

# The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1

## 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

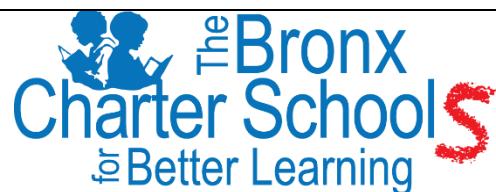
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## 2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr., Executive Director, and Vanessa Asencio-Trezza, Assistant Principal, prepared this 2019-20 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's Board of Trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Kimberly Kelly	Board Chairperson, Complaint Review Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Finance/Audit Committee
Marvin Waldman	Vice-Chairperson, Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Marilyn Maye	Treasurer, Finance/Audit Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Education Committee
William Bernhardt	Secretary, Teacher Employment Committee, Education Committee, Complaint Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Robert Bata	Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Victor Zimmerman	Complaint Review Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee, Finance/Audit Committee
Dean Thomas	Policy/Governance Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee
Neal Myerberg	Fundraising/Development Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Jem Pagan	Fundraising/Development Committee
Marlon Henry	Parent Representative, Complaint Review Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Education Committee

Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr. has served as the Executive Director since March 2020.

### SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 1 (BBL1) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. BBL 1 opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1. One grade was added each year thereafter and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1-5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. On January 15, 2008, the State University Trustees granted BBL 1 a full-term charter renewal for 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K-5 through the 2012-2013 school year. BBL 1 added a Kindergarten program in the fall of 2008 and served 345 students in grades K-5. In 2010-11 the school enrolled 386 students in those same grades. On March 4, 2013, the State University Trustees granted another full five-year renewal of the charter for Bronx Charter School for Better Learning. Additionally, on June 4, 2014, the State University Trustees approved a five-year charter for the replication of BBL1 and, in turn, the opening of Bronx Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) for September 2015. Since September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) has governed both charters, i.e., BBL1 and BBL2. BBL 1 had an enrollment of 545 students for the 2018-2019 school year.

BBL 1 was originally located in a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227<sup>th</sup> Street in the Bronx, NY. Following the first year of operation, BBL 1 reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which BBL 1 received permission to locate in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx, NY. The school used 3 classrooms and an office in the main building of P.S. 111 for the first time in 2008-09, to accommodate its growth in enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2008-2009, replaced by 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009-2010. Beginning September 2014, BBL 1 occupied three additional classrooms in the main building and added another two classrooms for the 2015-16 school year. Currently, its Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade and some 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade classes situate in the main P.S. 111 building.

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

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

To fulfill its mission, the school's teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons;

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assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child's high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students' work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students' use of what they know to master new content; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

In 2015, BBL1 was recognized by the Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents as a 2014-15 "High progress Reward School". The award celebrates BBL1's success in closing the gap between historically low and high performing students in the state. In 2018 and again in 2019, BBL1 was recognized as a Recognition School by the New York State Department of Education for having high academic achievement and student growth.

### BBL1:

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

## 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	100	101	93	73	65	66								
2016-17	101	101	100	94	65	63								
2017-18	78	102	101	100	94	62								
2018-19	78	78	102	101	95	92								
2019-20	100	98	75	75	102	101								

# GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### Goal 1: English Language Arts

#### Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

## BACKGROUND

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

During the 2019-20 school year, BBL 1 maintained its strong commitment to ensuring a quality ELA program for all of its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards by:

- a. Continuing with a new initiative, with the implementation of an ELA Curriculum Committee, to create a still more cohesive, rigorous, and integrated literacy curriculum across grades K-5.
- b. Continuing to edit and revise our 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA curriculum, primarily to increase rigor and to transition away from skill based instruction to one that is theme based, focusing on the underlying mental functionings that are called upon for the range of reading skills that ensure high achievement;
- c. Continuing to emphasize the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*;
- d. Continuing to incorporate, as part of its ELA class sessions, the use of Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop;
- e. Continuing to foster a joy of reading through the Growing Great Readers program;
- f. Continuing to support increased reading proficiency through the STAR program;
- g. Providing technology resources and computer based non-fiction resources with *Achieve 3000*, a web-based, adaptive, differentiated instruction resource;
- h. Continuing to make available to all students access to an extensive classroom library and school library;

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- i. Continuing to closely monitor each student's progress through the use of regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly "Data Day";
- j. Continuing to provide supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- k. Maintaining a Director of Professional Development to oversee and coordinate teacher development, including our Fellowship program, which incorporates a Master's degree program with SUNY Albany, designed specifically to promote teachers' capacity to practice well our unique pedagogy, the *Subordination of Teaching to Learning*;
- l. Elevating high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leaders, assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level;
- m. Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists and outside consultants, to both teachers and assistants, further ensuring each person's readiness to support the needs of all of our students;
- n. Continuing to utilize writing rubrics that are aligned with the State's Learning Standards; and
- o. Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through a higher frequency of classroom observations and "walkthroughs" by administrators.

In March 2020, BBL 1 transitioned to a fully on-line teaching and learning model, as per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order. During the COVID-19 school closure, our English Language Arts goal remained essentially unchanged; however; we did create an "Educational Continuity Plan" to address the unique challenge of teaching and learning online. BBL's revised English Language Arts instructional plans, developed weekly and shared with families, addressed three general categories of instructional interventions during the COVID-19 closure.

- 1) Interactive Instruction: Regularly scheduled, synchronous learning via various videoconferencing systems and online chats, directly between students and teachers, in both large and small groups.
- 2) Assignments Using Established Interactive Learning Systems and Apps: These resources included a wide range of programs and systems that supported learning and practice, often including adaptive responses to students' performance, with built-in mechanisms to track student participation times and progress, along with the capability to report on that information.
- 3) Posted Assignments: Daily asynchronous learning through teacher prepared written assignments, worksheets, writing prompts, website visits, and special projects.

### METHOD 1

The school administered two benchmarks to students in grades 3-5 to assess and evaluate student achievement in ELA during the 2019-2020 school year.

The assessment was an internally developed assessment aligned with the New York State standards. In collaboration with Educational Vistas Inc., the BBL Assessment Team and Academic Leaders offered benchmark testing in November and January of the 2019-2020 school year. Those

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benchmarks were administered and evaluated in a traditional testing environment and proctored by classroom teachers.

The table below summarizes the performance of our 3-5<sup>th</sup> grades on the 2019-2020 ELA Benchmark exams and compares scores from the same 2018-2019 ELA Benchmark exam given in January of 2019.

2019-20 BBL ELA Benchmark Exam Performance and Comparison in Grades 3-5

Grade	2019-2020 ELA A2 Practice Test <i>November 2019</i>		2019-2020 ELA A3 Practice Test <i>January 2020</i>		2018-2019 ELA A3 Practice Test <i>January 2019</i>		2018-2019 NYS ELA State Scores <i>March 2019</i>
3	BBL1	9.9%	BBL1	25%	BBL1	11.2%	70%
4	BBL1	19.4%	BBL1	28.6%	BBL1	39%	71%
5	BBL1	41.5%	BBL1	46.2%	BBL1	45.6%	58%
Avg. Totals	BBL1	23.6%	BBL1	33.3%	BBL1	31.9%	61%

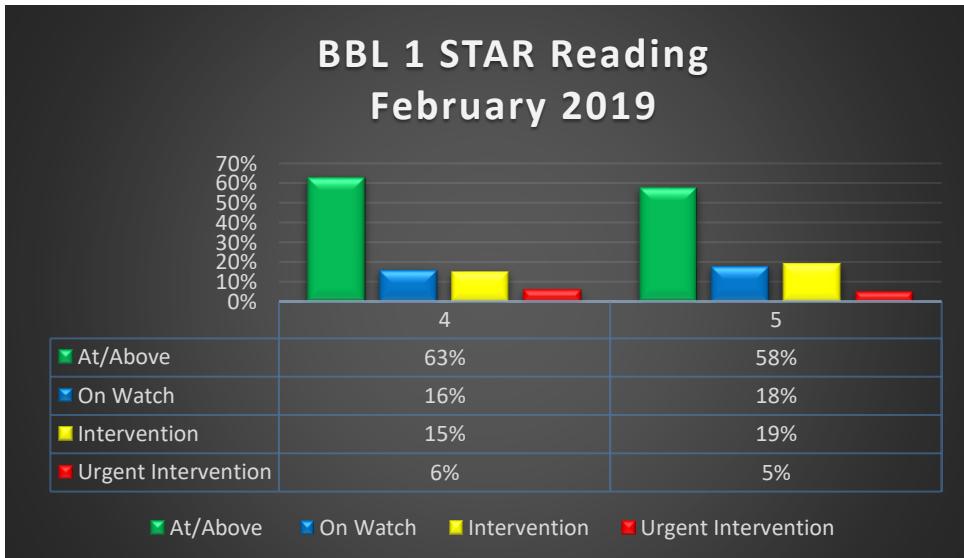
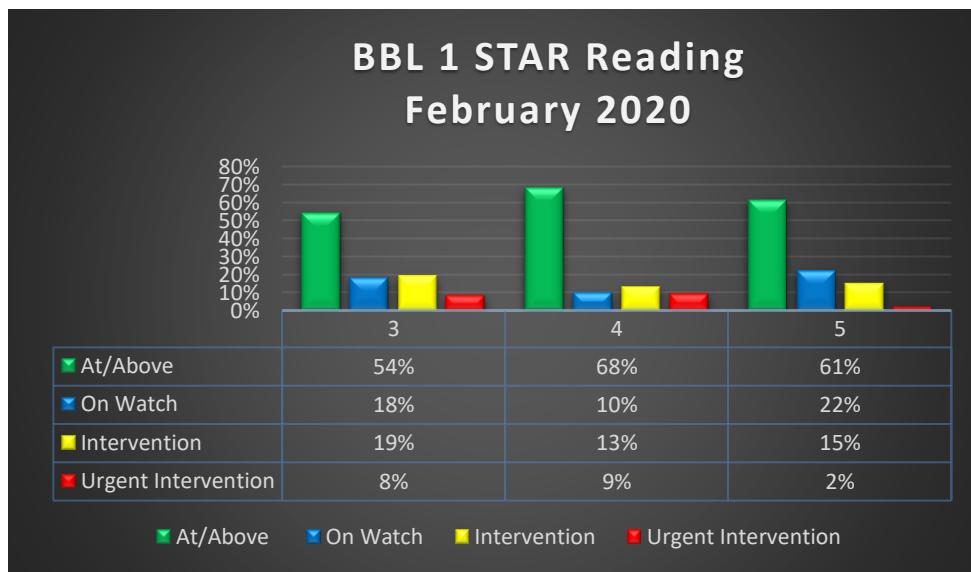
### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As summarized in the table, above, on the 2019-20 ELA Benchmark exams, 23.6% of all students scored at or above proficiency in November. In January 2020, 33.3% of all students scored at or above proficiency, for an increase of ten percentage points. Furthermore, in January 2020, 46.2% of 5th grade students, 28.6% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and 25% of 3rd grade students performed at that level. Given those data, and based on last year's trends, we estimate that BBL students, overall, would have matched or exceeded our 2018-19's NY State ELA exam scores on the 2019-2020 exam, should it have been administered. We feel confident in that estimate, given the deliberately highly conservative benchmark we set for ourselves on the Ed Vista exams and the relationship of our students' performance on those exams and their actual performance on the state assessments. In fact, our internally imposed "passing rate" for students on the Ed Vista exam administered in January 2019 (31.9% overall) associates with a nearly doubled overall actual percentage of 61% of our students achieving a level 3 or 4 on the state ELA assessment just two months later.

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### METHOD 2

Our second assessment, STAR, is given to students in grades 3-5 on a monthly basis. That computer based, adaptive assessment provides insight to how our students are growing in each of the ELA standards. The first chart below presents the final STAR assessment data gathered in February, before schools were closed for COVID-19. The second chart shows a comparative analysis of the results of the same assessment, given at the same time the previous year, to students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Third grade only started taking the STAR assessment in 2020, so there are no comparative data for that grade.



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## RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As of February 2020, 54% of our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were meeting or exceeding expectations. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 68% of our students were meeting or exceeding expectations. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 61% of our students were meeting or exceeding expectations. Those passing rates on the STAR assessment compare favorable with the results of the same assessment data we collected during the 2018-19 school year for the two grades for which we have comparative data. We therefore estimate with confidence that BBL 1 students, overall, would have matched or exceeded our high 2018-19 NY State ELA exam scores on the 2019-2020 exam, should it have been administered.

## SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Our English Language Arts Goal Students is for all students to become proficient readers and writers of the English Language. We maintain that we have met that goal. As shown above, our yearly assessments support the assertion that our students continue to improve in English Language Arts on a consistent basis in all grades. Still, we remain committed to providing a rigorous, high quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for continued success.

## ACTION PLAN

As highlighted in our action plan, below, we continue to closely review and enhance our newly revamped ELA curriculum, along with a number of ancillary actions that have proven successful.

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

As we prepare for another unprecedented year, with at least part of our school year taking place remotely, we have already planned and initiated the following steps, in order further to boost student achievement.

1. In 2019-2020, our ELA Curriculum Committee, composed of experienced ELA teachers, professional development specialists and administration, streamlined and further improved our ELA program. The committee integrated the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curriculums (K-5), aligned the K-5 ELA curriculums with social studies/science curriculums, and, created and organized resources for teachers. For the 2020-2021 year we have created a new position, ELA Curriculum Coordinator. We are confident that this position will further support our work to integrate the social studies and ELA curriculum, train teachers to execute our integrated curriculum in a way that aligns with our pedagogy, the Subordination of Teaching to Learning, and further align the K-2 curriculum with the 3-5 curriculum.
2. In the wake of today's social unrest, BBL has establish a new workgroup. The team, led by one of our principals, will engage social injustice issues through the lens of the humanities,

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looking at culture, philosophy, history, and community. The group, under the name of the Bronx Humanities Committee for Better Learning, will engage issue-driven conversations, and consider curriculum topics, with help from our Professional Development Department. The new workgroup will consist of delegates from both BBL 1 and BBL 2, including management, professional development, teachers, teacher assistants, and guidance staff. That structure provides a range of voices to inform and respond positively to the moment and drive curriculum decisions that will have a direct impact on our students' engagement with literacy and social studies.

3. Our purpose throughout has been to increase the rigor of the content and the academic challenges we present, significantly "raising the bar" with regard to vocabulary development, sophistication in handling complex texts and improving students' accuracy, clarity and cohesiveness in their writing. This year, we will continue our efforts to improve our ELA curriculum in grades K-5 by:

3.1 Continuing to plan and integrate the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curriculums (K-5): An integrated reading, writing and Words in Color ELA curriculum provides a comprehensive, broader perspective for teaching and learning. Rather than teaching reading, writing and Words in Color in isolated lessons, the integrated units will feature all three aspects of our literacy program. This provides a vehicle for students to develop literacy skills, tackle advanced vocabulary by using Words in Color, analyze renowned authors' techniques and artistry and, write their own high-level texts as a comprehensive learning experience.

3.2 Promoting a culture of readers by leveraging our Growing Great Readers (GGR) program. This year, GGR will align with our new Humanities Committee goals by providing appropriate, rigorous, and diverse literature to all our students. The summer months allowed BBL to promote sustained reading and embrace the English Language Arts as a targeted area. As a result, BBL created a summer reading initiative that put a new book and e-book in the hands of every student. The titles selected focused on cultural diversity.

4. Increased Early Grade Emphasis on Vocabulary Development and Reading Comprehension: While our core program for early literacy – Words in Color – is designed to support students' capacity to write and to understand what they read as well as their spoken language allows, we have determined that our ELA instruction can continue to improve in Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade by adjusting the following:

4.1 Our K – 2 teachers will incorporate, much more extensively in their lessons, work with students in the Primers and Worksheets that are part of the Words in Color program, but which have remained, until the past school year, less a central component than intended. Doing so will prepare students better to meet the increased challenges and expectations awaiting them in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and beyond.

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- 4.2 Our primary grade teachers will reflect in their plans an increased emphasis on “academic” vocabulary.
5. Administrative Support: The continued availability of an Assistant Principal will increase support and feedback for teachers. A refined evaluation schedule includes regularly scheduled “classroom walkthroughs,” with written feedback to teachers targeting student engagement, lesson development, and differentiation.
6. Assignment of the Academic Leaders: We have assigned a larger cadre of Academic Leaders, most notably in our primary grades, where they will function as constant, on-site coaches for less experienced staff, whom they will mentor on a daily basis.
7. Planning Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers will meet at least once every month to discuss differentiation and targeted challenges. Their purpose will be to better prepare the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
8. Lesson Planning Review: Academic Leaders at all grade levels will closely monitor lesson planning to ensure that teachers provide sufficient attention and time to both reading and writing.
9. Active involvement of our Guidance Department: With the increase of staff in our guidance department, we have been able to create in-house behavior interventions for Tier 2 students and have seen the impact/effect on the classroom climate. They will continue to conduct group and individual sessions to help students deal with testing and other anxiety, peer pressure and conflicts, and other academically related challenges. This year, in response to the trauma that COVID-19 and the current social unrest has created for our students, our school aims to be a Trauma Informed institution. All teachers have gone through Trauma Informed Care training by our guidance department. Further, our guidance department is scheduled to conduct weekly social and emotional lessons (SEL) in each class and integrate the SEL curriculum with our literacy curriculum.
10. Parent Resource Center: This year, our commitment to partner with parents has grown through the creation of our Parent Resource Center. Located on our website, that webpage provides parents with information and resources for all school topics, including, technology trainings, training in our pedagogy, videos for supporting their children in academics and emotional learning, as well lists of community resources. We will continue to update the Parent Resource Center every quarter with pertinent information.

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11. Student Support: Our administrative team will review and expand academic support, as necessary, to better meet the needs of underperforming students.
12. Review of Interim Assessments: Our assessment team will review both the schedule and method for monitoring student progress throughout the school year, ensuring an accurate alignment with our revised ELA curriculum and the implementation of assessment criteria that are sufficiently rigorous. The Assessment team will also research programs to assess students remotely, should our schools have to shut down again due to COVID-19.
13. Finally, our expanded Technology Committee will work with management, Professional Development, and our Academic Leaders to ensure tech equity. We have significantly increased our technology capability, given that technology is now a cornerstone of education during these unprecedented times. The Technology Committee has taken the following steps to boost student achievement, especially during remote instruction:
  - 13.1 Provided each student in grades 3-5 with a Google Classroom account and each student in grades PreK-2 with a SeeSaw account.
  - 13.2 Collaborated with our Professional Development team to create online versions of our curriculum tools and documents, including Words in Color Charts and Primers.
  - 13.3 Distributed Ipads to all students who requested a device and will provide WiFi for students without internet access.
  - 13.4 Augmented our online subscriptions to ensure engagement with a multitude of online resources for literacy, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing skills.
  - 13.5 Hosted numerous training sessions for both parents and staff to ensure everyone is ready to engage with the technology platforms used by BBL.

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS

#### Goal 2: Mathematics

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

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## BACKGROUND

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

BBL 1 demonstrates a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities, to ensure the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all of its students by:

- Reviewing the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Learning Standards;
- Maintaining a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Consistently applying the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, even in the earliest stages, so students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to bolster each person's readiness to meet the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through more frequent classroom visits by the principals;
- Emphasizing our students' development of two overarching capacities, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in computation skills and increasing their ability to focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills; and
- Ensuring that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time, moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction.

When the schools were closed in March, as a result of the Governor's executive order, BBL 1 was prepared to meet our students' educational needs via synchronous and asynchronous learning. Teachers developed a schedule to meet with whole class groups, small groups and individual students to provide instruction that was aligned with the NYS standards. Teachers also identified several online mathematics tools to support student learning and comprehension of key mathematical concepts. Those tools included: Geometry Pad, Math Playground, Labadabadoo, and Braincamp. The tools allowed both teachers and students to manipulate Cuisenaire rods, fraction tiles, geometric shapes, counters, and coins on their screens to work through mathematical

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problems. That capability was critical to the smooth transition from in-person to remote learning, because students were still able to learn through the physical exploration and manipulation of objects. Furthermore, teachers engaged their students through the screen to maintain a connection with them and with the mathematical concepts learned.

### METHOD

While still in the physical school building, teachers gave in-class, teacher-made quizzes and tests as formative assessments and summative practice tests using released questions from the NYS assessments from previous years.

Once we went remote in March 2020, teachers continued to assess student progress through observation, discussion, classwork, online apps (assignments for asynchronous learning), and teacher-created assessments. The teachers used Edmodo and Google Classroom as vehicles for students to complete and submit assessments. Those assessments gave the teachers information to continue planning to meet the individual academic learning needs of their students.

Our benchmark assessment was an internally developed assessment aligned with the New York State standards. In collaboration with Educational Vistas Inc., the BBL Assessment Team and Academic Leaders offered benchmark testing in February of the 2019-2020 school year. The benchmarks were administered and evaluated in a traditional testing environment and proctored by classroom teachers.

The table below summarizes the performance of our 3-5<sup>th</sup> grades on our February 2017-2019, February 2018-2019 and February 2019-2020 Ed Vista Math Benchmark exams. It compares our benchmark results with actual state math assessment passing rates for the first two of those years, and then includes estimations of how our students would have performed on a 2019-2020 assessment, had it been administered.

**Math Practice Test Comparisons: Ed Vista vs. Actual & Estimated BBL Passing Rates on State Assessments**

Math A3 Feb Practice	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
<b>BBL1 Grade 3</b>	Ed Vista: 61% On StateTest: 74%	Ed Vista: 53% On StateTest: 65%	Ed Vista: 51% <i>State Estimation: 61%</i>
<b>BBL1 Grade 4</b>	Ed Vista: 72% On StateTest: 74%	Ed Vista: 73% On StateTest: 80%	Ed Vista: 66.3% <i>State Estimation: 72%</i>
<b>BBL1 Grade 5</b>	Ed Vista: 46% On StateTest: 66%	Ed Vista: 43.3% On StateTest: 77%	Ed Vista: 54.3% <i>State Estimation: 80%</i>

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### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As summarized in the table, above, on the 2019-20 ELA Benchmark exam, 51% of third grade, 66.3% of fourth grade and 54.3% of fifth grade students scored at or above proficiency. Third grade Ed Vista passing rates slipped by 2% between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 and, in fourth grade, by a more significant 6.7% between those two years, leading us to estimate that there would have been a drop in the passing rates in those two grades if a state math exam had actually been administered in 2018-2019, though predictably still relatively high compared to district and statewide peers. Our fifth graders, on the other hand, demonstrated a full 10% improvement in our most recent Ed Vista passing rate, compared to the previous year, pointing to an estimated jump in state passing rates, possibly high enough to produce an overall passing rate for BBL 1 in math that would have been equal to or maybe even higher than our noteworthy overall passing rate in 2018-2019.

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS GOAL

Our Mathematics goal is for students to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving. We maintain that we have met that goal. Still,, we remain committed to providing a rigorous, high quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for continued success in mathematics.

### ACTION PLAN

By starting the 2020-2021 school year remotely and planning to transition to a hybrid model, BBL 1 is focused on supporting student learning through various media. Throughout the spring of 2020, teachers honed their skills using the online tools in math lessons and committed time in the summer to solidifying their ability to utilize those tools during remote instruction. Teachers will continue to assess student knowledge and skills through online assessments. We will continue to analyze individual student test results on our practice exams to plan effectively and to map our instruction this year. While have already planned the following targeted steps, those analyses will lead to additional adjustments in our mathematics program:

1. Instructional Alignment: Our mathematics professional development staff, as well as the Academic Leaders, along with our teachers, will continue to review our informal assessments and in-class assignments to reflect the structure of the assessment questions of the NYS Mathematics exam. Through weekly grade-level planning, professional development staff, AL's and teachers will adapt the curriculum to ensure students' familiarity of the nature of the assessment when tested, especially in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which once again will include a cohort of students who will be taking this assessment for the first time.
2. Instructional Rigor: The mathematics program will continue to focus on ensuring that students demonstrate competence in their understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving. The Academic Leaders have several years' experience with the mathematics curriculum. Their expertise will support the teachers' professional

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development, curriculum planning, the facilitation of common planning meetings, one-on-one targeted coaching with the teachers around our approach and the use of manipulatives in the classroom.

### 3. Data Driven Decision Making:

- a. We will give two benchmark exams and one NYS practice assessment to help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
- b. NYS assessment-like groupings will be created and incorporated into daily math lessons to allow teachers an additional opportunity to monitor student progress and adjust instruction as necessary.
- c. Weekend homework will be given with NYS assessment-like questions added to give students additional opportunities to practice skills assessed on the NYS Mathematics exam. We also assign “break packets” for the long vacations in December, February and April to ensure consistent focus on mathematics.
- d. We will conduct a formal midterm assessment for both 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5th grades to assess how they are achieving the curricular and instructional goals. We will assess them in January using EdVista.

### 4. Continued Adult Supervision: That level of staffing will maintain a favorable student to adult ratio, and will allow our teachers to create smaller groups during instruction and more individualized instruction, even while teaching remotely.

5. Student Support: Students who are “at-risk” will be identified early in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed. Given that we will start the year remotely, we will begin our academic support program the second full week of school. This will give our support teachers an opportunity to assess any gaps in learning due to the COVID-19 school closure and provide targeted instruction in areas where students are struggling and/or underperforming.

- a. Special Education instructional options: Students who are identified as being in need of special education services will continue to receive those services throughout the school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).
- b. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.

6. Professional Development: The mathematics professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction through regularly scheduled professional development sessions after school hours, as well as in-class support to ensure the application of the school’s pedagogy throughout each class.

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7. Home-School Connection: Much of our connections to families in the upcoming school year will take place virtually but will follow the similar structures to in-person, allowing for parents to learn and ask questions regarding our approach. To build more support for mathematics at home, we will continue to use parent teacher conferences to review individual scores with parents, virtual “Coffee and Conversation” sessions to go over overall progress of each grade, and we will also have two virtual Curriculum Nights in the beginning of the year – one in September for all parents and one in October for parents new to our school. Our primary purpose will be to increase parents’ comfort with and willingness to rely on manipulatives to bolster students’ deep understanding of basic mathematical concepts.

8. Administrative Support: The Principals will make frequent visits into the classrooms to ensure continuity in the instructional program across the grades, as well as to ensure instructional rigor.

### GOAL 3: SCIENCE

#### ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

##### Goal 3: Science

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

#### BACKGROUND

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

Our science staffing and curriculum remained virtually unchanged during the COVID-19 school closing. While all our classes were conducted remotely, our science lessons continued to focus on our four priorities listed above. We successfully adapted our Science 21 lessons to meet the needs of our students, allowing them to participate in science experiments and the scientific method all while doing so virtually.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to promote student mastery of the State’s standards in science by:

- a. Continuing to implement the Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning, incorporating techniques and materials that foster students’ active participation in lessons;

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- b. Continuing to implement lessons that emphasize hands-on experimentation and make use of BOCES prepared science kits (Science 21 Program) that complement the school's core pedagogy;
- c. Continuing to incorporate a problem solving approach that presents students with "real life" problems and working in groups, which analyze data/information to come up with solutions to the problems, all of which leads students to a deeper appreciation of cause and effect relationships; and
- d. Continuing to provide supplemental support to students who are not progressing as expected.
- e. Leveraging technology and online platforms to ensure a rich and rigorous science curriculum while students work remotely from home.

### METHOD

During the 2019-2020 school year, BBL administered internally developed assessments that were aligned to state standards. Those assessments included teacher made tests and quizzes, anecdotal evidence based on student engagement with curriculum, and problem-based learning projects. Furthermore, science teachers collaborated with our ELA teachers on essential questions to further integrate writing into science. Online programs such as Kidblog, IXL and BrainPop were used to progress monitor student growth in vocabulary acquisition and science concepts.

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Based on last year's trends, progress noted by teachers on internal exams, anecdotal evidence based on student engagement with curriculum, and problem-based learning projects, we can predict that BBL students would have outperformed last year's NY State Science exam scores on the 2019-2020 exam, should it have been administered.

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY SCIENCE GOAL

Our science goal is for students to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning. We believe that our efforts to meet this goal have proven effective. As shown above, our work in the science department continues to focus on academic rigor, the scientific method and problem-based learning projects. This approach, coupled with the success of our students on past state science exams prove that we continue to provide a sound and enriching science education for all our students. We remain committed to providing a rigorous, high quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for continued success in science.

### ACTION PLAN

While student performance in Science continues to be laudable, Bronx Better Learning will refine and improve its program through:

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1. Instructional Rigor: The science program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective analytical skills for all students through:
  - a. Academic Leaders, who have been placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards.
  - b. Science Curriculum Coordinator: A Science Curriculum Coordinator has been appointed and continues to facilitate instructional planning and curriculum refinement.
  - c. Data Driven Decision Making: Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
2. Focus on At-Risk Students: The science program continues to support students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:
  - a. Experienced Teachers: The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL's most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student's instructional program.
  - b. Special Education Instructional Options: Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services, and related services, e.g., speech, occupational therapy and counseling.
  - c. English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support: The ELL Coordinator's schedule ensures the effective delivery of needed support for students identified as ELL.
3. Professional Development: The science program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
  - a. Weekly Institutes: The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Academic Leaders have arranged a weekly Institute schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school's pedagogy throughout the school.
  - b. In-Class Support: Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in "real situations" the effectiveness of the school's approach.
  - c. Technology Training: The Technology department and Professional development department will continue to partner to ensure that teachers are prepared to

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leverage online platforms and online problem based learning opportunities in science.

### 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

Bronx Better Learning 1 is in good standing. The school has met this measure and achieved the goal.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Accountability Status by Year

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

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### APPENDIX A: OPTIONAL GOALS

#### Goal S: Absolute Measure

Each year, 90 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.

#### METHOD

Students are tracked through the Automate The Schools (ATS) student information system. Students are registered in BBL and then entered into ATS. Parents advise BBL's administration or teachers that their child(ren) will not be returning. At that time, the BBL staff member receiving the information will inquire as to the reason the student will not be returning to BBL. Students are tracked individually through class lists.

#### RESULTS

In 2018-2019 our school enrollment was 545. We had 92 students graduate that same year. 433 students returned to BBL in September 2020. Our retention rate percentage is 96%

2019-20 Student Retention Rate

2018-19 Enrollment	Number of Students Who Graduated in 2018-19	Number of Students Who Returned in 2019-20	Retention Rate 2019-20 Re-enrollment ÷ (2018-19 Enrollment – Graduates)
545	92	433	96%

#### EVALUATION

In 2019 -2020 BBL 1 exceeded the retention rate measure by 6 percentage points.

#### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Year	Retention Rate
2017-18	94%
2018-19	97%
2019-20	96%