



2024-25 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

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2024-25 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Julie Fisher, Executive Director, and Erin Solomon, Compliance Specialist, prepared this 2024-25 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school’s Board of Trustees:

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Julie Fisher has served as the Executive Director (initially Co-Director) since 2006.

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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The NYC Autism Charter School East Harlem (NYCACS East Harlem or NYCACS EH) is a comprehensive educational program that serves the needs of individuals diagnosed with severe to moderate autism. As such, NYCACS East Harlem offers a low student-to-teacher ratio (1:1 in most classrooms) and utilizes a well-rounded, functional curriculum that enables a high level of individualized and differentiated instruction. Data are collected to ensure that learning is taking place and, if not, to allow for timely and focused problem solving. In addition, family involvement is strongly encouraged with school observations (including clinic and planning meetings), home visits, and parent/caregiver training offered to all.

Opened in 2005, the school was initially authorized by the NYC Department of Education to serve 28 students with severe to moderate degrees of autism ages 5-12 years in an ungraded setting. The school received full five-year charter renewals in 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2022. Total size and ages served were adjusted as part of each renewal application. The school now operates as one of two schools under the SUNY CSI authorized NYC Autism Charter Schools Education Corporation along with its sister school, NYC Autism Charter School Bronx, with the most recent charter extension issued through July 31, 2027. The school currently serves 40 students with autism, ages 5-21.

NYCACS East Harlem is committed to providing an effective, research-based education to each of its students with autism. Autism is characterized by deficits in language and social skills, and by behavioral excesses such as aggression, self-injury, and perseverative or stereotypic behavior. NYCACS East Harlem employs only those science-based education and treatment strategies empirically demonstrated to be effective with students on the autism spectrum, all of whom are at risk for academic failure. NYCACS East Harlem provides its students with a comprehensive program of academic and support services based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA).

The educational philosophy of NYCACS East Harlem is aligned to its mission. It focuses on the treatment of individual students, recognizes the centrality of the environment in shaping behavior, includes the use of the scientific method (observation, collection and recording of data, use of data to inform instruction and interventions), and assumes that progress can be achieved by every student. This philosophy emphasizes the use of small classroom environments and optimal staff-student ratios to provide intensive, individualized instruction as prescribed by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Finally, NYCACS East Harlem holds that families are an integral part of each student's education and that parental involvement in the form of classroom observations, regularly scheduled clinic meetings, home and family consultations, annual reviews and transition planning meetings are all highly desired elements of the school's program.

The NYCACS East Harlem curriculum is aligned with and cross-walked to the New York State Learning Standards. The curriculum is comprised of research-based teaching procedures and individualized skill acquisition programs that facilitate the development of skills across 23 curriculum areas, including expressive language, social interaction, reading, mathematics, speech, fine motor, gross motor, behavior, and self-care. Close to 1,200 targeted instructional programs provide clearly defined behavioral objectives, specific teaching procedures, assessment procedures to determine the effectiveness of interventions, and terminal goals to ensure maintenance and generalization. When appropriate, standardized curriculum materials (e.g., Everyday Mathematics, Foundations) may be adapted for use with particular students. Data collection informs all decision-making. Educational goals for each student are developed as part of the

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student's IEP and skill acquisition list (updated quarterly), with voluntary parental input playing an integral role in program design.

NYCACS East Harlem students are assessed primarily by examining the percentage of objectives mastered on each student's IEP, and through assessments that are designed specifically for this population and conducted annually. As per their IEP recommendations, NYCACS East Harlem students do not take the statewide ELA, math, and science exams given to their typically developing age-matched peers. Instead, once they meet Grade 3 age equivalence, they are assessed using the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for students with severe disabilities. Consequently, most of the metrics requested in this template do not apply to our students.

The approved NYCACS East Harlem Accountability Plan identifies six goals and 20 measures specifically designed to assess the school's success in meeting the needs of its students with severe to moderate degrees of autism and their families, in addition to reporting on outreach and ESSA status. Progress toward each of those goals and measures for the 2024-25 school year is set forth below.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year															
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded	Total
2018-19														40	40
2019-20														40	40
2020-21														40	40
2021-22														38	38
2022-23														40	40
2023-24														38	38
2024-25														40	40

PROMOTION POLICY

As an ungraded program, a promotion policy is not applicable.

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GOAL 1: STUDENT PROGRESS IN TARGETED PROGRAMMING

GOAL 1: Students will demonstrate progress in targeted skill acquisition programming.

Measure 1: Progress on IEP Objectives

Annually, at least 75% of NYCACS East Harlem students will master a minimum of 85% of the objectives (skill acquisition and behavior reduction) set forth in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review.

METHOD

This measure serves as an indicator of progress on skills contained within each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score is generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review. An IEP objective is considered complete once the student can demonstrate the corresponding skill at a predetermined level (e.g., 90% correct responding or better for at least two consecutive data points).

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Overall, 90%, or 36 of 40 students¹, mastered a minimum of 85% of their annual IEP objectives, exceeding the 75% target.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

IEP objective selection is based upon: 1) results from annual assessments (VB-MAPP and/or AFLS), 2) evidence of past learning history and rate of acquisition, and 3) input from parents. Teachers understand the importance of these objectives for each student and monitor progress through weekly electronic data collection.

Measure 2: Annual Assessments

Annually, at least 75% of NYCACS East Harlem students assessed using the Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) will show an increase in score or will have reached the top score of 170 in the Milestones subtest. The VB-MAPP is a tool that is frequently used to assess young children on the autism spectrum.

¹ All 40 students have been enrolled at the school for at least 12 months.

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METHOD

Assessments are conducted twice for the first year of a student's enrollment at NYCACS East Harlem – once at the start of the year, and again at the end of the year. After a student's first year, these assessments are conducted on an annual basis. Typically, one of two assessments are conducted – the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP), or the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS). The former is focused primarily on assessing language, communication, and academics, and is therefore geared toward younger students and those on the more sophisticated end of the autism spectrum. The latter is focused primarily on life skills, and thus geared toward older students and those on the more profoundly affected end of the autism spectrum. Scores are compared for each student year to year, and a determination is made as to whether there has been an increase that meets or surpasses the criteria set within the assessment accountability measure.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS EH collects data for each student assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment and highlights the 2023-2024 assessment score or initial assessment score, the current year or final assessment score (2024-25 school year), and an indication of whether there was progress that met or exceeded the criteria set forth in the assessment accountability measure. **Twenty-five of 26, or 96% of eligible students increased annual assessment scores by the number of points stipulated within the accountability measure, surpassing the target percentage of 75%.** For the one student who did not meet the improvement criteria, they were able to maintain the same score as last school year.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Annual assessments not only document progress but allow for teachers to identify ongoing areas for growth and development. They are conducted within a timeframe that allows for results to be reviewed with parents at internal planning meetings (meetings scheduled with each family to discuss longer term goals and preparation for future transition) and utilized to inform IEP objective development in advance of annual reviews.

Measure 3: Group Instruction

Annually, 100% of NYCACS East Harlem students will participate in some amount of group instruction, regardless of classroom ratio, in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills.

METHOD

Despite the 1:1 instructional ratio in most classrooms, NYCACS East Harlem prioritizes group instruction in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills. Group instruction includes circle time activities, curriculum-based lessons, turn-taking during shared leisure activities, shared chores, and more. To collect data for Measure 3, Clinical Supervisors tracked whether each student received group instruction during the school year using the school's data collection platform and classroom schedules.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2024-25 school year, **40 of 40, or 100%** of students participated in group instruction during the school year, meeting the goal.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Despite behavioral challenges, all NYCACS East Harlem students were able to meet this measure this year. Group instruction remains an important goal for every student and NYCACS East Harlem will continue to prioritize such opportunities to the greatest extent possible.

Measure 4: IEP Goals

Annually, 100% of NYCACS East Harlem students will meet at least three IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and/or increased independence.

METHOD

Prioritizing instruction in the areas of self-care, life skills, and independence is critical to ensure that NYCACS East Harlem students develop the skills necessary to care for themselves. Examples of these IEP objectives include bathroom skills (like washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting), cleaning, walking safely in the community, dressing independently, and eating using utensils.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS East Harlem collects individualized data on progress toward and mastery of IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and increased independence for each student. **NYCACS East Harlem came close to the goal of 100% with 39 of 40 students, or 98% of students, meeting at least three IEP objectives focused on these critical skill areas.**

Measure 5: Student Inclusion in a Less Restrictive Environment

100% of students who have attended NYCACS East Harlem for at least two school years and who reach a pre-determined performance level in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of the VB-MAPP assessment will participate in some form of inclusion for part of the week.

METHOD

Each school year, most students under the age of 13 are assessed using the VB-MAPP assessment. Performance levels in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of this assessment are used to determine which students will participate in inclusion. If a student meets the criteria, inclusion in a less restrictive environment is planned for the following school year. This measure looks at whether each

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student who demonstrated readiness criteria in the previous year did, in fact, participate in inclusion during the current year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

In the 2024-25 school year, NYCACS EH had six students who met these criteria. **These students participated in inclusion ranging from two hours per day to up to 30 hours per week, meeting the goal.**

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

NYCACS East Harlem grew to six students who participated in inclusion this past school year. NYCACS sees the importance of inclusion for those students on a path to a less restrictive educational setting and will continue to focus on additional inclusion options in the coming years.

Measure 6: Movement to less restrictive environments

Within the current charter term, at least 10 students will transition from their NYCACS classroom placement to a less restrictive educational setting outside of NYCACS.

METHOD

Across a five-year charter period, NYCACS East Harlem tracks the number of students who transition to a less restrictive full-time educational setting. Typically, students who participate in inclusion within a less restrictive environment— successfully and for increasing amounts of time—will ultimately graduate and transition into a less restrictive educational environment full time.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The table below contains a line for each student who transitioned full-time to a less restrictive educational setting within the current five-year charter period. **So far in this five-year period, eleven students transitioned to a less restrictive educational setting, already surpassing the goal for the current term.**

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of students assessed using the AFLS, nine out of 10, or 90% demonstrated progress across each age matched section.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Annual assessments not only document progress but allow for teachers to identify ongoing areas for growth and development. They are conducted within a timeframe that allows for results to be reviewed with parents at internal planning meetings (meetings scheduled with each family to discuss longer term goals and preparation for future transition) and utilized to inform IEP objective development in advance of annual reviews.

Measure 8: Community Based Instruction (Objective Mastery)

Annually, 100% of NYCACS East Harlem students ages 13 and older whose behavior allows for participation in community based instruction (CBI) will master 100% of target CBI objectives (e.g., community fitness, travel, work internships) set forth in their IEPs. Data will be collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed community based IEP objectives by the total number of community based IEP objectives determined at each student's annual review.

METHOD

Community based instruction (CBI) is a part of the educational experience for all students over the age of 13 whose behavior allows for participation. NYCACS East Harlem's goal is for students to master 100% of the targeted objectives set forth in their IEP that fall into this domain.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS East Harlem tracks the number of CBI-based objectives each student masters for those who participate in CBI. **Of the students aged 13 and up who were able to participate in CBI, 85% (11 of 13) met all of their objectives.** For the two students who were unable to meet 100% of their targets, one student had an increase in absenteeism and disruptive behavior, and the second was just one target away from meeting the goal.

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ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

NYCACS East Harlem will continue to refine programming for this age group, as well as all community based instruction components, to ensure that students are exposed to skills and experiences that will position them for maximum success in adulthood.

Measure 9: Community Based Instruction (Student Independence)

Annually, 100% of NYCACS East Harlem students whose behavior allows for participation in CBI will perform with an increased level of independence as evidenced by NYCACS staff's ability to decrease physical proximity and overall support. The ultimate goal is for staff to be completely faded and for students to be supervised exclusively by site personnel.

METHOD

Community based instruction is a part of the educational experience for all students over the age of 13 whose behavior allows for participation. NYCACS East Harlem's goal is for students to show an increased level of independence as evidenced by NYCACS staff's ability to decrease physical proximity and overall support documented via data collected and/or anecdotal notes.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS EH tracks whether increased independence was observed during CBI. **Of the students aged 13 and up who were able to participate in CBI, 92% (12 of 13) showed an increased level of independence across their time participating in CBI, coming close to meeting the goal of 100%.** For the student who did not show an increased level of independence, they had limited exposure to CBI due to frequent absences and disruptive behavior.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

As referenced above, NYCACS East Harlem anticipates that it will have increased opportunities for CBI in the coming school year.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 1: STUDENT PROGRESS IN TARGETED PROGRAMMING

NYCACS East Harlem has made significant progress on its outcomes in the 2024-25 school year. The details and specifics for each Measure are found above.

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, at least 75% of students will master a minimum of 85% of the objectives (skill acquisition and behavior reduction) set forth in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Data are collected on all programs that support IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed IEP objectives by the total number of objectives determined at each student's annual review.	Met
2. Annually, at least 75% of students assessed using the Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) will show an increase in score or will have reached the top score of 170 in the Milestones subtest. The VB-MAPP is a tool that is frequently used to assess young children on the autism spectrum.	Met
3. Annually, 100% of students will participate in some amount of group instruction, regardless of classroom ratio, in order to promote social interaction and build social tolerance and social skills.	Met
4. Annually, 100% of students will have at least three IEP objectives focused on self-care, life skills, and/or increased independence.	Not Met
5. 100% of students who have attended NYCACS for at least two school years and who reach a pre-determined performance level in the Transition domain and/or decrease in the Barriers section of the VB-MAPP assessment will participate in some form of inclusion for part of the week.	Met
6. Within the current charter term, at least ten students will transition from their NYCACS classroom placement to a less restrictive educational setting outside of NYCACS.	Met
7. Annually, 100% of students who are assessed using the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS) will demonstrate progress across each age matched section. AFLS is frequently used to assess adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum.	Not Met
8. Annually, 100% of students ages 13 and older whose behavior allows for participation in community based instruction (CBI) will master 100% of target CBI objectives (e.g., community fitness, travel, work internships) set forth in their IEPs. Data will be collected on all programs that support	Not Met

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<p>IEP goals and objectives. Annually, a percent score will be generated by dividing the number of completed community based IEP objectives by the total number of community based IEP objectives determined at each student’s annual review.</p>	
<p>9. Annually, at least 100% of students whose behavior allows for participation in CBI will perform with an increased level of independence as evidenced by NYCACS staff’s ability to decrease physical proximity and overall support. The ultimate goal is for staff to be completely faded and for students to be supervised exclusively by site personnel.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS East Harlem met five of nine Measures in this goal area during the 2024-25 school year. While Goal 1, Measure 4 was not met, the criteria for this Measure has become more rigorous this school year. Previously, students were required to “have” three IEP objectives, and currently students are required to “meet” three IEP objectives. Since interfering behavior was the barrier of not meeting the three IEP objectives for one student this school year, NYCACS EH will focus on this as part of its programming for next school year. Additionally, NYCACS EH will broadly focus on decreasing absenteeism and disruptive behavior for students, as these factors directly impacted progress on AFLS, mastering CBI objectives, and indicating increased level of independence.

GOAL 2: PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCTION OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

GOAL 2: Students will demonstrate reduced levels of challenging behavior (in frequency and/or magnitude). Additionally, staff will work to fade Behavior Intervention Plans in a thoughtful manner, always keeping in mind the safety and well-being of each student and those around them.

Measure 1: Reduction of Challenging Behavior

Annually, 100% of NYCACS East Harlem students who have had one or more Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) in place to address challenging behavior for at least six months will show a reduction in challenging behavior—in terms of frequency, magnitude, or both. Data will be collected on all formal behavior reduction efforts daily. Progress will be defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIPs and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior). Progress will be assessed across every BIP, even if more than one is associated with an individual student.

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METHOD

NYCACS East Harlem collects student Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) data on a daily basis. Student progress is defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIP and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior).

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS EH tracks challenging behavior reduction for all students who have one or more formal Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs). Each BIP tracks mean and range percentages or occurrences of behavior (depending upon measurement procedures utilized within each plan) from baseline or previous plan, compared to current BIP mean. At NYCACS EH in the 2024-25 school year, there were 14 students with one or more BIPs. **Of these 14 students, 100% demonstrated a reduction from previous and/or baseline measures, meeting the goal.**

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Many NYCACS East Harlem students exhibit different forms of challenging behavior at different times during their enrollment as a result of their diagnosis. Neither school has ever suspended or expelled a student since opening in East Harlem in 2005. Rather, NYCACS East Harlem has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing levels of such challenging behavior through careful baseline and functional assessment procedures, intervention probes, and formal Behavior Intervention Plans. Parental consent is secured for every step of that process, starting with the baseline and assessment phase. Given how many different forms these plans can take, how long they may be in place, and the general ebb and flow of rates of behavior for this population at different times in their lifespan, meaningfully capturing progress can be difficult. NYCACS East Harlem will continue to look at how it reports on these data, given the critical nature of this area of programming.

Measure 2: Improvement in Barriers Section

For those students without formal behavior reduction planning, students will maintain an average classroom engagement score of at least 85% or show a 30% increase from initial engagement score to final engagement score on the VB-MAPP assessment. Examples of student engagement include: on task behavior, active learning, independence during leisure skills, and lower rates of stereotypy and maladaptive behavior(s).

METHOD

For many students without BIPs, NYCACS East Harlem assesses progress in student engagement on the VB-MAPP assessment. NYCACS East Harlem aims for an average classroom engagement score of at least 85% or a 30% increase from initial engagement score to final score.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS East Harlem collects engagement data on all students without BIPs. Of these students, their initial engagement score and final engagement score are recorded, and it is determined if they maintain or increase their score. **Of the 23 students who were assessed the 2024-25 school year, 23, or 100%, maintained an average score of 85% or showed a 30% improvement.**

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

As stated above, reducing levels of challenging behavior and teaching adaptive alternatives is a key aspect of instruction at NYCACS. Staff are constantly working to ensure that students have access to all of the environments, activities, and opportunities they need and deserve. The presence of behavior challenges can limit that access.

SUMMARY OF GOAL 2: PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCTION OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, 100% of students who have had one or more Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) in place to address challenging behavior for at least six months will show a reduction in challenging behavior—in terms of frequency, magnitude, or both. Data will be collected on all formal behavior reduction efforts daily. Progress will be defined as movement in the desired direction from previous BIPs and/or baseline measures (i.e., a reduction in rates of targeted behavior). Progress will be assessed across every BIP, even if more than one is associated with an individual student.	Met
2. For those students without formal behavior reduction planning, students will maintain an average classroom engagement score of at least 85% or show a 30% increase from initial engagement score to final engagement score. Examples of student engagement include: on task behavior, active learning, independence during leisure skills, and lower rates of stereotypy and maladaptive behavior(s).	Met

ACTION PLAN

Behavior Intervention Plans can take many different forms and be in place for varied amounts of time. The nature of autism, paired with changes that come during adolescence and/or the appearance of co-morbid conditions, means that challenging behavior can appear suddenly or change in magnitude and topography at different points. Given how much time, planning, collaborating, and problem-solving goes into managing and reducing challenging behavior, NYCACS East Harlem will continue to look at ways to capture all of the work that goes on in this arena. Additionally, NYCACS East Harlem will continue to explore new ways to address behavior challenges that are safe and effective for students and staff.

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GOAL 3: ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

GOAL 3: NYC Autism Charter Schools will continually respect and advocate for the human rights of each individual student.

Measure 1: HRC Positive Assessment of Behavior Intervention Plans

A Human Rights Committee comprised of outside experts (e.g., attorney, medical practitioner, autism specialist, special educator, psychologist) as well as internal representatives from both schools, will meet two times per year and judge NYCACS programs and procedures as respecting the human rights of each individual student, evidenced by positive responses to at least 80% of assessment items for each Behavior Intervention Plan reviewed. Any negative responses will be followed by immediate and documented modifications.

METHOD

In a typical school year, NYCACS East Harlem convenes a Human Rights Committee (HRC) two times per year. This committee consists of individuals from a variety of fields. Over the year, all Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) with any type of restrictive component (e.g. response cost, de-escalation) are reviewed by the HRC. For each, a history of challenging behavior is provided, as well as results from assessments, baseline data, and a rationale for the current BIP. Details of the BIP are reviewed along with data collected to date. HRC members are given the opportunity to discuss and seek clarification on any aspects of the plan. They are asked a series of questions including “Is there evidence of parental consent?”, “Was a functional behavior assessment conducted?”, and “Is there evidence of reinforcement procedures being utilized?” Committee member “yes” responses are tallied and divided by the total number of questions to determine a percentage of positive responses.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS records the total number of the items assessed at Human Rights Committee meetings, the number of items with a positive response, and the overall percentage of items with a positive response. In the 2024-25 school year, meetings were convened for four students, who were assessed on a total of 35 combined items. **Of the BIPs reviewed, there were positive responses to at least 80% of the items for two of the five plans.** For those BIPs that did not meet the 80% threshold, the reasons were: lack of staff training signatures, lack of an initiation date, and, in two instances, lack of parent signature (despite evidence of verbal consent). It was later determined that this last key issue was the result of an administrative error (see Goal 3, Measure 2). While this goal was not met for individual BIPs, NYCACS EH had positive responses for 42 of 49 aggregate items, or 86% on average.

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ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The purpose of the Human Rights Committee is to ensure that NYCACS East Harlem respects the rights of students who, in many cases, are unable to advocate for themselves. Close work with parents/caregivers around behavior reduction (and all other programming) is also evidence of the importance placed on this issue, as is the extensive training provided to staff on effective and ethical modes of instruction, respect and positivity, confidentiality, and professionalism.

Measure 2: HRC Evidence of Parental Consent

Evidence of parental consent will be demonstrated for 100% of Behavior Intervention plans reviewed.

METHOD

In a typical school year, NYCACS EH convenes a Human Rights Committee (HRC) two times per year. It consists of individuals from a variety of fields. Over the year, all Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) with any restrictive component (e.g., time out, response cost) are reviewed by the HRC. For each, a history of challenging behavior is provided, as well as results from assessments, baseline data, and a rationale for the current BIP. Details of the BIP are reviewed along with data collected to date. HRC members are given the opportunity to discuss and seek clarification on any aspects of the plan. Then they are asked a series of questions. The number of yes responses to the question, “Is there evidence of parental consent?” is divided by the total number of plans reviewed to determine a percentage of plans with parental consent.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Parental consent was provided for three of five, or 60%, of BIPs reviewed.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

See “ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE” section from Measure #1 above. Responses to this particular HRC review item are considered as a separate measure, given the importance of documented parental consent for such procedures.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 3: ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Measure	Outcome
1. A Human Rights Committee comprised of outside experts (e.g., attorney, medical practitioner, autism specialist, special educator, psychologist) as well as internal representatives from both schools, will meet two times per year and judge NYCACS programs and procedures as respecting the human rights of each individual student, evidenced by positive responses to at least 80% of assessment items for each Behavior Intervention Plan reviewed. Any negative responses will be followed by immediate and documented modifications.	Not Met
2. Evidence of parental consent will be demonstrated for 100% of Behavior Intervention plans reviewed.	Not Met

ACTION PLAN

Given the forms of challenging behavior demonstrated by some of the students served— including self-injury, aggression, property destruction – NYCACS East Harlem must focus on ensuring the safety of students and staff at all times. The school’s primary focus is and has always been on using antecedent management strategies whenever possible (arranging a student’s schedule, environment, reinforcement system, etc.) to minimize the occurrence of challenging behavior. However, there are times when instances of extreme and dangerous behavior occur which require responses that may be restrictive in nature in order to ensure the safety of all. Building in BIP reviews by a Human Rights Committee (in addition to parental consent at every step of the BIP process and ongoing dialogue with parents as rates of challenging behavior are monitored) ensures students are protected. In response to the missed dates and signatures identified by the HRC this year, NYCACS is already in the process of auditing all BIPs (regardless of levels of restrictiveness) and revising training for supervisors tasked with writing them, securing parent signatures, and training staff on implementation.

GOAL 4: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

GOAL 4: Families will be actively involved in their children’s education program, gain a broader understanding of autism-related issues and how best to address them, and prepare for life after school has ended. They will express satisfaction with the NYCACS East Harlem educational program and judge it to be effective in achieving these goals.

Measure 1: Individualized Parent Training

Annually, 85% of parents/guardians will participate in a minimum of four hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning.

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METHOD

The NYCACS East Harlem educational philosophy holds that families are an integral part of the students' education, and that parental involvement is a highly desired element of the school's programs. While no action is taken against parents, or children of parents, who do not choose to participate, NYCACS East Harlem has established a variety of initiatives and activities to engage parents in training focused on school, home and/or community for which participation hours are logged. These include the following: clinic meetings in which family members participate with clinical staff in reviewing, problem-solving, and enhancing educational programming; scheduled observations that allow parents to observe specific educational activities, some of which may take place off-site in the community; access to Home and Family Consultation by NYCACS East Harlem personnel and/or visits by parents to NYCACS East Harlem to develop specific skill acquisition and behavior reduction programs that improve quality of life for the student and their family outside of the school setting; and annual planning meetings in which future goals in the areas of work, living, and community participation are discussed.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYCACS EH tracks the number of clinic/school observation hours, the number of home consultation hours, and the total number of hours of these activities for each student. NYCACS EH strives to have each family participate in a minimum of four hours of parent engagement per year. **Forty of 40—or 100%—of parents/guardians obtained at least four hours of training.** The average number of parent engagement hours across the 40 families was 9.42, far exceeding the goal.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

Minutes of all clinic sessions, home consultation visits, and annual planning meetings are maintained in each student's file and attest to the quality and value of these activities, all aimed at helping parents and family members gain a broader understanding of 1) autism-related issues, 2) how best to address them as they relate to their child(ren), and 3) how to prepare for their child's life ahead.

Measure 2: NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey

Annually, 85% of parents/guardians who complete the annual NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey will rate the school's education program as effective.

METHOD

Annually, NYCACS East Harlem conducts an internally designed NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey to determine parent satisfaction with the school. The survey consists of 24 statements applicable to NYCACS. Statements are scored using a Likert five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Comments and answers to open-ended questions were solicited as well. The survey is distributed anonymously using the Qualtrics platform, and is made available in both English and Spanish.

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RESULTS and EVALUATION

Thirty-six of 40 families responded to the NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey, an increase from 21 families last school year. **When asked about satisfaction with their child’s program, 100% of parents indicated general satisfaction. In response to the statement “Overall, the school program is effective,” 100% of parents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed.**

NYCACS Program Effectiveness Survey Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results 2024-2025	
Item	Percent Satisfied
“Overall, the school program is effective.”	100%

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The Parent Program Effectiveness Survey offers open ended questions, including the following: “Please list important skills your child has learned at NYCACS this year.”; “Please list strengths of the school and leadership team.”; and “Please provide feedback about the support your family has received, as well as the quality of the individualized instruction for your child.”

Comments and anecdotes reinforced numerical findings from this and other surveys. A few responses to open-ended questions include the following:

- [REDACTED]

Measure 3: Parent Satisfaction

After every instruction focused visit at school, home, or in the community across the year, at least 85% of parents/guardians will indicate overall satisfaction with the quality of education provided to their child.

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METHOD

Parents/guardians are asked to complete an NYCACS Observation Form immediately following a visit or training session at school or in the community. Questions are presented in a yes/no format and request feedback on student engagement, instructional interaction, appropriateness of learning tasks, communication, learning environment, clarity of student performance data, safety, and overall satisfaction with the quality of education observed. Open-ended questions solicit further feedback on successes, concerns, and recommendations. Observation Forms are then reviewed by the Clinical Supervisor and Head of School. Translation support is provided where needed. The yes/no question utilized for this measure is the following “Are you satisfied with the quality of education observed during your visit?”

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Across the 30 families who completed post-visit surveys, 97% of those families expressed overall satisfaction with the quality of education observed, surpassing the goal of 85%.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The observation forms are valuable in providing immediate feedback following instruction-focused visits/training sessions. The forms are straightforward and give parents a voice in the continued development and shaping of instruction. Results are shared directly to the Head of School (rather than a paper/pencil form given to classroom staff) so that each parent/caregiver can be as comfortable as possible sharing both positive and critical feedback about their child’s classroom staff and programming. The Head of School will continue to ensure that any concerns are promptly considered and addressed.

Measure 4: Participation in Mandatory Action

Annually, 100% of parents/guardians of students over the age of 15 who have not already successfully completed transition readiness activities will participate in at least one mandatory action related to preparing for their child’s departure from the education system. These mandatory actions include: having their child evaluated to become eligible to access OPWDD (Office of People with Developmental Disabilities) services and funding; identifying and/or enrolling with an adult service agency and/or taking steps to secure self-directed funding; and identifying which care coordination organization will manage their child’s Individualized Service Plan.

METHOD

NYCACS EH strive to prepare families, and students, to successfully transition out of the school. For those families who have not already successfully completed transition readiness activities, NYCACS EH seeks to have those families complete at least one mandatory action related to their departure from the education system.

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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of the six families who had not successfully completed transition readiness activities, 100% of these families completed at least one mandatory action.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

NYCACS will continue to examine how to best inform and help support families as they prepare their children for the departure from the education system.

SUMMARY OF GOAL 4: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, 85% of parents/guardians will participate in a minimum of four hours of individualized parent training focused on school, home, and/or community learning.	Met
2. Annually, 85% of parents/guardians will rate the NYCACS education program as effective in the annual Program Effectiveness Survey.	Met
3. After every instruction focused visit at school, home, or in the community across the year, at least 85% of parents/guardians will indicate overall satisfaction with the quality of education provided to their child.	Met
4. Annually, 100% of parents/guardians of students over the age of 15 who have not already successfully completed transition readiness activities will participate in at least one mandatory action related to preparing for their child's departure from the education system. These mandatory actions include: having their child evaluated to become eligible to access OPWDD (Office of People with Developmental Disabilities) services and funding; identifying and/or enrolling with an adult service agency and/or taking steps to secure self-directed funding; and identifying which care coordination organization will manage their child's Individualized Service Plan.	Met

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS East Harlem demonstrates high levels of parent engagement and satisfaction across measures. The school will continue to work with students, parents and the broader community to enrich satisfaction and to better identify, prepare for, and transition its adolescent and young adult students to (and ready their families for) post-school adult services. NYCACS looks forward to carrying the new ways of communicating with and involving families, now and into the future.

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GOAL 5: STAFF PROFICIENCY AND SATISFACTION

GOAL 5: NYCACS Teachers and Instructors will demonstrate proficiency with instruction delivery and data-based decision making.

Measure 1: Evaluation Summary Score Gains

Annually, 90% of staff evaluated for the same role at mid-year and end-of-year will show gains of at least .25 in their final evaluation summary score from one performance review to the next. A detailed performance evaluation rubric is conducted with every staff member that encompasses all areas of instruction (e.g., discrete trial instruction).

METHOD

NYCACS utilizes a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of teacher and instructor performance to assess proficiency in teaching techniques and satisfactory execution of job requirements. All teachers and instructors receive an initial three-month performance evaluation and then comprehensive end-of-year performance evaluations annually from that point on, with additional mid-year evaluations conducted for certain roles. Data regarding each staff's performance of pivotal teaching skills are collected. The evaluations employ objective measures, including the following: frequency of behavior-specific praise; levels of engagement and on-task behavior of both students and staff; ability to implement a variety of teaching strategies; ability to follow and implement a written behavior intervention plan; and ability to use and understand behavioral terminology. Data are collected on clearly defined areas (e.g., discrete trial instruction, incidental teaching, professionalism with colleagues) that are further broken down into many discrete instructional skills. Within discrete trial instruction, for example, subcomponents include ensuring attending prior to presenting instruction, providing effective prompts, delivering appropriate levels of reinforcement). Points are assigned to each area according to a Likert Rating Scale ranging from Ineffective, to Developing, to Effective, to Highly Effective. Proficiency is defined as a rating of effective or above. To be invited to return the following year, staff must obtain a performance rating between Developing and Highly Effective.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Of NYCACS EH instructional staff invited to return for the upcoming school year, 10 of 29, or 34% demonstrated gains of at least .25 from the mid-year to end of year performance review. Of the 19 staff members who did not show a gain of at least .25, five demonstrated a more moderate gain, falling slightly below .25.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The NYCACS Performance Evaluation rubric is both comprehensive and objective. Beginning at the three-month evaluation, it provides a blueprint for individualized staff training and supervision. Areas to be

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strengthened are identified early and targeted for additional training and support. In the few cases where proficiency is not demonstrated after concerted effort, the decision not to continue employment is typically a mutual one.

There have been several modifications to the performance evaluation rubric over the years of its development, including a more significant refinement this past year. As part of this process, two different evaluation tools were used for the mid-year and end-of-year evaluations (Teachpoint and Direct Observation packets). NYCACS will work to ensure a common evaluation tool is used in the 2025-2026 school year to allow for a direct comparison. The hope is, once in its final form and consistent year over year, NYCACS will have a more reliable means of assessing improvement in performance evaluation scores over time.

Measure 2: Staff Accuracy on Reviews

Annually, staff who receive monthly data reviews will score an average of 80% accuracy on all reviews conducted across the year. Data reviews are conducted by Clinical Supervisors, Head Teachers, and sometimes Lead Instructors and involve a monthly review of every skill acquisition and behavior reduction program in place for every student. The review looks at whether or not a sufficient amount of data have been collected and whether or not the staff responsible for a particular program made good decisions to ensure ongoing progress (e.g., making changes if a skill is not moving in the desired direction).

METHOD

Monthly data reviews allow supervisors to assess skill acquisition and behavior reduction for every student under their purview. During this process, they are also able to investigate if sufficient data has been collected, as well as ensure that this data is used to inform instruction and programming moving forward. It involves a review of graphs corresponding to each skill acquisition program housed in every student's folder on the school's electronic data collection platform.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Across monthly data reviews, NYCACS strives for all instructors to receive at least an 80% aggregate accuracy score. In the 2024-25 school year, 22 of 30 staff received a score of at least 80%. While the individual accuracy goal is not met, staff had an accuracy score of 82% when aggregated.

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

NYCACS recently transitioned to a new data collection platform called Rethink. As a result, it took staff some time to adjust, which may have affected review scores. Additionally, NYCACS changed the format of data reviews, scoring fewer but more critical components for each skill acquisition and behavior reduction program. This revision to scoring procedures definitely impacted overall percentages.

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SUMMARY OF GOAL 5: STAFF PROFFICIENCY AND SATISFACTION

Measure	Outcome
1. Annually, 90% of staff evaluated for the same role at mid-year and end-of-year will show gains of at least .25 in their final evaluation summary score from one performance review to the next. A detailed performance evaluation rubric is conducted with every staff member that encompasses all areas of instruction (e.g., discrete trial instruction).	Not Met
2. Annually, staff who receive monthly data reviews will score an average of 80% accuracy on all reviews conducted across the year. Data reviews are conducted by Head Teachers and Lead Instructors and involve a monthly review of every skill acquisition and behavior reduction program in place for every student. The review looks at whether or not a sufficient amount of data have been and whether or not the staff responsible for a particular program made good decisions to ensure ongoing progress (e.g., making changes if a skill is not moving in the desired direction).	Not Met

ACTION PLAN

NYCACS East Harlem will continue its highly successful staff development, supervisory and evaluation practices and continue to seek ways to enhance the satisfaction and well-being of its staff. The school will work to ensure all staff receive adequate training, support, and supervision.

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GOAL 6: ESSA

ESSA Measure 1

Under the state’s ESSA accountability system, the school is in good standing: the state has not identified the school for comprehensive or targeted improvement.

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's performance standards, the federal statute stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. As New York State, like all states, is required to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Each year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school’s status under the state accountability system. More information on assigned accountability designations and context can be found [here](#).

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2021-22	Good Standing
2022-23	Good Standing
2023-24	Local Support and Improvement+
2024-25	Local Support and Improvement+

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

NYCACS East Harlem has been in Good Standing each year since its inception in 2005.