

Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2009-10 School Year

Reader's Guide

SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

As set forth in the *Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees*, the single most important factor that the Charter Schools Institute and the SUNY Board of Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school's record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, **each charter school that the SUNY Board of Trustees authorizes is required to enter into an accountability agreement, known as an Accountability Plan**, which ultimately becomes part of its charter.

The Charter Schools Institute closely monitors each school's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in its Accountability Plan.

In addition, as part of its annual reporting requirements, **each SUNY authorized charter school must submit an Accountability Plan Progress Report which, from its vantage point, addresses each of the goals and outcome measures contained in its Accountability Plan.** The information presented in these Progress Reports constitutes important evidence that a school is keeping its promises to its students, parents and community, and is critical to making its case for renewal at the end of its charter period. The most important parts of Progress Reports are student achievement results on state exams and other assessments. However, not all schools will have tested grade levels for a particular state exam. Each year, the state administers English language arts and mathematics tests to 3rd through 8th grade, science tests to the 4th and 8th grades, and, up through 2009-10, social studies tests to the 5th and 8th grades.

Important Note: **The Accountability Plan Progress Report is authored by the charter school.** In reporting school progress toward meeting the outcome measures set forth in the Accountability Plan, schools are encouraged to build a case for the effectiveness of their program, and to lay the groundwork for writing a Renewal Application and ultimately for charter renewal. **The school's evaluation of its own progress does not necessarily reflect the conclusions of the Institute.** Further, the Institute does not affirm the completeness or accuracy of the report's data and may not endorse the school's characterization of the progress it has made toward achieving its Accountability Plan goals. Throughout the life of the school's charter, the Institute will visit each school, generating Institute School Visit Reports and, at the end of each charter period, a Renewal Report (select the <back> button in your browser to return to the school profile to see any/all available reports). These reports include detailed summaries of the Institute's observations of the school, as well as its evaluation of student performance and progress toward meeting the academic subject goals in its Accountability Plan.

**BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL
FOR BETTER LEARNING**

**2009-10
ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

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Theodore F. Swartz prepared this 2009-10 Accountability Plan Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Mrs. Kimberly Kelly	Chair; Complaint Review Committee; Teacher Employment Committee; Policy/Governance Committee; Strategic Planning Committee
Mr. Marvin Waldman	Vice Chair; Teacher Employment Committee; Strategic Planning Committee; Fundraising/Development Committee
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Mr. William Bernhardt	Secretary; Teacher Employment Committee
Mr. Jefferyson Barnes, Sr.	Trustee; Strategic Planning Committee; Fundraising/Development Committee
Dr. Paula Hajar	Trustee; Complaint Review Committee
Mr. Lowell Lifschultz	Trustee; Finance/Audit Committee; Strategic Planning Committee; Policy/Governance Committee
Mr. Daniel Tamulonis	Teacher Representative Trustee; Complaint Review Committee
Mrs. Flora Thompson	Parent Representative Trustee; Complaint Review Committee; Teacher Employment Committee
Mr. Everett Wallace	Trustee; Teacher Employment Committee; Strategic Planning Committee
Mrs. Crystal Benjamin	Teacher Representative Trustee; Policy/Governance Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning (Bronx Better Learning) on February 23, 2003; it was subsequently approved by the Board of Regents on March 25, 2003. Bronx Better Learning opened in the fall of 2003 with an enrollment of 50 students in Grade 1, added one grade each year thereafter, and enrolled 285 students in Grades 1 – 5 in the fall of 2007, the final year of its original charter term. On January 15, 2008 the State University Trustees granted Bronx Better Learning a full-term charter renewal for 5 years, authorizing the school to provide instruction in Grades K – 5 through the 2012-13 school year. Bronx Better Learning added a Kindergarten program in the fall of 2008 and enrolled 345 students in grades K – 5.

Bronx Better Learning was originally located at a facility leased from the Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene at 971 East 227th Street in the Bronx. Following the first year of operation, a shared space agreement was reached with the New York City Department of Education in which Bronx Better Learning was granted permission to locate in the annex portion of P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School) at 3740 Baychester Avenue in the Bronx. In addition, the school used 3 classrooms and an office in the main building of P.S. 111 for the first time in 2008-09 to accommodate its growth in enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2008-09, replaced by 5th grade in 2009-10.

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

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

To fulfill its mission, the school’s teachers endeavor to practice *the subordination of teaching to learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons; assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child’s high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students’ work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students’ use of what they know to master new content; encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2005-06		54	54	54										162
2006-07		57	57	57	58									229
2007-08		60	59	57	58	51								285
2008-09	60	59	60	59	55	52								345
2009-10	63	63	61	60	59	49								355

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

Background

The school's English Language Arts curriculum is closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates, especially in the early grades, materials and techniques that constitute the "Words in Color" program, for instruction in English language arts. That program addresses all five elements of scientifically-based approaches to reading and writing instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. As students progress through the grades, more traditional materials, including, for example, Junior Great Books, along with instructional programs supportive of the school's pedagogical approach, most notably, Writer's Workshop and, starting in the 2009-10 school year, Reader's Workshop, have been incorporated into the instructional program to ensure that students are (1) able to read effectively and efficiently in all genres and subjects, (2) afforded sufficient practice in refining their skills, including demonstrating those skills on New York State examinations and standardized tests of academic achievement, and (3) exposed to a wide range of activities that will prepare them for continued academic success in more conventional school settings. Regardless of the materials used, Bronx Better Learning teachers are expected to implement the school's pedagogical approach; therefore, extensive and intensive professional development is provided to them, including available daily in-class support.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year through 2008-09, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State English language arts examination.

In 2009-10, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the New York State English language arts examination.

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to students in 3rd through 5th grade in April 2010. Each student's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level. Through 2008-09, the criterion for success on this measure required students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4. For 2009-10, the criterion for success on this measure requires students to have a Scale Score of 650 or above.

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 been enrolled for less than one year.

**2009-10 State English Language Arts Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	60	0	0	0	60
4	59	0	0	0	59
5	49	0	0	0	49
All	168	0	0	0	168

Results

The following table presents the New York State ELA examination results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 60 students tested in Grade 3, 55 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 55 continuously enrolled 3rd graders, 65.5% (36 of 55) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State ELA examination. Of the 59 students tested in Grade 4, 57 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 57 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 77.2% (44 of 57) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State ELA examination. All of the 49 students tested in Grade 5 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 49 5th graders, 79.6% (39 of 49) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State ELA examination. In total, 161 of the 168 students tested in Grades 3- 5 were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 73.9% (119 of 161) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State ELA examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2009-10 State English Language Arts Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent Scoring at or above 650	Number Tested
3	All Students	66.6	60
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	65.5	55
4	All Students	77.9	59
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	77.2	57
5	All Students	79.6	49
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	79.6	49
All	All Students	74.4	168
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	73.9	161

Evaluation

With its aggregate 73.9% of students enrolled for at least two years in the three tested grades who attained a scale score at or above 650, Bronx Better Learning narrowly missed meeting its objective for this outcome measure, by just over 1 percentage point. It is noteworthy that students enrolled for

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.

at least two years in both grades 4 and 5 exceeded the target, by 2.2 and 4.6 percentage points, respectively. It is only in 3rd grade that the percent of students enrolled for at least two years was below the 75% target, by a margin of 9.5%, which was large enough to bring the aggregate passing rate just below target. That is an interesting phenomenon, as 3rd grade results during the 2008-09 school year were in keeping with the other two grades' scores (see Additional Evidence, below), and two of the three 3rd grade teachers have worked in the school for at least two years.

We attribute the apparent decrease in 3rd grade performance to primarily two factors: one relates to the test data and the other to the introduction of Reader's Workshop. First, a close look at the 2009-10 3rd grade scale scores for students enrolled in at least their second year reveals an unusually high percentage of scores that just barely missed the 650 mark: in fact 7 of the 20 students who failed to reach the target fell short by just a single scale score point, with scores of 649, indicating overall performance for the grade that is somewhat less worrisome than the 65.5% passing rate might first suggest.

Nevertheless, performance on the most recent state ELA examination for 3rd grade was not satisfactory, especially compared with the other two grades, which may be attributed to the fact that the two returning teachers were the only ones among their colleagues in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades who had not had previous training in Reader's Workshop. It was first introduced into the school last year, as a program that complements the subordination of teaching to learning. While we provided training in Reader's Workshop for all the ELA teachers in grades three through five, there is a learning curve associated with the program and the relatively lower performance of our 3rd graders may be understood in light of that fact.

Additional Evidence

Year-to-year trends in Bronx Better Learning's ELA scores support the conclusion that the introduction of Reader's Workshop into grades 3, 4 and 5 may have had what we fully expect to be a temporarily negative impact in classrooms with teachers who had not had previous training in the approach, as there was a drop of 13.1 percentage points of students in grade three who were enrolled in at least their second year and who attained a scale score of at least 650 (78.6% in 2008-09 vs. 65.5% in 2009-10). The two teachers in question had to make significant adjustments in their teaching of reading, which likely interfered with their overall effectiveness as they were first learning how to integrate Reader's Workshop into their daily practice.

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4 through 2008-09 and a Scale Score of 650 in 2009-10							
	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	63.3	49	66.7	51	78.6	56	65.5	55
4	59.1	44	70.8	48	75.0	52	77.2	57
5			75.5	49	78.8	52	79.6	49
All	61.3	93	70.9	148	77.5	160	73.9	161

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) 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 all students being proficient by the year 2013-14. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state’s learning standards in English Language Arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds this year’s English language arts AMO, which for 2009-10 is 155.² The PI 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 PI is 200.

Results

Of the 168 students tested, 51% attained Level 2, 30% attained Level 3 and 5% attained Level 4. The attained aggregate Performance Index on the ELA examination in 2009-10 was 121.

Calculation of 2009-10 English Language Arts Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
3 - 5	14	51	30	5	168

$$\begin{array}{rccccccccc}
 \text{PI} & = & 51 & + & 30 & + & 5 & = & 86 \\
 & & & & + & 30 & + & 5 & = & 35 \\
 & & & & & & \text{PI} & = & \text{121}
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

New York State’s NCLB 2009-10 target ELA Annual Measurable Objective for grades 3 – 8, as of the preparation of this report, was 155. Since Bronx Better Learning’s attained aggregate Performance Index value was 121, the school did not meet this objective, by a wide margin of 34 points.

Additional Evidence

Bronx Better Learning experienced a dramatic drop in its PI in 2009-10, compared to the previous three years of test results, reported below, which is not surprising, in light of the significant change in cut-off levels instituted by the State Education Department in 2009-10. As a result of the State’s raising considerably the scale scores needed to achieve Levels 2 and 3, a much higher percentage of Bronx Better Learning students scored at Levels 1 and 2 than in previous testing years.

² With the change in Proficiency Scores, the State Education Department is currently reviewing the current Annual Measurable Objectives in English language arts and mathematics.

**English Language Arts Performance Index (PI) and
Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year**

Year	Grades	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2006-07	3 & 4	114	4.3	32.5	57.9	5.3	159	122
2007-08	3 - 5	165	3.1	27.9	64.2	4.8	165.9	133
2008-09	3 - 5	166	0.6	22.9	72.3	4.2	175.9	144
2009-10	3 - 5	168	14	51	30	5	121	155

An additional analysis was conducted, of percentages of students who attained a Level of 3 or 4, by grade level, with the data disaggregated by disability status. It is evident in the table below that Bronx Better Learning students with disabilities, as a group, performed significantly lower than those who were not classified as such. In fact, only 11% of the school’s students, classified as having a disability, achieved a Level 3 or 4 on the state’s 2009-10 ELA examination. That is a particularly low percentage, even in light of the State Education Department’s revised “cut-off” scores, when compared to the school’s corresponding and already depressed general education figure of 38%. For the purposes of this analysis, we can disregard the anomaly of 50% of students with disabilities achieving a Level of 3 or 4 in 3rd grade, since there were so few students with disabilities tested in that grade, only four.

**English Language Arts Performance
All Students Tested, by Grade Level and Disability Status**

Grade	Number Tested		Attaining Level 3 or 4			
	Disabled	General Education	Disabled		General Education	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
3	4	56	2	50	24	43
4	7	52	0	0	19	37
5	7	42	0	0	14	33
All	18	150	2	11	57	38

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 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

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared 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 and the results for the respective grades in the local school district, as well as between the total result of 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.

Results

The following table presents the results for grades 3, 4 and 5 separately, along with the aggregate comparative data. The percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning who performed at Level 3 or higher on the New York State ELA examination in grades 3, 4 and 5 individually were 41.8%, 33.3% and 28.6%, respectively. The matching results for District 11 were 39.8%, 35.5% and 40.9%. The aggregate percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at Bronx Better Learning in grades 3 through 5 who performed at Level 3 or 4 was 34.8%, compared to 38.7 % of students in those same grades in New York City District 11.

**2009-10 State English Language Arts Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	41.8	55	39.8	3168
4	33.3	57	35.5	3239
5	28.6	49	40.9	3177
All	34.8	161	38.7	9584

Evaluation

Since the percentages of continuously enrolled Bronx Better Learning students at or above Level 3 in grades 4 and 5 and in the aggregate for all three grades fell below the corresponding percentages for students enrolled in those two grades and in the aggregate for all three grades in District 11, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure. Bronx Better Learning’s continuously enrolled 3rd grade students did surpass District 11 3rd grade students by 2 percentage points, but the school fell short by 2.2 percentage points in grade 4 and sizable 12.3 percentage points in grade 5.

The leadership team at Bronx Better Learning is fully aware of the critical role this comparative outcome measure plays in renewal decisions and readily accepts its responsibility to re-establish in the remaining years of the current charter cycle its lead over District 11 passing rates in ELA.

It is interesting to note that the order of relative achievement of Bronx Better Learning’s 3rd, 4th and 5th grade continuously enrolled students on this outcome measure, with 3rd scoring the best against District 11 and 5th scoring the worst, is exactly opposite the relative performance of those three grades on ELA Goal 1, where 3rd grade showed distinct weakness when compared with our 5th graders’ performance on that outcome measure. Since our 2009-10 group of continuously enrolled 5th graders actually reached a higher percentage at a scale score of 650 or above than any of our continuously enrolled 5th graders in previous years (see the table in the above Additional Evidence section for ELA Absolute Measure Goal 1), and since our 2009-10 cohort of 5th graders, who were also tested in ELA in 2008-09, actually included a higher percentage of students scoring at least a 650 in the more recent of those two years, we conclude that District 11 5th graders, in the aggregate, performed significantly better in 2009-10 than they performed in any of the previous years for which

we have data. Consequently, we are further put on notice of the need to allocate attention and resources to re-establishing our lead over District 11 in grade 5, and grade 4, as well.

Additional Evidence

While Bronx Better Learning students in at least their second year outperformed District 11 students, in the aggregate, in tested grades in ELA in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09, by 9.2 percentage points, 10.2 points and 9.9 points, respectively, the school underperformed District 11, in the aggregate, by 3.9 percentage points, in 2009-10. While grade 3 maintained a positive difference of 2 percentage points, grade 4 Bronx Better Learning students in at least their second year fell behind by 2.2 percentage points, compared with District 11 4th grade students. Of greater significance is the disparity between grade 5 Bronx Better Learning students, in at least their second year, and District 11 grade 5 students, which was a negative 12.3 percentage points, especially in light of two previous years of positive differences (+9.8 percentage points in 2007-08 and +6.9 percentage points in 2008-09).

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Levels 3 and 4 and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students							
	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	63.3	51.9	66.7	58.3	78.6	65.7	41.8	39.8
4	59.1	52.4	70.8	57.3	75.0	67.0	33.3	35.5
5			75.5	65.3	78.8	71.9	28.6	40.9
All	61.3	52.1	70.9	60.3	78.1	68.2	34.8	38.7

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school’s actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure. Given the timing of the state’s release of poverty data, the 2009-10 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2008-09 results, the most recent ones available.

Results

As noted in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for ELA in the 2008-09 school year, for grades 3, 4 and 5 were 0.39, -0.17 and -0.17, respectively. The aggregate Effect size for the three grades combined was 0.03.

2008-09 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3		59	78.0	73.5	4.5	0.39
4		55	72.7	74.6	-1.9	-0.17
5		52	78.9	80.5	-1.6	-0.17
All	48.4	166	76.5	76.1	1.0	0.03

School's Overall Comparative Performance:
<i>About the Same as Expected</i>

Evaluation

Since the attained aggregate Effect Size for grades 3, 4 and 5 combined, in 2008-09, was 0.03, Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure in that school year. The Effect Size figures for grades 4 and 5, identical at -0.17, fell into negative territory, while the 3rd grade figure pushed that group's performance into the target category of "Higher than Expected to a Small Degree."

Additional Evidence

As reflected in the following table, the aggregate Effect Size target of .30 was not reached in 2008-09 school year. While the school's attained Effect Size dropped after the 2005-06 school year, it has increased incrementally over the course of the following three years, from -0.07, in the 2006-07 school year, to -0.01 in the next and most recently, to 0.03.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2005-06	3	58.6	53	64.2	59.4	.25
2006-07	3 & 4	48.0	114	63.2	64.1	-0.07
2007-08	3 - 5	49.3	165	69.1	69.31	-0.01
2008-09	3 - 5	48.4	166	76.5	76.1	0.03

Goal 1: Growth Measure

Each year through 2008-09, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s state English language arts exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s state English language arts exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

In 2009-10, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent of students at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2008-09 state exam and 75 percent of students at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2009-10 state exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 in 2008-09, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the percentage in 2009-10.

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and in 2009-10 the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent of students performing at or above a Scale Score of 650. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 2009-10 and also have a state exam score in 2008-09. It includes students who repeated the grade. Students who repeated the grade are included in their current grade level cohort, not the cohort to which they previously belonged. In addition, the aggregate of all cohorts is examined to determine the growth of all students who took a state exam in both years.

Results

There are two cohorts available for a value added analysis of the state ELA examination results in 2009-10. Since the percents of both applicable cohorts (4th and 5th graders in 2009-10) during the 2008-09 school year was above the 75% absolute proficiency threshold, the targets required at least an increase in the percentage in 2009-10. Therefore, the targets for the 4th and 5th grade cohorts were 79.0 and 77.7, respectively, while the aggregate target was 78.4.

The percentage of students in the 4th grade cohort that performed at or above a scale score of 650 in 2009-10 was 77.2, which fell short of the target by 1.8 percentage points. The percentage of students in the 5th grade cohort that performed at or above a scale score of 650 in 2009-10 was 79.6, exceeding the target by 1.9 percentage points. The aggregate percentage of students that performed at or above a scale score of 650 in 2009-10 was identical to the total group’s performance in 2008-09, remaining flat at 78.3; therefore the target was missed by 0.1%

Cohort Growth on State English Language Arts Exam from 2008-09 to 2009-10

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent Performing At or Above 650			Target Achieved
		2008-09	Target	2009-10	
4	57	78.9	79.0	77.2	No
5	49	77.6	77.7	79.6	Yes
All	106	78.3	78.4	78.3	No

Evaluation

Bronx Better Learning did not meet its objective for this outcome measure, since only one of the two cohort groups met or exceeded its target and the aggregate percentage did not increase. It is noteworthy that the drop in the 4th grade cohort performance is for all practical purposes evenly matched by the increase in the 5th grade cohort performance, which resulted in the school’s aggregate performance on this measure being as close to attainment as possible, that is, overall even performance from year-to-year.

Additional Evidence

While the table below reports a decrease in the percentage in one of its two cohorts, it is prudent to conclude that overall, combined 2009-10 student performance in grades 4 and 5 in ELA remained as strong as it was in 2008-09, at least as measured by the percent of cohort students who achieved a scale score of 650.

**Cohort Performance on State English Language Arts Exam
Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2006-07	4	0	1
2007-08	4 & 5	1	2
2008-09	4 & 5	2	2
2009-10	4 & 5	1	2

Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

While Bronx Better Learning came close to meeting three of its five outcome measures in ELA for the 2009-10 school year, it did not come close to meeting two others (one of which relies on data from the 2008-09 school year). Overall, the school came close, but did not meet its English Language Arts goal for the year.

On the measures that rely on data from the Spring 2010 administration of the New York State ELA examination, Bronx Better Learning missed its first Absolute Measure target (75% with a scale score of 650 or above) by 1.1 percentage point, its school-to-district Comparative Measure by an aggregate 3.9 percentage points and its Growth Measure by an aggregate .1 (one-tenth) percentage point. The school missed its target for its second Absolute Measure (meeting the AMO) by a wide margin, a fact that should be considered in the context of revised cut-off scores recently instituted by the New York State Department of Education and, at the time of the preparation of this report, as yet unmodified Annual Measurable Objectives for ELA.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the New York State examination.	Close
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Close
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Did Not Achieve (2008-09)
Growth	Each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2008-09 state exam and 75 percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2009-10 state exam.	Close

Action Plan

Close or not, our full attention is turned to the fact that Bronx Better Learning has not clearly met its ELA goal, for the first time in several years. We have analyzed the data and considered them in light of extensive and intensive conversations with teachers, administrators and professional development staff. Those conversations have included, as well, careful consideration of the pointed feedback we received after last spring’s monitoring visit from Charter Schools Institute. Even though it was preliminary, it has proven very useful in identifying needs, which we are proceeding to address, especially since our analysis of our 2009-10 ELA test results point us in some similar directions.

There are several major initiatives we are undertaking during the 2010-11 school year, specifically and deliberately to raise student achievement in ELA:

1. We are increasing the amount of training for our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers in Reader’s Workshop and we will now be including teachers in Kindergarten through 2nd grade. That training will be undertaken by outside experts, who have years of successful experience in educating teachers on the effective practice of Reader’s Workshop, one of whom specializes

in the primary grades and the other, the upper elementary grades.

2. We are scheduling significantly more time, compared to last year, from our salaried professional development staff to be working, hand-in-hand, during the school day, with our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers on how to effectively subordinate teaching to learning in Language Arts, smoothly integrating the practices of Reader's Workshop into the overall instructional program. That increase in time is possible, since one of our senior professional staff members has been freed up from time consuming administrative responsibilities that he had to undertake, in an interim role, following a board instituted change in senior leadership last October.
3. We are increasing the amount of training in our instructional approach afforded to the large number of instructional/teaching assistants hired by the school. They have been a mostly underutilized resource. Moving forward, in addition to more in-service in Words in Color and Gattegno mathematics, we are scheduling training for them in how to support student learning in classes that will be better differentiated and focused on addressing the needs of students who are most at-risk.
4. We are adding to the use of a Gates-MacGinitie reading assessment, a far more nuanced and complex assessment tool, which will support a systematic, regular and rigorously objective assessment of student progress in reading, at all grade levels. Commercially labeled the "Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System," it institutes in our school a consistent, objective system to assess student progress in reading, yielding data that will better inform our instruction on a regular basis. The priority focus for training teachers to use the assessment system will be grades 3 through 5.

Further to promote the effective implementation of Reader's Workshop, we are greatly expanding our in-class libraries, stocking them with a broad array of reading material leveled according to the Fountas & Pinnell system.

5. We have hired three full-time Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teachers. We fully expect that their integrated, in-class work with classified students and regular education teachers will greatly enhance our students' learning. In the past, we relied on the New York City Department of Education to provide such teachers for our students, who met with and worked with our classified students, whose IEP's call for SETSS, after school hours. That situation created a disjointed provision of support services, since it resulted in a lack of communication between the outside, contracted special education providers and our students' teachers in school. Additionally, last school year, in particular, we found little value in the instructional interventions provided by the external SETSS teachers, and observed diminished opportunity for student learning, as a result. New York State ELA test results for the 2009-10 school year unfortunately validated our findings.

We have furthermore staffed the three new SETSS positions with teachers who have been working in our school for one to three years, who are dually certified and who have displayed a clear affinity for our school's instructional approach.

6. By remaining true to our purpose, that is, to be guided by and to serve our students' learning, rather than to dominate it, we will achieve results by focusing properly on the process of learning. At the same time, we recognize the need for our students to practice more

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will demonstrate mastery of grade level mathematical concepts.

Background

The school's Mathematics curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates, especially in the early grades, materials and techniques that constitute the "Gattegno Mathematics" program, for instruction in mathematics. That program relies heavily on the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, to ensure, even in the earliest stages, that students develop models for thinking mathematically, thereby providing them with a sound basis for accomplishing two essential objectives: becoming swift and accurate in their computation skills while focusing on problem solving activities that involve practice and real world application of those skills. The approach is particularly well suited to mastery of the student proficiencies outlined in New York State's mathematics standards, since its implementation involves frequent exercises requiring students to demonstrate, not just the correct answers, but also awareness of the mathematical processes that lead to them. As students progress through the grades, more traditional materials may be incorporated into instructional activities to ensure that students are (1) able to solve effectively and efficiently mathematical problems of all types relevant to their grade level, (2) afforded sufficient practice in refining their skills, including demonstrating those skills on New York State examinations and standardized tests of academic achievement and (3) exposed to a wide range of activities that will prepare them for continued academic success in more conventional school settings. Regardless of the materials used, Bronx Better Learning teachers are expected to implement the school's pedagogical approach; therefore, extensive and intensive professional development is provided to them, including available daily in-class support.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year through 2008-09, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examination.

In 2009-10, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the New York State mathematics examination.

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in 3rd through 5th grade in May 2010. Each student's raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. Through 2008-09 the criterion for success on this measure required students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4. For 2009-10, the criterion for success on this measure requires students to have a Scale Score of 650 or above.

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 been enrolled for less than one year.

**2009-10 State Mathematics Exam
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ³			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	60	0	0	0	60
4	59	0	0	0	59
5	49	0	0	0	49
All	168	0	0	0	168

Results

The following table presents the New York State mathematics examination results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 60 students tested in Grade 3, 55 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 55 continuously enrolled 3rd graders, 100% attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State mathematics examination. Of the 59 students tested in Grade 4, 57 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 57 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 93% (53 of 57) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State mathematics examination. All of the 49 students tested in Grade 5 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 49 5th graders, 93.9% (46 of 49) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State mathematics examination. In total, 161 of the 168 students tested in Grades 3- 5 were enrolled in at least their second year and, of those, 95.6% (154 of 161) attained a scale score of 650 or above on the New York State mathematics examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2009-10 State Mathematics Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent Scoring at or above 650	Number Tested
3	All Students	100	60
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	<u>100</u>	55
4	All Students	93.2	59
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	<u>93</u>	57
5	All Students	93.9	49
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	<u>93.9</u>	49
All	All Students	95.8	168
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	<u>95.6</u>	161

Evaluation

Since the attained percent for students enrolled in at least their second year is above 75%, Bronx Better Learning met its objective for this outcome measure, by a margin of over 20 percentage points, in the aggregate. Furthermore, performance as measured by this absolute standard was strong across the three tested grade levels, with each exceeding the target by a wide margin: 25 percentage points in 3rd grade; 18 percentage points in 4th grade; 18.9 percentage points in 5th grade.

³ 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

Additional Evidence

The table below reveals an overall year-to-year increasing trend in performance on the state’s mathematics examination, as measured by the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year who met the standard set by this absolute measure. While there was deviation from that trend in 2008-09, when the school experienced an aggregate drop of 2.2 percentage points from the year before, due to a significant 8.2 percentage point drop in the fifth grade mathematics scores, along with a 3.2 percentage point decrease in 4th grade, the generally upward trend in performance, as gauged by this absolute measure, was firmly re-established during the 2009-10 school year, with 4th grade rising by 4.5 percentage points and 5th grade increasing by a notable 20.8 percentage points.

We attribute the correction to the trend, and the high levels of students during 2009-10 school year in all three grades who attained a scale score of at least 650, primarily to three factors: our professional development staff has maintained a strong focus on subordinating teaching to learning in mathematics; we departmentalized instruction in 5th grade, placing a strong veteran teacher, who has been with the school for five years, as the 5th grade mathematics instructor; our lead teachers for the tested grades assumed a very active role in organizing student sub-grouping and targeting skills most in need of attention, thereby improving the differentiation of instruction in mathematics.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4 through 2008-09 and a Scale Score of 650 in 2009-10							
	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	83.3	48	92.3	52	96.4	56	100	55
4	79.5	44	91.7	48	88.5	52	93	57
5			81.3	48	73.1	52	93.9	49
All	81.5	92	88.5	148	86.3	160	95.6	161

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) 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 all students being proficient by the year 2013-14. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100 percent of students will ultimately be proficient in the state’s learning standards in Mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Index (PI) value that equals or exceeds this year’s Mathematics AMO, which for 2009-10 is 135⁴. The PI 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 PI is 200.

⁴ With the change in Proficiency Scores, the State Education Department is currently reviewing the current Annual Measurable Objectives in English language arts and mathematics.

Results

Of the 168 students tested on the New York mathematics examination in 2009-10, 36% attained Level 2, 46% attained Level 3 and 15% attained Level 4. The school’s attained aggregate Performance Index on the test was 158.

Calculation of 2009-10 Mathematics Performance Index (PI)

Grades	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				Number Tested
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
4 & 5	2	36	46	15	168

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{PI} &= 36 + 46 + 15 = 97 \\
 &+ 46 + 15 = 61 \\
 \text{PI} &= \mathbf{158}
 \end{aligned}$$

Evaluation

New York State’s NCLB 2009-10 target Annual Measurable Objective in mathematics for grades 3 – 8, as of the preparation of this report, is 135. Since the Bronx Better Learning attained aggregate performance index value was 158, the school met the objective for this outcome measure, by a comfortable margin of 23 points.

Additional Evidence

Despite the significant change in the cut-off levels instituted by the State Education Department in 2009-10, and the concomitant decrease this year in Bronx Better Learning’s attained aggregate performance index value, a decline of 26.4 points compared to 2008-09, the school nevertheless continues its track record of exceeding the state’s target Annual Measure Objective in mathematics.

Mathematics Performance Index (PI) and Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by School Year

Year	Grades	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level				PI	AMO
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4		
2006-07	3 & 4	114	4.4	14	58.8	22.8	177	86
2007-08	3 – 5	165	0	13.9	60.6	25.5	186.1	102
2008-09	3 – 5	166	1.8	12	61.5	24.7	184.4	119
2009-10	3 – 5	168	2	36	46	15	158	135

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

Method

Tested students who were enrolled in at least their second year are compared 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 and the results for the respective grades in the local school district, as well as between the total result of students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for the corresponding grades in the school district.

Results

The following table presents the results for grades 3, 4 and 5, separately, along with the aggregate data. Bronx Better Learning’s percentages for grades 3, 4 and 5, individually, and for those three grades combined were 63.6%, 54.4%, 73.5% and 63.4%, respectively. The matching results for District 11 were; 46.7%, 52.9%, 55.3% and 51.6%.

**2009-10 State Mathematics Exam
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	63.6	55	46.7	3236
4	54.4	57	52.9	3218
5	73.5	49	55.3	3232
All	63.4	161	51.6	9746

Evaluation

Since the aggregate mathematics performance of Bronx Better Learning students enrolled in at least their second year in the tested grades exceeded the aggregate performance of District 11 students in those same grades, the school met its objective for this outcome measure, by a margin of 11.8 percentage points. Additionally, Bronx Better Learning students in at least their second year exceeded the percentage of their District 11 counterparts who achieved a Level of 3 or 4 in each of the three grade levels tested at Bronx Better Learning: in 3rd grade, by 16.9 percent points, in 4th grade, by 1.5% points; in 5th grade, by 18.2 percentage points.

Additional Evidence

The following table reveals the following three facts: Bronx Better Learning has consistently over the past four years outperformed New York City District 11 on this outcome measure; the degree to which the school outperformed the district narrowed to just one half of a percentage point in the 2008-09 school year; the gap, under the state’s newly established “cut-off” scores in 2009-10, widened to its largest difference thus far, at 11.8 percentage points. Furthermore, and significantly, Bronx Better Learning reversed a negative difference between its 2008-09 5th grade performance, as defined by this comparative measure, and that of 5th graders in District 11, which stood that year at minus 11.5 percentage points, turning it during the 2009-10 school year into a positive difference of plus 18.2 percentage points.

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Levels 3 and 4 and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students							
	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	83.3	82.4	92.3	85.4	96.4	90.4	63.6	46.7
4	79.5	71.4	91.7	78.6	88.5	82.4	54.4	52.9
5			81.3	77.6	73.1	84.6	73.5	55.3
All	81.5	77.0	88.5	80.5	86.3	85.8	63.4	51.6

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by at least a small Effect Size (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State.

Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school’s performance to demographically similar public schools state-wide. Regression analysis is used to control for the percentage of students eligible for free lunch among all public schools in New York State. The school’s actual performance is then compared to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar free lunch percentage. The difference between the school’s actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar free lunch statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 is considered performing higher than expected to a small degree, which is the requirement for achieving this measure. This report contains 2008-09 results, the most recent ones available.

Results

As displayed in the following table, the obtained Effect Size for mathematics in the 2008-09 school year was 0.71 for grade 3, 0.11 for grade 4, -1.52 for grade 5 and -0.19 overall. Of note, the 3rd graders’ performance was “higher than expected to a medium degree,” while the 5th graders’ performance was “lower than expected to a large degree,” obviously a matter of serious concern, which was recognized, addressed and remediated during the 2009-10 school year (see current year results on the immediately previous comparative measure). While final judgment as to the extent of the remediation clearly must wait for the Charter Schools Institute’s pending comparative performance analysis on this measure for the 2009-10 school year, the fact that the school’s percent eligible for free lunch for that year will show an increase of several percentage points – up to nearly 54%, but not yet reflected in any of the data below – should further contribute to improvement in this measure.

2008-09 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3		59	96.9	92.3	4.3	0.71
4		54	87.1	86.1	1.0	0.11
5		52	73.0	86.8	-13.8	-1.52
All	48.4	165	86.1	88.5	-2.5	-0.19

School’s Overall Comparative Performance:
<i>About the Same as Expected</i>

Evaluation

Since the attained Effect Size was -0.19 overall, the Charter Schools Institute has determined that Bronx Better Learning’s 2008-09 performance on this outcome measure was “about the same as expected”; therefore, the school did not meet the target for this measure for that school year.

Additional Evidence

The table below starkly reveals the overall negative impact during the 2008-09 school year that the 5th grade performance that year had on the school’s overall Effect Size, effectively pulling it down into negative territory, to -0.19, whereas it had been a positive figure in all three previous years for which we have data: .48, then 0.11 and then 0.22.

Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2005-06	3	58.6	54	81.5	73.0	.48
2006-07	3 & 4	48.0	114	81.6	80.2	0.11
2007-08	3 – 5	49.3	165	86.1	83.78	0.22
2008-09	3 – 5	48.4	165	86.1	88.5	-0.19

Goal 2: Growth Measure

Each year through 2008-09, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year’s state mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year’s state mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above Level 3 in the previous year, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

In 2009-10, each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent of students at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2008-09 state exam and 75 percent of students at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2009-10 state exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75 percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 in 2008-09, that cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the percentage in 2009-10

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of students from one year to the next and in 2009-10 the progress they are making towards the absolute measure of 75 percent of students performing at or above a Scale Score of 650. Each grade level cohort consists of those students who took the state exam in 2009-10 and also have a state exam score in 2008-09. It includes students who repeated the grade. Students who repeated the grade should be included in their current grade level cohort, not the cohort to which they previously belonged. In addition, the aggregate of all cohorts is examined to determine the growth of all students who took a state exam in both years.

Results

In 2009-10 the 4th grade cohort’s performance decreased by 5.2 percentage points failing to meet the target for that grade, while the 5th grade cohort’s performance increased by 2.1 percentage points, which exceeded the target for that grade by 2 percentage points. The aggregate performance of the two cohorts combined narrowly missed the aggregate target by 1.9 percentage points.

Cohort Growth on State Mathematics Exam from 2008-09 to 2009-10

Grade	Cohort Size	Percent Performing At or Above 650			Target Achieved
		2008-09	Target	2009-10	
4	57	98.2	98.3	93.0	No
5	49	91.8	91.9	93.9	Yes
All	106	95.2	95.3	93.4	No

Evaluation

There were decreases in the percentages of students who achieved a scale score of 650 or above, in both the 4th grade cohort and the combined cohort, while the 5th grade cohort exceeded its target. As a result, Bronx Better Learning came close, but missed meeting its value added objective.

Additional Evidence

The table below reveals that cohort performance during the 2009-10 school year was improved over 2008-09, when neither of the two cohort groups met the target, reversing direction of momentum from the previous year-to-year comparison, which indicated a decline in cohort performance between the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years.

**Cohort Performance on Mathematics Exam
Since the Advent of the Grades 3-8 Testing Program by School Year**

School Year	Cohort Grades	Number of Cohorts Meeting Target	Number of Cohorts
2006-07	1	0	1
2007-08	2	1	2
2008-09	2	0	2
2009-10	2	1	2

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

As delineated in the following table, during the 2009-10 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first, second and third measures for Goal 2 and came close to meeting the fifth measure. The school did not meet its fourth measure (which actually represents performance in 2008-09). Overall, the school met Goal 2 for the 2009-10 school year.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (PI) on the State exam will meet the 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 or above Level 3 on the State exam will be greater than that of all 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 exam by at least a small Effect Size.	Did Not Achieve (2008-09)
Growth	Each grade-level cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2008-09 state exam and 75 percent at or above a Scale Score of 650 on the 2009-10 state exam.	Close

Action Plan

Scrutiny of Bronx Better Learning’s New York State 2009-10 mathematics assessment results reveals relatively less strength in the school’s 4th grade mathematics program, as compared with 3rd and 5th. Fourth is the only grade in which we had piloted the integration of a mathematics textbook, which became too much of a focus of instruction, consequently interfering with the teachers’ capacity to subordinate their teaching to their students’ learning, through the implementation of Gattegno Mathematics; additionally, and partly because of the significant reduction of available salaried professional development resources in our school last year (please see ELA Action Plan, item #2, for a fuller explanation), relatively little professional development support was afforded to 4th grade teachers. Moving forward, we plan to:

1. sustain our concerted efforts to support the work of our 3rd and 5th grade teachers, while adding significant professional development time in mathematics to our schedule of in-service for our 4th grade teachers, which our current, sufficient complement of salaried professional development staff will permit.
2. remove the 4th grade mathematics textbook as a focus, so that it no longer strongly influences the scope, sequence or material used for instruction; rather it will assume its originally intended role as a supplemental resource, one that provides practice and some extensions in a traditional format. As we resume our piloting its effectiveness, our newly appointed Supervisor of Instruction, in concert with professional development staff, will monitor the appropriate use of mathematics textbooks in 4th grade, through frequent classroom visits, participation in regularly scheduled grade level meetings and the review of lesson plans.

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

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

Background

The school's science curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates techniques and materials that foster students' active participation in lessons. For that reason, hands-on experimentation with commercially prepared science kits has been instituted and the school has completed its transition from the FOSS Science program to the Science 21 program.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State science examination.

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4th grade. Each student's raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

Results

The following table presents the New York State science test results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. Of the 57 tested in grade 4, 55 were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those 55 continuously enrolled 4th graders, 78.2% (43 of 55) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State science examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2009-10 State Science Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
4	All Students	2	12	28	15	75.4	57
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	1	11	28	15	78.2	55

Evaluation

Since the 78.2% of tested students, who were in at least their second year and who attained a Level of 3 or 4, exceeded the target of 75%, Bronx Better Learning has met its objective for this outcome measure.

Additional Evidence

As indicated in the table below, in all three of the past four years for which there are data, Bronx Better Learning met or exceeded the target of 75%, in 2007-08, by 12.5 percentage points, and in 2009-10, by a narrower 3.2 percentage points. In 2008-09, though all students were tested, an administrative error occurred, resulting in the invalidation of all scores for that year.

**Science Performance
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4							
	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	75.0	44	87.5	48	0	0	78.2	55

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State science exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

Note: Statewide New York State science examination results were not available at the time of the submission of this report; therefore, compared proficiency with the local school district could not be determined.

Summary

As delineated in the following table, during the 2009-10 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first outcome measure for Goal 3. Since comparative data were not available at the time of the preparation of this report, attainment of the second outcome measure could not be determined.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 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

The school will continue to use Science 21 as its primary resource for the teaching of science. Teachers will be supported in the use of those materials. The school will continue to support teachers’ participation at professional development seminars within grade levels. Teachers will then “turnkey” that training, by sharing their experiences with their grade-level colleagues.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Goal 4: Social Studies

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social studies concepts.

Background

The school's social studies curriculum is very closely aligned to the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *subordination of teaching to learning*, incorporates techniques and materials that foster students' active participation in lessons.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State social studies examination.

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program social studies assessment to students in 5th grade in November 2009. Each student's raw score has been converted to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students who have been enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at Levels 3 or 4.

Results

The following table presents the New York State social studies examination results for all students tested and for those students enrolled in at least their second year. All of the 49 students tested were enrolled in at least their second year. Of those students, 83.6% (41 of 49) performed at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies examination.

**Charter School Performance on 2009-10 State Social Studies Exam
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grade	Population	Percent at Each Performance Level					Number Tested
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3/4	
5	All Students	8.2	8.2	71.4	12.2	83.6	49
	Students in At Least 2 nd Year	8.2	8.2	71.4	12.2	83.6	49

Evaluation

Since the attained percent scoring at Levels 3 and 4 for students enrolled in at least their second year was above 75%, Bronx Better Learning has met its objective for this outcome measure, exceeding the target by 8.6 percentage points.

Additional Evidence

As the table below indicates, there is three year’s worth of data available and only one grade level tested for this goal area. Performance decreased from 2007-08 to 2008-09, by 4.7 percentage points, and then increased in 2009-10, by 6.7 percentage points, to the school’s highest level thus far.

**Social Studies Performance
by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Levels 3 and 4					
	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	81.6	49	76.9	52	83.6	49

Goal 4: Comparative Measure

Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State social studies exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

Note: Statewide New York State social studies examination results were not available at the time of the submission of this report; therefore, compared proficiency with the local school district could not be determined.

Summary

As delineated in the following table, during the 2009-10 school year, Bronx Better Learning met its first outcome measure for Goal 4. Since comparative data were not available at the time of the preparation of this report, attainment of the second outcome measure could not be determined.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 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

To continue to improve academic achievement in social studies, Bronx Better Learning has initiated a pilot program in grades 2 and 3, of an approach to social studies learning that is in close accord with its more general approach, the subordination of teaching to learning. The social studies pilot employs the consultant services of a celebrated author of elementary level books that present history as a series of stories, including those from a child’s perspective. The approach engages students in “living history vicariously,” so that they will understand their lives, their society and their world from the relative perspective of other people, in other places and other

times. The consultant, who has already worked closely with teachers to revamp the 2nd and 3rd grade Social Studies scopes and sequences, will be conducting classroom visits and lesson studies, already established resources in our more general framework for professional development, to promote our teachers’ understanding and effective implementation of the approach.

NCLB

Goal 5: NCLB
Under the state’s NCLB accountability system, the school Accountability Status will be “Good Standing” each year.

Goal 5: Absolute Measure
Under the state’s NCLB accountability system, the school’s Accountability Status will be “Good Standing” each year.

Method

Since *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 the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards which indicate each school’s status under the state’s NCLB accountability system. For a school’s status to be “Good Standing” it must not have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years.

Results

The school’s accountability status for 2009-10 was in “Good Standing.”

Evaluation

Since Bronx Better Learning’s accountability status for 2009-10 was in “Good Standing,” this measure was met.

Additional Evidence

As indicated in the table below, the school’s accountability status over the past five year’s has been in “Good Standing”; thus, Bronx Better Learning has met this measure over that period of time.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2005-06	Good Standing
2006-07	Good Standing
2007-08	Good Standing
2008-09	Good Standing
2009-10	Good Standing