled readers and chapter books can be added to individual or group Google Classroom for students. Teachers have the ability to assign additional practice to each child according to their specific developmental needs and reading level. Teachers can administer a Running Record to individual children by simply “sharing the screen” on Zoom if the child is remote. Students will scan writing assignments into Google Classroom for submission and grading.
- **Collections Grades 6-8:** Students receive a hardcover anthology, A Close Reader Workbook, and a Performance Assessment Workbook, which focuses on applying reading skills to extensive writing assignments. Students will scan writing assignments into Google Classroom for submission and grading.
- **iREADY ELA: Grades K-8:** All students in Grades K-8 can be assessed digitally on all reading skills from basic letter recognition (Kindergarten) to the turning point in a story (Grade 8). These assessments are both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. Students will move ahead in the levels according to their area of strength. If students are demonstrating difficulties with a skill, remediation is automatically assigned to that student.
- **Social Studies Grades K-8:** Teachers will address Social Studies through a project-based approach. There is a digital component for Grades 3-8 with McGraw-Hill, in addition to the student textbooks.

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS

#### Goal 2: Mathematics

All students at the Grand Concourse Academy Charter School will become proficient in Mathematics.

#### BACKGROUND

Grand Concourse Academy uses a standards-based Mathematics curriculum. GCA implements both a direct instruction and constructivist approach in the teaching of Mathematics with a school wide use of the researched-based series, *Pearson Envision MATH 2.0* for all students in Grades K-8. A supplemental *Ready Mathematics Instruction* program is used in Grades 3-8 to further support the development of skills and strategies and to provide additional practice for each standard and for problem solving. Curriculum maps and pacing charts developed by teachers and administrators lay out six cycles that reflect six to seven weeks of instruction. These are the road maps that guide the year's instruction.

The EnVision Math program helps students to develop deep conceptual understanding, assess daily learning, and use student data to inform instruction. It utilizes a 3-step approach for instruction. During step 1, students are introduced to concepts through problem-based learning that allows for mathematical discourse and it results in deeper conceptual understanding. In step 2, students engage in visual learning where learners gain greater access to the concepts. Teachers make the key math ideas explicit through instruction connected to step 1. The visual learning animation, *Visual Bridge*, continues to promote conceptual understanding. Teachers also formatively assess students and prepare for step 3. Lastly, teachers use the Quick Check to provide students with differentiated instruction during step 3. All lessons include language supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) to address different levels of English proficiency. The supports are embedded in the Teacher's Edition.

We incorporate Envision's formative and summative assessments. There is a benchmark test at the beginning of the year to allow for the grouping of students. Teachers group students and provide remediation based on the results.

At the lesson level, teachers can assess students using the *Quick Check*. The *Quick Check* allows teachers to see how well students are progressing and preparing for the Topic Assessment. Teachers also have Cumulative Benchmark Assessments that are used throughout the year. Then, we wrap up instruction for the year using the end of year cumulative assessment.

The instructional design for math for the upcoming school year will include a review of the prior year's curriculum that address each strand in each standard before the teaching of new curriculum in Grades K-8. Therefore, each new curricular topic will be devoted to skills and strategies review, focusing on reducing deficit areas. Students in Grades 3-8 take a baseline test in October. Teachers analyze the data and plan together to center instruction and review on the areas in which students

are deficient. Math classes will receive AIS support staff trained in the intervention materials provided by the math curriculum, and it is our expectation that students who have not been successful in math will increase 10% to eventually eliminate the deficit. English as a New Language teachers will support ELLs with ENL support and enrichment materials provided by the math curriculum.

Interim assessment data and daily formative assessment drive mathematics instruction, student grouping, re-teaching, and enrichment. When data shows that a topic in mathematics was not mastered by a class, a group, or individual students, teachers reteach the topic for students to reach a mastery level. During daily lessons, teachers engage in formative assessment to identify students who have not mastered a concept or skill. In order to provide an entry point for every student, teachers use flexible grouping during the math block to reteach, reinforce, and enrich skills and conceptual understandings, using intervention and enrichment resources from Pearson's Envision Math and Ready programs as well as resources that teachers develop as teams in conjunction with the Director of Instruction.

Teachers, coaches, and instructional directors meet to plan and to provide an opportunity for ongoing professional development in the content area of Mathematics. Presentations, workshops, and sharing best practices in Mathematics are on an ongoing basis to increase learning outcomes. Teachers in all grades receive ongoing, focused coaching in the teaching of Mathematics from lead teachers in every grade and the Director of Instruction for Math. This coaching includes ongoing feedback, modeled lessons, and math resources. Professional development and coaching focus on rigor in mathematics, problem solving, higher-order questioning and critical thinking, scaffolding for all learners, and the Common Core Math Practices. The professional development and coaching program are developed in response to the needs that were evident from the cumulative final exam and cycle tests since the 2020 NYS Math Assessment was not administered due to Covid-19 related school closures. The professional development and coaching are responsive to the needs of the school, grade teams, and individual teachers, and are focused on bringing up the proficiency level of students.

Due to Covid-19 school closures, in person math instruction was changed to remote learning. We created and carried out an instructional plan that allowed us to meet our goal and maintain high level instruction and student performance. We distributed Chromebooks and Fire tablets to all students who did not have devices that allowed them to participate in daily instruction. Technology troubleshooting and platform tutorials were readily accessible.

### **Instruction**

A Google G Suite email account was set up to provide to every child along with a secure Google Classroom account. A secure Zoom account, connected to the student's email, was created for each child to receive live math instruction with their classroom teacher. Every child was provided their own digital *Pearson Courseware* package where students accessed all EnVision Math materials

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including textbooks, practice workbooks, videos, and enrichment tutorials. Students received the same number of minutes of math instruction and AIS support service as they had when receiving instruction in the school building. Google classroom provided a video of the day's mini lesson. The daily videos allowed children to access the day's lesson in the evening, assignments, homework and coursework.

### Staff Development

Teachers were provided weekly training on how to provide quality online instruction on Google Classroom, Zoom teleconferencing and Pearson digital coursework training from an authorized Pearson software professional.

### METHOD

We administered a combination of Envision's formative and summative assessments and cycle tests. There was a benchmark test at the beginning of the year to allow for the grouping of students. Teachers group students and provide remediation based on the results. Weekly topic tests and unit tests allowed teachers to see how well students are progressing from topic to topic. Teachers also gave cumulative benchmark assessments that were administered every six to seven weeks throughout the year. We administered an end of year cumulative assessment that included the test standard designations that are comparable to the standards on the New York State Math assessment.

End of Year - 2020 Cumulative Math Final Exam

Grade	Total Tested	IEP Tested	ELLs Tested	Absent	Grade Average or % 3s and 4s
3	66	9	11	0	31%
4	64	4	2	3	66%
5	56	5	4	1	48%
6	45	8	0	2	87%
7	50	5	2	2	64%
8	38	2	0	0	71%
ALL	319	33	19	8	61%

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Math diagnostic shows a 13% decline due to lost learning during school closures due to the pandemic. Challenges with technology and new digital learning platforms were addressed with weekly staff development.

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### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

As evidenced by the table below, it was a challenge for many of the students to perform at the math proficiency levels we have exhibited in the past. This can be attributed to many factors; home learning environment, distraction, fear of the unknown and the first time most teachers delivered instruction remotely – to name a few.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

	2017-18 NYS Math Exam		2018-19 NYS Math Exam		2020 GCACS Final Exam	
Grade	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	80%	54	68%	59	31%	66
4	37%	51	88%	48	66%	64
5	34%	50	67%	43	48%	56
6	50%	48	69%	45	87%	45
7	58%	48	74%	42	64%	50
8	68%	34	81%	48	71%	38
All	<b><u>54%</u></b>	285	<b><u>74%</u></b>	285	<b><u>61%</u></b>	319

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS GOAL

Although the Pearson EnVision program already had a digital component to utilize, there were many considerations and challenges in delivering instruction remotely with extraordinarily little notice. That said, the staff and students really pulled together and got up to speed teaching and learning online through the various platforms we all had to utilize. Our goal for 2020-21 is to continue to serve all our students with a variety of effective tools in multiple learning modes and increase proficiency to 75% at a minimum in math.

### ACTION PLAN

In addition to the Re-opening plans outlined in the previous section, we are integrating a new diagnostic program called I-Ready, an interactive online learning environment designed to assess students and provide individualized instruction based on each one's unique needs. The diagnostic program gives a complete picture of student performance and growth. I-Ready Diagnostic is an adaptive assessment designed to provide teachers with actionable insight into student needs. The diagnostic offers a complete picture of student performance and growth, eliminating the need for multiple, redundant tests.

# 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

## GOAL 3: SCIENCE

### ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

Summary of changes to the Elementary Science Goal due to the Covid-19 school closure:

- Schools will be unable to report state test proficiency rates or a district comparison.
- However, in the absence of state test results, schools should report results from internally developed assessments, national norm-referenced tests, and/or any other evaluation method below. When possible, schools report tabular data aligned to the narrative.

#### Goal 3: Science

All students at Grand Concourse Academy Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning.

### BACKGROUND

Grand Concourse Academy upgraded the science curriculum for the 2018-2019 school year. *Pearson Elevate Science* is aligned with the New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards. Elevate Science is a comprehensive K-8 science program. The program's pedagogy is based on the latest research, including the instructional shifts to accommodate a phenomena-driven investigative approach. *Elevate Science* supports three-dimensional learning, coherent instruction across the curriculum, and relevance to student experience and community needs. The primary program goal is to ensure thorough standards mastery while inspiring students investigate, explore, and elevate their understanding of how the disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices work together so that students become thoughtful problem solvers.

This curriculum includes a comprehensive offering of formative, summative and performance-based assessments designed to monitor student progress towards successful science understanding. Pearson Elevate also fully assess learning with a combination of different types of assessment. The program includes pre-assessments diagnostic testing that help teachers assess student prior knowledge. Teachers use the 'Activate Prior Knowledge' feature to provide a quick reference to connect students to the topic concepts. Teachers use formative assessment type questions to detect and address any student misconceptions. The program also comes with a formative assessment component. A variety of formative assessment options guide instruction and monitor student progress. Questions in the Labs, Analyzing Data, and topic level labs provide formative assessment questions and activities that teachers use to monitor student progress toward standards mastery. Check Points appear in each lesson that teachers use to check comprehension of the informational text. Each lesson concludes with a lesson review. The Quest Connections component allows our teachers to check the comprehension of lesson concepts and connect to the 'Problem Based Learning' path in the topic. 'End of Lesson' and "End of Topic" questions help determine the level of student understanding of the lesson concepts. Teachers also assess the students with summative assessments. The 'Topic Review' helps teachers assess student



understanding at the end of each topic. From these results, teachers will then reteach before administering end of topic assessments. The following summative assessments are also used online and in editable word document format: Evidence-Based Assessments which provide a scenario based multi-item questions where students demonstrate conceptual understanding of the topic science ideas. The programs topic tests assess the performance expectations, disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices, and crosscutting concepts found in the topic. Remediation is included for these tests. Teachers also administer benchmark assessments. These benchmark assessments test a larger group of performance expectations to prepare students for the “End of Year Assessment”. The “End of Year Assessment” gauges student readiness, each grade level includes an End of Year Assessment. Additionally, teachers use non-paper and pencil assessment opportunities to determine a student’s conceptual understanding and ability to apply these key ideas in new and unfamiliar situations.

Elevate Science also includes extensive support for students at every level of English language proficiency as well as for the ENL teachers who teach them. ENL notes in every lesson of the teacher edition provide specific suggestions for presenting lesson content for English language Learners.

For the 2019-2020 school year we upgraded the hands-on science portion of the science curriculum with a new state-of-the-art lab. All grades had bi-weekly hands-on and STEM experiences in the lab. Due to the Covid-19 school closures, we had to convert the lab into a Pearson virtual lab. The virtual lab allowed the science lab teacher to effectively use the Pearson phenomena-driven investigative approach during instruction. Grades 4 and 8 continued to participate in science lab experiences for 2 hours weekly.

### METHOD

The school administered a thirty (30) question multiple choice assessment, that was comprised of questions from 2017, 2018 and 2019 New York State Science Assessments, was given to 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on June 17, 2020. 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 AND EVALUATION

GCACS students excelled on both the Final Science Assessments in grades 4 and 8 to meet the measure with **89%** (4<sup>th</sup>) and **97%** (8<sup>th</sup>) proficient.

## 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

GCACS continues to perform well on science each year.

Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2017-2108		2018-2019		2019-2020 School Created NYS Science Exam	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	98%	51	98%	51	89%	64
8	94%	35	86%	50	97%	35
All	97%	86	92%	101	92%	99

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY SCIENCE GOAL

GCACS has devoted a lot of resources and effort to build an exploratory experience in science for our students both in the virtual classroom and in our physical science lab. It was new and different to deliver that experience remotely, but the virtual science lab was an excellent substitute that students seemed to really respond to positively.

### ACTION PLAN

GCACS has consistently demonstrated strong performance in science. With the rollout of the new curriculum, Pearson Elevate Science, and the addition of STEM modules to our Math program, we anticipate continuing to build on that success in science.

## 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### GOAL 4: ESSA

The 2019-20 ESSA Goal remains unchanged due to the Covid-19 school closure. The 2019-20 accountability status based on 2018-19 results and can be found by navigating to the school report card available [here](#).

#### Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

### METHOD

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

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The school achieved this measure and has an accountability status of good standing.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The school continues to remain in good standing from year to year.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2017-18	Good Standing
2018-19	Good Standing
2019-20	Good Standing

