

Accountability Plan Progress Reports for the 2006-07 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 State University 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 State University 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 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.

Amber Charter School (Amber) completed its seventh year of operation in 2006-07 as a K-6 school. In September 2000, it opened as a K-2 school, adding a grade during each of the five subsequent school years. Amber, authorized by SUNY's Charter Schools Institute, was re-chartered in 2005 for five additional years with an increase to grade 6.

Amber Charter School

**ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2006-07
(FOR THE CHARTER PERIOD 2005-2010)**

Goal—English Language Arts: All students at Amber will become proficient readers and will make strong yearly progress towards mastery of English-language reading skills.

- 1. Measure: Absolute Proficiency 2005-06 through 2009-10 school years: 75 percent of 3rd through 6th graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.**

A. Method

Amber Charter School (Amber) students in grades 3 through 6 took the New York Statewide Testing Program English Language Arts (ELA) exam over three days in January 2007. The ELA exam measures skills and knowledge that have been mastered during students' history of school up to that grade level. The progress towards this goal is measured by assessing only those students who have been at Amber for at least two years. This report includes data on raw scores (all students who took the exam). It should be noted this was the second year Amber students participated in the exam for grades 3, 5, and 6. This is the fourth year of participation for students in grade 4. In all, there were 119 students tested.

B. Results

Table 1a and Table 1b, respectively, list Amber's NYS ELA 2005-06 and 2006-07 results across all grades tested, 3 to 6, including students with less than one full school year.

NYS ELA

L4-Proficient; L3-Nearing Proficiency; L2-Progressing; L1-Step-1/Starting Out

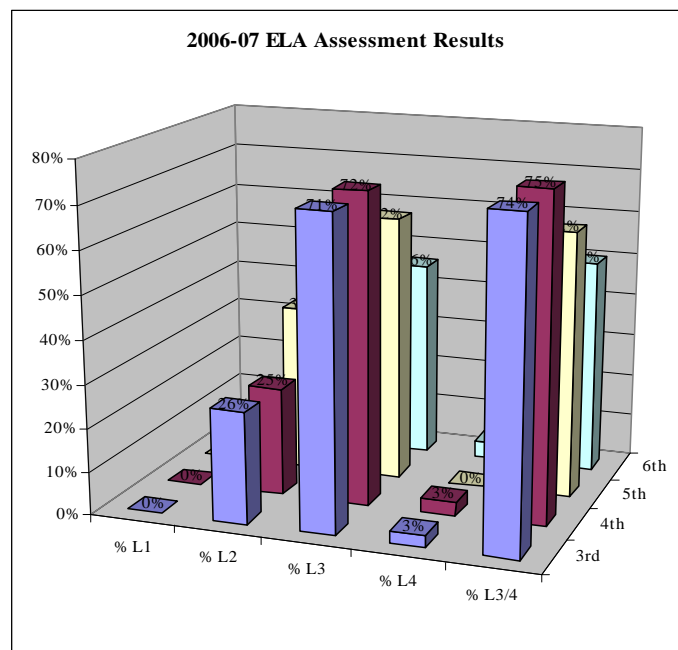
Table 1a: NYS-ELA 2005-06 Student Performance Level by Grade Level

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested	Grade	% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4
3rd	1	10	25	1	37	3rd	3%	27%	68%	3%	70%
4th	5	11	12	0	28	4th	18%	39%	43%	0%	43%
5th	4	21	22	1	48	5th	8%	44%	46%	2%	48%
6th	0	8	4	0	12	6th	0%	67%	33%	0%	33%
Total	10	50	63	2	125	Avg.	7%	44%	47%	1%	49%

Table 1b: NYS-ELA 2006-07 Student Performance Level by Grade Level

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested	Grade	% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4
3rd	0	9	25	1	35	3rd	0%	26%	71%	3%	74%
4th	0	8	23	1	32	4th	0%	25%	72%	3%	75%
5th	0	10	16	0	26	5th	0%	38%	62%	0%	62%
6th	0	13	12	1	26	6th	0%	50%	46%	4%	50%
Total	0	40	76	3	119	Avg.	0%	35%	63%	2%	65%

For the purposes of determining raw score “proficiency,” we combine Levels 3 & 4 and thus the results of students who took the exam in each grade, are as follows. Seventy-four percent (74%) of all Amber students in third grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Amber students in fourth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. Sixty-two percent (62%) of Amber students in fifth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. Fifty percent (50%) of Amber students in sixth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. School wide, 65% of Amber students across all grades showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07, however this does not meet the required 75% proficiency benchmark. The following figure demonstrates all of the grades for the current year.



Amber Charter School Accountability Plan Progress Report, 2006-07

Table 2 lists Amber’s NYS ELA 2006-07 results (in numbers and percent) across all grades tested, 3 to 6, for those students who have been at Amber for two years or more. This data is crucial as it relates to the Charter Schools Institute requirement of showing progress among students who have been at Amber for two years or more. Charter Schools Institute believes it makes “good sense to examine the result of students who have been enrolled in [our] school for at least two years in order to adequately attribute their achievement to [our] school’s program.”¹ There were 115 students in these grades at Amber for two years or more.

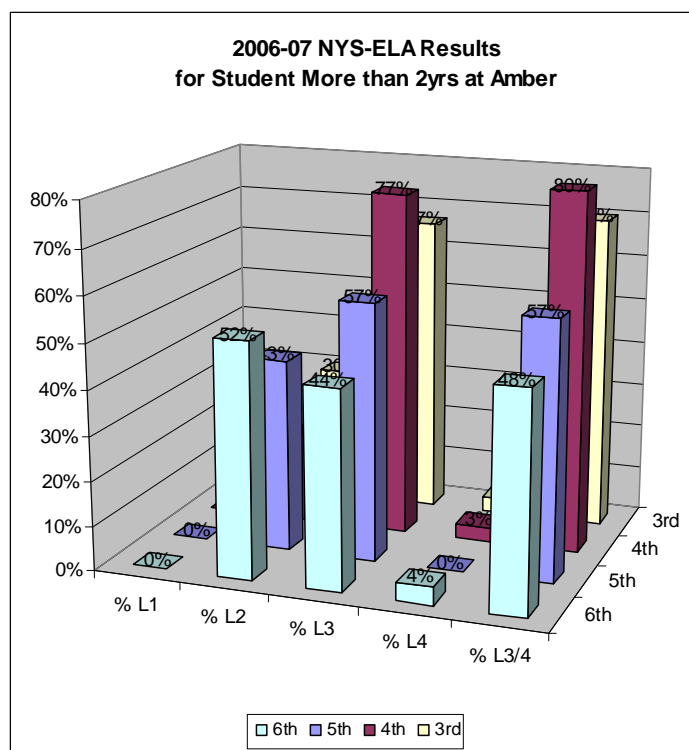
Table 2 : NYS-ELA 2006-07 Student Performance Level by Grade Level for Student More Than 2 yrs at Amber

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested		% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4
3rd	0	9	20	1	30	3rd	0%	30%	67%	3%	70%
4th	0	6	23	1	30	4th	0%	20%	77%	3%	80%
5th	0	12	16	0	28	5th	0%	43%	57%	0%	57%
6th	0	13	11	1	25	6th	0%	52%	44%	4%	48%
Total	0	40	70	3	113	Avg.	0%	36%	61%	3%	64%

Table 2 provides crucial data for Amber since it focuses on the number of students who have been at Amber for two years or more—it excludes those students were new to the school last year and more importantly provides the critical comparison required by Charter Schools Institute. For the purposes of determining meeting “proficiency,” we combine Levels 3 & 4 and thus the results of students who took the exam in each grade, are as follows. These scores are nearly identical to the raw scores.

Seventy percent (70%) of Amber students in third grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. Eighty percent (80%) of Amber students in fourth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. The fourth grade students surpassed the 75% proficiency mark, surpassing the previous year’s fourth grade students. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of Amber students in fifth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. While this cohort of students did not meet the 75% proficiency mark, by and large, these students, who scored 50% proficiency on the fourth grade exam in the previous year showed improvement. Forty-eight percent (48%) of Amber students in sixth grade showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. This cohort fell dramatically short of proficiency. It should be noted, this six grade cohort was, in part, the same cohort of students who scored 33% proficiency in the NYS ELA in 2004-05. Combining the four grade levels (3, 4, 5, 6), thus school wide, 64% of Amber students across all grades showed proficiency on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2006-07. Taken as a whole, we did not meet 75% proficiency, but closed the gap over last year’s scores with a 15% jump.

¹ Memo from Simeon Stolzberg, Senior Analyst, Charter Schools Institute, October 27, 2006.



C. Evaluation

Fortunately, there were no Level 1 students. When we examine scores under Level 1 and 2, we note that in each grade level, the majority of students underperforming fall within Level 2: 30% of third grade, 20% of fourth grade, 43% of fifth grade, and 52 % of sixth grade. Raising all students from Levels 1 and 2 to proficiency is our overall goal. This past year, the entire school community participated in the creation of assessment portfolios capturing all pertinent data for each student. Instructional staff met with the instructional leader periodically to learn how to analyze student data and determine best practices for group and individual instruction. Our staff will continue to closely examine individual students’ performance levels to determine which skill areas of the ELA test students need improvement to move them to the next level. Analyzing current scores in grades 4 through 6 reveal dramatic increases over last year’s fourth grade scores climbed from 43% to 80%, fifth grade scores climbed from 48% to 62%, and sixth grade scores climbed from 33% to 48%. Significant changes to the instructional program led to these increases.

D. Additional Evidence

Using a set of statistical analysis designed by CSI and other education regulators, we conducted a cohort analysis from one year to the next for the same student. For example, if Johnny Doe was in third grade last year and took the ELA exam, we compared his 2005-06 score to the 2006-07 exams. Of the eligible students who took the exam, we are able to conduct a cohort analysis for 71 students. The missing 44 students were either in second grade in 2005-06, or graduated last year from sixth

grade to seventh grade. The crucial question to be asked of the cohort analysis, did the cohort make sufficient progress? Table 3 shows the cohort results for 2007.

Table 3: 2007 Cohort Results					
		Percent at Levels 3 & 4			
Cohort	Num. in Cohort	2005-06 Results	2006-07 Results	2006-07 Target	Met the Target?
3 - 4	27	81.5%	77.8%	Gain	NO
4 - 5	19	57.9%	68.4%	66.4%	YES
5 - 6	25	52.0%	52.0%	63.5%	NO
6 - 7	0				
7 - 8	0				
Total	71	64.8%	66.2%	69.9%	NO
In 2007, in how many grades did each cohort in this school reach its target?					1 of 3

Of these 71 students, 64.8% were at Levels 3 & 4 in 2005-06. The proficiency target point in 2006-07 was 69.9%. The percent at Levels 3 & 4 in 2006-07 was 66.2%, or 3.2 percentage points below the target. According to NYSED guidelines, “if a single grade cohort within a school does not reach its target, then the school cannot be deemed to have made sufficient progress”. If a cohort's level of proficiency in 2006 was 75% or higher, its progress is judged by determining whether there was a gain in the percentage of students at Levels 3 & 4 in 2007. If so, the group is deemed to have met expectations. The answer to the question about progress is yes. If any cohort that has reached the 75% threshold in 2006 fails to improve, the answer to the question is no. According to the guidelines, if that should happen, the school cannot be deemed to have made sufficient progress as a whole.” Thus, taking into consideration the performance of each cohort in the aggregate, and the aforementioned special notes, the school did not make sufficient progress however, one of three cohorts (from fourth to fifth grade) did meet its target.

2. Measure: Absolute Proficiency

Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.

A. Method

For school year 2006-07, the Annual Measurable Objective measurement in English Language Arts has been set at 122, according to the Charter Schools Institute guidelines pertaining to the No Child Left Behind regulation for elementary schools taking the English Language Arts exam. The following is the

formula used to calculate the Annual Measurable Objective, where PI is Performance Index and L is Percent at Level:

$$PI = (L2+L3+L4) + (L3+L4)$$

B. Results

Using the overall school Proficiency Levels for all students, Amber's performance index is as follows:

$$PI = (L2+L3+L4) + (L3+L4)$$

$$PI = (42+76+3) + (76+3)$$

$$PI = 121 + 79$$

$$PI = 200$$

Amber surpassed the expected Annual Measurable Objective with 200 over the state required 122.

3. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams

2005-06: Students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will be greater than that of the local school district CSD#5.²

A. Method

Charter Schools Institute requires we compare ourselves to a local community school district (CSD). As negotiated with our authorizer, we use district 5 as the basis of comparison (Harlem) as this district was Amber's location at its inception. Included in this analysis are districts 4 and 6. District 4, which includes East Harlem and the Upper East Side, is where Amber is currently located. District 6, Washington Heights, is where Amber was originally slated to open. Approximately 66% of Amber students hail from districts 4, 5, and 6 (in about equal parts). The remainder of students in our school hails from the Bronx.

B. Results

Table 4 compares Amber's ELA scores by grade and total to school districts 4, 5, and 6. Overall, when compared to the three nearest local community school districts, where a majority of our students are from, Amber ranked #1. Amber's third grade scores outpaced each of the districts by a range of 20 to 30 percentage points. Amber's fourth grade scores outpaced each of the districts by a range of 33 to 42 percentage points. Amber's fifth grade scores outpaced each of the

² Comparisons may not hold valid as the district 4, 5, 6 scores cited in this report may include all students tested regardless of the amount of time spent at the specific school or district; whereas the Amber scores are for students at Amber for two years or more.

districts by a range of 18 to 19 percentage points. Amber’s sixth grade scores outpaced each of the districts by a range of 15 to 17 percentage points.

	3 rd Gr.	4 th Gr.	5 th Gr.	6 th Gr.	% District	District Ranking
Amber	70%	80%	57%	50%	64%	1
CSD 4	50%	47%	49%	35%	45%	2
CSD 5	40%	41%	39%	38%	40%	3
CSD 6	40%	38%	38%	33%	37%	4

C. Evaluation

When we compare Amber’s fourth grade scores to the local community school districts, we can do so with four years worth of data. See Table 5.

	03-04 (Yr.1)	04-05 (Yr. 2)	05-06 (Yr. 3)	06-07 (Yr. 4)	1 Yr. Change (Yr. 4 to Yr. 3)
Amber	33.00%	50.00%	50.00%	80.00%	30.00%
CSD 4	40.40%	50.60%	47.00%	47.00%	0.00%
CSD 5	31.70%	38.80%	43.40%	41.00%	-2.40%
CSD 6	34.90%	44.80%	45.00%	38.00%	-7.00%

In a comparison of ELA test scores for fourth grade, Amber showed higher proficiency rates than all three districts. Thus, we rank first. Amber’s higher fourth grade scores outpace these districts from 33 to 42 percentage points. When comparing yearly changes for our own scores, Amber scores rose significantly (30 percentage points). Each of the comparison districts remained flat or declined.

C. Further Evidence

We are uncertain as to current instructional practices in the comparative school districts but we know that our instructional program has taken root given the strengthening of our fourth grade reading scores.

4. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams

2005-06 through 2009-10: the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools as determined by the Charter Schools Institute and based on the

similar school categories generated by the State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education (if applicable).

As discussed with Charter School Institute leadership, the data and regression analysis for this measure will be provided by Charter Schools Institute at a later date.

5. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams

2004-05 through 2009-10: the school will exceed to a specified degree (as set by CSI) its expected level of performance on the State ELA exam, as determined by the performance of other schools that have a similar proportion of students eligible for free lunch among all charter and public schools in districts with charter schools.

As discussed with Charter School Institute leadership, the data and regression analysis for this measure will be provided by Charter Schools Institute at a later date.

6. Measure: Value Added to Student Learning on Nationally Normed Test

2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally normed test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.³

A. Method

In 2004-05, Amber for the first time instituted the Terra Nova exam, a nationally normed assessment. This test, developed by McGraw Hill, was administered to students in grades one through five in late September and again in early May. The current school year, 2006-07, was the third time that Amber administered the test. Charter Schools Institute guidelines recommend comparisons of testing be conducted spring to spring, thus this was the third year Amber's comparisons are made on a spring to spring basis.

As per Charter Schools Institute: "If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the difference between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the first year's average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (As per CSI guidelines, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first

³ A note on Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE): The NCE is used in the evaluation of remedial education and other special programs. Because NCEs are equal-interval scores, they are often used for comparing achievement across subject areas over time. Because NCEs have no inherent meaning, national percentiles are generally preferred when reporting results to parents and the general public. For this report, Amber is required to use NCEs rather than percentiles.

year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)” The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

$$\text{Threshold} = \text{spring 2006 NCE} + [\text{NCE 50 minus spring 2006 NCE}]/2]$$

B. Results

Using the Terra Nova exam’s norm curved equivalent (NCE) scores; a review of the grade level cohorts of grades 1 through 6 reveals positive increase in all five cohorts. Table 6 summarizes the Terra Nova spring 2005, 2006, 2007 NCE results. (This data shows a cohort of students from one year to the next but does not reflect attrition nor new admits from one year to the next. By and large, a spring 2006 student in first grade is now a spring 2007 student in second grade.)

Grade to Grade	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Benchmark	Threshold
Kinder			58.6	N/A	N/A
K-1.	NA	NA	57.0	NA	NA
1 - 2.	NA	48.2	55.3	51.7	Above
2 - 3.	57.8	47.5	65.0	56.2	Above
3 - 4.	50.0	52.3	56.1	54.2	Above
4 - 5.	45.3	50.0	52.2	50.0	Above
5 - 6.	53.7	46.7	55.9	51.3	Above

In 2006-07, the second grade cohort had an average NCE score of 55.35. When these students were in the first grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 48.2. Since the second grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 55.3 and 50 (e.g., $55.3 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 55.3) = 51.77$), the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2006-07, the third grade cohort had an average NCE score of 65.0. When these students were in the second grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 47.5. Since the third grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 65.0 and 50 (e.g., $65.0 + \frac{1}{2} (65 - 47.5) = 56.7$), the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2006-07, the fourth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 56.1. When these students were in the third grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 52.3. Since the fourth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 52.3 and 50 (e.g., $52.3 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 52.3) = 54.2$), the cohort surpassed the minimum threshold.

In 2006-07, the fifth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 55.2. When these students were in the fourth grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 50.0.

Since the fifth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 50.0 and 50 (e.g., $50.0 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 50.0) = 50.0$), the cohort surpassed its target.

In 2006-07, the sixth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 55.9. When these students were in the fifth grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 46.7. Since the sixth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 46.7 and 50 (e.g., $46.7 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 46.7) = 51.3$), the cohort surpassed its target.

C. Evaluation

The Terra Nova results as measured by NCEs surpassed the current school year compared to the previous years. Grade Level Equivalent is a score on a scale developed to indicate the school grade (usually measured in months) that corresponds to an average age, mental age, test score, or other characteristic of students. For example, Grade Level Equivalent of 6.4 is interpreted as a score that is average for Grade 6, 4th month. The “typical” student should gain 1 grade per year to maintain his/her position in relation to age-mates. Table 7 demonstrates grade level equivalents which are at levels they should be and point to further strength in our instructional program.

Grade to Grade	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Difference
K-1.			1.45	NA
1 - 2.	NA	1.7	2.69	0.99
2 - 3.	2.4	2.6	3.52	0.92
3 - 4.	2.9	4.1	4.82	0.72
4 - 5.	3.5	4.8	6.19	1.39
5 - 6.	5.7	5.3	6.69	1.39

D. Further Evidence

Amber has learned that by implementing and integrating a comprehensive scope and sequence program, such as Scotts Foresman for grades K through 4 and Success for All for grades 5 and 6, we have created and enforced alignment by grade. The adoption of the Scott Foresman literature-based reading series for Amber’s balanced literacy program helped to create a clearly defined curriculum that prepared students to meet State standards. Customized for New York State, and providing alignment with the NYS ELA standards, Scott Foresman provides consistency of instruction taught among classes in a grade and between grades. In addition, Amber adopted McGraw Hill’s Terra Nova series for use from the end of Kindergarten through sixth grade. McGraw-Hill produces both Terra Nova and

the New York State ELA exams assuring alignment. Movement to Terra Nova allowed Amber to effectively and systematically use assessment and evaluation data to improve the instructional program and student learning. For the first time, an extensive analysis of individual students' Terra Nova scores dramatically helped drive instruction. This past year included the second year of the Reading Edge program for students in our three upper grade classes were grouped by ability. Some groups met in teams of 10 to 15 and all worked intensively during each six-week cycle. In addition, we engaged six classrooms based tutors to supplement teacher instruction. These tutors began to work in classrooms on a daily basis in November, three months prior to the ELA exam, and seven months before Terra Nova. Instructional leadership, teachers, and professional developers from Success for All analyzed scores consistently and changed students to appropriate ability groupings during cycles.

We believe that the stability of scores in the lower grades can be accounted for by increased familiarity with the Scotts Foresman curriculum now in its third year at Amber. In addition, a full time experienced Title 1 reading teacher worked primarily with the third and fourth grade students enabling teaching staff to focus on student deficiencies in between testing periods. Teachers and the reading specialist worked with all regular and special education students. In addition, with the support of our community sponsor, ACDP, we were able to offer extended day and Saturday test preparation as an enrichment program which began in October. To aid instruction and determine added value, every third, fourth, and fifth grade class participated in extra test preparation classes once a week as one of their prep periods. Amber paid close attention to research that shows group size variation—especially smaller groups for those students identified as being at risk through Title 1.

Goal—Mathematics: All students at Amber will become proficient in math and will make strong yearly progress towards mastery of mathematical skills.

- 1. Measure: Absolute Proficiency 2005-06 through 2009-10 school years: 75 percent of 3rd through 6th graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.**

A. Method

Amber students in grades 3 through 6 took the New York Statewide Testing Program Mathematics exam over three days in March 2007. The math exam measures skills and knowledge that have been mastered during students' history of school up to the grade level. The progress towards this goal is measured by assessing only those students who have been at Amber for at least two years. This report includes data on raw scores (all students who took the exam) and students who have been at Amber for two years or more. It should be noted this was the second year Amber students participated in the exam for grades 3, 5, and 6. This

is the fourth year of test administration for students in grade 4. In all grades, there were 119 students tested.

B. Results

Table 8a and 8b, respectively, lists Amber’s NYS math 2005-06 and 2006-07 results for all grades tested, 3 to 6, regardless of length of time at the school.

L4-Proficient; L3-Nearing Proficiency; L2-Progressing; L1-Step-1/Starting Out

Table 8a : NYS-MATH 2005-06 Student Performance Level by Grade Level

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested	% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4
3rd	2	10	18	6	36	6%	28%	50%	17%	67%
4th	2	7	18	1	28	7%	25%	64%	4%	68%
5th	14	16	16	0	46	30%	35%	35%	0%	35%
6th	4	8	1	0	13	31%	62%	8%	0%	8%
Total	22	41	53	7	123	Avg. 18%	37%	39%	5%	44%

Table: 8b NYS-MATH 2006-07 Student Performance Level by Grade Level

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested	% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4
3rd	0	3	23	9	35	0%	9%	66%	26%	91%
4th	0	13	14	3	30	0%	43%	47%	10%	57%
5th	4	12	13	0	29	14%	41%	45%	0%	45%
6th	1	9	15	0	25	4%	36%	60%	0%	60%
Total	5	37	65	12	119	Avg. 4%	32%	54%	9%	63%

As compared to the previous years, Amber students show more strength in all grades math scores, consistent with our current ELA scores. The third grade scores, 91%, exceed the required 75% proficiency levels. Amber shows relative strength in its 4th grade math scores. These scores, 57%, do not approach the required 75% proficiency levels. Amber shows less strength than anticipated in its 5th grade math scores at 45 % proficiency. Amber shows improved strength in its 6th grade math scores at 60 % proficiency. Overall the school’s 63% proficiency does not meet the 75% requirement.

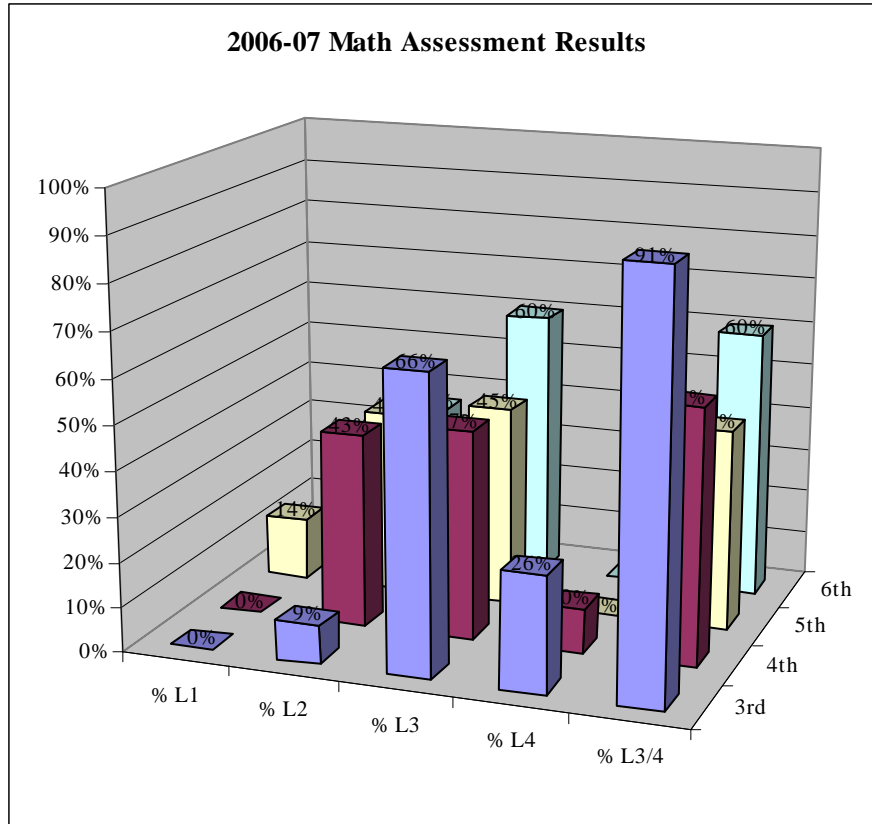
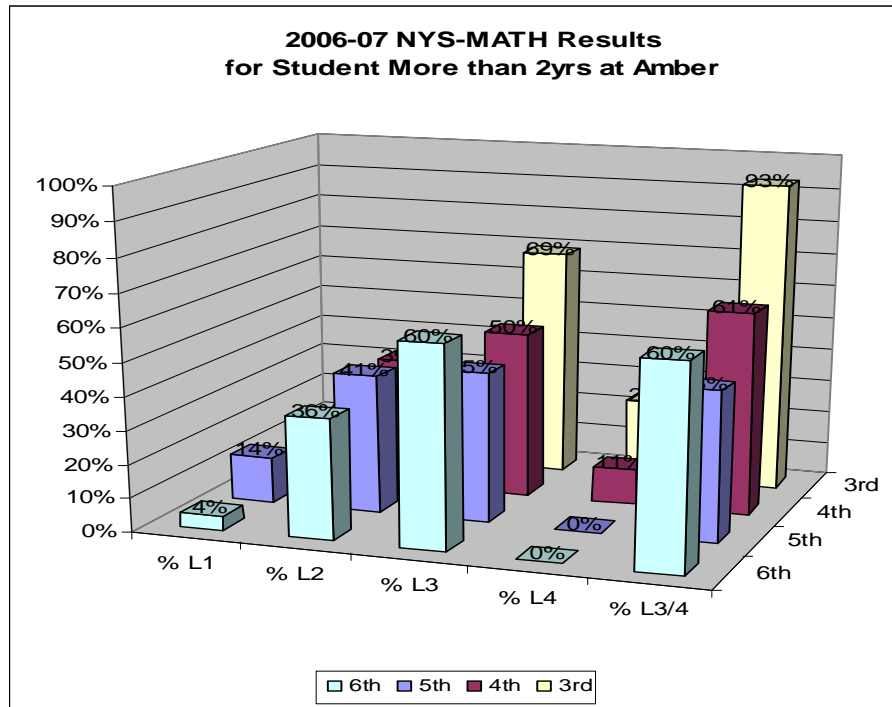


Table 9 lists in numbers and percent Amber’s NYS math 2006-07 results for all grades tested, 3 to 6, excluding new students. In other words, these tables include critical data for Amber as it examines the number of students who have been at Amber for two years or more. With two years at Amber, students show strength in 3rd grade math scores, consistent with ELA. These scores, 93%, surpass the required 75% proficiency levels. All other scores mirror the raw scores.

Table 9: NYS-MATH 2006-07 Student Performance Level by Grade Level for Student More Than 2yrs at Amber

Grade	L1	L2	L3	L4	# Tested	% L1	% L2	% L3	% L4	% L3/4	
3rd	0	2	20	7	29	0%	7%	69%	24%	93%	
4th	0	11	14	3	28	0%	39%	50%	11%	61%	
5th	4	12	13	0	29	14%	41%	45%	0%	45%	
6th	1	9	15	0	25	4%	36%	60%	0%	60%	
Total	5	34	62	10	111	Avg.	4%	31%	56%	9%	65%



C. Evaluation

The relative strength of student performance in all grades over the previous years reflects a somewhat strong instructional program and instructional performance. It indicates that the current instructional staff has a relative good grasp of the content and students were more prepared to participate in the testing program. To a lesser extent, two of three instructors in these grades participated in a mathematics scoring workshop conducted by the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence; we believe this may have contributed to better information on exposure to the expectations on the test. We are extremely concerned about the instructional program and teaching at the upper grades. This past year was the second year of Amber’s sixth grade and thus the instructional staff’s unfamiliarity with the requirements of the mathematics program may have contributed to the lower than expected scores.

D. Further Evidence

Using a set of statistical analysis designed by CSI and other education regulators, we conducted a cohort analysis from one year to the next for the same student. For example, if Johnny Doe was in third grade last year and took the Math exam, we compared his 2005-06 score to the 2006-07 exams. Of the eligible students who took the exam, we are able to conduct a cohort analysis for 69 students. The missing students were either in second grade in 2005-06, or graduated last year from sixth grade to seventh grade. The crucial question to be asked of the cohort analysis, did the cohort make sufficient progress? Table 10 shows the cohort results for 2007.

Table 10 2007 Math Cohort Results					
Cohort	Num. in Cohort	Percent at Levels 3 & 4			Met the Target?
		2005-06 Results	2006-07 Results	2006-07 Target	
3 - 4	26	73.1%	61.5%	74.0%	NO
4 - 5	19	73.7%	52.6%	74.3%	NO
5 - 6	24	37.5%	58.3%	56.3%	YES
6 - 7	0				
7 - 8	0				
Total	69	60.9%	58.0%	67.9%	NO
In 2007, in how many grades did each cohort in this school reach its target?					1 of 3

Of these 69 students, 60.9% were at Levels 3 & 4 in 2005-06. The proficiency target point in 2006-07 was 58.0%. The percent at Levels 3 & 4 in 2006-07 was 67.9%, or 9.9 percentage points below the target. According to NYSED guidelines, “if a single grade cohort within a school does not reach its target, then the school cannot be deemed to have made sufficient progress”. If a cohort’s level of proficiency in 2006 was 75% or higher, its progress is judged by determining whether there was a gain in the percentage of students at Levels 3 & 4 in 2007. If so, the group is deemed to have met expectations. The answer to the question about progress is yes. If any cohort that has reached the 75% threshold in 2006 fails to improve, the answer to the question is no. According to the guidelines, if that should happen, the school cannot be deemed to have made sufficient progress as a whole.” Thus, taking into consideration the performance of each cohort in the aggregate, and the aforementioned special notes, the school did not make sufficient progress however, one of three cohorts (from fourth to fifth grade) did meet its target.

2. Measure: Absolute Proficiency 2005-06 school year: 75 percent of fourth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.

A. Method

Amber students in grades 4 took the New York Statewide Testing Program Mathematics exam over three days in March 2007. The math exam measures skills and knowledge that have been mastered during students’ history of school up to the grade level. The progress towards this goal is measured by assessing only those students who have been at Amber for at least two years. This section includes data on raw scores or all fourth grade students who took the exam, and students who have been at Amber for two years or more. This is the third year of test administration for students in grade 4.

B. Results

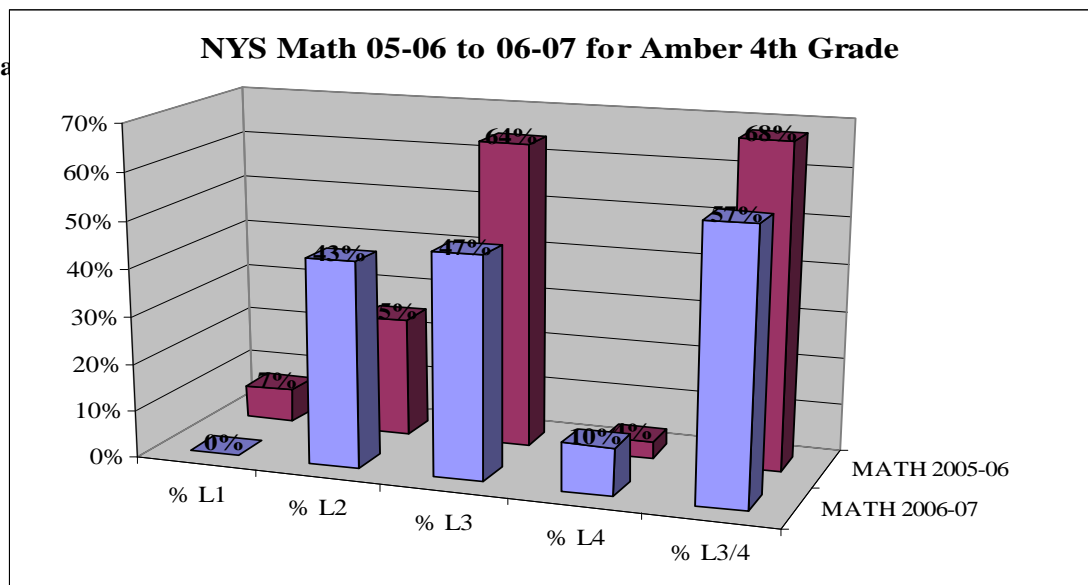
Table 10 lists Amber’s NYS math 2006-07 results for fourth grade tested over a fourth-year period. Based on this information, Amber students’ abilities in math are markedly different from ELA scores. The scores from Year 1 in 2003-04 to Year 2 2004-05 grew by 23 percentage points. The scores from Year 2 2004-05 to Year 3 2006-07 dropped by a slight five percentage points. The score this year for fourth grade for students at Amber two or more years was 58%, below the required 75 % proficiency, and virtually flat from the previous year.

Table 11: Amber’s 4th Grade NYS Math 4-Year Comparison, All Levels (with two years or more)

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L3/4
2003-04	15%	44%	33%	7%	40%
2004-05	2%	35%	48%	15%	63%
2005-06	23%	19%	54%	4%	58%
2006-07	0%	43%	47%	10%	57%

C. Evaluation

We were, again, surprised at the lower than expected math scores. We had expected the scores to be above the previous year’s 63% proficiency. We are pleased there are no students in Level 1 but we are particularly concerned that a significantly higher number of our students were at Level 2, 43%, as it constitutes a dramatic climb from the previous year’s cohort of students. This means that our fourth grade mathematics program needs more support. To make sure we do not lose ground in fourth grade, Amber will continue to work with a consultant from CUNY’s Lehman College on math instruction and assessment. We have recently hired a new staff developer to work with our instructional staff and she will focus on mathematics skills. We believe that this will have a positive impact on math instruction.



- 3. Measure Absolute Proficiency Each year, Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State math exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.**

For school year 2006-07, the Annual Measurable Objective measurement in mathematics has been set at 86, according to the Charter Schools Institute guidelines pertaining to the No Child Left Behind regulation for elementary schools taking the mathematics exam. The following is the formula used to calculate the Annual Measurable Objective, where PI is Performance Index and L is Percent at Level, followed by the calculation:

$$PI = (L2+L3+L4) + (L3+L4)$$

$$PI = (37+65+12) + (65+12)$$

$$PI = 114 + 77$$

$$PI = 191$$

Amber surpassed the expected Annual Measurable Objective with 191 over the state required 86.

- 4. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams 2005-06: Students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above Level 3 on the State Math exam in each tested grade will be greater than that of the local school district CSD#5.**

A. Method

Charter Schools Institute requires we compare ourselves to a local community school district (CSD). As negotiated with our authorizer, we use district 5 as the basis of comparison (Harlem) as this district was Amber's location at its inception. To be included in this analysis are districts 4 and 6. District 4, which includes East

Harlem and the Upper East Side, is where Amber is currently located. District 6, Washington Heights, is where Amber was originally slated to open. Approximately 66% of Amber students hail from districts 4, 5, and 6 (in about equal parts). The remainder of students in our school hails from the Bronx.

A. Results

At this time the math scores for these districts are not accessible.

4. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams 2005-06 through 2009-10

The percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State Math exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools as determined by the Charter Schools Institute and based on the similar school categories generated by the State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education (if applicable).

As discussed with Charter School Institute leadership, the data and regression analysis for this measure will be provided by Charter Schools Institute at a later date.

5. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exam 2005-06 through 2009-10

The school will exceed to a specified degree (as set by CSI) its expected level of performance on the State Math exam, as determined by the performance of other schools that have a similar proportion of students eligible for free lunch among all charter and public schools in districts with charter schools.

As discussed with Charter School Institute leadership, the data and regression analysis for this measure will be provided by Charter Schools Institute at a later date.

6. Measure: Value Added to Student Learning on Nationally Normed Test 2005-06 and 2009-10 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average NCE in the previous spring on the Terra Nova, a nationally normed test, and an NCE of 50 (i.e., grade-level) in the current spring. If a grade-level cohort exceeds an NCE of 50 in the previous year, the cohort is expected to show at least an increase in the current year.

A. Method

In 2004-05, Amber for the first time instituted the Terra Nova math exam, a nationally normed assessment. This test, developed by McGraw Hill, was administered to students in grades one through five in late September and again in early May. The current school year, 2006-07, was the third time that Amber administered the test. Charter Schools Institute guidelines recommend comparisons of testing be conducted spring to spring, thus this was the first year Amber's comparisons are made on a spring to spring basis. As per Charter Schools Institute: "If the plan contains a gap-closing outcome as a value-added measure, the results should be expressed as the extent to which cohorts are narrowing the

different between their scores in the previous spring and grade-level performance in the current spring. The school is expected to enable the cohorts to reduce the difference between the first year’s average NCE score and average NCE of 50, or above grade second year. (Remember, if a cohort scores above an NCE of 50 or above grade level in the first year, then it need only show *some* gain in the second year.)”

The formula used to determine threshold is as follows:

$$\text{Threshold} = \text{spring 2006 NCE} + [\text{NCE 50 minus spring 2006 NCE}]/2]$$

B. Results

Using the Terra Nova exam, a review of the grade level cohorts of grades 1 through 6 reveals positive increase in each cohort. With one exception, each cohort achieved its target. Amber has demonstrated student progress, attributable to the impact of the school instructional program. The following table 11 reports the grade NCE scores for mathematics on the Terra Nova exam from spring 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Grade to Grade	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Benchmark	Threshold
Kinder			59.59	NA	NA
K-1.	NA	NA	47.24	NA	NA
1 - 2.	NA	40.5	56.77	48.63	Above
2 - 3.	54.6	58.8	58.39	58.60	Below
3 - 4.	44.2	51.7	53.52	52.61	Above
4 - 5.	45.8	47.4	47.74	47.57	Above
5 - 6.	48.5	42.5	51.08	46.79	Above

C. Evaluation

In 2006-07, the second grade cohort had an average NCE score of 56.77. When these students were in the first grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 40.5. Since the second grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 40.5 and 50 (e.g., $40.5 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 40.5) = 48.6$), the cohort did reach and surpass the minimum threshold.

In 2006-07, the third grade cohort had an average NCE score of 58.3. When these students were in the second grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 58.8. Since the third grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 58.8 and 50 (e.g., $58.8 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 58.8) = 58.6$), the cohort did not reach the minimum threshold by .3.

In 2006-07, the fourth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 53.5. When these students were in the third grade in 2004-05, they had an NCE score of 51.7. Since the fourth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 51.7 and 50 (e.g., $51.7 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 51.7) = 52.6$), the cohort did not reach the minimum threshold by only .4.

In 2006-07, the fifth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 47.7. When these students were in the fourth grade in 2005-06, they had an NCE score of 47.5. Since the fifth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 47.4 and 50 (e.g., $47.4 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 47.4) = 47.5$), the cohort did reach its target.

In 2006-07, the sixth grade cohort had an average NCE score of 51.0. When these students were in the fifth grade in 2004-05, they had an NCE score of 42.5.0. Since the sixth grade’s target was an average NCE score of more than half the difference between 42.5 and 50 (e.g., $42.5 + \frac{1}{2} (50 - 42.5) = 46.7$), the cohort did reach the minimum threshold.

D. Additional Evidence

We are encouraged that four of five grades reached the target NCE scores this school year and further encouraged by our comparison of Terra Nova Grade Level Equivalents between this current school year and last school year. See Table 12. The grade levels this year are better than last year. Amber continues to work with a consultant from CUNY’s Lehman College on math instruction and assessment. We believe that this has had a positive impact on math instruction. It is our belief that the decrease of Terra Nova scores was due to variability in testing administration, and we tackled this in a uniform manner through staff development. We used professional development opportunities along with weekly staff meetings to help staff understand the best ways to conduct testing for optimal efficiency.

Grade to Grade	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	Difference
K-1.			1.41	NA
1 - 2.	NA	1.3	2.43	1.13
2 - 3.	2.2	3.2	3.27	0.07
3 - 4.	2.6	3.9	4.64	0.74
4 - 5.	3.6	4.6	5.26	0.66
5 - 6.	4.8	5.3	5.65	0.35

Goal—Science: All students at Amber will become proficient in science and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of scientific skills.

1. Measure: Absolute Proficiency

In each year, 75 percent of fourth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.

A. Method

The New York State Science examination was administered in May 2007. The exam measures skills and knowledge that students have studied in fourth grade in preparation for the NYS Science examination. Twenty nine students attempted the exam but five have been removed from the count because four students were only in their first year at Amber and one student was absent for part of the exam.

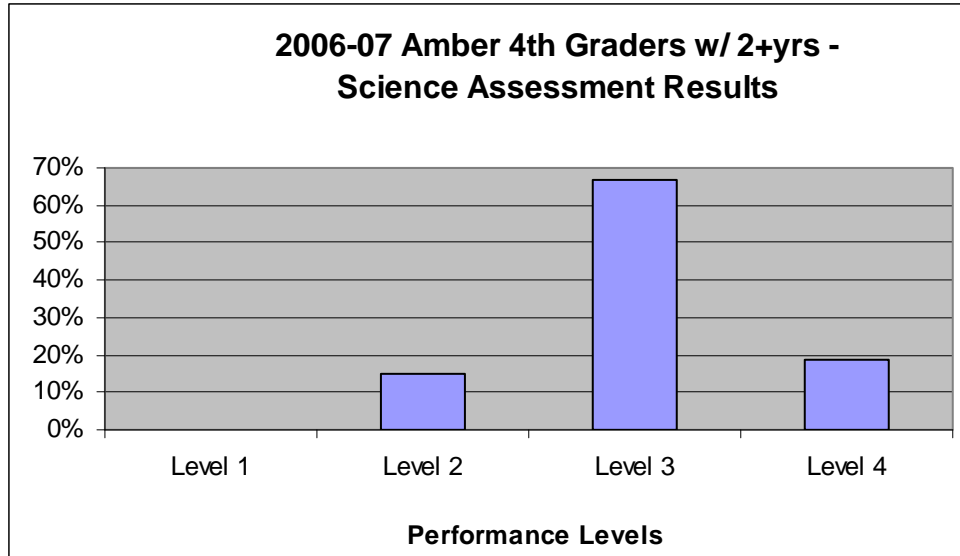
B. Results

Of the 29 Amber students who tested in the fourth grade New York State Science examination, 86% of students scored at Level 3 or above. Amber surpassed its fourth grade science objective measure in 2006-07. This is above the required objective measure of 75% at Level 3 or 4. Of the four students subtracted from the total tested population, three students scored at Level 3 and one student scored at Level 2. Thus, the remaining Level 3 students mirror the tested figures.

C. Evaluation

In a comparison of scores across three school years, Amber gained some ground in that last year we achieved our target with 76% of students at Levels 3 and 4 and this year we scored 67% of students at Level 3 and 19% at level 4, for 86% at or above proficiency. Fortunately, the percentage of students at Level 2 declined from 29% to 15 %.

Table 13: NYS Science Exam 2004-05 2+year			NYS Science Exam 2005-06 2+year			NYS Science Exam 2006-07 2+year		
Level	N	%	Level	N	%	Level	N	%
1	2	4%	1	0	0%	1	0	0
2	11	20%	2	7	29%	2	5	17
3	28	52%	3	17	71%	3	19	66
4	13	24%	4	0	0%	4	5	17
Total	54	100%	Total	24	100%	Total	29	100



D. Additional Evidence

Trends indicate that the science cohort of school year 2006-07 is making significant progress within classrooms and school wide. These scores reflect the work that Amber staff did this year, including working with K12 Solutions, a science based company providing staff development and instructional resources to grades K through 3. Also, by organizing a school wide science fair that engaged students in the scientific method over several weeks followed by hands on exploration and presentations to a standing room audience of parents and local visitors and board members helped to focus our students on vital science skills. Students who participated in the science fair showed gains in their science exam scores. We are also encouraged that we for a second year in a row we did not have any Level 1 students.

2. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams

Each year, 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 the local school district CSD#5.

The science scores for CSD#5 were not available at the time of this writing.

Goal—Social Studies: All students at Amber will become proficient in social studies and will make strong yearly progress toward mastery of social studies skills.

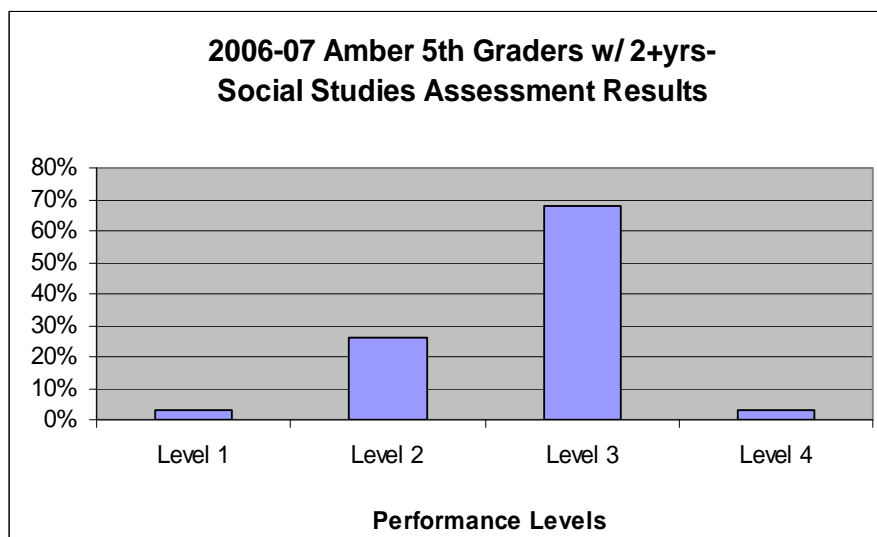
1. Measure: Absolute Proficiency

In each year, 75 percent of fifth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies examination.

A. Method

The New York State Social Studies examination was administered in November, 2005. The exam measures skills and knowledge that students have acquired during their first four years of schooling in preparation for the NYS Social Studies examination. Thirty-one students took the exam and they were in their second year at Amber.

Table 14 NYS Social Studies Exam 2005-06 (All tested)			NYS Social Studies Exam 2005-06 (W/2yrs.+at Amber)			NYS Social Studies Exam 2006-07 (W/2yrs.+at Amber)		
Level	N	%	Level	N	%	Level	N	%
1	6	3%	1	4	8.7%	1	1	3%
2	4	28%	2	4	8.7%	2	8	26%
3	33	72%	3	30	65.2%	3	21	68%
4	3	3%	4	3	6.5%	4	1	3%
	46	100.0%			10.00%		31	100.0%



B. Results

Amber’s raw results for the fifth grade NYS Social Studies exam indicate that 71% of students scored at Levels 3 and 4, slightly under the 75% requirement.

C. Evaluation

We continue to be pleased with our students’ results on the fifth grade NYS Social Studies exam. Strength in the scores reflect a school wide social studies curriculum that is aligned with state standards, articulated appropriately from year

to the next indicate, and supported with useful field trips to appropriate historical and cultural venues.

D. Additional Evidence

Given the flat trend over last year's scores compared to this year and the raw score of this year's tested group, we believe Amber is making some progress towards reaching its objective measure. When we compare our Terra Nova NCE scores for students testing in social studies we continue to show some progress but are concerned that the Terra Nova scores don't reflect growth. We believe that perhaps the key questions and concepts covered in the Terra Nova examine are topics with which our students are unfamiliar. We will closely review the national test to align to our state standards-based curricula.

2. Measure: Comparative Proficiency on State Exams

Each year, the percent of 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 the local school district CSD#5.

CSD#5 NYS Social Studies scores were unavailable.

SUMMARY

Amber's third grade ELA and math scores and fourth grade ELA scores were at or exceeded required levels. However, this was not true of ELA and/or math scores in grades 4, 5, and 6. Amber's Terra Nova scores, used as another gauge for learning at Amber, were also with mixed results but trends are pointing in the right direction for ELA and math. As a school community—including the school's board of trustees, parents, teachers, and staff, we have been asking what classroom and institutional supports are in place that leads to high scores. Will this year's instructional changes to third grade change next year's test scores? There were problems with fourth grade scores perhaps due to instruction and/or resources. We have engaged all staff in determining to what classroom and institutional supports were not in place that lead to low scores. Led by our education program committee, we will continue to monitor how instructional team changes (with new personal, new team leaders) improve scores and learning for our students

ACTION PLAN

We have undertaken an intensive re-examination of our assumptions and preconceived notions about our leadership and practice. We began the school year by commissioning an internal evaluation with an outside educational management consultant. We entered into partnership with subject matter specialists in literacy, mathematics, and science. We have adapted the updated

and revised TERC aligned with current state standards. We signed up to work with the city's Department of Education empowerment schools which will provide us with educational consultants and assessment managers. We have re-committed to work with the NYC Center for Charter Excellence to identify the right support systems and mechanism to make positive change happen in our school. We re-organized grade level classrooms, hiring new teachers in-sync with the demands of the age of accountability. We are committed to improving our students' tests scores but more importantly, we have committed to helping our students become life long learners.

Additional Required Academic Measure

Under the state's NCLB accountability system, the school's Accountability Status will be "Good Standing" each year.

According to a July 10, 2006 memo from Martha Musser of the NY State Department of Education, we remain in Good Standing in 2006-07 and made Adequate Yearly Program in 2006-07 on every accountability measure.

Organizational Goals

Parent and Student Satisfaction

Goal: Amber will maintain strong enrollment and strong parent interest.

1. Measure: Parents

Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least two-thirds of *all* parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.

A. Methods

Amber designed a parent survey with the input of administrators and teachers for distribution in early April 2007. We color-coded the surveys by class, and teachers distributed the surveys to all 311 students to give to their parents, with a one week's deadline. Approximately 70% of surveys were received within the first week. During the balance of the month, Amber staff reached out to as many parents as possible via telephone to encourage survey completion.

B. Results

Overwhelmingly, parents of Amber students participated in the parent survey and based on results, Amber *exceeded* its objective measure of two-thirds of parents expressing their satisfaction with the school. In all, 313 parents completed the

surveys, representing 95% of all Amber parents. (We acknowledge there may be duplicates where some parents inadvertently or purposely completed the survey twice; we believe this to have negligible affect and does not mitigate the final analysis.) Survey questions were keyed to the objective measures, including the following along with primary responses:

My knowledge of what goes on in my child's classroom is: 93% excellent/good; up from 91% in 2005-06; and up from 86% in the prior year. Seven percent believed they needed improvement in learning what was going on in the classroom.

I think my child's homework is: 85% age appropriate; up from 80% in the previous year. Twelve percent believed the homework was too hard and a small 3% thought it too easy.

Communication with my child's teacher is: 92% excellent/good; holding steady from the previous year.

I am satisfied with my child's academic progress: 94% excellent/good; up from 83% in the previous year.

My child likes to come to school: 95% strongly agree/agree; up from 88% in the previous year.

My child is interested in learning: 98% strongly agree/agree; up from 90% in the previous year.

My child has improved his/her ability to resolve conflicts: 89% strongly agree/agree; up from 82% in the previous year.

I am pleased that my child attends Amber: 91% strongly agree/agree; up from 86% in the previous year.

Parents were asked to comment on their concerns and responded with the following: help with ways to improve my child's behavior, English homework, the discipline/card process, homework is too easy, student squabbles, teacher absences, standing outside before school starts in wintertime, the after school program needs more staff, more communication and activities. We will explore these comments (and their meaning) with our new Parent Association leaders.

This year, we introduced a series of new questions specific to Amber's specialty programming in Spanish, visual arts, technology, and physical education. The following tables illustrate the parent's satisfaction levels (strongly agree/agree) with each program. The numbers tell us that while 79% of parents are pleased with the Spanish program, we believe there is some concern about the program which we will examine through parent focus groups in the new school year. Parents were overwhelmingly pleased with the visual arts program (92%), technology (93%), and physical education (90%).

In the long answer response, several people who had concerns about academics thought there was too much homework being given out or that the homework was

too hard. Most people who wanted to improve academics wanted to see music classes, art classes and improved gym classes.

C. Evaluation

We are heartened that parents are delighted with Amber's resolve to improve their children's learning. We have made great strides in creating a learning community for students that is safe and contributes to their productivity. We do this by creating meaningful relationships with parents and students. Working with faculty and counselors, Amber has established a series of parent workshops over the past few years. Nearly one third of parents participated in workshops focused on the important of attendance and its effects on school success, the importance of service providers (e.g., speech, OT, PT, special education), understanding standardized testing and time management. This series will be revised and presented anew in the coming school term. In addition, one of the vehicles for communicating with parents was extensive use of automated telephone calls to inform parents of the latest school wide happenings. Towards that end, we made weekly telephone calls.

D. Additional Evidence

Parents are also active participants in Amber's policy planning and decision making through the following vehicles: parent association, parent representatives on the board of trustees, and members of the school planning council. This coming year, with new parental leadership on the Parents Association, we expect to see an increased level of parent outreach to improve education for our students.

2. Measure: Parents

Each year, 90 percent of the parents will participate in Parent Teacher Conferences and Primary Language Interviews.

Amber conducts two annual Parent Teacher Conferences, one over two days in the fall and another over two days in the spring. These half day sessions are led by Amber staff. During the 2006-07 school years 260 parents participated.

Goal: Students will demonstrate strong interest and engagement.

1. Measure: Students

Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.

A. Method

Amber staff works closely to coordinate attendance to make certain students participate in school. Each day classroom teachers take attendance within 30

minutes of commencing instruction. Pupil personnel services staff collect the daily attendance rosters for input into its data collection system connected to the New York City Department of Education's ATS. Staff monitor student attendance, pursuant to the school handbook, and notify parents. A policy has been implemented wherein when students who miss three to five days (unexcused absences or lateness) we generate an official notice addressed to parents. When six to eight unexcused absences/lateness occur, an intervention conference is conducted with Amber guidance personnel. After eight or more unexcused absences/lateness an official meeting is held with the appropriate school administrator and parents that may result in a possible education neglect report to the City's Agency for Child Services and/or the state's 800 telephone hotline.

B. Results

Amber's daily attendance rate was an average 89% throughout the school year, slightly less than our objective measure of 95%.

Table 15: Student Attendance/Registration, September 2006 to June 2007					
Month	# Absent	% Absent	# Present	% Present	Total Registered
September	26	7%	333	93%	359
October	27	7%	333	93%	359
November	36	10%	318	90%	354
December	38	11%	314	89%	352
January	39	11%	314	85%	345
February	52	15%	293	89%	332
March	41	12%	297	88%	338
April	33	10%	304	90%	337
May	30	9%	305	91%	335
June	53	16%	280	84%	334
Averages	38	11%	309	89%	347

C. Evaluation

Amber strives to improve student attendance. While we continue to struggle with attendance issues we feel confident that with a strong push for improved daily attendance, we will reach target levels by next year. Contributing factors to decreased attendance are a result of high student absences and lateness in kindergarten and first grade. Despite missing our objective, we are encouraged by data from our survey of parents. When asked to respond to the statement, “My child likes to come to school,” overwhelmingly 95% of all parents strongly agreed or agreed.

D. Additional Evidence

We have learned that our attendance problem lies principally in the Kindergarten arena. We have learned from parents that since Kindergarten is not compensatory, it is much easier for parents to consider absences as acceptable behavior. We do not believe absences, except in extreme cases of illness, should be allowed. We are analyzing and developing an attendance plan together for this population, assigning a counselor to the K-2 group. We have spent time convincing parents of the importance of attending school (promptly) and will continue to make this a crucial outreach step in the coming year. For our incoming students (approximately 100), we have conducted parent orientations where we provide information on attendance policies. We will continue to offer workshops and training to parents for them to understand the need for students to attend school and stay on task.

Legal Compliance

Goal: Amber will be in legal compliance

1. Measure:

Each year, the school will generally and substantially comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the provisions of its by-laws and charter.

Amber has complied with all federal, state, and municipal rules and regulations. Amber has posted meeting dates, time, and location on its web site, in mailings to parents, and staff have participated in appropriate workshops (e.g., Individuals with Disability Education Act training) to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. We did not received request under the New York Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

2. Measure:

Each year, the school will have in place and maintain effective systems, policies, procedures and other controls for ensuring that legal and charter requirements are met.

Amber has established, put in place, and refined effective systems, policies, and procedures and other controls ensuring that all legal and charter requirements are met. Amber board members meet monthly, document all board meetings, and take an active role in creating and enforcing policies. Towards that end, we updated our complaint policy.

3. Measure:

Each year the school will maintain a relationship with independent legal counsel that reviews relevant policies, documents, and incidents and makes recommendations as needed, and in proportion to the legal expertise on the board of trustees, if any.

Amber has maintained for five years a relationship with independent legal counsel Michael Stolper, Esq., a partner in Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, and LLP. Mr. Stolper and his firm have contributed hundreds of hours *pro bono* in reviewing relevant policies, documents, and incidents and have designed and made recommendations as needed. In addition to serving as counsel to Amber, Mr. Stolper also serves as the board vice chairman. As such, in the rare absence of Amber's board chair, Mr. Stolper takes a

leadership role at board meetings, works closely with the school's leadership team, and negotiates contracts on the school's behalf.

Fiscal Soundness

Goal: Amber will make sound decisions and effective, responsible use of financial resources to maximize student learning.

1. Measure—Budgeting:

Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget meaning actual revenues will equal or exceed actual expenses.

On a monthly basis, Amber's fiscal office produces a balance sheet for the current fiscal year. The balance sheet is reviewed by the board treasurer and additional members of the board who serve on the finance committee. The balance is filed quarterly with the Charter Schools Institute as well as additional agencies that oversee Amber's fiscal matters, including La Raza Development Fund, which holds the mortgage for Amber's building.

In the year ending June 30, 2007 representing the 2006-07 school year, Amber demonstrates a balance between resources and expenses. The detailed results are attached in the appendices.

Amber continues to abide by GAAP, engages an external auditing firm to review its books, materials, resources, and procedures. An audit will begin in August 2007 and is expected to be completed by mid October. The audit will be reviewed by Amber staff and board to be discussed and to be approved by the board. The completed and approved audit will be delivered to the Charter School Institute by November 1, 2007.

2. Measure—Financial Condition:

Beginning with the school's first operating year, at the end of each fiscal year, unrestricted net assets will be equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.

Amber's unrestricted net assets were equal to two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.

3. Measure—Internal Controls and Compliance

Each year the school will take corrective action, if needed, in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, SED, or the Institute.

Where appropriate, Amber took corrective action to address an internal control or compliance deficiency identified by state comptroller's auditors, but no other measures for major change were requested by SED, or the Charter Schools Institute.