



HARLEM LINK CHARTER SCHOOL

**2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

September 15, 2020

By Steve Evangelista, Principal

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2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Steven Evangelista prepared this 2019-20 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
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Steven Evangelista has served as the Principal since 2011 and as the Co-Director from 2004 to 2011.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Harlem Link, an independent public charter school, opened its doors in the fall of 2005 to link academics, values and community to graduate articulate scholars who meet or exceed New York Performance Standards and active citizens who learn and serve their communities. Since 2005, the school has grown to serve PreK-5 students in Harlem and its surrounding communities.

Diverse families from more than ten districts across New York City choose Harlem Link for their children with the majority of students attending residing in District 5. Of the total student population for the 2019-20 school year, 91.8% of students were in poverty; 23.5% of students had at least one disability; and 9.3% were Multiple Language Learners.

Though Harlem Link is located in CSD 3, its student population is much more disadvantaged than CSD 3. Harlem Link’s student population is more similar to CSD 5, the district with the greatest scholar enrollment at Harlem Link.

2019-20 Demographic Comparison for School and Districts

	Harlem Link	CSD 3	CSD 5
In poverty	91.8%	45.6%	79.9%
With disabilities	23.5%	18.2%	24.1%
Multiple Language Learners	9.3%	4.2%	7.6%

Leveraging the key design elements described below, Harlem Link consistently prepares its students to attend high performing, competitive public and private middle schools. These outcomes along with the significant and consistent progress the school has made toward achieving its mission has resulted in the SUNY Charter School Institute granting Harlem Link a three-year charter renewal in 2010 and five-year charter renewals in 2013 and 2018.

Harlem Link’s instructional vision, adopted in 2014, is: “We align our practice and use our relationships to help students achieve world-class scholarship and build good character.” The school’s educational program has undergone some important changes in recent years due to the development of the school’s Instructional Vision. Notably, the early childhood program is further emphasizing learning through play and social emotional learning. Returning more forcefully to the school’s founding philosophy after a period in which teacher-directed lessons were the norm, student-to-student interaction is again more highly valued in all grades and subjects, as is student thinking and learning through error making and reflection. Finally, students are more involved in their own goal-setting and receive more frequent feedback against the progress of those goals.

The school has strived to actualize Responsive Classroom (RC) guiding principles, which include the notion that social and emotional learning is as important as academic learning. The four elements of Responsive Classroom (Positive Community, Engaging Academics, Effective Management and Developmental Awareness) support the core of the vision: data-driven, rigorous learning and leadership.

Harlem Link’s key design elements are:

1) Rigorous, high expectations and a belief in students

Harlem Link seeks to uphold the same, rigorous, college-bound expectations for its students as those typically found in our nation's most well-resourced communities. These are embodied in the school's long-term vision for student success, supported by a preparatory environment for college and careers including the school's challenging curriculum and Core Values.

The school's first cohort alumni, which graduated from fifth grade in 2010, graduated from high school in four years at a rate of 73%. Currently 54% of that cohort is enrolled in college. The school is carefully tracking college matriculation and progress for its alumni, as well as supporting graduates along the path in middle and high school.

Working backward from the goal of college graduation, the school promotes a growth mindset. A core belief of the school is that behaviors presented by students are not reflective of fixed attributes, but can change and evolve with direction and effort. For this reason, the school never gives up on students and strives to engage and retain even those students expressing disaffection. To do so, Harlem Link partners with families, builds on the hopes and dreams of children, and creates a milieu of belief in which students can thrive.

2) A data-driven curriculum and pedagogy that support the school's mission

Harlem Link seeks to provide a curriculum and teaching structures that support the development of critical thinking skills and student independence. The school uses a balanced literacy curriculum and a set of inquiry-based math and science programs, in which students have frequent opportunities to direct their own learning, examine their thinking and speak and listen about their ideas and strategies with peers. Students must also acquire basic skills; therefore, the school incorporates highly structured academic programs that include a multisensory, sequential phonics program in the early grades and copious practice in basic mathematics skills.

Teachers choose instructional strategies based on data they collect and analyze that indicate student needs. This data is derived from the school's comprehensive assessment calendar, comprised of five distinct levels of assessment. Formal school-wide assessments (Level 4) include Foundations phonics inventories, the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Inventory, practice state exams, periodic math fluency assessments and a once-per-grade annual performance-based Science Expo.

The school has developed a protocol for analyzing unit-end performance assessments (Level 3). The school is now collecting and analyzing data school-wide on prioritized classroom based lesson objective measures (Level 2), which include trade and teacher-made tests, exit slips, mini-quizzes and student-teacher conferencing notes. Teachers use Level 1 assessment (checks for understanding) to ensure their lesson is on target and preparing students for Level 2 assessments.

The school has formal programmatic structures in place to support each element of its Instructional Vision. Responsive Classroom (RC) creates the conditions in each classroom for strong learning. The RC practices include a consistent approach to morning meeting, introducing new material or routines, speaking to students, delivering lessons, learning about students, differentiating lessons and building community.

In Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), teachers introduce a challenging mathematical problem,

having planned carefully around state standards and watching all students work independently with specific outcomes, strategies and misconceptions in mind. Teachers then orchestrate a collaborative discourse in which students share increasingly sophisticated strategies, helping students learn from each other and measuring their increased understanding over time. CGI addresses number sense, operations and fractions standards, while the school's TERC curriculum units address the remainder of the math standards in a daily Math Workshop.

In the upper grades, the school piloted the use of Visible Learning in its test preparation program, and is bringing this approach school-wide. Visible Learning is based on the principle that people, including children, learn best when they set meaningful goals and receive frequent concrete feedback on their standing against those goals. Visible Learning successfully transitioned students in the upper grades from relying on extrinsic incentives to focusing on learning targets for the satisfaction of learning.

Emotionally Responsive Practice (ERP), a set of pedagogical tools and knowledge provided by Bank Street College of Education's Safe and Sound Schools program, helps teachers use child developmental principles to create a learning environment where students who experienced trauma can be successful. Strategies such as reflective technique (in which students receive validation for their feelings regardless of their state, and thereby gain investment in the classroom community) create this environment, which benefits all children.

The school teaches the five competencies of the Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL), which are consistent with both RC and ERP's work. The five capacities are in the domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills and responsible decision-making.

The school staffs most classrooms with two teachers and has developed a model for co-teaching in which teachers choose from a small menu of appropriate structures and roles depending on the course, content and academic goals for students. The school also features at least two Integrated Co-Teaching classrooms on each grade, a robust student intervention program, and a rigorous promotion policy. For students who struggle academically or to complete required course work during the school year, successful completion of a mandatory summer academy may be required for promotion to the next grade.

3) High levels of professional learning

The school utilizes both contracted and internal resources in order to support teachers in meeting the school's mission and effectively executing the curriculum and pedagogy. Harlem Link has developed a professional learning community on its campus in which all adults are constant learners, and the use of professional development resources encourages collaboration among staff.

Harlem Link contracts for professional development in areas such as mathematics, literacy and science and provides on-site training and coaching in planning and assessing, co-teaching, differentiating instruction, and use of assessment data among other areas.

Within the first year of teaching at Harlem Link (and in most cases, prior to service) each teacher is

trained in the four-day Responsive Classroom I course, and a two day Cognitively Guided Instruction workshop. These workshops are provided in addition to a two-day on-site orientation and a two-week Summer Institute, during the latter of which all staff members participate in workshops, discussions and team planning sessions.

Harlem Link uses internal resources by having Grade Team Leaders, teachers recognized as having achieved a high level of both student achievement and fidelity to the school's vision, support newer teachers to the school; by having teachers join administrators in thematic walkthroughs, which include feedback by peers, administrators and consultants to the host classroom; and by ensuring grade teams function as an organized unit, such that each classroom is able to learn from the other or others on the team. Twice per month, grade teams have dedicated time set aside to perform pre-unit protocols, post-unit data analysis protocols and other forms of data analysis including part of the school's Child Study Process.

4) Family and community involvement strategies

Harlem Link supports the development of its independent parent association, the primary means by which parents can be involved in the life of the school and decision-making. The school also maintains an open door policy, in which parents are encouraged to make appointments and spend time observing or helping in their child's classroom. The school has employed parents when appropriate, and invites family members in for programs, performances and events throughout the year, both during and after school. The school places a high level of importance on universal participation in tri-annual family-teacher conferences. As a community-based institution, the school is also committed to enrolling a student population representative of the community of location, in keeping with, originally, the spirit and, now, the letter of the charter law.

Living up to one of the founding reasons for the name "Link," the school's curriculum also includes attention to the rich tapestry of New York City and its surrounding environs as resources for learning. As part of units of study, scholars visit and study the local Harlem community and visit other parts of the city to support social studies learning throughout the grades.

The school maintains partnerships with community institutions in order to support its mission, instructional priorities, and families. The school boasts a number of key partnerships, for example: The Africa Center, which has provided cultural programming and support; a cadre of early childhood programs including the Northern Manhattan Neo-Natal Partnership, the Helen B. Atkinson Clinic, and the Bank Street Straus Center, which support the school's Start to Finish program and help coordinate resources to promote early learning in the community; the Northside Center for Children and Families, which provides on-site individual and family therapy to students in need; and the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, which has provided programming including essay contests, a boys support group, and the development of a college-focused competitive Step Team.

5) Supportive school culture

Harlem Link defines school culture as the tone created by the physical environment and all the actions and words of the people in it. The school places an emphasis on supporting teachers to promote their retention and continued growth and having an open, collaborative work environment for all staff. The school intends that teachers, administrators and all other staff

members model the school's Core Values and successful student behaviors at all times and that the tone of the school is serious about learning but also joyful and celebratory.

Each day begins with a structured Morning Meeting in each classroom. Each classroom has the same set of goals for this time: to convey a sense of belonging, importance and fun to each student every day; to build positive community and relationships with and among students; and to practice academic content in novel and engaging ways.

The school used Responsive Classroom principles and practices throughout not only classrooms but common spaces as well. RC Teacher Language, which frames three complementary types of teacher approaches to student learning (Reinforcing, Redirecting and Reminding Language), is applicable in the lunchroom for not only maintaining order and safety but also teaching Social and Emotional Learning competencies.

The emphasis on students and families being physically represented in the school, in pictures and work on the walls, through performances and events, and in the school's open door policy, creates a warm, inviting and joyful learning environment where students can focus and learn at a high academic level.

Transition to Remote Learning

Harlem Link transitioned to remote learning in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the first week, March 16 through March 20, Harlem Link established the foundation for successful remote learning: driving principles, clear goals, and a "virtual school" website with information for families. The school also made contact with all families during that first week, conducting the first in a series of wellness calls. The operations staff surveyed families about their technology needs and coordinated the distribution of 275 Chromebooks to families. The "virtual school" website is a comprehensive site for families, including all links to remote learning sessions, schedules, technology support, mental health support, resources, and other communications from the school.

The school implemented daily synchronous learning to sustain school community. After trying different learning management platform and communication methods to see what worked best, Seesaw (for K-2) and Google Classroom (for grades 3-5) emerged as most developmentally and academically appropriate. Teachers collect student work and give feedback daily. In ELA, Harlem Link has used Lexia Core 5 and Epic to support independent reading. In mathematics, Harlem Link was able to adapt TERC to be used online.

Academic intervention, counseling, and related services continued. Teachers leveraged breakout rooms to give extra support in ICT classrooms. Students had access to standalone multi-language learning time and academic intervention. The school worked to incorporate its social emotional learning program, PATHS, into remote instruction but did not teach explicit lessons in the virtual setting. The school will be using online resources to teach PATHS remotely in the 2020-21 school year.

Harlem Link closely monitored student attendance and was in frequent proactive communication with families to support them through the challenges of the pandemic, including illness and caretaking within family units, provision of childcare for families who were essential workers, access to technology, and the unfortunate increase in unemployment, home insecurity, and food insecurity. Harlem Link made daily calls and used an internal Slack to discuss and address issues. The social work team handled case management for difficult and challenging hardships. Through

surveys and anecdotal comments to staff members, families have expressed very positive feedback to Harlem Link's proactive, thoughtful, empathetic, and community-focused approach.

Harlem Link adopted a framework for the Return to School for the fall, provided by Opportunity Labs and made available via a webinar hosted by Schoolworks. Beginning the process, the school adopted these key principles:

- **Care:** We maintain our priority of caring for our community, supporting vulnerable populations, and prioritizing wellness (including physical health and safety and mental health) as the top considerations of all planning.
- **Flexibility:** We are prepared for multiple scenarios (on-site, remote learning and a mixture), and we use data to adjust roles, schedules and programs to meet student needs.
- **Accelerated Learning:** Intervention will become part of core instruction during this recovery period. We identify foundational skills and standards ("pre-requisites") in each grade and core subject area, and provide extra instructional time to close gaps in learning while also teaching new content.
- **Engagement:** We utilize the strengths and interests of our entire community, keep stakeholders working together, and prioritize engaging academic work both remotely and in the classroom.
- **Collaboration and Documentation:** Careful planning, consistent communication and organized record keeping is essential in a time of great uncertainty and change, to protect our school and maintain learning for the future.

Through the Return to School Framework, the school formed a number of committees to contribute to two sets of shifts: the school year planning that takes place each summer, plus the pandemic/remote-specific aspects of planning. School Management team members led each committee, which covered the following topics:

- Literacy subcommittee
- Math subcommittee
- Wellness: Mental Health/SEL Crisis Response Team
- Wellness: Physical Health & Safety
- Scheduling
- Attendance
- Classroom community and routines (First Six Weeks)
- Blended Learning and Technology
- Facility

Harlem Link also surveyed teachers three times to ensure their feedback about school programming, remote learning, staff/family/student wellness, and culture were incorporated into planning. The pre-school planning period was extended from 10 to 12 days and conducted remotely. In devising the remote schedule for the 2020-21 school year, the number of synchronous teaching minutes were increased from the spring remote plan (varies by grade and day of week):

- Morning meeting: 30 minutes
- ELA: 60-90 minutes
- Writing: 0-30 minutes
- Math: 45-75 minutes

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

- Specials: 30 minutes
- Enrichment (after school): 30 minutes

Conditions permitting, in Fall 2020, Harlem Link will transition to a hybrid model with our regular school schedule for students on campus.

Harlem Link believes firmly that families are experts on their children, and it is critical to the success and wellbeing of each student that the school is connected to families and they feel they belong at Harlem Link. Reflecting this, the school conducted teacher-driven family interviews with every family. Through these interviews, staff was able to learn about family background, enrollment, technology issues, student wellbeing, and more. In addition, each student is paired to a specific staff member “mentor” for the 2020-21 school year who will act as a consistent proactive contact on attendance and wellbeing. The school also conducted lower school early childhood town halls with families, where the Assistant Principals, teachers, and behavior specialist could hear the perspectives of families and answer their questions.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2015-16	82	52	57	48	49	43								331
2016-17	83	74	54	52	46	50								359
2017-18	79	75	87	53	55	52								401
2018-19	69	69	79	75	56	45								393
2019-20	77	76	71	82	78	45								429

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

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

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link uses a balanced literacy approach to teaching English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers use the Reader's and Writer's Workshop as a guide for instruction. This includes the use of read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and other small group instruction, independent reading with teacher conferencing, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and independent writing as elements of classroom instruction. Teachers use individual conferences and a variety of unit-level and term-level formal assessments to gauge student achievement and to plan differentiated instruction based on individual student needs. Harlem Link uses the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment as a school-wide reading level benchmarking tool. Teachers use results to plan small group instruction and develop student goals.

Harlem Link's curriculum is aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. The school has modified the Reading and the Writing scopes and sequences in each grade to increase nonfiction reading and persuasive writing. Based on these and other small changes to the ELA program, a large percentage of returning students are arriving to the school on or above grade level for ELA.

During the current charter period the school adopted Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), in which the school assesses, differentiates, creates groupings, provides intervention, and uses data to monitor improvements across both academic and socio-emotional learning domains (including math, Fountas and Pinnell, reading, test prep, socio-emotional learning and attendance). The school employs four Academic Intervention Specialists who provide interventions to struggling readers and writers. Harlem Link's RTI program is organized through Child Study Team meetings. As part of RTI, each student receives targeted goals with expected periods for improvement, interventions and frequent progress monitoring. The school emphasizes classroom-based interventions with the goal of sparingly referring students for a special education designation and only when school-based interventions are ineffective, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Using this framework, Harlem Link is working toward a support-centered, coherent academic program and aligning its instruction, assessments, and professional learning accordingly.

METHOD

In Winter 2019-20, Harlem Link administered a practice test mirroring the New York State examination in ELA to students in grades 3-5. The same examination was administered the prior year, allowing for a comparison of results.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Overall the average points earned on the ELA practice test increased by 3 percentage points from 2018-19 to 2019-20. The percentage of students projected to be proficiency on the New York State ELA exam increased by 4 percentage points from 2018-19 to 2019-20. Notably in the Winter 2019-20 administration, multi-language learners outperformed general education students by 3 percentage points.

The school used test the practice test results to identify students who, based on historical data, were within range of passing the state test if they made the improvements Harlem Link projected. With those students making the improvements the school expected, Harlem would have

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

increased our percentage passing on the New York State ELA exam test by 5 to 10 percentage points from the prior year.

Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the New York State ELA examination was not administered, and so these results are not available. However, the ELA practice test results demonstrated that the school was on a trajectory to continue the upward growth that has been in place for approximately five years. Comparing year-over-year performance on the practice exam, the instrumented predicted that four percentage points more students were on track to pass the 2020 state exam, compared to the 2019 projected pass rate.

The ELA practice test also provided valuable information regarding student performance of certain standards and question format. Disaggregating by class demonstrated that information from classroom observations, teacher evaluations and general qualitative data about teacher performance correlated strongly with expected student performance on the state exam.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

In each of the last three years when the New York State ELA examination was administered, Harlem Link has consistently increased its performance on the New York State ELA examination and has outperformed CSD 5, the district of residency for most Harlem Link students.

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 District Students								
	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
	Charter School	CSD3	CSD 5	Charter School	CSD3	CSD 5	Charter School	CSD3	CSD 5
3	41	60.8	23.4	55.9	66.9	32.1	57.1	65.9	36.3
4	33	63.3	24.2	32.4	66.4	28.6	36.6	70.8	29.5
5	26	57.4	20.8	27.8	58.0	22.0	29.7	57.2	25.2
6									
7									
8									
All	33	60.6	22.8	38.3	63.8	28.0	43.3	64.6	30.2

Goal 1: Optional Measure

Each year, 75% of students in Grades 1-5 enrolled for two or more years will achieve the Instructional Benchmark level on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System corresponding to their grade according to the table below, which is based on F&P's recommended benchmark level standard: Grade 1: Level F, Grade 2: Level K, Grade 3: Level O, Grade 4: Level R, Grade 5: Level U.

METHOD:

Each year the school administers the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System on a 1:1 basis to each child enrolled. In Grades K-2, students are assessed three times per year and in Grades 3-5 students are assessed twice (unless they score in the Tier 3 range in the first assessment, in which case they are assessed three times throughout the year). Students are assigned an Instructional Level based on their fluency and comprehension reading and responding to a leveled text, according to a rubric included in the assessment. The accountability measure is applied to data generated in the third and final assessment period.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:

Harlem Link fell short of this measure by 6.6 percentage points. 68.4% of students in grades 1-5 who were enrolled for two or more years achieved the grade-level Instructional Benchmark level on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System on the end of year assessment, which was administered remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE:

The F&P assessment was also administered in Winter 2019-20, and at this time 53% of students were on track to meet the end of year benchmark. The results of the Winter assessment were similar to the year prior. In that year, at the end of the year, 74% of students in grades 1-5 who were enrolled for two or more years met the benchmark. The data set, including the points discussed below, suggests that in the 2019-20 school year: (a) students were on track to meet this measure before the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted the year and shifted the school's work and (b) the school mitigated significant learning loss for struggling learners during the challenging implementation of remote learning.

In the Winter 2019-20 administration, the portion of students in Tier 3 fell from the prior year (31% in Winter 2019-20 vs. 33% in Winter 2018-19). The portion of students in Tier 3 remained consistent and even decreased in the final 2019-20 F&P administration (30%).

Among students with at least 90% attendance during the remote period starting in March 2020, 63% met the rigorous internal end-of-year benchmark suggested by F&P (which is higher than the grade-level benchmark used in the Optional Measure). Only 24% scored at Tier 3.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Though year-end data in ELA is lacking, in the 2019-20 school year, Harlem Link students were on track to meet the ELA measures, before the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted the year. The school's robust remote learning plan mitigated learning loss to the greatest extent possible, thanks to the high number of synchronous sessions and consistent daily schedule.

ACTION PLAN

Harlem Link will continue to strive for improved results in ELA. The board and leadership at Harlem Link believe that only authentic, rigorous instruction with embedded opportunities for test preparation can produce students who excel academically.

In the 2020-21 year, Harlem Link is strengthening its ELA curriculum. Some less effective and outdated units have been removed, and more Teachers College units were added. As well the school's Diversity and Social Justice Committee has established a goal of including standards from Teaching Tolerance through the curriculum. As a result, the school has incorporated these standards into its Pre-Unit Protocols and adjusted the ELA curriculum accordingly. The school will continue with the Close Reading program that was piloted in 2018-19 and implemented in 2019-20 in the upper grades. The school is also emphasizing a phonemic awareness program that compliments Foundations, due to data that show Foundations instruction was, despite its strengths in helping students "crack the code," insufficient for promoting phonemic awareness.

The school is continuing to provide increased individualized attention and both behavioral and academic support to students. The Student Support Team has developed systems to maximize instructional supports for students. The SST ensures that the school's scheduling process prevents students who receive additional services from missing core instruction. If a scheduling conflict arises in which a service provider is only available during a student's core instruction, the service provider is required to push in. ENL and other services were provided starting in the first month of the school year. Harlem Link is a member of the Special Education and ELL Collaborative, both projects of the NYC Charter Center. The school is using Specially Designed Instruction to meet the learning needs of students with IEPs. The school has built a staff team to support the needs of Multiple Language Learners. In the remote learning environment, throughout synchronous sessions, intervention staff members, including two ENL teachers and special education ICT teachers, provide push-in support (which often includes small group work in Zoom breakout groups); depending on data and student needs, intervention staff members may provide additional small group or individual intervention during the Independent Work blocks.

Harlem Link will continue to build its use of interim and formative assessment data to identify gaps in student learning and guide ELA instruction, whether in person or remote. Harlem Link will continue using the F&P assessment, and will conduct unit assessments each month. In addition the school is introducing a monthly writing sample to allow teachers to monitor writing development more closely. The school will leverage SeeSaw and Google Classroom to gather student work portfolios. As well student work is assessed, and teachers provide feedback to students, daily.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS

Summary of changes to the Elementary Mathematics 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 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 2: Mathematics

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link delivers to its scholars a comprehensive, standards-based math curriculum aligned to the school's mission.

Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) builds on students' natural problem-solving strategies to guide them toward mathematical understanding. CGI addresses all of the New York State number sense standards, and has been built into the mathematics sequencing to appropriately build conceptual understanding. When using CGI, students will attempt to solve problems without direct instruction from teachers. Instead, the teacher will guide students to understand the different strategies used by others in the class to solve the math problem. The class will collaboratively identify the most efficient strategies with students teaching each other how to use the strategies through modeling and teacher guidance. With a high degree of student engagement, this approach places the onus of learning on the student rather than the teacher. Teachers intentionally select math problems to build students' mathematical understanding.

Harlem Link teachers implement the TERC and CGI math programs and provide students with skills practice during Morning Meeting and direct skills instruction through assessment-driven, teacher designed instruction. As constructivist math programs, TERC and Contexts for Learning foster mathematical thinking. New York State's eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, with their focus on student argumentation, communication, and problem solving, are consistent with the school's structured constructivist approach. Teachers also implement the Contexts for Learning program, which supplements conceptual gaps in TERC such as measurement of time and money and basic number sense while using the same pedagogical philosophy.

Teachers create individualized math stations and lead Guided Math groups to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students. This combination of programs ensures students have the number sense and basic number fact recall to wrestle with and master conceptual problems. It also allows students to understand and apply mathematical computation and problem solving to situations that arise in everyday life.

The school had adopted Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), in which the school assesses, differentiates, creates groupings, provides intervention, and uses data to monitor improvements across both academic and socio-emotional learning domains (including math, Fountas and Pinnell, Harlem Link Charter School 2019-20 Accountability Plan Progress Report

reading, writing, test prep, socio-emotional learning and attendance). The school employs four Academic Intervention Specialists who provide interventions to struggling readers and writers. Harlem Link's RTI program is organized through Child Study Team meetings. As part of RTI, each student receives targeted goals with expected periods for improvement, interventions and frequent progress monitoring. The school emphasizes classroom-based interventions with the goal of sparingly referring students for a special education designation and only when school-based interventions are ineffective, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Using this framework, Harlem Link is working toward a support-centered, coherent academic program and aligning its instruction, assessments, and professional learning accordingly.

METHOD

In Winter 2019-20, Harlem Link administered a practice test mirroring the New York State examination in mathematics to students in grades 3-5. The same examination was administered the prior year, allowing for a comparison of results.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Overall based in on the results of the practice test, the percentage of students projected to be proficient on the New York State mathematics exam increased by 8 percentage points from 2018-19 to 2019-20. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the New York State mathematics examination was not administered, and so these results are not available. However the mathematics practice test results demonstrated that the school was on a trajectory to continue the upward growth that has been in place for approximately five years.

As in the administration of the ELA practice exam (and reflection on past state assessments), teacher performance as judged by classroom observations and general qualitative data was consistent with student performance on the mathematics practice test.

In the absence of other data, in selected lower grades, the school has identified some unit level data analysis to evaluate student performance in mathematics. These data points show that the school is working toward meeting state standards throughout the grades.

- Kindergarten: Units through the fall taught and assessed Counting and Cardinality and Geometry standards.
 - The grade averaged 83% of points on unit-level assessments in CC
 - The grade averaged 85% of points on unit-level assessments in Geometry
 - In each unit assessment, MLL students outscored non-MLLs. Special education students scored at a lower level than general education students, but in some units the percentage of points earned was marginal.
- Grade 1:
 - 83% average on Geometry
 - 88% average on Number and Base Ten
 - 76% average on Operations and Algebraic Thinking
 - 89% average on Measurement and Data

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

In each of the last three years when the New York State mathematics examination was administered, Harlem Link has consistently increased its performance on the New York State mathematics examination and has outperformed CSD 5, the district of residency for most Harlem Link students.

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								
	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
	Charter School	CSD 3	CSD 5	Charter School	CSD 3	CSD 5	Charter School	CSD 3	CSD 5
3	37	62.7	24.7	57.1	66.5	33.1	62.5	67.4	33.0
4	27	63.5	18.3	36.8	66.1	22.4	37.2	67.3	27.8
5	16	56.7	21.0	21.6	58.6	23.0	48.6	59.8	25.5
6									
7									
8									
All	27	61.1	21.4	38.2	63.8	26.2	50.7	64.9	28.7

Goal 2: Optional Measure

Each year, 75% of students in Grades 1-5 enrolled for two or more years will score at 75% or higher on the school's year-end math interim assessment, provided by CGI consultants.

METHOD:

Due to complications resulting from the pandemic, the school was unable to adapt the assessment for the remote learning environment.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:

The school does not have valid and reliable evidence for this measure due to the pandemic; interim assessments administered during the school year (and prior to the pandemic) are used only for formative purposes, since the year-end standards are tested both in the beginning and middle of the year. These interim assessments include standards students have not yet been taught.

For Fall 2020, the school is using diagnostic curriculum-based measures in order to have baseline data that would otherwise be provided by the year-end assessment from the prior year.

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS GOAL

Though year-end data in mathematics is lacking, in the 2019-20 school year, Harlem Link students were on track to meet the mathematics measures, before the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted the Harlem Link Charter School 2019-20 Accountability Plan Progress Report

year. The school's robust remote learning plan mitigated learning loss to the greatest extent possible, thanks to the high number of synchronous sessions and consistent daily schedule.

ACTION PLAN

Harlem Link will continue to strive for improved results in mathematics. The board and leadership at Harlem Link believe that only authentic, rigorous instruction with embedded opportunities for test preparation can produce students who excel academically.

Harlem Link will continue initiatives that have demonstrated improvements to student achievement, including the Responsive Classroom program and test prep. TERC is available online, which has allowed Harlem Link to move its mathematics program to a remote learning environment smoothly. The school will also continue using CGI to supplement TERC. In the 2020-21 year, Harlem Link is adding in Zearn, a mathematics skills builder. The Mathematics Coach and Assistant Principals have engaged in a review of the sequence of standards thought, and have restructured the curriculum to teach priority standards earlier in the school year. The aim is to properly sequence the learning of mathematical standards that build on each other and maximize the practice time with foundational standards.

Teacher retention has been strong from the 2019-20 year to the 2020-21 year. All but two teachers returned from spring to fall. The school believes returning teachers are best equipped to teach the constructivist approach to mathematics, since this approach is so dependent on teacher understanding and capacity, and expects that this consistency will maximize student learning in the 2020-21 year.

The school is continuing to provide increased individualized attention and both behavioral and academic support to students. The Student Support Team has developed systems to maximize instructional supports for students. The SST has driven a redesign of the school's scheduling process so that students who receive additional services never miss core instruction. If a scheduling conflict arises in which a service provider is only available during a student's core instruction, the service provider is required to push in. ENL and other services were provided starting in the first month of the school year. Harlem Link is a premier member of the Special Education and ELL Collaborative, both projects of the NYC Charter Center. The school is using Specially Designed Instruction to meet the learning needs of students with IEPs. The school has built a staff team to support the needs of Multiple Language Learners. In the remote learning environment, throughout synchronous sessions, intervention staff members, including two ENL teachers and special education ICT teachers, provide push-in support (which often includes small group work in Zoom breakout groups); depending on data and student needs, intervention staff members may provide additional small group or individual intervention during the Independent Work blocks.

Harlem Link will continue to build its use of interim and formative assessment data to identify gaps in student learning and guide mathematics instruction, whether in person or remote. In the 2020-21 year, Harlem Link will use TERC's assessments, which can be customized to assess specific standards that were taught. The school is reconsidering the value of the Smith family interim assessment, which is not aligned to the CGI program's level of rigor nor its content. The school will leverage Seesaw and Google Classroom to gather student work portfolios. As well student work is

assessed daily.

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

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

BACKGROUND

Harlem Link uses and supplements the FOSS (Full Option Science System) program, an inquiry-driven set of units that align to New York State Learning and Performance Standards. The school staffs science instruction with two Specialty Teachers. Students receive science instruction three periods per week. The school also sets aside time and when necessary extra funding for external enrichment programs that support science units. The school takes advantage of its proximity to Central Park and the variety of museums in New York City for hands-on experiences that support curriculum units.

Internal science assessment is done primarily through the use of curriculum-based measures provided with the FOSS kits. The school has also begun adjusting the science curriculum to meet Common Core learning standards. As a result, science instruction is closely aligned to ELA standards, mirrors the constructivist math approach, and includes small and whole group instruction.

METHOD

Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the New York State science examination was not administered, and so these results are not available. Student learning in science was evaluated through formative data including performance tasks and grades. However there was no interim assessment given in science in the 2019-20 school year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

N/A

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Harlem Link has demonstrated strong performance in science in each of the past three years when the New York State science exam was administered.

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	88	44	91.7	36	85.0	40
8						
All	88	44	91.7	36	85.0	40

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY SCIENCE GOAL

The school does not have interim assessment data from the 2019-20 school year in science that can be used to evaluate achievement of its science goal.

ACTION PLAN

Given the strong historical performance in science, Harlem Link will continue the current program in 2020-21, with no significant changes planned for curriculum or instruction.

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 7: 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

Harlem Link has met this measure; the school is in good standing in 2019-20.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Harlem Link has been in good standing in each of the past three years.

Accountability Status by Year

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