



Bushwick Ascend Charter School

**2015-16 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

September 15, 2016

By Dylan Schaffer

Bushwick Ascend Lower School
751 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11221

(347) 464-7600 ext. 1124

INTRODUCTION

Dylan Schaffer, planning and external affairs associate, Ascend Learning, Inc. prepared this 2015-16 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Stephanie Mauterstock	Chair; member of the executive, finance, and nominating committees
Kathleen Quirk	Vice chair; member of the executive, academic, and hiring committees
Amanda Craft	Secretary; member of the executive, academic, and hiring committees
Katya Levitan-Reiner	Treasurer; member of the executive, finance, and nominating committees
Kwaku Andoh	Trustee; member of the academic committee
Christine Schlendorf	Trustee; member of the finance committee
Oral Walcott	Trustee; member of the executive, hiring, and nominating committees

Zelda Washington has served as school director, Lower School, since July 2014.

Ariella Diamond has served as school director, Middle School, since July 2015.

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Bushwick Ascend Charter School is to equip our students with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond. By offering a rich liberal arts education in a supportive environment, we animate children’s natural sense of curiosity and prepare students to think on their own, thrive on their own, and engage the world as informed, responsible citizens.

At Ascend, our mission is to provide an extraordinary education to children of Central Brooklyn, placing them firmly on a path to success in college and beyond. Our model focuses on developing in our students critical thinking skills and a sense of agency and independence. Ascend’s value proposition rests on three pillars.

1. A rich and rigorous liberal arts curriculum that drives student achievement
2. Cultural practices that foster student independence and agency
3. A commitment to operate truly public schools

Bushwick Ascend opened in September 2010 and has since grown to serve students in kindergarten through grade 6. It will continue to grow by a grade per year to offer at maturity a comprehensive K-12 college-preparatory program. Bushwick Ascend is located in Community School District 32 in New York City. In SY 15-16, 89% of Bushwick Ascend students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch, 98% were black or Latino, and 15% were special education students.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2011-12	54	100	99											253
2012-13	116	118	117	88										439
2013-14	125	108	114	115	81									543
2014-15	116	116	118	111	116	65								642
2015-16	110	111	119	110	110	104	80							738

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Bushwick Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in English Language Arts.

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend moved fully away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the components of the English language arts programs included:

- *Foundations*, grades K-2—a program for phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Based on the Wilson Reading System principles, which is supported by multiple studies, including one by Massachusetts’s Lynn Public Schools (of which the student population is comprised of 66 percent black or Latino students). The study found that the System expedites grade-level reading increases among elementary school students who previously struggled in achieving appropriate reading level growth.
- In kindergarten, the writing program is *Units of Study in Opinion, Informational, and Narrative Writing*, by Lucy Calkins. In later grades of the lower school, *Voyages in English: Grammar and Writing*, is used to help students with the mastery of grammar, writing, and the use of the English language. *Voyages in English* has been fine-tuned throughout the 70 years of its published life. It is also the recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Achievement Award by the Association of Educational Publishers.
- Ascend’s *Literature Circle* program, influenced by a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools and at Icahn Charter Schools (which serve student populations not unlike those served Ascend schools), was adopted to promote student discussion as teachers help students mine the deepest meaning of the finest children’s literature and develop the habits of excellent readers, all while building reading comprehension skills, and seminar style discussion skills. In addition, Literature Circle builds students’ core background and cultural knowledge by following the Core Knowledge History and Geography Scope and Sequence.
- *Guided Reading*—a separate reading class—creates a bridge between Shared Text and independent reading. It is taught in small groups of students who are on the same reading level, as determined by individual one-on-one reading assessments. Teachers serve as skilled facilitators, guiding students through prompts and questioning student strategies as they read a book together. Each guided reading session addresses needs identified through the previous session, whether in the area of decoding, fluency, or comprehension.
- In the *Shared Text* component, modeled after a similar program at Success Academy Charter Schools, the teacher models the habits of a skilled reader, and leads students briskly to accessing and then writing about the deeper meaning of a short complex text. Students are

guided in answering Common Core-style comprehension questions and short response questions. In the lower school, Shared Text is a companion component to Literature Circle; in grades 5-8 texts are often selected to align with the Humanities Program Scope and Sequence. Texts are selected in a range of genres and often provide historical context to the anchor text book under discussion.

- Ascend’s Humanities Program, which begins in grade five, is the natural successor to the lower school’s Literature Circle and Guided Reading programs. Modeled closely on the practices of the city’s finest private and selective public schools, the great books program was designed to develop students’ individual voices, reading and writing sensibilities, and public speaking skills with an ambitious syllabus that includes a cross-cultural selection of classic literature and key primary texts.

Bushwick Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark assessments, unit tests, STEP and STAR assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The purchase in SY 14-15 of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allowed staff to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback.

In SY 15-16, all Ascend schools initiated Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts (“ELA”) assessment to students in 3rd through 6th grade in April 2016. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	108	0	0	0	2	110
4	104	0	0	0	6	110
5	105	0	0	0	0	105
6	81	0	0	0	0	81
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	398	0	0	0	8	406

RESULTS

31.9% of all Bushwick Ascend students achieved proficiency on the NYS English language arts exam in SY 15-16; 34.2% of students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency. Performance was particularly strong in grade 6, while grade 5 students struggled to achieve proficiency at levels similar to their peers in other grades.

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

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	34.3%	108	33.7%	95
4	32.7%	104	35.1%	97
5	21.9%	105	23.6%	89
6	40.7%	81	53.1%	49
7	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--
All	31.9%	398	34.2%	330

EVALUATION

In SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. The overall gap of 40.8% between Bushwick Ascend's overall performance of 34.2% and the absolute measure threshold of 75% is significant. Grade 6 students however, particularly those who have been enrolled at Bushwick Ascend for two or more years, performed well on the ELA exams, achieving 53.1% proficiency.

In grade 5, students did not meet the school's standards and aspirations for success. Their lower proficiency level of 23.6% may be understood in the context of the transition that students experience in the ELA curriculum at this stage; grade 5 is the first year students take part in

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Ascend’s ambitious and challenging Humanities program, and the first time there is no dedicated guided reading block. The middle school has also experienced staffing concerns that have affected the quality of teacher training and expertise; they are being addressed with urgency in order to increase achievement.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

SY 15-16, in particular, showcased strong growth in performance over the preceding year in grades 3 and 4, as evidenced in the table below. Both grades improved their proficiency by more than 10 percentage points from SY 14-15. With the full implementation of Ascend’s new Common Core curriculum in SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend’s proficiency levels experienced a decline, particularly in grade 4; in SY 15-16, this trend has been reversed. Notably, all three cohorts that were tested in both SY 14-15 and SY 15-16 gained in proficiency in SY 15-16; the strong performance by grade 6 students in SY 15-16 is particularly promising given that same cohort’s 29.8% proficiency the previous year. Overall, Bushwick Ascend is back on a path of progress towards meeting this measure with an increase of 2.8 percentage points over three years and an even more significant 10.7-point increase since SY14-15.

The decline in performance at the grade 5 level in SY 15-16 is deeply disappointing, and another sign of a weaker teaching staff at this level.

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	24.5%	110	21.3%	94	33.7%	95
4	41.0%	78	22.0%	100	35.1%	97
5	--	--	29.8%	57	23.6%	89
6	--	--	--	--	53.1%	49
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	31.4%	188	23.5%	251	34.2%	330

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state’s learning standards in English language arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2015-16 English language arts AMO of **104**. The PLI is

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.²

RESULTS

In English language arts, Bushwick Ascend achieved a PLI of 107.5 in SY 15-16.

English Language Arts 2015-16 Performance Level Index				
Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
398	24.4%	43.7%	26.1%	5.8%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 43.7 & + & 26.1 & + & 5.8 & = & 75.6 \\
 & & & & 26.1 & + & 5.8 & = & \underline{31.9} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 107.5
 \end{array}$$

EVALUATION

The school met the measure for a PLI value exceeding SY 15-16 English language arts AMO of 104. This achievement was effect by a strong number of students achieving Level 2 and Level 3 proficiency. Notable performances include a high percentage of grade 3 students at Level 3 (34.3%), and a high percentage of grade 4 students at Level 2 (50.0%). This performance in particular can be attributed by Bushwick Ascend’s strong response to intervention (RTI) program, which provides tiered interventions to students who are struggling academically, while still keeping those students integrated with their classmates through a series of push-in and pull-out services. Critical to the high percentage of Level 2 and 3 performances was the ability of students—especially those in grades 4 and 6—to progress from Level 1 to Level 2, and from Level 2 to Level 3 from SY 14-15 to SY 15-16.

In 2014, Bushwick Ascend purchased and implemented the use of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system, which allowed for increased efficiency and effectiveness of tracking student performance and growth across a variety of measures. This system, along with a robust professional development and planning program, have allowed the school to better prepare teachers for providing targeted, purposeful lessons aimed at improving student achievement levels.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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

RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend's aggregate performance on NYS English language arts exams outpaced Community School District 32, Bushwick's home district, by 10.2%. Bushwick Ascend achieved 34.2% proficiency among students enrolled in at least their second year, compared to 24% proficiency for all district students. The strongest comparative performance occurred in grade 6, where Bushwick Ascend students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed all district students by 25.1 percentage points; in grades 3 and 5, the exceedances were more modest.

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

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	33.7%	95	27%	976
4	35.1%	97	24%	986
5	23.6%	89	18%	992
6	53.1%	49	28%	1,103
7	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--
All	34.2%	330	24%	4,057

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance by 10.2 percentage points. Bushwick Ascend also exceeded district performance for every tested grade in SY 15-16.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend students have outperformed their district peers at every grade level for the past three years, and Bushwick Ascend's overall proficiency level has remained higher than that of the district since SY 13-14. Since SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend has outpaced the growth of corresponding grades in CSD 32 by 2 percentage points.

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Scoring at or Above Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	24.5%	15%	21.3%	15%	33.7%	27.0%
4	41.0%	17%	22.0%	15%	35.1%	24%
5	--	--	29.8%	17%	23.6%	18%
6	--	--	--	--	53.1%	28%
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	31.4%	16%	23.5%	16%	34.2%	24%

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

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

RESULTS

Bushwick Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.19 overall in SY 2014-15. Grade 5 achieved an Effect Size significantly greater than 0.3.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

2014-15 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	85%	109	19%	20.5%	-1.5%	-0.10
4	89%	115	19%	17.9%	1.1%	0.09
5	83%	65	29%	17.8%	11.2%	0.87
6	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	87%	289	21.5%	18.9%	2.6%	0.19

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend achieved a positive Effect Size of 0.19 in SY 14-15, indicating that the school performed slightly better than expected, but failed to meet the measure of achieving an Effect Size greater than 0.3. In grade 5, the school performed better than expected to a meaningful degree, while grade 4 achieved an Effect Size of 0.09. While the school's grade 3 comparative performance was lower than expected, that grade's growth in proficiency in SY 15-16 is a promising sign for increasing that grade's Effect Size in SY 15-16.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since SY 12-13, Bushwick Ascend has maintained a positive overall Effect Size, achieving a significant and meaningful degree in SY 12-13 and SY 13-14. While the magnitude of the overall Effect Size decreased over the past three years, the significant overall gains in proficiency in SY 15-16 will likely lead to an increase its Effect Size for that year.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2012-13	3	92%	90	37.8%	17.1%	1.92
2013-14	3-4	88%	195	30.8%	20.8%	0.74
2014-15	3-5	87%	289	21.5%	18.9%	0.19

Goal 1: Growth Measure⁴

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

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

METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2014-15 and also have a state exam score from 2013-14 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2013-14 score are ranked by their 2014-15 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2014-15 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁵

RESULTS

In SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile of 45.0, compared to the statewide median of 50.0.

2014-15 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	46.0	50.0
5	43.5	50.0
6	--	50.0
7	--	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	45.0	50.0

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend did not meet the measure of a mean growth percentile higher than the state's median of the 50th percentile. This result is disappointing, but the school, which educates students with higher levels of need than the statewide averages, is making a concerted effort to increase performance.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend's disaggregated mean growth percentile values are not currently available for years prior to SY 14-15.

SUMMARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan's first absolute measure of 75% proficiency, Bushwick Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in English language arts.

⁵ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's Business Portal: portal.nysed.gov.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

As evidenced by this year's progress in grades 3 and 4 in absolute measures and relative strength compared to district peers, along with the particularly strong performance by grade 6 students in SY 15-16, the school is confident in the strength of the Ascend Common Core curriculum instituted in SY 14-15. Though Bushwick Ascend failed to meet the growth and Effect Size measures in SY 14-15, the significant increase in proficiency achieved by students in SY 15-16 is a positive indicator for future achievement of these measures, and another signal of programmatic adjustments bearing fruit

Overall, the school has shown marked improvement towards attaining its English language arts goal in this accountability period, though much work remains, especially in grade 5. Targeted improvements to the educational program as described below, persistence and enhancement of successful practices, and continued staff development will allow for more consistent and rapid progress and achievement towards this goal in the next accountability period.

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

ACTION PLAN

Through the next accountability period, Bushwick Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practices and results in ELA, while improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Bushwick Ascend will take part in Ascend's network-wide initiatives: cultivating a Love of Reading, and the Continuous Monitoring of Student Work. The Love of Reading initiative will help to bolster English language arts scores by developing rituals and activities in the school that celebrate, highlight, and inspire a love of reading among students and faculty. The introduction of a robust independent reading block at the lower school levels, improvement of access to books that are at students' target reading levels and increasingly challenge students, continual training for teachers,

and evaluation of program effectiveness will provide the programmatic framework for these cultural changes.

The Continuous Monitoring of Student Work initiative will be implemented to build on the overall success of Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) efforts, as well as the ongoing positive effects of strong incremental goal-setting and targeted intervention at Bushwick Ascend Lower School in SY 15-16. The initiative will standardize incremental goal-setting as a practice across all levels, allowing for increased staff development opportunities for leaders and teachers.

Literacy interventions for struggling students represent an important subset of monitoring student work. This year will mark the second year of implementation for the leveled literacy intervention program at Bushwick Ascend; increased familiarity with the program, combined with professional training, will allow for a more robust progress for struggling students in the future.

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Bushwick Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in mathematics.

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend moved fully away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the components of the English language arts programs included:

- The curriculum in math features the approach known as *Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)*. CGI has significantly improved performance in other leading NYC charter schools, including those in the Success network.
- *Singapore Math* is the primary math program in the kindergarten through the fifth grade. Singapore Math is based on the curriculum that took Singapore students to the top of international math assessments. The program focuses on building problem-solving skills and an in-depth understanding of essential math skills. It is closely aligned with curricular focal points recommended by the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics and the Common Core Learning Standards. Students are taught not only mathematical methods, but also why they work.
- In *Number Stories*, which is founded on the tenets of CGI, students spend an entire period studying a single Common Core-style math problem, constructing their own solutions, defending their thinking, and comparing their approaches.
- For approximately 10-20 minutes per day, students practice *Math Routines* to build automaticity and fluency in computation.
- In middle school, one of the 45-minute daily math periods is deployed for *EngageNY*. The second math period is dedicated to *Math in Context*.

Bushwick Ascend has created a powerful culture of response to instructional data. In addition to New York State exams administered each spring, teachers use benchmark assessments, unit tests, STEP and STAR assessments, and other measures of student performance during the course of the year. The purchase in SY 14-15 of the Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA) system allowed staff to monitor progress and assess comprehension, as well as for data-driven teacher training and evaluation, through access to instant feedback.

In SY 15-16, all Ascend schools initiated Teacher Planning and Development, a network-wide program aimed at improving teaching and learning and creating a platform for teacher collaboration. Through unit studies, planning and assessment studies, lesson debriefs, teach-backs, and data meetings, TPD meetings represent a critical piece of a professional development program

MATHEMATICS

that also includes pre-service training, full professional development days, afterschool sessions, and ongoing coaching and modeling.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3rd through 6th grade in April 2016. Each student's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

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

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁶				Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	Refused	
3	108	0	0	0	2	110
4	104	0	0	0	6	110
5	105	0	0	0	0	105
6	80	0	0	1	0	81
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	397	0	0	1	8	406

RESULTS

40.8% of all Bushwick Ascend students achieved proficiency on the NYS mathematics exam in SY 15-16; 42.2% of students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency. While grade 5 students struggled to achieve proficiency at levels similar to their peers, grades 3, 4, and 6 showed strong results.

⁶ Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

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

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
3	57.4%	108	57.9%	95
4	37.5%	104	37.1%	97
5	23.8%	105	24.7%	89
6	45.0%	80	54.2%	48
7	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--
All	40.8%	397	42.2%	329

EVALUATION

In SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend did not meet this absolute measure. The gap of 32.8% between Bushwick Ascend's overall performance of 42.2% and the absolute measure threshold of 75% is significant. Yet, the performance of grade 3 at 57.9% and grade 6 at 54.2% are encouraging. Grade 3 and 4 students have benefitted from taking part in the Ascend Common Core curriculum from an earlier stage in their academic lives, and there is great potential to close the remaining gap. And grade 6 has shown considerable strength. Despite the fact that SY 15-16 was the first year at Ascend for a large proportion of students, that cohort maintained a high percentage of overall proficiency. The implementation of a math re-teaching program by Middle School Director Ariella Diamond played a pivotal role in 6th grade students' continued improvements and overall success in SY 15-16. At the lower levels, strong scores were supported by particularly effective Teacher Planning and Development sessions in math.

With a proficiency level of 24.7%, the performance of 5th grade students this year was weak, failing to meet the school's standards and aspirations for these students' success. At this level, a lack of consistent goal-setting and strong intervention has affected the quality of instruction, and these issues will be address in the coming year.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Several indicators testify to the school's progress towards the measure, despite mixed grade-level trends over time. In SY 15-16, both lower school grades (3 and 4) improved upon the previous year's proficiency levels, and grade 3 achieved a significant gain of 23.9 percentage points. Overall, these gains, and the strong performance of Bushwick Ascend's inaugural 6th grade cohort, fueled an overall 5.5-percentage-point increase in a one-year span in Bushwick Ascend's proficiency. Since SY 13-14, overall proficiency at Bushwick Ascend has increased by 6.8 percentage points.

As mentioned above, the troubling decline of proficiency in grade 5 signifies staffing challenges faced by the school at this level, which has led to an urgent redoubling of the school's effort to hire highly-qualified teachers.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	30.0%	110	34.0%	94	57.9%	95
4	43.0%	79	36.0%	100	37.1%	97
5	--	--	42.1%	57	24.7%	89
6	--	--	--	--	54.2%	48
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	35.4 %	189	36.7%	251	42.2%	329

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state's learning standards in mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a PLI value that equals or exceeds the 2015-16 mathematics AMO of 101. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.⁷

RESULTS

In mathematics, Bushwick Ascend achieved a PLI of 118.6 in SY 15-16.

Mathematics 2015-16 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
397	22.4%	36.8%	27.0%	13.9%

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 36.8 & + & 27.0 & + & 13.9 & = & 77.7 \\
 & & & & 27.0 & + & 13.9 & = & \underline{40.9} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 118.6
 \end{array}$$

⁷ In contrast to NYSED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

EVALUATION

The school met the measure for a PLI value, exceeding the SY 15-16 English language arts AMO of 101. Notable performances include a high percentage of grades 3 and 6 at Level 3 (39.8% and 30.0%, respectively), and a high percentage of grade 4 students at Level 2 (43.3%). This achievement was accomplished by a strong number of students scoring at Levels 2, 3, and 4 proficiency, and by a relatively small percentage of students scoring in the Level 1 range. Bushwick Ascend's response to intervention (RTI) program provided tiered interventions to students who are struggling academically while still keeping those students integrated with their classmates through a series of push-in and pull-out services. In 2014, Bushwick Ascend purchased and implemented the use of Illuminate Data and Assessment (DnA), which allowed for increased efficiency and effectiveness of tracking student performance and growth across a variety of measures.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

A school compares the performance of tested students enrolled in at least their second year to that of all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.⁸

RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend's aggregate performance on NYS mathematics exams outpaced Community School District 32, the school's home district, by 20.2 percentage points. Bushwick Ascend achieved 42.2% proficiency among students enrolled in at least their second year, compared to 22% proficiency for all district students. The strongest comparative performance occurred in grades 3 and 6, where Bushwick students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed all district students by over 32%. In grade 5, the gap was more modest, with Bushwick Ascend students outperforming their district peers by 5.7%.

⁸ Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

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

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	57.9%	95	23%	993
4	37.1%	97	25%	994
5	24.7%	89	19%	1,007
6	54.2%	48	22%	1,126
7	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--
All	42.2%	329	22%	4,120

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend met the measure by exceeding the aggregate district performance by 20.2%. Bushwick Ascend also exceeded CSD 32 performance for every tested grade in SY 15-16. In grade 5, increased intervention, use of concrete representations and modeling techniques, and goal-setting will help to bolster that grade's performance on this comparative measure in coming years.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend students have achieved an increase of 6.8 percentage points in mathematics proficiency over the past three years, compared to a 1-point overall decline for CSD 32 students in the same tested grades. Notably, while grade 3 CSD 32 students have declined in proficiency by 2 percentage points over the past three years, Bushwick Ascend 3rd grade students have improved their performance by 27.9 points. Over the last two years, the school has increased proficiency by 5.5 percentage points, compared to an overall decline of 2 points for the CSD.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	30.0%	25%	34.0%	23%	57.9%	23%
4	43.0%	21%	36.0%	22%	37.1%	25%
5	--	--	42.1%	25%	24.7%	19%
6	--	--	--	--	54.2%	22%
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	35.4 %	23%	36.7%	24%	42.2%	22%

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

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

RESULTS

Bushwick Ascend achieved an Effect Size of 0.44 overall in SY 14-15 for mathematics. All grades achieved a positive Effect Size, and grades 4 and 5 achieved an Effect Size greater than 0.3.

2014-15 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	85%	109	33%	29.5%	3.5%	0.18
4	89%	115	35%	26.2%	8.8%	0.50
5	83%	65	42%	27.8%	14.2%	0.77
6	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	87%	289	35.9%	27.8%	8.1%	0.44

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend met the measure of achieving an Effect Size greater than 0.3. All tested grades achieved a positive Effect Size in SY 14-15, and in grades 4 and 5, students performed better than expected to a meaningful degree.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Over the past three years, Bushwick Ascend has performed better than expected to a meaningful degree in mathematics, maintaining an Effect Size at or above 0.3.

Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch/ Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2012-13	3	92%	90	30.0%	20.8%	0.65
2013-14	3-4	88%	196	34.7%	29.03%	0.30
2014-15	3-5	87%	289	35.9%	27.8%	0.44

Goal 2: Growth Measure⁹

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

METHOD

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other students with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes students who took the state exam in 2014-15 and also have a state exam score in 2013-14 including students who were retained in the same grade. Students with the same 2013-14 scores are ranked by their 2014-15 scores and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (student growth percentile). Students’ growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school’s mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state’s release of Growth Model data, the 2015-16 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2014-15 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.¹⁰

RESULTS

In SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile of 50.0, compared to the statewide median of 50.0. Both grades 4 and 5 achieved mean growth percentiles of 50.0 in SY 14-15.

⁹ See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

¹⁰ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED’s business portal: portal.nysed.gov.

2014-15 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
4	50.0	50.0
5	50.0	50.0
6	--	50.0
7	--	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	50.0	50.0

EVALUATION

Bushwick Ascend achieved a mean growth percentile equal to the state’s median, overall and in each grade, but fell slightly short of the measure of a mean growth percentile higher than the state’s median of the 50th percentile.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend’s disaggregated mean growth percentile values are not currently available for years prior to SY 14-15.

SUMMARY OF THE MATHEMATICS GOAL

While the school did not meet the Accountability Plan’s first absolute measure of 75% proficiency, Bushwick Ascend students remain on a path toward continued progress in mathematics.

As evidenced by this year’s significant progress in grades 3 and 4 in absolute and comparative measures, the school is confident in the strength of the Ascend Common Core curriculum instituted in SY 14-15, especially for those students, who from an early age, have benefitted from its use. In grade 6, students’ high proficiency level in SY 15-16 is due in part to the ongoing efforts made to increase frequent, targeted intervention and the use of a re-teaching program in math.

Overall, the school has shown steady improvement towards attaining its mathematics goal in this accountability period; still, much work remains, especially in grade 5. Targeted improvements to the educational program and staffing as described below, persistence and enhancement of successful practices, and continued staff development will contribute to more consistent progress and achievement towards this goal in the next accountability period.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Achieved

MATHEMATICS

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

ACTION PLAN

Through the next accountability period, Bushwick Ascend will continue to build on its most successful practices in math, while improving on areas of weakness with targeted adjustments and interventions.

Bushwick Ascend will take part in Ascend's network-wide initiative towards Continuous Monitoring of Student Work. The initiative will standardize incremental goal-setting as a practice across all levels, allowing for increased staff development opportunities for leaders and teachers. Further, this initiative will enhance the existing structure of Teacher Planning and Development (TPD) meetings, with increased analysis of frequent "exit tickets" and other informal assessments of student learning, as well as improved data-focused coaching.

More frequent and in-depth monitoring of student work will also inform and improve the ways teachers address the learning needs of their students by allowing teachers to enhance the interventions provided in the classroom for struggling students and those nearing proficiency. In this way, the initiative will improve on successes such as the math re-teaching program already in place in SY 15-16.

In order to address weaker performance in grades 5, several interventions will take place this year and beyond to ensure greater progress towards accountability measures. Highly-qualified teachers have been hired to fill critical positions and will be monitored closely.

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Bushwick Ascend Charter School students will meet grade level expectations in science.

BACKGROUND

In SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend moved fully away from the SABIS curriculum and implemented the new Ascend Common Core curriculum. In SY 15-16, the elements of this curriculum for science included:

- MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's *A Closer Look* science program was first selected as the curriculum for the lower school because of its strong Common Core alignment, integration of rich content with well-conceived inquiry experiments, and vibrant, engaging textbooks. An independent study of St. Louis Public Schools (which are instructed under the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill science series), revealed that black students' performance on the Missouri Assessment Program is exhibiting a growth trend that exceeds that of the state average. Ascend has since added many originally created science units that are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and culminate in project-based learning projects.
- In the middle school, students learn standards-based science in the context of intriguing personal and societal issues through the *Science Education for Public Understanding Program*, developed at the University of California at Berkeley and composed of courses in *Issues and Earth Science*, *Issues and Life Science*, and *Issues and Physical Science*. Two decades' worth of research have demonstrated the program's positive impact on students' science education with regards to fostering subject knowledge, inquiry skills, engagement, and approaches for making decisions and solving issues.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4th grade in spring 2016. The school converted each student's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year to score at proficiency.

RESULTS

In SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend's grade 4 students enrolled in at least their second year achieved 89.1% proficiency.

SCIENCE

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

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency	
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	89.1%	101
8	--	--
All	89.1%	101

EVALUATION

The school met the measure for achieving at least 75% proficiency for all students enrolled in at least their second year, exceeding the measure by a significant margin of 14.1%.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend's 4th grade students have maintained consistently high levels of proficiency over the past three years.

Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	96.2%	79	92.0%	100	89.1%	101
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	96.2%	79	92.0%	100	89.1%	101

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

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

METHOD

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

RESULTS

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 32 in SY 15-16.

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

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	89.1%	101	Not available	Not available
8	--	--	--	--
All	89.1%	101	Not available	Not available

EVALUATION

Results for science are not yet available for CSD 32 in SY 15-16.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 32 in SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend’s performance compared to overall CSD performance in previous years has been strong. In both SY 13-14 and SY 14-15, Bushwick Ascend students have posted numbers more than 15 points higher than their CSD peers.

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students					
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
4	96.2%	80%	92.0%	75%	89.1%	Not available
8	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	96.2%	80%	92.0%	75%	89.1%	Not available

SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE GOAL

While results for science are not yet available for CSD 32 in SY 15-16, Bushwick Ascend students continue to attain excellence in science, indicating the strength of the Ascend science curriculum. Beyond this, Bushwick Ascend students have outperformed their CSD peers by wide margins in previous years—a trend that will likely continue in SY 15-16 given the school’s continued strong performance in SY 15-16.

SCIENCE

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

ACTION PLAN

Bushwick Ascend hopes to maintain its current levels of proficiency in science by building upon successful systems already in place.

This year, professional development in science will continue to expand as it has over the past two years since the implementation of the new science program. This, combined with a staff of teachers who have gained experience and expertise in science instruction over time, will lead to a further strengthening of the science program. This year, Bushwick Ascend will also implement professional development targeted specifically at the middle school level in science, in order to support the specific needs of the middle school grades as the school expands to include a new tested grade in this accountability period.

NCLB

Goal 4: NCLB

To achieve an Accountability Status of good standing.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

METHOD

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

RESULTS

Bushwick Ascend’s NCLB status for SY 15-16 will be Good Standing.

EVALUATION

The goal will be met.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Bushwick Ascend has achieved Good Standing status over the past three years.

NCLB Status by Year

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