



**Brighter Choice
Charter Middle School for Boys**

**2013-14 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

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Derick Brown, School Leader, prepared this 2013-14 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Martha Snyder	Chair
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Derick Brown has served as the school leader since 2013.

INTRODUCTION

The Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys (BCMSB) opened its doors to 48 scholars in September. Initially serving grade 5, BCMSB has added a grade each year until operating at full capacity with grades 5-8 in the 2013-14 school year. BCMSB is an upper grades extension of the successful Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys model. The school is Albany's only public single-gender middle school option for boys and aims to meet the challenges of educating the scholars by establishing a program that is driven by high expectations, uses additional time to focus on academics and remediation, and creates a culture that values hard work, achievement and preparation for the demands of high school and college. Key design elements include:

- The only public single-gender middle school option in the city of Albany
- The smallest planned full enrollment – less than 200 scholars – of any public middle school in Albany
- A low average scholar class size of about 19
- A unique iChoose program designed to identify the unique talents and interests of The scholars

The longer school day and longer school year serve to prepare BCMSB scholars for the demands of high school and college. While the student body is predominantly African-American and Latino, with many families qualifying for the federal Free and Reduced-Lunch Program, research shows that males of all races and ethnicities are underperforming as they move through middle school and high school. BCMSB believes the program is designed to meet the unique challenges faced by urban middle schools that traditionally underserve their scholars.

The mission of BCMSB is to prepare scholars for high school and college success while attending to the unique developmental needs of middle school scholars. BCMSB pursues this mission by:

- Differentiating instruction to meet the wide-ranging learning needs of its entire scholar body and offering flexible learning spaces that compliment and encourage varied instructional methods
- Emphasizing scholar choice with BCMSB's unique iChoose: Citizenship, Integrity, Perseverance and Scholarship character campaign
- Utilizing data from all aspects of its operation to inform decision-making and improve scholar performance
- Committing to technology use and integration into the school's academic program and culture
- Providing each scholar an adult advisor and small group seminar to support the positive social and emotional development of boys
- Offering individualized counseling and guidance throughout the high school placement process

Academic Program & Policy

In the first four years of its initial charter term, BCMSB has steadily improved its learning environment and academic program.

I. Student-Centered Instruction

Most of the middle school scholars at BCMSB arrived accustomed to a direct instruction approach to teaching that follows the “I, We, You” model. This traditional approach did not provide the rigor and stimulation necessary to fully implement the CCLS. In an effort to align the BCMSB instructional practices with the CCLS, BCMSB has shifted its instructional paradigm from traditional to constructivist. This means a move away from teacher-centered instruction to lessons that provide many opportunities for student conversation. To implement this approach, BCMSB teachers plan purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to its curriculum.

Instructional strategies of focus in the 2013-14 school year included:

Maximized learning time. Each lesson includes multiple activities and tight transitions to ensure that scholars are kept engaged in the learning process. The school’s persistent challenge has been increasing scholars’ stamina to support them in reading longer and complex texts for sustained blocks of time, which was substantiated by its scholars’ performance on the previous NYSE. Increased use of released materials on EngageNY have helped faculty to increase the rigor of instruction. This added information has been used to inform existing Interim Assessments (IA).

Increased writing. Scholars in every core subject perform frequent writing activities. These activities spur scholars to deeply process new information and help prepare scholars for CCLS-aligned assessments that require written responses. In the 2013-2014 school year, BCMSB implemented the Collins Writing Program across all disciplines in order to improve its scholars’ thinking and writing skills. Through mastering the Five Types of writing as outlined by the program, scholars have become more creative and critical thinkers.

Increased student talk time. Thought-provoking discussions are a core component in all of the school’s classrooms. This is evident through the “Habits of Discussion” (HOD) initiative, which requires scholars to participate actively and effectively in intellectual discourse. Scholars learn the techniques of how to have these discussions in pairs and larger groups. As this “good student noise” fills BCMSB classrooms, scholars are building their capacity for critical thought.

II. Teacher Observation & Coaching

In order to support teachers in implementing these instructional methods and CCLS shifts, BCMSB teachers are observed approximately ten times per year by either the principal or assistant principal. Observers use an evaluation tool that is aligned to the BCMSB curriculum and goals. After these visits, teachers receive feedback about their planning and use of rigorous

instructional methods. Teachers who show weakness in a particular area of instruction will be provided with additional coaching and observations.

III. Data-Driven Instruction and Intervention

BCMSB utilizes a multi-facilitated approach to data and assessment. The assessments are aligned to the BCMSB curriculum and the CCLS, and allow teachers to effectively determine areas of student weakness that require re-teaching. Because the CCLS demand that scholars practice higher order thinking skills, the school's assessments mimic state assessments in that they require scholars to not only choose the correct answer, but also write about their reasoning.

IV. Student Support

BCMSB uses student data to implement Response to Intervention ("RtI"). In the RtI system, data from interim assessments, NYS assessments, and classroom observations is used to identify and serve scholars at risk of academic failure. Its levels of RtI are consistent with moderate to significant interventions. Three support teachers are employed in this effort. Two of these teachers work only with special education students, identified by the Committee on Special Education. Each month, the principal, SPED teachers, and classroom teachers meet to review the progress of scholars receiving intervention services. For scholars who are classified as ELL, BCMSB's ELL provider communicates with classroom teachers on a weekly basis to ensure that students are receiving necessary accommodations and are progressing within the program.

V. CCLS Alignment

BCMSB realized a need to intensify the efforts to align its instructional methods with the CCLS. School leadership found it necessary to make curricular changes based on these results but due to the timeframe of dissemination of these scores. During the 2013-14 school year, several teachers piloted new curriculum by implementing components of the EngageNY modules (Eureka Math and Expeditionary Learning in ELA). The 8th relied primarily on the EngageNY Math materials and scored 31% proficient. Based on their analysis of this successful implementation of curriculum, school leaders have overhauled the Math program to rely heavily on the EngageNY modules in all grade levels in 2014-15.

School Enrollment

Enrollment for BCMSB varies little between 215-220, and BCMSB has been within its target for enrollment in every year of its first charter term. 2011-12 was a strong recruiting year for BCMSB with a substantial wait list for fifth grade. During 2013-14, BCMSB experienced a small wait list for fifth and sixth grade. The school also had a long wait list for seventh grade, though typically few enroll at this grade.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year As of BEDS Day

School Year	5	6	7	8	Total
2010-11	50	0	0	0	50
2011-12	49	53	0	0	102
2012-13	57	46	48	0	151
2013-14	62	56	56	40	214

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

The scholars of Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys will be proficient readers and writers of the English Language.

Reading

Focused on using authentic literature to develop a love for reading, the middle school language arts program uses a variety of resources to foster literacy. Scholars work on developing reading skills through different class formats: large group discussion, independent work, literature circles, and centers. Along with activities that promote the development of comprehension skills, the scholars receive rich reading instruction that ensures future success.

For the 2011-2012 school year, BCMSB developed a weekly schedule that supported continued use of the MacMillan “Treasures” reading program with a focus on vocabulary development (context clues), fluency, phonics and comprehension. BCMSB feels the Treasures program provides systematic and predictable support in developing scholars’ vocabulary, fluency, phonics and comprehension skills. BCMSB used the Treasures program three days per week.

A new addition to the ELA program for the 2011-2012 school year was Novel Study, which occurred two days per week. Novel Study is a space where scholars take a “deep dive” in the Common Core text exemplars, think critically, and discuss complex texts. More specifically, scholars will annotate texts (interactive reading), answer focal questions prior to reading (accountable, independent reading), and engage in quality discussions connecting events, information and situations from text to larger themes.

Although BCMSB conducts Novel Study two days a week, scholars have daily interactions with their novel or non-fiction text. Scholars complete Accountable Independent Reading using their Novel or non-fiction text during Do Now’s, homework or during independent reading. BCMSB made a concerted effort to keep the scholars immersed in complex texts. This allowed for discussions to be more open-ended and necessitate deeper textual interpretation.

In addition to teacher-created, weekly assessments, BCMSB continues to administer school

wide Interim Assessments every 4-5 weeks to measure scholar progress and teacher effectiveness. All Interim Assessments are followed by a detailed data conference in which teachers complete a data analysis and create action plans based on the data. Also, new to Brighter Choice in 2012-13 was a 40-minute “FLEX” period, a re-teach/tutoring block for core teachers to provide additional instruction or pre-teaching to scholars who struggled to master the day’s or week’s aims/objectives. All ELA and writing teachers also now have a 40-minute block each day to provide targeted small group instruction to a pre-determined number of scholars to support mastery of skills. This provides additional targeted instruction for scholars in need of Tier II and Tier III support.

With the first round of CCLS-aligned NYS exams in 2013, BCMSB realized a need to continue this pedagogical shift. Weekly professional development sessions in the 2013-14 school year focused on supporting teachers in the delivery of constructivist instruction. Instructional strategies of focus in the 2013-14 school year included:

- Performance tasks across curriculum,
- Socratic seminar,
- Shared Text across content areas,
- Focus on informational reading and writing in Science and Social Studies,
- Habits of Discussion.

The school’s persistent challenge has been increasing scholars’ stamina to support them in reading longer and complex texts for sustained blocks of time, which was substantiated by its scholars’ performance on the previous NYSE. Increased use of released materials on EngageNY have helped faculty to increase the rigor of instruction. This added information has been used to inform existing Interim Assessments (IA).

School leaders determined that the existing ELA scope and sequence, and its dependence on unconnected skill-instruction, did not support the critical thinking demanded by CCSS. Beginning in April 2014, ELA and Social Studies teachers began working with Literacy coaches from the Albany Charter School Network to plan instructional units using the “Understanding by Design” framework with a focus on thematic integration across grade levels and capitalizing on opportunities for increased reading, higher-order thinking, and authentic assessment.

In 2014-15, teachers will use pacing guides for ELA based off analysis of EngageNY curricular tools with a heavy focus on writing across all content areas, increased close reading within all disciplines.

Writing

Great emphasis is placed upon scholars’ development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in the writing curriculum. Utilizing varied samplings from literature, novels, and other textual sources, scholars work on developing their comprehension skills, broadening their usable vocabulary, and becoming stronger writers.

Writing appropriate sentences, developing cohesive and logical written responses, enhancing vocabulary, and mastering spelling are skills embedded into the writing curriculum. Scholars learn to write essays both in a literary and informational context with different organizational structures. Incorporated into these essays are the use of grade-level vocabulary and varied sentence patterns. Scholars learn to write with good organization and a logical flow of sentences. As part of the writing process, scholars use peer review of work to edit spelling and grammar, and to analyze the use of literary elements in creative writing. Assessment of writing is focused on the Six Traits plus 1 Analytic Model for Writing Assessment.

Scholars in every core subject perform frequent writing activities. These activities spur scholars to deeply process new information and help prepare scholars for CCLS-aligned assessments that require written responses. In the 2013-2014 school year, BCMSB implemented the Collins Writing Program across all disciplines in order to improve its scholars' thinking and writing skills. Through mastering the Five Types of writing as outlined by the program, scholars have become more creative and critical thinkers.

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

Method

BCMSB administered the New York State Testing Program English language arts assessment to scholars in fifth through eighth grade in April 2014. Each scholar's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

2013-14 State English Language Arts Exam Number of Scholars Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ¹			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
5	63				63
6	55				55
7	55		1		56
8	39				39
All	212	0	1	0	213

¹ Scholars 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.

Results

Overall, 17 percent of scholars in at least their second year at BCMSB performed at standards 3 and 4 on the NYS English Language Arts exam in 2014.

Performance on 2013-14 ELA Exam By All Scholars and 2+ Year Scholars

Grades	All Scholars		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	5%	63	0%	2
6	11%	55	13%	39
7	7%	55	10%	31
8	26%	39	26%	38
All	11%	212	16%	110

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure, falling short by 59 percentage points. Scholars in their second year did do better than total scholars by 5 points. The CCSS based ELA exam still challenges the scholars.

Additional Evidence

Scholars did make progress since last year's performance and BCMSB has systems in place for 2014-15 to ensure progress continues.

English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Scholars Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Percent	# Tested	Percent	# Tested	Percent	# Tested
5	80%	5	0%	1	0	2
6	95%	37	7%	29	13%	39
7			14%	42	10%	31
8					26%	38
All	93%	42	11%	72	16%	110

Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all scholars to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each

year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state’s learning standards in English language arts. To achieve this measure, all tested scholars must have a Performance Level Index (PLI) value that equals or exceeds the 2013-14 English language arts AMO of 89. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested scholars at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested scholars at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.²

Results

BCMSB’s Performance Level Index totaled 64 versus the AMO of 89.

English Language Arts 2013-14 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Scholars at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	48	42	9	2

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 42 & + & 9 & + & 2 & = & 53 \\
 & & & & 9 & + & 2 & = & \underline{11} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 64
 \end{array}$$

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

Method

A school compares tested scholars enrolled in at least their second year to all tested scholars in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested scholars in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all scholars at the corresponding grades in the school district.³

Results

Overall, the BCMSB scholars in at least their second year outperformed the same grades at the local district by three percentage points.

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

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

2013-14 ELA Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Scholars at Proficiency			
	Charter School Scholars 2+ Years		All District Scholars	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	0	2	10%	610
6	13%	39	16%	532
7	10%	31	9%	583
8	26%	38	18%	591
All	<u>16%</u>	110	<u>14%</u>	2316

Evaluation

BCMSB achieved this measure.

Additional Evidence

For 2011-2012 overall, BCMSB scholars outperformed the district. In 2013-2014, BCMSB outperformed the district.

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

Grade	Percent of Scholars Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Scholars					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
5	20%	39%	0%	18%	0	10%
6	68%	40%	7%	19%	13%	16%
7			14%	19%	10%	9%
8					26%	18%
All	<u>62%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>14%</u>

Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for scholars eligible for economically disadvantaged scholars among all public schools in New York State.⁴

Method

The Charter Schools Institute conducts a Comparative Performance Analysis, which compares the school's performance to demographically similar public schools statewide. The Institute uses a regression analysis to control for the percentage of economically disadvantaged scholars among all public schools in New York State. The Institute compares the school's actual

⁴ The Institute will continue using *economically disadvantaged* instead of *eligibility for free lunch* as the demographic variable in 2013-14. Schools should report previous year's results using reported free-lunch statistics.

performance to the predicted performance of public schools with a similar economically disadvantaged percentage. The difference between the schools' actual and predicted performance, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics, produces an Effect Size. An Effect Size of 0.3 or performing higher than expected to a small degree is the requirement for achieving this measure.

Given the timing of the state's release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2013-14 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2012-13 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

Results

The overall Effect Size for ELA in 2012-13 was -0.64, falling below the 0.3 target.

2012-13 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Scholars at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	--					
4	--					
5	80.7	55	12.7	20.8	- 8.1	-0.66
6	83.0	48	4.2	15.8	-11.6	-1.15
7	91.7	43	13.9	14.4	- 0.5	-0.04
8	--					
All	84.7	146	10.3	17.2	- 7.0	-0.64

Evaluation

The school's overall comparative performance was lower than expected. BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2010-11	5	62	46	43.5	45.5	-0.12
2011-12	5-6	67.3	100	50.0	44.3	0.37
2012-13	5-7	84.7	146	10.3	17.3	-0.64

Goal 1: Growth Measure⁵

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

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of scholars from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other scholars with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes scholars who took the state exam in 2012-13 and also have a state exam score from 2011-12 including scholars who were retained in the same grade. Scholars with the same 2011-12 score are ranked by their 2012-13 score and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (scholar growth percentile). Scholars' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2013-14 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2012-13 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.⁶

Results

The overall Mean Growth Percentile for ELA in 2012-13 was 36.2, falling below the 50.0 target.

2012-13 English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Median
5	36.00	50.0
6	37.52	50.0
7	35.14	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	36.2	50.0

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

⁵ See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

⁶ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's Business Portal: portal.nysed.gov.

English Language Arts Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2010-11 ⁷	2011-12 ⁷	2012-13	Statewide Average
5			36.00	50.0
6			37.52	50.0
7			35.14	50.0
8			--	50.0
All			36.2	50.0

Summary of the English Language Arts Goal

During the 2011-2012 school year, BCMSB met all accountability goals in ELA. Like many schools across the state, BCMSB experienced a decline in performance during the 2012-2013 school year.

Although BCMSB scholars did not meet its chartered absolute goals for ELA in its first charter term, the school has demonstrated consistent, year-to-year gains in academic performance on the NYS ELA and Math exams. In ELA, the percentage of scholars scoring proficient increased from 43% in 2011 to 50% in 2012. In 2012, 60% of sixth graders scored at or above proficiency on the NYS ELA exam, an increase of 17 percentage points from the fifth grade performance in 2011.

In comparison with Albany City School District ("ACSD"), BCMSB scholars performed at higher rates of proficiency than ACSD students in ELA in both 2011 and 2012. In 2013, BCMSB scholars in ELA showed slightly lower proficiency than ACSD students. However, in the following year (2014), ACSD scores declined in ELA, while BCMSB improved, especially with cohort scholars. While school leaders acknowledge that at some grade levels, their scholars performed only on par with ACSD, each cohort experienced growth between the two years of CCLS test administrations.

⁷ Grade level results not available.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested scholars who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English language arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state English language arts exam will meet that year's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested scholars who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English language arts exam will be greater than that of scholars in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged scholars among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2012-13 school district results.)	Did Not Achieve
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in English language arts for all tested scholars in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Did Not Achieve

Action Plan

BCMSG is committed to enhancing the academic program to met accountability goals. In 2014-15, teachers will use pacing guides for ELA based off analysis of curricular tools from the modules of instruction published on EngageNY.

I. ELA Specific Highlights

To support teacher implementation of inquiry-based learning and rigorous instruction, BCMSB will focus on three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum. Leaders and coaches will refine structures to support these practices:

- Lesson Essential Questions will be incorporated into daily lessons to promote discussion and inquiry versus teacher-center pedagogy.
- A refined evaluation cycle will be implemented that includes observation and coaching. BCMSB teachers will receive ongoing coaching support from the Albany Network's ELA coach.
- Engage NY and O'Dell materials have been purchased, plus teachers will have access to supplemental materials.

- Interim assessments will be redesigned. Interim assessments will use a combination of assessments from EngageNY and teacher-created assessments using exemplars issued by the state and designed to meet the rigor of the CCSS. The assessments will be administered at the end of the first, second, and fourth quarters. The state exams will take the place of the third quarter assessment.

To support increase rigor in ELA, the following expectations have been communicated to staff:

- Students in each classroom encounter an appropriate balance, sequence, and variety of exemplary texts spending the majority of time during daily lessons reading, speaking, listening, and/or writing about texts.
- Students in each classroom have opportunities to practice and engage in the range of text dependent and text specific tasks demanded by CCSS through varied and frequent close reading, writing, oral response, and investigation.
- Each teacher employs intentionally sequenced questions and tasks which support student learning.
- Through monitoring of students' progress, each teacher ensures instruction and materials explicitly and systematically provide all students with the opportunity to master grade-level standards and demonstrate increasing independence in grade level reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks.
- Each teacher regularly adjusts instruction based on evidence of student progress from student work and ongoing assessment.

II. BCMSB Overall

1. Deepening the Impact of Academic Improvements

With positive results from initial efforts to better align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to the expectations of CCLS, with the goal of deepening the engagement and ownership of scholars in the learning process, and with the intention of establishing a robust foundation for middle school boys to advance to high school, college and future careers, BCMSB plans to make reinforcing improvements to its academic program. At the heart of these future improvements is the objective of completing the school's transition from teacher-led instructional practices to student-driven learning and knowledge and skills acquisition. Leveraging Understanding By Design ("UbD") as an overarching model of change and improvement during the next charter term, BCMSB plans to: (i) shift to a thematic unit curriculum; (ii) promote inquiry-based learning; and (ii) enhance teacher and leader professional development.

Understanding By Design: In April 2014, in preparation for the 2014-15 school year, BCMSB began working with the Albany Network to plan instructional units using the UbD framework, with a focus on thematic integration across grade levels and capitalizing on opportunities for increased reading, higher-order thinking, and authentic assessment. UbD, or backwards design challenges educators to help scholars make connections between prior knowledge, current learning, and future discovery, illuminating the "big picture" and enabling them to build logical

sequences between their lessons and the CCLS. UbD emphasizes the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning and works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify learning goals, devise revealing assessments of student understanding, align standards with assessment and instruction, and craft effective and engaging learning activities. In addition, UbD focuses on deepening student knowledge and the transfer of knowledge through "uncovering" learning, rather than "covering" content. Leveraging the UbD framework, BCMSB plans intends to integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment to create a cohesive and engaging educational experience for scholars.

i. Shift to a Thematic Curriculum

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, BCMSB will begin the shift to cross-curricular thematic units, which will include an updated scope and sequence with interdisciplinary connections that builds upon the strengths of the EngageNY modules. With support from the Albany Network, BCMSB has developed a revised curriculum guide that incorporates the school's key design elements with an inquiry-based focus. While the curriculum guide continues to draw strongly from the EngageNY modules, it has been adapted to suit the unique needs of BCMSB scholars and the overarching focus of the school. The curriculum guide provides vertical and horizontal alignment. Standard sets have been identified that are aligned across content areas and grade levels. The curriculum guide has weekly, quarterly, and yearly components to support short-term and long-term planning.

While UbD is traditionally used to create new curriculum or units, the professional development teachers have received has focused on UbD as a critical lens to examine the existing curriculum units and the curriculum planning and implementation itself. The process requires teachers to review and refine units by asking the following questions: (i) what do I want my students to know, learn and do; (ii) how will I know that students know it, learned it, or can do it; and (iii) what instructional activities will be used to help students know it, learn it, or do it. As part of their professional development, teachers are being required to critically analyze their curricula and support materials to ensure they meet the needs of middle school scholars. The use of the revised curriculum guides and the process of critically analyzing curricular materials will promote alignment with CCLS and support continued progress towards improved student achievement.

ii. Strengthening the Quality of Instruction

In order to support effective teacher implementation of inquiry-based learning and rigorous instruction, BCMSB will focus on three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum. These three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum – emerged from the observation of teachers and the analysis of curricular materials. A key element in the work of the critical analysis of units through the UbD lens is selecting appropriate instructional practices that align with CCLS and support rigor. Accordingly, the school leaders identified these practices as solutions that can be implemented in all subject areas to strengthen scholar engagement and learning.

With the shifts in curriculum and instruction, the school leaders recognize the need to engage in similar critical analysis. To support the critical focus and alignment, school leaders and coaches will (i) refine structures to support these practices; (ii) working to build teacher toolkits with strategies, which support these practices; and (iii) engaging in a “cycle of inquiry”.

In terms of structures, leaders and coaches will focus on unit plans designed using UbD in ELA; LEQs to promote discussion and inquiry versus teacher-centered pedagogy; providing additional resources; and evaluating the master schedule, grade-book weights, assessment portfolio and internal assessment tools. In terms of strategies, leaders and coaches will support a focus on math practices; shared text across content areas; focus on informational reading and writing across content areas; increased time with authentic text in ELA; and various instructional practices (Socratic Seminar, Habits of Mind, etc.).

School leaders will facilitate a “cycle of inquiry” using all school data, definition of rigor informed by CCLS, and specific school-wide goals. School leaders will support these initiatives by planning professional development sessions, conducting observations and providing feedback, and revising teacher evaluation criteria.

iii. Cultivating Instructional Leadership

To fully support the successful improvement and transition of the academic program at BCMSB, the Board of Trustees also has plans to invest in the continued professional growth and development of the principal and other members of the leadership team. In partnership with the Albany Network, the principal will participate in monthly collaborative inquiry-based, case study-oriented professional development sessions with principals from other charter schools in Albany. These sessions are designed to help leaders continue to sharpen their curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies, as they share ideas with colleagues through Socratic engagement and exploration of local and national best practices. This support will enable the principal to serve as the school’s lead learner and a model of continuous learning for both staff and students.

2. More Fully Engaging of the Albany Charter School Network

The Albany Charter School Network (the “Albany Network”) is a support organization for a number of the charter schools in Albany, New York. BCMSB is currently in partnership with the Albany Network, through a compact agreement under which the Albany Network provides a range of academic, operating, and financial support services to the school. In addition to ongoing recruitment services and other operating and financial support services, the Albany Network has provided significant support to the school in terms of curriculum development, instructional coaching, assessment strategy implementation, and leader and educator professional development during the 2013-14 school year. At the time of this renewal submission, the BCMSB Board of Trustees is in discussions with the Albany Network to explore the potential for the school to receive even more comprehensive services in the future. Once negotiations are finalized, Exhibit J (management company contract) may be updated.

MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

The Scholars of Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys will demonstrate proficiency in their understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.

Background

During the 2010-2011 school year, BCMSB used Envisions Math as the core Math program. Envisions Math allows teachers to begin their planning with asking, *“What is the essential understanding for this lesson?”* True conceptual understanding is encouraged and supported throughout the program and BCMSB have found the program to provide a balance of quality visual supports, opportunities to work with manipulatives and real world problem solving practice. The lessons outlined in the program allow teachers to move from conceptual understanding through discussion, visual learning bridges and guided practice to independent practice. Guided and independent practice is structured to discern whether scholars can demonstrate they know how to perform a specific skill.

Professional development for the Envisions Math program was conducted by Pearson Education representatives and focused mainly on using all the resources available in the program. BCMSB used Envisions intervention sequence for re-teaching and Tier II support for struggling scholars. All scholars who performed at a low level 3 (and below) received additional instruction using Envisions’ intervention program.

For this year, BCMSB have mapped the Envisions curriculum to the New York State Common Core Standards and modified the scope and sequences, interim assessments and lesson plan templates. BCMSB will continue the seminar style discussion block (15 minutes) 2-3 times per week, so scholars can engage in quality discussions that provide multiple opportunities to justify/scrutinize answers, present varying approaches to solve problems and analyze mistakes. Finally, BCMSB will be incorporating more rigorous performance assessments at the end of the instructional cycles and on the interim assessments. These are all experiences that the Common Core will expect scholars to be competent with in 2014.

During the 2013-14 school year, several teachers piloted new curriculum by implementing components of the EngageNY modules published by Eureka Math. 8th grade Math relied primarily on the EngageNY materials and scored 31% proficient. Based on their analysis of this successful implementation of curriculum, school leaders have overhauled the Math program to rely heavily on the EngageNY modules in all grade levels in 2014-15.

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to scholars in fifth through eighth grade in April 2014. Each scholar's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

2013-14 State Mathematics Exam Number of Scholars Tested and Not Tested

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested ⁸			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
5	63				63
6	55				55
7	55			1	56
8	39				39
All	212	0	0	1	213

Results

Overall, 20% of scholars in at least their second year performed at standards 3 and 4 on the NYS math exam in 2014.

Performance on 2013-14 State Math Exam By All Scholars and 2+ Years Scholars

Grades	All Scholars		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	16%	63	0%	2
6	18%	55	14%	37
7	13%	55	13%	30
8	31%	39	32%	38
All	18%	212	20%	107

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

⁸ Scholars 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 performance improved by 3 percentage points since the first CCSS based exam in 2013.

Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Scholars Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Percent	# Tested	Percent	# Tested	Percent	# Tested
5	80%	20	0%	1	0%	2
6	95%	68	21%	29	14%	37
7			15%	41	13%	30
8					32%	38
All	93%	62	17%	71	20%	107

Goal 2: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all scholars to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an AMO each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state's learning standards in mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested scholars must have a Performance Level Index (PLI) value that equals or exceeds the 2013-14 mathematics AMO of 86. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested scholars at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested scholars at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.⁹

Results

BCMSB' Performance Level Index totaled 80 versus the AMO of 86.

Mathematics 2013-14 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Scholars at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	40	42	15	4

$$\begin{array}{rclclclcl} \text{PI} & = & 42 & + & 15 & + & 4 & = & 61 \\ & & & & 15 & + & 4 & = & \underline{19} \\ & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 80 \end{array}$$

⁹ In contrast to NYSED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

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

Method

A school compares tested scholars enrolled in at least their second year to all tested scholars in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested scholars in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all scholars at the corresponding grades in the school district.¹⁰

Results

BCMSB outperformed the local district by 10 percentage points on the math exam in grades 5 through 8.

2013-14 State Mathematics Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Scholars at Proficiency			
	Charter School Scholars at 2+ Years		All District Scholars	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
5	0%	2	13%	578
6	14%	37	17%	540
7	13%	30	8%	581
8	32%	38	0%	469
All	20%	107	10%	2168

Evaluation

BCMSB achieved this measure.

Additional Evidence

In comparison with Albany City School District ("ACSD"), BCMSB scholars performed at higher rates of proficiency than ACSD students in Math in both 2011 and 2012. In 2013, BCMSB scholars continued to outperform ACSD students in Math. However, in the following year (2014), ACSD scores declined in Math, while BCMSB improved, especially with cohort scholars. BCMSB shrank the achievement gap by a measurable amount in comparison to the district. While school leaders acknowledge that at some grade levels, their scholars performed only on

¹⁰ Schools can acquire these data when the New York State Education Department releases its Access database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The NYSED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

par with ACSD, each cohort experienced growth between the two years of CCLS test administrations.

Over the period of three years, BCMSB continued to outperform the district in Math. In 2012-2013, the school had higher levels of proficiency in 6th and 7th grade. In 2011-2012 and 2013-2014, BCMSB had higher levels of proficiency than ACSD in 7th and 8th grade.

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

Grade	Percent of Scholars Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Scholars					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
5	60%	41%	0%	14%	0%	13%
6	81%	51%	21%	14%	14%	17%
7			15%	8%	13%	8%
8					32%	0%
All	<u>79%</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>10%</u>

Goal 2: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for scholars eligible for economically disadvantaged scholars among all public schools in New York State.¹¹

Method

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

Given the timing of the state's release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2013-14 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2012-13 results, the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

¹¹ The Institute will continue using **economically disadvantaged** instead of **eligibility for free lunch** as the demographic variable in 2013-14. Schools should report previous year's results using reported free-lunch statistics.

Results

Overall, BCMSB achieved an average effect size of -0.11. However, it is notable that the effect size improved over the progression of cohorts of scholars. Grade 7 scholars achieved a moderate positive effect size of 0.13. This indicates that the persistence of a cohort at BCMSB has a positive effect on student performance.

2012-13 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Number Tested	Percent of Scholars at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	--					
4	--					
5	80.7	55	16.4	21.0	- 4.6	-0.30
6	83.0	48	16.7	18.5	- 1.8	-0.12
7	91.7	43	14.0	12.1	1.9	0.13
8	--					
All	84.7	146	15.8	17.5	- 1.7	-0.11

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

Additional Evidence

With the effect size improving over the progression of cohorts of scholars, BCMSB anticipates improved effect size for 2013-2014.

Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch through 2011; Economically Disadvantaged 2012-13	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2010-11	5	62%	46	73.9	58.6	0.83
2011-12	5-6	67.3%	100	70.0	55.8	0.69
2012-13	5-7	84.7%	146	15.8	17.5	-0.11

Goal 2: Growth Measure¹²

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

Method

This measure examines the change in performance of the same group of scholars from one year to the next and the progress they are making in comparison to other scholars with the same score in the previous year. The analysis only includes scholars who took the state exam in 2012-13 and also have a state exam score in 2011-12 including scholars who were retained in the same grade. Scholars with the same 2011-12 scores are ranked by their 2012-13 scores and assigned a percentile based on their relative growth in performance (mean growth percentile). Scholars' growth percentiles are aggregated school-wide to yield a school's mean growth percentile. In order for a school to perform above the statewide median, it must have a mean growth percentile greater than 50.

Given the timing of the state's release of Growth Model data, the 2013-14 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2012-13 results, the most recent Growth Model data available.¹³

Results

The overall Mean Growth Percentile for Math in 2012-13 was 45.1, approaching, but falling short of the 50.0 target.

2012-13 Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile	
	School	Statewide Average
5	47.68	50.0
6	46.12	50.0
7	41.12	50.0
8	--	50.0
All	45.1	50.0

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

Additional Evidence

BCMSB had consistent performance in Math across grade levels and came very close to the statewide average in Student Growth Percentile. Since their performance in Math was even stronger in the 2013-14 testing cycle, it is anticipated that growth will meet or exceed the state mean in with data from the most current test administration.

¹² See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

¹³ Schools can acquire these data from the NYSED's business portal: portal.nysed.gov.

Mathematics Mean Growth Percentile by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Mean Growth Percentile			
	2010-11 ¹⁴	2011-12 ¹⁴	2012-13	Statewide Average
5			47.68	50.0
6			46.12	50.0
7			41.12	50.0
8			--	50.0
All			45.1	50.0

Summary of the Mathematics Goal

In comparison with Albany City School District (“ACSD”), BCMSB scholars performed at higher rates of proficiency in Math in both 2011 and 2012. With the introduction of the new, CCLS-aligned NYS exams in 2012-13, scores declined. In 2014, BCMSB scholars maintained scores in all grades.

In the Spring 2013 NYS test administration, BCMSB scholars continued to outperform ACSD students. In the following year (Spring 2014), ACSD scores declined in Math, while BCMSB improved, especially with cohort scholars. While school leaders acknowledge that at some grade levels, their scholars performed only on par with ACSD, each cohort experienced growth between the two years of CCLS test administrations.

¹⁴ Grade level results not available.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested scholars who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested scholars who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of scholars in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged scholars among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2012-13 school district results.)	Did Not Achieve
Growth	Each year, under the state's Growth Model the school's mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested scholars in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Did Not Achieve

Action Plan

I. Math Specific Highlights

BCMSB will continue to focus on rigorous instruction. To support teacher implementation of rigorous instruction, BCMSB will focus on three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum. Leaders and coaches will refine structures to support these practices:

- Lesson Essential Questions will be incorporated into daily lessons to promote discussion and inquiry versus teacher-center pedagogy.
- A refined evaluation cycle will be implemented that includes observation and coaching. BCMSB teachers will receive ongoing coaching support from the Albany Network's Math coach.
- Engage NY materials have been purchased, plus teachers will have access to supplemental materials.
- Interim assessments will be redesigned. Interim assessments will use a combination of assessments from EngageNY and teacher-created assessments using exemplars issued by the state and designed to meet the rigor of the CCSS. The assessments will be administered at the end of the first, second, and fourth quarters. The state exams will take the place of the third quarter assessment.

In 2014-15, teachers will use pacing guides for Math on analysis of curricular tools with a heavy focus on the 8 Math Practices recommended by CCLS, writing across all content areas, increased close reading within all disciplines.

The Director of School Quality has articulated a set of best practices for teachers in grades 5-8, which align with the school's values and future plans for improvement. Shifts in the curriculum and expectations for classroom practice are reflected in these content-specific goals. These "Aspirational Statements" will be incorporated into teacher observation tools for the 2014-15 school year that include:

- All lessons and tasks are intentionally sequenced, cumulatively attend to the three aspects of rigor, and spend the large majority of time on the major work of grade.
- Supporting content directly relates and supports mastery of grade-level standards with assessment focusing on grade-level Standards for Mathematical Content.
- Each teacher works to develop student mastery of grade-level Common Core Standards and increase student independence in applying the Standards of Mathematical Practice
- Each teacher monitors and tracks student progress and regularly adjusts instruction based on evidence from student work and ongoing assessment.

II. BCMSB Overall

1. Deepening the Impact of Academic Improvements

With positive results from initial efforts to better align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to the expectations of CCLS, with the goal of deepening the engagement and ownership of scholars in the learning process, and with the intention of establishing a robust foundation for middle school boys to advance to high school, college and future careers, BCMSB plans to make reinforcing improvements to its academic program. At the heart of these future improvements is the objective of completing the school's transition from teacher-led instructional practices to student-driven learning and knowledge and skills acquisition. Leveraging Understanding By Design ("UbD") as an overarching model of change and improvement during the next charter term, BCMSB plans to: (i) promote inquiry-based learning; and (ii) enhance teacher and leader professional development.

Understanding By Design: In April 2014, in preparation for the 2014-15 school year, BCMSB began working with the Albany Network to plan instructional units using the UbD framework, with a focus on thematic integration across grade levels and capitalizing on opportunities for increased reading, higher-order thinking, and authentic assessment. UbD, or backwards design challenges educators to help scholars make connections between prior knowledge, current learning, and future discovery, illuminating the "big picture" and enabling them to build logical sequences between their lessons and the CCLS. UbD emphasizes the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning and works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify learning goals, devise revealing assessments of student understanding, align standards with assessment and instruction, and craft effective and engaging learning activities. In

addition, UbD focuses on deepening student knowledge and the transfer of knowledge through “uncovering” learning, rather than “covering” content. Leveraging the UbD framework, BCMSB plans intends to integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment to create a cohesive and engaging educational experience for scholars.

i. Strengthening the Quality of Instruction

In order to support effective teacher implementation of inquiry-based learning and rigorous instruction, BCMSB will focus on three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum. These three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum – emerged from the observation of teachers and the analysis of curricular materials. A key element in the work of the critical analysis of units through the UbD lens is selecting appropriate instructional practices that align with CCLS and support rigor. Accordingly, the school leaders identified these practices as solutions that can be implemented in all subject areas to strengthen scholar engagement and learning.

With the shifts in curriculum and instruction, the school leaders recognize the need to engage in similar critical analysis. To support the critical focus and alignment, school leaders and coaches will (i) refine structures to support these practices; (ii) working to build teacher toolkits with strategies, which support these practices; and (iii) engaging in a “cycle of inquiry”.

In terms of structures, leaders and coaches will focus on implementing the math modules; LEQs to promote discussion and inquiry versus teacher-centered pedagogy; providing additional resources; and evaluating the master schedule, grade-book weights, assessment portfolio and internal assessment tools. In terms of strategies, leaders and coaches will support a focus on math practices; shared text across content areas; focus on informational reading and writing across content areas; and various instructional practices (Constructive Struggle, Student, Discourse, etc.).

School leaders will facilitate a “cycle of inquiry” using all school data, definition of rigor informed by CCLS, and specific school-wide goals. School leaders will support these initiatives by planning professional development sessions, conducting observations and providing feedback, and revising teacher evaluation criteria.

ii. Cultivating Instructional Leadership

To fully support the successful improvement and transition of the academic program at BCMSB, the Board of Trustees also has plans to invest in the continued professional growth and development of the principal and other members of the leadership team. In partnership with the Albany Network, the principal will participate in monthly collaborative inquiry-based, case study-oriented professional development sessions with principals from other charter schools in Albany. These sessions are designed to help leaders continue to sharpen their curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies, as they share ideas with colleagues through Socratic engagement and exploration of local and national best practices. This support will enable the principal to serve as the school’s lead learner and a model of continuous learning for both staff and students.

2. More Fully Engaging of the Albany Charter School Network

The Albany Charter School Network (the “Albany Network”) is a support organization for a number of the charter schools in Albany, New York. BCMSB is currently in partnership with the Albany Network, through a compact agreement under which the Albany Network provides a range of academic, operating, and financial support services to the school. In addition to ongoing recruitment services and other operating and financial support services, the Albany Network has provided significant support to the school in terms of curriculum development, instructional coaching, assessment strategy implementation, and leader and educator professional development during the 2013-14 school year. At the time of this renewal submission, the BCMSB Board of Trustees is in discussions with the Albany Network to explore the potential for the school to receive even more comprehensive services in the future. Once negotiations are finalized, Exhibit J (management company contract) may be updated.

SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

The Scholars of Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys will demonstrate proficiency in their understanding and application of scientific reasoning and problem solving.

Background

BCMSB uses the Houghton Mifflin Science series in conjunction with the Independent Inquiry Kits. The goal for this program was to introduce scholars to more hands on inquiry-based learning.

Since opening in 2010, BCMSB has placed an emphasis on inquiry. BCMSB introduced scholars to action instruction through Directed Inquiry, where scholars investigate the activity that accompanies each lesson in an effort to provide opportunities to develop scientific thinking through directed exploration. This introductory process is very heavily teacher directed. Scholars will progress to Guided Inquiry, where each lesson is investigated more thoroughly, which encourages scholars to expand their understanding of the scientific process. During this phase of inquiry, scholars are becoming less dependent on teachers for direction. Scholars will ultimately undergo Independent Inquiry, where they will be able to design their own experiments to extend their understanding of science concepts.

Houghton Mifflin Science provides real-world opportunities for scholars to develop and practice grade-appropriate math skills and express their learning through the interpretation of world problems, graphs, and data. Interactive Readers provide scaffolded support for reading informational text, vocabulary development, leveled study guides and leveled independent books.

Teachers will also have opportunities to build their science inquiry awareness through professional development designed to help educators focus on developing experiments, integrating science with other core disciplines, fostering interactive discussions regarding science concepts and content, as well as providing opportunities for collaboration and coaching.

The science curriculum is geared toward helping scholars not only learn the concepts and skills necessary to be successful on state assessments, but to make meaningful connections to current events in society. Teachers use technology to foster independent growth in exploration through science. Scholars learn to perform labs as part of scientific inquiry to solve larger problems that teachers present to them.

Goal 3: Absolute Measure

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

Method

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to scholars in 8th grade in spring 2014. The school converted each scholar's raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires scholars enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at proficiency.

Results

For 2013-2014, BCMSB did not meet the absolute measure of 75% for scholars enrolled in at least their second year scoring proficient. Scholars enrolled for 2+ years and all scholars performed at a similar level of proficiency – 53% and 54% respectively.

Performance on 2013-14 By All Scholars and 2+ Years Scholars in Science

Grades	All Scholars		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
8	54%	39	53%	38

Evaluation

BCMSB did not achieve this measure.

Additional Evidence

For the 2013-2014 school year, 8th grade was added. This was first year of science testing for these scholars. There is no historical data available to track performance over time.

Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Scholars Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
8					53%	38

Goal 3: Comparative Measure

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

Method

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

in which the school had tested scholars in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

Results

At this time, ACSD data is not available for comparison with school performance.

2013-14 State Science Exam Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level

Grade	Percent of Scholars at Proficiency			
	Charter School Scholars In At Least 2 nd Year		All District Scholars	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
8	53%	38	TBD	

Evaluation

Without access to ACSD data, BCMSB cannot compare performance to the local district.

Additional Evidence

For the 2013-2014 school year, 8th grade was added. This was first year of science testing for these scholars. There is a no historical data available to track performance over time.

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

Grade	Percent of Charter School Scholars at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Scholars					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
8					53%	TBD

Summary of the Science Goal

For the 2013-2014 school year, 8th grade was added. This was first year of science testing for these scholars. With the lack of historical data and lack of district data, there is minimal analysis of performance that can occur.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested scholars enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State examination.	Achieved/ Did Not Achieve
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested scholars enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of all scholars in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved/ Did Not Achieve

Action Plan

After completing the first year of science instruction and testing, BCMSB have initiatives related to science.

i. Shift to a Thematic Curriculum

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, BCMSB will begin the shift to cross-curricular thematic units, which will include an updated scope and sequence with interdisciplinary connections that builds upon the strengths of the EngageNY modules. With support from the Albany Network, BCMSB has developed a revised curriculum guide that incorporates the school's key design elements with an inquiry-based focus. While the curriculum guide continues to draw strongly from the EngageNY modules, it has been adapted to suit the unique needs of BCMSB scholars and the overarching focus of the school. The curriculum guide provides vertical and horizontal alignment. Standard sets have been identified that are aligned across content areas and grade levels. The curriculum guide has weekly, quarterly, and yearly components to support short-term and long-term planning.

ii. Strengthening the Quality of Instruction

In order to support effective teacher implementation of inquiry-based learning and rigorous instruction, BCMSB will focus on three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum. These three main practices – student discourse, close reading, and writing across the curriculum – emerged from the observation of teachers and the analysis of curricular materials. A key element in the work of the critical analysis of units through the UbD lens is selecting appropriate instructional practices that align with CCLS and support rigor. Accordingly, the school leaders identified these practices as solutions that can be implemented in all subject areas to strengthen scholar engagement and learning.

iii. Cultivating Instructional Leadership

To fully support the successful improvement and transition of the academic program at BCMSB, the Board of Trustees also has plans to invest in the continued professional growth and development of the principal and other members of the leadership team. In partnership with the Albany Network, the principal will participate in monthly collaborative inquiry-based, case study-oriented professional development sessions with principals from other charter schools in Albany. These sessions are designed to help leaders continue to sharpen their curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies, as they share ideas with colleagues through Socratic engagement and exploration of local and national best practices. This support will enable the principal to serve as the school's lead learner and a model of continuous learning for both staff and students.

NCLB

Goal 4: NCLB

Brighter Choice Charter Middle School for Boys will make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

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

Method

Since *all* scholars 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 scholars among all tested scholars must meet state proficiency standards. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards. The report cards indicate each school's status under the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.

Results

BCMSB is in Good Standing.

Evaluation

BCMSB achieved this measure.

Additional Evidence

BCMSB continues to be in Good Standing.

NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2011-12	Good Standing
2012-13	Good Standing
2013-14	Good Standing