



Buffalo United Charter School

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

August 15, 2021

By: Buffalo United Charter School

Board of Trustees

325 Manhattan Avenue

Buffalo, NY 14214

716-835-9862

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

National Heritage Academies (NHA) prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	committees (e.g. finance, executive)
Andrew Freedman	President	Compliant Committee Planning Task Force Committee Education Committee
Kim DeJesus	Vice President	Compliance Committee Personnel Committee Planning Task Force Committee Scholarship Committee Education Committee
Robert Lowery	Treasurer	Education Committee Wrap-Around Services Committee Finance Committee
Kathy Wood	Secretary	Personnel Committee Education Committee
Ashia Martin	Trustee	Education Committee Wrap-Around Services Committee

Teresa Gerchman has served as the principal since May 2019.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Buffalo United Charter School (Buffalo United or BUCS) opened in the fall of 2003. We started by serving 234 students in grades K-4. We currently serve 639 students in grades K-8, of whom 95 percent qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

Our mission is to offer families and students a public charter school that focuses on high academic achievement and instills a sense of family, community, and leadership in all our students. Since 2003 our mission has never wavered, and we remain faithful to our key design elements:

- *Academic Excellence.* We believe a high-quality K-8 education sets the critical foundation for a student's success in high school, college, and beyond. Achievement may look different for each individual student, but our goal is to prepare every child for college. Buffalo United has implemented many different initiatives to drive academic improvement. As a result of these initiatives, we have seen an increase in Buffalo United's academic performance. We will continue on our path for improvement in the 2021-22 school year.
- *Strong Parent Relationships.* We are committed to fostering strong partnerships with parents. Parents are encouraged to make a voluntary commitment at the beginning of each school year to a parent-student-teacher compact that affirms support for Buffalo United's mission, vision, policies, and activities. We actively engage parents in their children's learning and have an "open door" policy where parents are welcome in the school at any time.
- *Accountability.* Buffalo United staff, students, and parents are responsible for their actions and results. We understand that it is essential for all three groups to work together to ensure students' educational success.
 - *Staff:* Our staff understands that student learning is an adult responsibility, and leadership and staff are committed to creating a scholarly environment by setting high expectations for instruction to ensure that our students are college-ready. Multiple data points are collected and analyzed to monitor the quality of the educational program at the school level, grade level, and student level. This enables us, to hold teachers accountable for student learning results.
 - *Students:* A critical component of the parent-teacher-child partnership is the role the child plays in his or her academic success. From kindergarten through the 8th grade, Buffalo United students are taught to act responsibly and take accountability for their actions, both positive and negative.
 - *Parents:* We encourage parents and families to be involved in their child's education because we recognize that parental involvement is a key indicator of student success. We work purposely to involve parents in their child's education because it is crucial to maintaining the school culture we desire.

The COVID-19 pandemic required immediate transition to an entirely new model of teaching and learning. BUCS' commitment to broad school improvement remained apparent throughout our response. Key facets of our pandemic response included:

- We initially focused on standards and skills crucial to success and suitable for remote learning in structured, guided, and accessible learning opportunities for all students.

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- In the spring of 2020, we surveyed families for information on home technology access. We gave families 293 Chromebooks and provided several families internet "hotspots." Families also can receive tech support from a designated BUCS educator as well as NHA's tech support team. For the 2020-21 school year, BUCS went to 1:1 technology.
- We identified four overriding priorities: *access* for all students; *consistency* in instruction; *simplicity* (to support parents' new involvement); and *accountability*.
- Students received printed materials for the rest of the school year, which supplemented teachers' remote instruction. Teachers also received many digital tools to use as needed and appropriate. All teachers already had created Google Classrooms when school first closed, and they used that environment to generate lessons and lesson plans. Teachers also sent written learning plans weekly to students' homes.
- We monitored and checked for growth for all students using i-Ready assessments.
- We sent home a grade-level expectations test focused on priority standards for grades K-7.
- Special education students and at-risk students received the same learning opportunities as all other students received; they also received learning activities and services in accordance with IEPs. BUCS also continued to provide intervention support services.
- To track engagement, teachers logged student contacts weekly. Google Classroom login and participation data also helped track engagement. Attendance was tracked using completed tasks, family reports, and activity on Google Classroom and other websites.
- New training materials and PD helped teachers adapt to the new approach to instruction.
- Teachers began sharing weekly instructional plans with families. Communications with families were intensified and streamlined, with one teacher serving as a single point of family contact and responding to messages within 24 hours.
- Food service continued providing food to families that need it.

To sustain students' and families' social, mental, and emotional health, BUCS implemented daily 30-minute morning restorative circles for every class whether it was conducted virtually or in-person. Staff received training from Erie 1 BOCES to ensure restorative circles were effective. To build on this practice, Bestself has been hired to conduct the enrichment piece of BUCS' summer program. In addition, parent meetings still take place to ensure families have what they need for their student to be successful.

From the remote learning experience, BUCS has taken many lessons:

- Educators confirmed the importance of building and sustaining a strong ongoing connection with parents and families. The challenges of remote learning make parental involvement and engagement more critical than ever. As parental engagement deepened, the families we serve grew closer than ever to the school and its educators. Some parents are more involved than others, but the entire spectrum has moved closer.
- We learned we should be regularly using Google Classroom with all grades, so all students and teachers know how to use it. Before school closures began, BUCS was using this tool in middle school, so those students adapted more easily to increased use of it. Students and teachers in lower grades had a steeper learning curve. We plan to use this tool at all grade levels regardless of how much we rely on remote learning. A key advantage we expect in any instructional model is the tool's ability to have children who are absent from school continue doing classwork.

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- We learned we should be more clear, thorough, and proactive in explaining i-Ready to students and parents. When parents know how to use this tool and why it is valuable, it is used more effectively, and its benefits to teaching and learning increase.
- We affirmed the importance of flexibility in implementing remote learning, which is still new to students, parents, teachers, and school leaders. Teachers have made allowances for students who, for different valid reasons, have needed to modify their participation in remote learning activities.

These lessons have formed some of the improvement efforts BUCS plans to implement moving forward. For example, all teachers had Google Classrooms for use throughout the 2020-21 school year to give students assignments and receive work that students use their Chromebooks to complete. Experiences with Google Classroom in remote learning clearly show that this can be a powerful tool for teaching and learning in a traditional classroom as well as a remote learning environment. BUCS will continue efforts to implement remote learning strategies and adapt them to the traditional in-school learning environment for the 2021-22 school year.

In subsequent sections of this accountability plan progress report, there are, under each specific subject area, action plans that detail efforts to help BUCS improve its performance. These actions are part of a larger school-wide improvement effort that BUCS and NHA have begun with the active collaboration of the Board. Significant improvements were made at the school in 2019-20 and many of these improvements continued in the 2020-21 school year. Since some of our initial improvement efforts needed to be adjusted to conform to a remote learning environment, we plan to reinforce those efforts in the 2021-22 school year. BUCS' improvement efforts continue to focus on increasing achievement in English language arts (ELA), math and science. This goal is being supported in several ways. Some examples include: implementation of a new curriculum tailored for New York State standards; professional development to support the successful implementation of the new curricular tools; a continued focus on data analysis; supports for struggling students. Highlights of these school-wide improvement efforts are as follows:

Data-driven instruction: BUCS has improved its use of assessment data in evaluating student and educator performance, supporting student needs, driving professional development for leaders and teachers, and helping teachers adjust instruction in real time.

Curriculum and tools: The school has transitioned to curricular tools that align well with New York's NextGen standards. BUCS has identified opportunities to improve material alignment and continues to promptly make refinements as needed.

Professional development: BUCS and NHA's C&I team have worked on a plan for the ongoing coaching and PD that C&I will offer to support instructional execution at BUCS. The plan's priorities are helping the school implement and sustain its systems, scheduling and time structures, management structures, instructional structures, and its new curriculum, especially in ELA and math.

PD will be offered during summer and through ongoing initiatives throughout the school year through both in-person visits and video-based remote interactions. This support will be provided in a continuous cycle of four elements:

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- *Develop teachers and deans:* This support will focus on structures, systems, unit "unpacking," lesson preparation, and teaching.
- *Enact and observe:* Teachers will implement what they learn in their classrooms. Deans and C&I specialists will observe.
- *Plan coaching conversations:* Deans and C&I professionals will plan coaching conversations around key levers and bite-sized action steps. Coaching conversations will include emphasis on an identified teacher strength followed by an identified area of improvement opportunity.
- *Debrief and coach:* Each Dean and participating C&I consultant(s) will debrief on their observations and renew the coaching cycle around specific action steps for the teacher.

Five different C&I specialists have been designated to provide this support in ELA, ELA intervention, math, and school culture.

Assessments: BUCS teachers used aligned NHA-provided assessments and created other formative assessments and homework aligned to the state's standards and expectations of rigor as needed. Teacher-created formative assessments and homework for math and ELA reflected the breadth and depth of state test questions. The provided curriculum materials that were implemented in 2020-21 now include more assessments that meet expectations of alignment. NHA and BUCS also worked together to redesign the school's assessments and change how the school uses the data to drive school improvement.

Supports for struggling students: In the 2020-21 school year, BUCS changed a response-to-intervention (RTI) approach to an intervention model based on a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS). This model is rooted in RTI concept, but it is more proactive, emphasizes early intervention, addresses both behavioral and academic concerns, and worked to overcome systemic barriers that both students and teachers face in pursuit of learning. BUCS will screen *all* students under this system, and MTSS will improve remediation and intervention both in traditional in-school learning and in remote learning. BUCS will use this approach to support students who needed help both before the school was forced to adopt remote learning along with students whose needs became apparent during remote learning.

Behavior management: BUCS will continue the new approach to behavior management rooted in restorative discipline, a proactive and preventive approach to behavior management that had been adopted in 2019-20. This approach reduces emphasis on punishment; instead, it prioritizes strengthening relationships for individuals at the center of behavior issues. In-school professional development sessions helped us launch this effort. A core value of this initiative is strengthening the connection between our responses to disciplinary issues and students' social and emotional well-being.

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
2016-17	67	73	79	82	98	85	70	78	70	-	-	-	-	702
2017-18	59	68	76	81	96	76	64	75	65	-	-	-	-	660
2018-19	62	56	73	79	81	81	80	62	72	-	-	-	-	646
2019-20	65	64	58	80	78	76	83	76	54	-	-	-	-	634
2020-21	83	66	60	66	81	65	80	80	58	-	-	-	-	639

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Students will be proficient readers and writers of the English language.

BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2020, due to the COVID pandemic, BUCS began a transition to remote learning that started almost overnight and that forced NHA and BUCS to create a whole new setting for instruction. BUCS' goal for remote learning was reinforcing and introducing standards and skills that are critical to academic success and that can be delivered effectively via remote learning in structured, guided, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Even as BUCS' doors were closed and innovations in teaching and learning took root, efforts to improve academic outcomes lost no momentum. We continued to focus on our improvement efforts and evaluated ways to effectively provide instruction to students remotely. At the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, BUCS operated remotely. In January 2021, the school began to offer in-person instruction (K-5 offered full in-person instruction and 6-8 offered a hybrid model to its students). BUCS still offered families a virtual option if they were not comfortable returning to the school. Sixth grade students moved to five day in-person in March 2021.

Our remote learning plan included opportunities to connect with students and families, provide physical and digital resources, and create and implement essential new professional development programs for staff. To connect with families, teachers conducted Google LIVE meetings, offered daily office hours, and made weekly contact via phone or email with students and families. Students were physically mailed printed academic packets, and a weekly learning plan was shared by teachers via Class Dojo or Google Classroom that included live links for instructional videos and instructional programs to support learning. Lesson videos were also provided for students and families to provide deeper understanding. Staff was provided access to a Home Learning site which

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houses resources to support remote learning as well as professional development on recording and posting a video and creating and leading a live video. In addition, deans held weekly one-on-one meetings with their teachers to review expectations, ensure student participation, review weekly learning plans, and provide feedback.

METHOD

Buffalo United administered the i-Ready reading diagnostic to students in third through eighth grade in the fall, winter, and spring of 2020-21 to measure student growth and achievement throughout the school year. After students complete their first diagnostic in the fall, i-Ready generates a Typical Growth measure for each student and places the student in one of five placement levels. I-Ready then measures each student's progress toward their Typical Growth goal and updates their placement level after the winter and spring diagnostic assessments.

During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exam to assess student growth and achievement in ELA: i-Ready

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Measure 1: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3rd through 8th grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.

In 2020-21, from fall to spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of all students at Buffalo United was 125% in reading. Therefore, **this measure was met**, exceeding the target by 25 percentage points.

Students in grades 6-8 showed the most progress towards meeting their spring growth target, with very positive results in eighth grade.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready ELA Assessment
By All Students

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	36%	63
4	90%	77
5	69%	59
6	163%	64
7	197%	64
8	306%	55
All	125%	382

Measure 2: Each year, the school's median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of all third through eighth grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.

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In 2020-21, from fall to spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of students at Buffalo United who were two or more grade levels below in the fall was 176% in reading. Therefore, **this measure was met**, exceeding the target by 76 percentage points.

Students in grades 6-8 showed the most progress towards meeting their spring Typical Growth target, with very positive results in eighth grade. Students in fourth grade also showed a lot of progress in meeting their spring Typical Growth goal.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready ELA Assessment By Students who were Two or More Grade Levels below in the Fall

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	85%	26
4	164%	21
5	62%	38
6	199%	50
7	224%	33
8	345%	32
All	176%	200

Measure 3: Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of third through eighth grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of third through eighth grade general education students at the school.

In 2020-21, from Fall to Spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of students with disabilities was 90% in reading. Therefore, **this measure was not met**, falling short of the target by 35 percentage points. At the grade level, this measure was met in third grade.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready ELA Assessment By Students with Disabilities

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	69%	10
4	81%	12
5	0%	6
6	95%	10
7	175%	8
8	220%	10
All	90%	56

Measure 4: Each year, 75% of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will score at the *mid on-grade level* or above scale score for the year-end assessment.

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In the Spring of 2020-21, 17 percent of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at Buffalo United scored at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end assessment. This was below the target of 75 percent, therefore **the measure was not met**.

Students in seventh and eighth grade showed the most positive results.

End of Year Performance on 2020-21 i-Ready ELA Assessment By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested
3	13%	63	12%	43
4	16%	77	16%	58
5	7%	59	8%	50
6	11%	64	6%	47
7	26%	66	28%	53
8	35%	55	30%	43
All	17%	384	17%	294

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

BUCS initially had concerns with the validity of the fall i-Ready assessment results. Since students were taking the assessment remotely, teachers were unable to monitor students to explain that it is an adaptive assessment. This caused a lack of understanding with new parents. In addition, students were simply absent and did not take the assessment.

BUCS held parent meetings to share background information about the i-Ready assessment to give parents a better understanding of the assessment itself and what it measures. Data from the assessment was also shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences to allow for a better understanding as well. This, along with the utilization of Blocksi, allowed for truer results on assessments taken later in the school year. In addition, if a student was in the building for in-person learning, they also completed their assessments in-person.

Academic Conditions for Renewal

To be eligible for its next renewal, Buffalo United must meet additional academic measures during the accountability period. The ELA academic conditions are listed below. These measures are based on i-Ready assessments and are evaluated below. In 2020-21, Buffalo United met two of their four ELA measures. The school did not meet the SWD gap closing measure, falling short of the target by ten percentage points.

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Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
<u>Measure 1 (Absolute)</u> : Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 8 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will either score at the <i>mid on-grade level or above</i> ¹ scale score for the year-end ELA assessment or move up at least one placement level in ELA from the fall.	2+ Students	75%	286	54%	No
<u>Measure 3 (Growth)</u> : Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students in ELA will be equal to or greater than 100%.	All Students	100%	382	125%	Yes
<u>Measure 5 (Gap Closing)</u> : Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth in ELA of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students who were <i>two or more grade levels below</i> grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 100%.	Low initial achievers	100%	200	176%	Yes
<u>Measure 7 (Gap Closing)</u> : Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth in ELA of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than 100%.	Students with Disabilities	100%	56	90%	No

¹ The i-Ready Diagnostic establishes five criterion-referenced relative placement levels. These levels are standards-based interpretations of the scale score each student achieves and are included in the student-level results from the assessment.

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ELA Goal: Additional Measure

Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will either score at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end ELA assessment or move up at least one placement level in ELA from the fall.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:

In the spring of 2020-21, 54% of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school scored at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end reading assessment or moved up at least one placement level in reading from the fall. The school fell short of the target by 21 percentage points; therefore, **the measure was not met**.

Students in sixth through eighth grade showed the most progress and students in eighth grade fell short of the target by only four percentage points.

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested
3	53%	59	53%	43
4	43%	77	43%	58
5	43%	54	43%	47
6	54%	63	62%	47
7	52%	60	55%	49
8	77%	52	71%	42
All	53%	365	54%	286

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

In 2020-21, Buffalo United met two of the four measures of the ELA goal and met two of the four ELA academic conditions for renewal. In addition, the school fell short of meeting the SWD gap closing measure by ten percentage points, which is included in their academic conditions for renewal.

The data shows Buffalo United has made progress toward meeting their overall goal that students will be proficient readers and writers of the English Language.

2020-21 i-Ready ELA Assessment End of Year Results

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.	All students	100%	382	125%	Yes

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<p>Measure 2: Each year, the school’s median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3rd through 8th grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.</p>	Low initial achievers	110%	200	176%	Yes
<p>Measure 3: Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3rd through 8th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3rd through 8th grade general education students at the school.</p>	Students with disabilities ²	125%	56	90%	No
<p>Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will score at the <i>mid on-grade level</i> or above scale score for the year-end assessment.</p>	2+ students	75%	321	15%	No

ACTION PLAN

As previously mentioned, BUCS has continued the implementation of a significant number of improvements in the 2020-21 school year. Earlier in this document, examples of new efforts are provided, so the same level of detail will not be provided here.

One of the biggest improvement efforts that began in 2020-21 is BUCS’ implementation of its new curricular plan and tools. The plan and tools were developed by professionals on NHA’s Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) team and reviewed in detail with school leaders before being finalized.

BUCS’ ELA curriculum is an NHA-developed balanced literacy approach that relies on reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and writing (grades K-5) and writing and literature seminar (grades 6-8). This curriculum is aligned to state standards, reflects Next Generation Learning Standards, and incorporates evidence-based instructional strategies to ensure high-quality literacy instruction and student learning in all classrooms. Professional development will be provided to staff to ensure the program’s successful implementation.

As part of its ongoing improvement effort, NHA and BUCS worked to redesign the school’s assessments and how the school uses the data from these assessments to drive school improvement. A few examples of these assessments are mentioned below.

² Schools may elect to report the aggregated data for a different subpopulation of students if the total tested number of students with disabilities is 5 or fewer, or if the school’s mission aligns to serving a different specific subpopulation. For schools that choose a different subpopulation (e.g. English language learners, homeless students, etc.), please explain the rationale in the narrative section

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BUCS will continue to set literacy goals to help achieve the ELA goals outlined in the school's Accountability Plan. I-Ready growth scores will be reviewed, and the school will set specific goals for students in the school's intervention program. The initiatives below will continue as the school works to achieve its ELA goals. Below are details on the initiatives the school has implemented to reach these goals.

- *Aimsweb* will be used to monitor students in K-2 and identify struggling students in third grade who will then receive additional interventions. We will also use this tool to measure the progress of students who are in the bottom quartile. The program will support school efforts in screening, progress monitoring, and data management.
- *Corrective Reading* and *Reading Mastery* will be utilized to help students become more skillful at decoding, comprehending, and thinking while improving their background knowledge. *Reading Mastery* and *Corrective Reading* use direct instruction to help students master vital decoding and comprehension skills. *Corrective Reading* will be used as an intervention tool for students in grades 3-8.
- *R.A.D.D.* is a writing acronym that stands for *Restate, Answer, Detail, and Detail*. This acronym will be used school-wide to help students write proper short responses to assessment questions in ELA, science, and social studies. Teachers will use ELA Reading Responses in homework assignments with question stems that align to the appropriate common core standard.
- Lexia Core5 and Powerup will be utilized as intervention tools in all grades. These programs are adaptive blended learning programs that accelerate the development of literacy skills for students of all abilities. Lexia's approach to learning adapts to students' needs in real time, providing teachers with the data and resources needed to support student growth. Lexia helps students make the critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn in Core5, and help students progress on the college- and career-ready path in PowerUp.
- i-Ready will be utilized in all grades as a diagnostic tool. The diagnostic tool pinpoints students' strengths and knowledge gaps at the sub-skill level. i-Ready Instruction delivers personalized learning paths for each student. i-Ready data will be used to group students for workshop.
- A 45-minute intervention block has been hard-scheduled into the master schedule for struggling middle school students. These students will receive 135 minutes of ELA instruction each day.
- Teachers will conduct data meetings with students, so they understand the progress they are making towards their achievement goal. Teachers will be trained on how to conduct these meetings. A parent meeting will also be conducted so parents understand their students' reading goal and how they can support their student in reaching that goal.
- Students will have a personal data binder/folder to track their progress towards mastering each standard being taught.
- BUCS educators will continue to receive support from NHA's Curriculum & Instruction team to ensure programs are implemented with fidelity.
- Teacher lesson plans are reviewed to ensure that lesson plans reflect New York State learning standards, as well as the appropriate scope and sequence. These plans will identify the resource to be used to teach each standard.
- Weekly skill quizzes are given to students. Data from these weekly quizzes are used to determine skills that need to be retaught and strategies to reteach this skill. In addition,

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teachers give exit tickets to students after each class that reflect the rigor of New York State assessments and mastery of standards.

- Twice-monthly staff professional development sessions are planned to improve teachers' skills in the areas of rigor, differentiation, checks for understanding (CFU), engagement strategies, standards, and data review.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will be proficient in mathematics.

BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2020, due to the COVID pandemic, BUCS began a transition to remote learning that started almost overnight and that forced NHA and BUCS to create a whole new setting for instruction. BUCS' goal for remote learning was reinforcing and introducing standards and skills that are critical to academic success and that can be delivered effectively via remote learning in structured, guided, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Even as BUCS' doors were closed and innovations in teaching and learning took root, efforts to improve academic outcomes lost no momentum. We continued to focus on our improvement efforts and evaluated ways to effectively provide instruction to students remotely. At the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, BUCS operated remotely. In January 2021, the school began to offer in-person instruction (K-5 offered full in-person instruction and 6-8 offered a hybrid model to its students). BUCS still offered families a virtual option if they were not comfortable returning to the school. Sixth grade students moved to five day in-person in March 2021.

Even as BUCS' doors were closed and innovations in teaching and learning took root, efforts to improve academic outcomes lost no momentum. We continued to focus on our improvement efforts and evaluated ways to effectively provide instruction to students remotely.

Our remote learning plan included opportunities to connect with students and families, provide physical and digital resources, and create and implement essential new professional development programs for staff. To connect with families, teachers conducted Google LIVE meetings, offered daily office hours, and made weekly contact via phone or email with students and families. Students were physically mailed printed academic packets, and a weekly learning plan was shared by teachers via Class Dojo or Google Classroom that included live links for instructional videos and instructional programs to support learning. Lesson videos were also provided for students and families to provide deeper understanding. Staff was provided access to a Home Learning site which houses resources to support remote learning as well as professional development on recording and posting a video and creating and leading a live video. In addition, deans held weekly one-on-one meetings with their teachers to review expectations, ensure student participation, review weekly learning plans, and provide feedback.

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METHOD

Buffalo United administered the i-Ready math diagnostic to students in third through eighth grade in the fall, winter, and spring of 2020-21 to measure student growth and achievement throughout the school year. After students complete their first diagnostic in the fall, i-Ready generates a Typical Growth measure for each student and places the student in one of five placement levels. I-Ready then measures each student's progress toward their Typical Growth goal and updates their placement level after the winter and spring diagnostic assessments.

During 2020-21, the school(s) primarily used the following exam to assess student growth and achievement in mathematics: i-Ready

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Measure 1: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of third through eighth grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.

In 2020-21, from Fall to Spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of all students was 104% in math. This is greater than 100%, therefore, **this measure was met.**

Students in grades 6-8 showed the most progress towards meeting their spring growth target, with very positive results in eighth grade.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready Mathematics Assessment
By All Students

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	78%	64
4	67%	75
5	95%	59
6	138%	64
7	108%	62
8	258%	53
All	104%	377

Measure 2: Each year, the school's median percent progress towards Annual Typical Growth of all third through eighth grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.

In 2020-21, from Fall to Spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall was 119 percent in math. This is greater than 100 percent, therefore **this measure was met.**

Additionally, all grade levels, except for fourth and seventh grade, met this goal.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready Math Assessment
By Students who were Two or More Grade Levels below in the Fall

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	115%	33
4	69%	46
5	148%	36
6	153%	44
7	92%	35
8	213%	26
All	119%	220

Measure 3: Each year, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of third through eighth grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3rd through 8th grade general education students at the school.

In 2020-21, from Fall to Spring, the median percent progress toward Annual Typical Growth of students with disabilities was 73 percent in math. Therefore, **this measure was not met**, falling short of the target by 35 percentage points.

At the grade level, this goal was met in third grade.

End of Year Growth on 2020-21 i-Ready Math Assessment By Students with Disabilities

Grades	Median Percent of Annual Typical Growth	Number Tested
3	119%	11
4	53%	12
5	0%	8
6	136%	13
7	81%	8
8	142%	10
All	73%	62

Measure 4: Each year, 75% of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will score at the *mid on-grade level* or above scale score for the year-end assessment.

In the spring of 2020-21, 14 percent of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school scored at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end math assessment. This was below the target of 75 percent; therefore **the measure was not met**.

Students in seventh and eighth grade showed the most positive results.

End of Year Performance on 2020-21 i-Ready Math Assessment By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested
3	6%	64	9%	43
4	5%	76	7%	58
5	7%	59	8%	50
6	8%	65	4%	45
7	14%	63	16%	51
8	42%	53	42%	43
All	13%	380	14%	290

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

BUCS initially had concerns with the validity of the fall i-Ready assessment results. Since students were taking the assessment remotely, teachers were unable to monitor students to explain that it is an adaptive assessment. This caused a lack of understanding with new parents. In addition, students were simply absent and did not take the assessment.

BUCS held parent meetings to share background information about the i-Ready assessment to give parents a better understanding of the assessment itself and what it measures. Data from the assessment was also shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences to allow for a better understanding as well. This, along with the utilization of Blocks*i*, allowed for truer results on assessments taken later in the school year. In addition, if a student was in the building for in-person learning, they also completed their assessments in-person.

Academic Conditions for Renewal

To be eligible for its next renewal, Buffalo United must meet additional academic measures during the accountability period. These measures are based on i-Ready assessments and are evaluated below. In 2020-21, Buffalo United met two of their four math measures. The school did not meet its absolute measure, falling short of the target by 13 percentage points.

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
<u>Measure 2 (Absolute)</u> : Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 8 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will either score at the <i>mid on-grade level or above</i> scale score for the year-end mathematics assessment or move up at least one placement level in mathematics from the fall.	2+ Students	75%	284	62%	No
<u>Measure 4 (Growth)</u> : Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students in mathematics will be equal to or greater than 100%.	All Students	100%	377	104%	Yes

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Measure 6 (Gap Closing): Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth in mathematics of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students who were <i>two or more grade levels below</i> grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 100%.	Low initial achievers	100%	220	119%	Yes
Measure 8 (Gap Closing): Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth in mathematics of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than 100%.	Students with Disabilities	100%	62	73%	No

Mathematics Goal: Additional Measure

Each year, 75% of 3rd through 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will either score at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end mathematics assessment or move up at least one placement level in mathematics from the fall.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION:

In the spring of 2020-21, 62% of third through eighth grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school scored at the mid on-grade level or above scale score for the year-end math assessment or moved up at least one placement level in reading from the Fall. The school fell short of the target by 13 percentage points; therefore, **the measure was not met**. Students in eighth grade showed the most progress, falling short of the target by only four percentage points.

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested	Percent Mid-On Grade Level or Above	Number Tested
3	60%	57	67%	42
4	53%	75	52%	58
5	59%	56	65%	48
6	63%	60	66%	44
7	50%	60	54%	50
8	72%	50	71%	42
All	59%	358	62%	284

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

In 2020-21, Buffalo United met two of the four measures of the math goal and met two of the four math academic conditions for renewal. The data shows Buffalo United had made progress toward meeting their overall goal of students will be proficient in mathematics.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

2020-21 i-Ready Mathematics Assessment End of Year Results

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students will be equal to or greater than 100%.	All students	100%	377	104%	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of all 3 rd through 8 th grade students who were two or more grade levels below grade level in the fall will be equal to or greater than 110% by the spring assessment administration.	Low initial achievers	110%	220	119%	Yes
Measure 3: Each year, the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median percent progress to Annual Typical Growth of 3 rd through 8 th grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities ³	104%	62	73%	No
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 rd through 8 th grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will score at the <i>mid on-grade level</i> or above scale score for the year-end assessment.	2+ students	75%	290	14%	No

ACTION PLAN

As previously mentioned, BUCS has continued the implementation of a significant number of improvements in the 2020-21 school year. Earlier in this document, examples of new efforts that are provided, so the same level of detail will not be provided here.

BUCS' math curriculum will rely on Bridges in Mathematics and Math Stories (K-5), Number Corner (grades K-2), and Illustrative Math (grades 6-8). The math curriculum is aligned to state standards, reflects the Next Generation Learning Standards, and incorporates evidence-based instructional strategies.

As mentioned in the description of our ELA actions, NHA and BUCS worked to redesign the school's assessments and how it uses the data to drive school improvement. A few examples of these assessments are also mentioned below.

³ Schools may elect to report the aggregated data for a different subpopulation of students if the total tested number of students with disabilities is 5 or fewer, or if the school's mission aligns to serving a different specific subpopulation. For schools that choose a different subpopulation (e.g. English language learners, homeless students, etc.), please explain the rationale in the narrative section

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

BUCS will continue to set goals for math learning targeted towards improving student achievement and accelerating student growth. Specific goals will also be set for students in the school's intervention program. The initiatives below will continue as the school works to achieve its math goals. Below are details on the initiatives the school has implemented to reach these goals.

- Our instructional professionals will use i-Ready instruction materials in conjunction with Bridges in Mathematics and Illustrative Math to provide additional instructional opportunities for priority materials emphasized in New York State standards.
- DreamBox will be utilized in grades K-8. It is a digital math program designed to complement math instruction in the classroom. DreamBox's pioneering technology enables seamless integration of instruction and assessment for a deeply personalized math learning experience that adapts to students' needs in real time. The DreamBox experience is student-driven and boosts inspiration and confidence for all learners by focusing on conceptual understanding as well as computational fluency and problem solving.
- i-Ready will be utilized in all grades as a diagnostic tool. The diagnostic tool pinpoints students' strengths and knowledge gaps at the sub-skill level. i-Ready Instruction delivers personalized learning paths for each student.
- As is the case with ELA, beginning with the 2020-21 school year, teachers conduct data meetings with students, so they understand progress they are making towards their achievement goal. Teachers are being trained on how to conduct these meetings. A parent meeting will help parents understand their students' math goal and how they can support their student in reaching that goal.
- Students will have a personal data binder/folder to track their progress towards mastering each standard being taught.
- BUCS educators will continue to receive support from NHA's Curriculum & Instruction team to ensure programs are implemented with fidelity.
- Teachers' math lesson plans are reviewed, as ELA lesson plans are, to ensure that they reflect New York State learning standards, as well as the appropriate scope and sequence. These plans identify the resource to be used to teach that standard.
- Quizzes targeting math skills are given to students. Data from these weekly quizzes are used to determine skills that need to be retaught and strategies to reteach this skill. In addition, teachers give exit tickets to students after each class that reflect the rigor of New York State assessments and mastery of standards.
- Twice-monthly staff professional development sessions are planned to improve teachers' math instruction skills in the areas of rigor, differentiation, CFU, engagement strategies, standards, and data review.

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will be proficient in science.

BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2020, due to the COVID pandemic, BUCS began a transition to remote learning that started almost overnight and that forced NHA and BUCS to create a whole new setting for instruction. BUCS' goal for remote learning was reinforcing and introducing standards and skills that are critical to academic success and that can be delivered effectively via remote learning in structured, guided, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Even as BUCS' doors were closed and innovations in teaching and learning took root, efforts to improve academic outcomes lost no momentum. We continued to focus on our improvement efforts and evaluated ways to effectively provide instruction to students remotely. At the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, BUCS operated remotely. In January 2021, the school began to offer in-person instruction (K-5 offered full in-person instruction and 6-8 offered a hybrid model to its students). BUCS still offered families a virtual option if they were not comfortable returning to the school. Sixth grade students moved to five day in-person in March 2021.

Even as BUCS' doors were closed and innovations in teaching and learning took root, efforts to improve academic outcomes lost no momentum. We continued to focus on our improvement efforts and evaluated ways to effectively provide instruction to students remotely.

Our remote learning plan included opportunities to connect with students and families, provide physical and digital resources, and create and implement essential new professional development programs for staff. To connect with families, teachers conducted Google LIVE meetings, offered daily office hours, and made weekly contact via phone or email with students and families. Students were physically mailed printed academic packets, and a weekly learning plan was shared by teachers via Class Dojo or Google Classroom that included live links for instructional videos and instructional programs to support learning. Lesson videos were also provided for students and families to provide deeper understanding. Staff was provided access to a Home Learning site which houses resources to support remote learning as well as professional development on recording and posting a video and creating and leading a live video. In addition, deans held weekly one-on-one meetings with their teachers to review expectations, ensure student participation, review weekly learning plans, and provide feedback.

METHOD

For the 2020-21 school year, the school administered a mock interim assessment for science to fourth and eighth grade students at Buffalo United. A student scoring a scale score of 3.0 is considered proficient.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In March 2021, three months before the actual state assessment, 19 percent of fourth and eighth grade students at Buffalo United scored at or above a scale score of 3.0 on the science mock interim assessment. This assessment was an old released state assessment whose data was utilized as a checkpoint to monitor student progress. When comparing the number of tested eighth graders to previous years, the number is much lower in the 2020-21 school year, 71%, due to the fact that only 13 students return to in-person learning.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Grades	Percent at or Above 3.0	Number Tested
4	18%	66
8	20%	41
All	19%	107

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Since 2016-17, Buffalo United has seen a decrease in the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year achieving proficiency on the New York State science exam. However, fourth grade has met the absolute measure the last three years the state test was administered.

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Percent Proficient	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent Proficient	Number Tested
4	80%	72	90%	61	75%	55
8	30%	50	38%	56	35%	55
All	60%	122	65%	117	55%	110

Buffalo United has met the comparative measure the past three years the state test was administered. Additionally, this goal was met at each grade level.

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students					
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	BUCS	District	BUCS	District	BUCS	District
4	80%	64%	90%	69%	75%	65%
8	30%	24%	38%	24%	35%	27%
All	60%	46%	65%	50%	55%	49%

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

In 2020-21, 19 percent of fourth and eighth grade students at Buffalo United scored at or above a scale score of 3.0 on the science mock interim taken in the spring. Based on these results, the school needs to make more progress to meet their science goal. Buffalo United has met the comparative goal the last three years the state test was administered (2016-17 to 2018-19).

ACTION PLAN

- We will continue to utilize STEMscopes in grades 3-8, which reflects the Next Generation Learning Standards, to improve our science proficiency in grades 3-5. Measuring Up will be used to supplement STEMscopes in grades 4, 7, and 8. We will utilize Picture Perfect Science for grades K-2.

2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

- BUCS is reviewing lesson plans to ensure that teachers are providing instruction on priority science standards in all grades.
- Several of the initiatives that have been implemented for ELA and math will also help to increase science proficiency – professional development and after-school tutoring.
- The school will administer a mock assessment twice throughout the school year that covers the NYS science Grade 5-8 standards. The assessment will be given to 8th graders and reflect the length, format, and rigor of the NYS test. The fall mock assessment will be utilized to create pacing guides that are reflective of student need. We will also track student progress using mock assessments.

GOAL 4: ESSA

Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent changes to the state’s testing, accountability, and federal reporting requirements, the 2020-21 school accountability statuses are the same as those assigned for the 2019-20 school year. The 2019-20 accountability statuses were based on 2018-19 exam results. Assigned accountability designations and further context can be found [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

In 2020-21, Buffalo United was in Good Standing and therefore met their ESSA goal.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Since 2017-18, Buffalo United has been in Good Standing.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2018-19	Good Standing
2019-20	Good Standing
2020-21	Good Standing