



**The Bronx Charter School for Better  
Learning 2**

**2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

August 9, 2021

By Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr.

2545 Gunther Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Bronx, NY 10469

(718) 655-6660 X2

[www.bronxbetterlearning.org](http://www.bronxbetterlearning.org)

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr., Executive Director, and Dr. Amanda Santos-Olson, Assistant Principal, prepared this 2020-21 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position	
	Office (e.g. chair, treasurer, secretary)	committees (e.g. finance, executive)
Kimberly Kelly	Chair	Complaint Review Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Finance/Audit Committee, Teacher Employment Committee
Marvin Waldman	Vice Chair	Fundraising/Development Committee, Policy/Governance Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Education Committee
Marilyn Maye	Treasurer	Finance/Audit Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Education Committee
William Bernhardt	Secretary	Complaint Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Education Committee
Victor Zimmerman	Trustee/Member	Complaint Review Committee, Fundraising/Development Committee, Finance/Audit Committee
Dean Thomas	Trustee/Member	Policy/Governance Committee, Fundraising Committee, Finance/Audit Committee
Neal Myerberg	Trustee/Member	Fundraising/Development Committee, Strategic Planning Committee
Jem Pagan	Trustee/Member	Fundraising/Development Committee
Ariel Dobkin	Trustee/Member	TBD in August 2021
Marlon Henry	Parent Representative	Complaint Review Committee, Teacher Employment Committee, Education Committee
Syrion Jack	Trustee/Member	TBD in August 2021
Gregory Kimble	Trustee/Member	TBD in August 2021

**Dr. Thomas Howard, Jr. has served as the Executive Director since March, 2020.**

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York approved the application for the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) on June 4, 2014. BBL 2 opened in the fall of 2015 with an enrollment of 75 students in Kindergarten. For the 2016-17 school year, BBL 2 added a 1<sup>st</sup> grade, increasing its enrollment to 150 students. BBL 2 continued to add one grade (2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>) with 75 students each year since and we had our first graduating class in 2021! At full capacity, we have an enrollment of 450 students. As of September 2015, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Educational Corporation (Board of Trustees) governs both charters, i.e., Bronx Better Learning 1 (BBL 1) and BBL 2.

Prior to the first year of operation, BBL 2 reached a shared space agreement with the New York City Department of Education, through which BBL 2, the school, received permission to co-locate on the JHS 144 Michelangelo campus, sharing space with two public middle schools: JHS 144 and Pelham Gardens. BBL 2 is located at 2545 Gunther Avenue, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, in CSD 11, approximately two miles from BBL 1. The BBL 2 campus will accommodate its growth up to full enrollment. Its new Kindergarten classes were situated there in 2015-2016, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes were added for the 2016-2017 school year. Beginning September 2015, BBL 2 occupied a total of 16 full or half size classrooms. For the 2016-2017 school year, BBL 2 occupied a total of 17 full or half size classrooms, in the 2017-2018 school year, we occupied 19 full or half size classrooms, and in the 2018-2019 school year, BBL 2 occupied a total of 22 full or half size classrooms. In the 2019-2020 school year, BBL 2 occupied a total of 25 full or half size classrooms. In 2020-2021, BBL 2 occupied all rooms on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building except for one full classroom (which remained as a Pelham Gardens classroom space) and a shared office space, as well as one classroom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. In 2021-2022, with BBL 2 at full capacity, we will receive one additional office space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

The mission of The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 is as follows:

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

To fulfill its mission, the school's teachers endeavor to practice *the Subordination of Teaching to Learning*, an instructional approach that does not dominate learning, but rather is guided by it. Implementing the approach involves: getting students actively and mentally engaged in lessons; assisting students to go beyond rote memorization, wherever the subject matter allows, and to

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

develop criteria for understanding; recognizing every child's high intellectual capacity and, thereby, welcoming errors in students' work as guides to help them harness that capacity; promoting students' use of what they know to master new content; and encouraging student initiative and self-sufficiency.

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2:

- is not test-prep driven; as noted, the instructional approach is constructivist: we know children "construct" their knowledge, understanding and skills, so our teaching is guided by their learning and does not dominate it;
- does not have extended school days;
- does not incorporate an extended school year;
- backfills at all grade levels; and
- serves all students, including those eligible for free and reduced lunch, eligible for special education services and/or eligible for support as English Language Learners (ELL).

## ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

The enrollment numbers below were those provided by BBL 2 to the state for BEDS day in October, 2020.

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2016-17	78	72												150
2017-18	73	76	76											225
2018-19	74	72	78	75										299
2019-20	74	76	72	77	72									371
2020-21	70	77	79	75	78	78								457

## GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Goal 1: English Language Arts

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

### BACKGROUND

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 (BBL 2) maintains a focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data-Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy, all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

During the 2020-21 school year, BBL 2 maintained its strong commitment, as a replication of Bronx Better Learning 1 (BBL 1), to ensure a quality ELA program for all its students, through the delivery of a comprehensive and challenging instructional program that is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards by:

- Continuing to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of our 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA curriculum to ensure rigorous instructional delivery, alignment with the State's Learning Standards, and to continue to transition towards a theme-based instructional program;
- Emphasizing the consistent application of Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the *Subordination of Teaching to Learning*;
- Incorporating as part of its reading foundation the use of Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop throughout the school;
- Closely monitoring each student's progress through the use of regularly scheduled interim assessments and the scheduling of a monthly "Data Day";
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Appointing high performing teachers to the position of Academic Leader assigned to further support teacher development at each grade level or subject area;
- Providing professional development through our in-house professional development specialists to both teachers and assistants to enhance each person's readiness to support the needs of all of our students;
- Utilizing writing rubrics that are aligned with the State's Learning Standards; and
- Providing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through increasing the frequency of classroom observations and "walkthroughs" (which during remote learning were Zoom visits) by administration.

BBL 2 began the 2020-2021 school year providing remote instruction to all students. Schedules were arranged on a cohort model to prepare for hybrid instruction in October. All students were assigned to either the Blue or Gold cohort. After a 5-week hybrid instructional model, BBL 2 went fully remote in November (as was decided by the BBL Board of Trustees for both BBL 1 and BBL 2). Throughout these changes in instructional delivery, our English Language Arts goal remained essentially unchanged. Families became part of our instructional team, directly or indirectly, as students navigated the rigorous demands of the ELA curriculum while learning

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

from home. Teachers revised instructional plans weekly to reflect their progress within the curriculum. Those plans addressed three general categories of instructional interventions during the fully remote learning periods:

- 1) Interactive Instruction: Regularly scheduled, synchronous learning via various videoconferencing systems and online chats, directly between students and teachers, in both large and small groups.
- 2) Assignments Using Established Interactive Learning Systems and Apps: These resources included a wide range of programs and systems that supported learning and practice, often including adaptive responses to students' performance, with built-in mechanisms to track student participation times and progress, along with the capability to report on that information.
- 3) Posted Assignments: Daily asynchronous learning through teacher prepared written assignments, worksheets, writing prompts, website visits, and special projects.

### METHOD

The school administered the ELA STAR assessment monthly to grades 3, 4, and 5 during the 2020-2021 school year. This computer based, adaptive assessment provides insight to how our students are growing in each of the ELA standards. We used the STAR to evaluate student achievement, make adjustments in our instruction, and make determinations for further academic support for any individual student.

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

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The table below summarizes the performance of our 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades on the 2020-2021 ELA STAR assessments.

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students will be greater than 50. Student growth is the difference between the beginning of year score and the end of year score.	All students	50	227	53	Yes
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.	Low initial achievers	55	118	63	Yes

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Measure 3: Each year, the median growth percentile of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities <sup>1</sup>	53	19	71	Yes
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent according to the STAR proficiency scores. <sup>2</sup>	2+ students	75%	203	59%	No

As summarized in the table above, BBL 2 met growth measures in ELA in 3 out of the 4 categories. Of the 227 students who were tested, 53% met BBL 2's growth percentile target. Of the 19 students with disabilities, approximately 13 students met proficiency expectations. Of the 118 low achieving students, approximately 74 students met the proficiency goal. 59% of the students enrolled in BBL 2 for 2 or more years met or exceeded the scale score proficiency goal on the STAR assessment.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

The models of instruction we used during this pandemic year, hybrid and fully remote, presented myriad challenges to student learning in general and to our pedagogy specifically. Our teachers made herculean efforts in terms of outreach to parents to ensure that each student took the monthly administration of the STAR assessment and that each child completed it independently. Our Guidance staff worked with students and their families to address issues of test anxiety as well as distractions in the home that made the test environment less than optimal. With each new challenge presented to the authenticity of the assessment results, our instructional staff, guidance staff and professional development staff met to discuss and implement solutions. For these reasons, we are confident that the results reported here are an accurate reflection of the academic growth of our students.

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Our English Language Arts Goal is for all students to become proficient readers and writers of the English Language. Our data shows that among all students, including those most at-risk, we have achieved that goal. As shown above, our yearly assessments demonstrate that our students continue to improve in English Language Arts. Still, we remain committed to providing

---

<sup>1</sup> Schools may elect to report the aggregated data for a different subpopulation of students if the total tested number of students with disabilities is 5 or fewer, or if the school's mission aligns to serving a different specific subpopulation. For schools that choose a different subpopulation (e.g. English language learners, students experiencing housing insecurity, etc.), please explain the rationale in the narrative section

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/02/NY-MAP-Growth-Linking-Study-Report-2020-07-22.pdf>.

a rigorous, high-quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for continued success.

### ACTION PLAN

As highlighted in our action plan, below, we continue to closely review and enhance our newly revamped ELA curriculum, along with several ancillary actions that have proven successful.

The BBL Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to ensure the continued improvement of student performance in ELA, including working with the Executive Director to provide all needed resources.

As we prepare for another year of unknowns in terms our instructional delivery, we have already planned and initiated the following steps, in order further to boost student achievement.

1. In 2019-2020, our ELA Curriculum Committee, composed of experienced ELA teachers, professional development specialists and administration, streamlined and further improved our ELA program. The committee integrated the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curriculums (K-5), aligned the K-5 ELA curriculums with social studies/science curriculums, and created and organized resources for teachers. In addition to the ELA Curriculum Coordinator (position created in 2019-2020), we have added a professional development specialist with a focus on the lower grades to provide support in ELA at all levels. Moreover, these two positions will continue to support the integration of the social studies and ELA curriculum, train teachers to execute our integrated curriculum in a way that aligns with our pedagogy, the Subordination of Teaching to Learning, and further align the K-2 curriculum with the 3-5 curriculum.
2. Our Bronx Humanities Committee for Better Learning will continue its work bringing to the fore, conversations around social injustice issues through the lens of the humanities, looking at culture, philosophy, history, and community. The committee has delegates from both schools, including management, professional development, teachers, teacher assistants, and guidance staff. That structure provides a range of voices to inform and respond positively to the moment and drive curriculum decisions that will have a direct impact on our students' engagement with literacy and social studies.
3. BBL consistently and constantly seeks to increase the rigor of the content and academic challenges presented to students. By raising the level of vocabulary students are exposed to and expected to use, their writing and reading comprehension is improved. Our instructional staff will continue to plan and integrate the reading, writing, and Words in Color ELA curricula (K-5), which in turn will provide a comprehensive, broader perspective for teaching and learning and a cohesive literacy program. Students will be able to analyze high-level texts and incorporate such writing mechanics in their own writing.



## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

4. We will continue to incorporate daily reading times in our schedule. We will continue to enhance reading comprehension by focusing on our Growing Great Readers Program to foster a joy for reading. We will allocate time in our daily schedule for that program. In addition to our Growing Great Readers Program, the teachers will allot time in their ELA instruction for guided reading groups. That adjustment will allow teachers to work with students according to their specific reading levels, and an opportunity to focus on targeted skills to aid in increasing reading comprehension.
5. Instructional Rigor. We will continue to maintain:
  1. A high level of administrative support: The Principal has an especially strong background in ELA. She will continue to make frequent classroom visits to ensure instructional rigor and continuity in the instructional program across the school. She will review weekly lesson plans and provide targeted feedback during “walkthroughs,” as well as during grade level meetings.
  2. Assistant Principal: The Assistant Principal will support the Principal in her efforts to ensure instructional rigor and the continuity of our ELA program.
6. Continued Increased Adult supervision: We will continue to provide small group instruction as part of our pedagogy. We will have co teachers in ELA in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. That level of staffing will further improve the student to adult ratio and will allow the teacher to create smaller groups during instruction and more individualized instruction.
7. Data-Driven Decision Making: Monthly reviews of running records will take place during our Data Day time allotment to ensure that students are making substantial growth throughout the school year.
8. Student Support: Students who are “at-risk” will be identified early in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed.
  1. Special education instructional options: Students who are identified as needing special education services will continue to receive those services throughout the school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).
  2. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.
  3. Academic support: The scheduling of academic support, both during and after school hours, will be reviewed and expanded as needed to better meet the needs of underperforming students.
9. Professional Development: The ELA professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

through professional development sessions during lunch and after school hours, along with in-class support.

10. Implementation of a new assessment platform: NWEA. After reviewing the offerings of NWEA in terms of questions available, analysis (item and growth over time), and alignment with our Student Information System, we believe we will be able to better support our students' academic growth over time.
11. Expanded Parent Partnerships:
  1. Parent Resource Center: We will continue to maintain our Parent Resource Center. Located on our website, this webpage provides parents with information and resources for all school topics. Including, technology trainings, training in our pedagogy, videos for supporting their children in academics and emotional learning, as well lists of community resources. We will continue to update the Parent Resource Center every quarter with pertinent information.
  2. Parent Seminars: Given extensive positive feedback on the two cycles of Parent Seminars conducted in the spring 2021, we will continue to host such seminars on topics that will include training in our pedagogy, the middle school application process, and social and emotional well-being of our students.
12. Finally, our expanded Technology Committee is determined to work with administration, Professional Development, and our Academic Leaders to ensure tech equity. We have significantly increased our technology capability given that technology is now a cornerstone of education during these unprecedented times. The Technology Committee has taken the following steps to boost student achievement, especially during remote instruction:
  1. Provided each student in grades 3-5 with a Google Classroom account and each student in grades PreK-2 with a SeeSaw account.
  2. Collaborated with our Professional Development team to create online versions of our curriculum tools and documents, including Words in Color Charts and Primers.
  3. Distributed iPads to all students who requested a device and provided Wifi for students without internet access.
  4. Augmented our online subscriptions to ensure engagement with a multitude of online resources for literacy, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing skills.
  5. Hosted numerous training sessions for both parents and staff to ensure everyone is ready to engage with the technology platforms used by BBL.

## GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

### ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS

#### Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.

#### BACKGROUND

BBL 2 maintains a focus on four priorities: 1) Instructional Rigor, to ensure that every student receives an instructional program that is rigorous and enriching; 2) Data Based Decision Making, to ensure that all instructional decisions are based on student performance; 3) Meeting Individual Student Needs, to ensure that the instructional program regularly adapts to meet the needs of each student; 4) Student Empowerment, to ensure that through an instructional program that emphasizes engagement, effort and efficacy all students sustain a personal sense of their own innate abilities.

BBL 2 demonstrates a strong commitment to those school-wide priorities, as a replication of BBL 1, to ensure the delivery of a challenging and meaningful instructional program in mathematics for all its students by:

- Reviewing the mathematics curriculum to ensure that the pacing of the instructional program effectively supports student learning of the full scope of the Learning Standards;
- Maintaining a strong commitment to the Bronx Better Learning's pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning;
- Consistently applying the use of manipulatives, primarily Cuisenaire rods, even in the earliest stages, so students develop models for thinking mathematically;
- Providing supplemental support to students identified as not progressing as expected;
- Continuing to provide professional development, through our in-house professional development specialists, to both teachers and assistants to bolster each person's readiness to meet the needs of all of our students;
- Increasing feedback to teachers and assistants on their instructional approach through more frequent classroom visits by the Principal;
- Emphasizing our students' development of two overarching capacities, i.e., becoming swift and accurate in computation skills and increasing their ability to focus on problem solving activities that involve practice and real-world application of those skills; and
- Ensuring that instructional decisions are made based on specific student performance data. As with ELA, teachers utilize both formative and summative assessments, along with real-time, moment-to-moment analysis of how students are responding to instruction.

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

With the exception of 5 weeks of hybrid instruction, our students learned remotely, synchronously and asynchronously. BBL 2 teachers met with all students every day in math, and we were prepared to meet our students' educational needs via synchronous and asynchronous learning. Teachers developed a schedule to meet with whole class groups, small groups, and individual students to provide instruction that was aligned with the NYS curriculum. Teachers also identified several online mathematics tools to support student learning and comprehension of key mathematical concepts. These tools included: Geometry Pad, Math Playground, Labadabadoo, Brainingcamp, and Nearpod. The tools allowed both teachers and students to manipulate Cuisenaire rods, fraction tiles, geometric shapes, counters, and coins on their screens to work through mathematical problems. And further, teachers engaged their students through the screen to maintain a connection with them and with the mathematical concepts taught.

### METHOD

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, teachers continued to assess student progress through observation, discussion, classwork, online apps (assignments for asynchronous learning), and teacher-created assessments. The teachers used Edmodo and Google Classroom as vehicles for students to complete and submit assessments. These assessments gave the teachers information to continue planning to meet the individual academic learning needs of their students.

Our main assessment, STAR, was administered to students in grades 3-5 monthly. That computer based, adaptive assessment provides insight to how our students are growing in each of the mathematics standards.

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

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Measure	Subgroup	Target	Tested	Results	Met?
Measure 1: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students will be greater than 50. Student growth is the difference between the beginning of year score and the end of year score.	All students	50	221	35	No
Measure 2: Each year, the school's median growth percentile of all 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students whose achievement did not meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent in	Low initial achievers	55	52	60	Yes

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

the fall will meet or exceed 55 in the spring administration.					
Measure 3: Each year, the median growth percentile of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students with disabilities at the school will be equal to or greater than the median growth of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade general education students at the school.	Students with disabilities <sup>3</sup>	35	18	40	Yes
Measure 4: Each year, 75% of 3 <sup>rd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year at the school will meet or exceed the scale score proficiency equivalent according to the STAR proficiency scores. <sup>4</sup>	2+ students	75%	203	65%	No

We are disappointed that we did not meet our overall growth target in math among all students. However, of the 52 students tested who were receiving additional academic support for low performance, approximately 31 met the growth percentile target. Of the 18 students with disabilities tested in mathematics in the STAR system, 40% met the growth target. And of the 203 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders who have been at BBL for at least two years, approximately 132 met the growth percentile target in proficiency. Not having met our growth percentile targets in proficiency among all students in grades 3 through 5 provides us with data that will be important in how we support all students and in particular our newest students in meeting our academic expectations. Our math instruction, as with our pedagogy overall, puts the onus of thinking mathematically on the students. We know that traditional math instruction sees the teacher as the holder of knowledge and is typically one-directional (teacher to student). As our newest students learn our pedagogy and take more responsibility for their learning, we are confident that we will see our math growth on par with years' past.

### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT AND EVIDENCE

With the bulk of our school year taking place remotely, we know that some students did not have all the materials at home to complete assignments where they had to show their work. Our schools provided care packages to all students in January. Though the package contents differed by grade, teachers took the time to include pencils and paper for those students whom they knew did not have it at home so that they could complete work on paper. Without some of the basic tools, we know that students weren't able to show their work and thus their scores

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

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/02/NY-MAP-Growth-Linking-Study-Report-2020-07-22.pdf>.

suffered. We also tried to address this issue with the purchase of Nearpod, a screen-sharing platform that our upper grades teachers embraced because of its capabilities to view student work on the screen and save it for further data analysis and subsequent adjustments in instruction.

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE MATHEMATICS GOAL

BBL 2 was established with the same goals and priorities as BBL 1. With little exception, BBL students, in general, outperform students in the district and state in mathematics on the NYS assessments. Despite the challenges of remote instruction, having a strong foundation in mathematics instruction that BBL has had historically, we were able to navigate those challenges while continuing to provide strong mathematics instruction. As with each year, we seek to improve the effectiveness of our instruction and will do so with the plan outlined below, with an added focus on addressing what might have been a drop in our mathematics scores, had the state assessment been administered.

### ACTION PLAN

In an effort to provide a seamless assessment program for students Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, BBL will be switching from the STAR assessment to the NWEA assessment. This decision, though not wanting to put another program to learn on our teaching staff, has a larger library of questions and will be given less frequently to allow for teachers to see the impact of the adjustments they are making in student groupings, instructional levels, and differentiation. Teachers will use classroom-level assessments to gauge academic goal attainment within each standard. Moreover, we will continue to use the EdVista program to create benchmark assessments to have more data on students' attainment of academic goals, particularly as they relate to the NYS assessment.

With fully remote instruction behind us, we look to the 2021-2022 school year as a reset year. We will examine the learning gaps from the 2020-2021 school year and put supports in place for teachers and students to meet instructional and academic goals, respectively. Our teachers will use their learning acquired during the remote learning period to improve their in-person instruction. Teachers will assess student knowledge and skills through the NWEA online assessments. We will continue to analyze individual student test results on the practice exam to effectively plan and map our instruction this year. These analyses will lead to additional adjustments in our mathematics program as the school year begins, we have already planned the following targeted steps:

1. **Instructional Alignment:** Our mathematics professional development staff, as well as the two mathematics Academic Leaders, one in K-2 and the other in grades 3-5, along with our teachers, will continue to review our informal assessments and in-class assignments to reflect the structure of the assessment questions of the NYS Mathematics exam.

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Through weekly grade-level planning, professional development staff, AL's and teachers will adapt the curriculum to ensure students' familiarity of the nature of the assessment when tested, especially in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which once again will include a cohort of students who will be taking this assessment for the first time. Additionally, we have changed the instructional structure of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It is now departmentalized, and we have assigned two math teachers to the grade. In doing so, each teacher will be able to provide more targeted instruction to smaller groups of students to better support students as they make the transition to a testing grade.

2. **Instructional Rigor:** The mathematics program will continue to focus on ensuring that students demonstrate competence in their understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving. The assigned mathematics Academic Leaders have several years' experience with the mathematics curriculum. Their expertise will support the teachers' professional development, curriculum planning, the facilitation of common planning meetings, one-on-one targeted coaching with the teachers around our approach and the use of manipulatives in the classroom.
3. **Data-Driven Decision Making:**
  1. We will give two benchmark exams and one NYS practice assessment to help monitor student progress and to identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
  2. NYS assessment-like groupings will be created and incorporated into daily math lessons to allow teachers an additional opportunity to monitor student progress and adjust instruction as necessary.
  3. Weekend homework will be given with NYS assessment-like questions added to give students additional opportunities to practice skills assessed on the NYS Mathematics exam. We also assign "break packets" for the long vacations in December, February, and April to ensure consistent focus on mathematics.
  4. We will conduct a formal midterm assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades to assess how they are achieving the curricular and instructional goals. We will assess them in January using EdVista.
4. **Continued Adult Supervision:** That level of staffing will maintain a favorable student to adult ratio and will allow our teachers to create smaller groups during instruction and more individualized instruction.
5. **Student Support:** Students who are "at-risk" will be identified early in the school year to ensure that they receive the support services needed. Given the challenges of remote learning this year, we will begin our academic support program the second full week of school. This will give our support teachers an opportunity to assess any gaps in learning due to the COVID-19 school closure and provide targeted instruction in areas where students are struggling and/or underperforming.
  1. **Special Education instructional options:** Students who are identified as needing special education services will continue to receive those services throughout the

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

school day, including integrated co-teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS).

2. English Language Learners: We will ensure that students who are identified as English language learners receive an effective delivery of instruction that meets their needs, in full accord with our charter.
  
6. Professional Development: The mathematics professional development staff will continue to work with teachers and classroom assistants to provide the highest quality of instruction through regularly scheduled professional development sessions after school hours, as well as in-class support to ensure the application of the school's pedagogy throughout each class.
  
7. Home-School Connection: Much of our connections to families in the upcoming school year will take place virtually (as we can reach more parents in the virtual space) but will follow the similar structures to in-person, allowing for parents to learn and ask questions regarding our approach. To build more support for mathematics at home, we will continue to use parent teacher conferences to review individual scores with parents, virtual "Coffee and Conversation" sessions to go over overall progress of each grade, and we will also have two virtual Curriculum Nights in the beginning of the year – one in September for all parents and one in October for parents new to our school. Our primary purpose will be to increase parents' comfort with and willingness to rely on manipulatives to bolster students' deep understanding of basic mathematical concepts.
  
8. Administrative Support: The Principal will make more frequent visits into the classrooms to ensure continuity in the instructional program across the grades, as well as to ensure instructional rigor. Our Assistant Principal has expertise in mathematics instruction, to assist the Principal in ensuring the implementation of these action steps. She will very closely monitor the mathematics program to ensure that students' needs are met and progress is being made by:
  1. frequent visits to the classrooms.
  2. reviewing weekly lesson plans and homework.
  3. providing targeted feedback to both teachers and assistants.
  4. working closely with the Academic Leaders, PD staff and teachers to ensure consistency in rigor of mathematics instruction throughout the grades.

### GOAL 3: SCIENCE

#### ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE

##### Goal 3: Science

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



### BACKGROUND

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 uses Science 21, an integrated K – 6 science curriculum, which is developed by teachers and meets the New York State Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science and Technology. The appeal of the curriculum to BBL 2 is the importance it places on student-directed investigations with a focus on hands-on, inquiry-based science. Moreover, this curriculum integrates mathematics, English language arts and technology into the science content, making it relevant for students.

There are four units of study in each grade. These units are vertically aligned. Teachers attend professional development workshops offered through the Putnam/Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services three times a year. Additionally, Academic Leaders lead teacher discussions about the curriculum and the unit kits of materials with which students engage in learning activities. Teachers from BBL 2 plan with teachers from BBL 1 to share best practices in implementation and instruction.

Teachers assess students using a variety of methods, which include, but are not limited to, class discussions, writing prompts, teacher-made quizzes, and experiments.

Our science staffing and curriculum remained virtually unchanged during the COVID-19 school closing. While all our classes were conducted remotely, our science lessons continued to focus on our four priorities listed above. We successfully adapted our Science 21 lessons to meet the needs of our students, allowing them to participate in science experiments and the scientific method all while doing so virtually.

The BBL 2 continues to strongly promote effective student mastery of the State’s standards in science by:

- a. Continuing to implement the Bronx Better Learning’s pedagogical approach, the subordination of teaching to learning, incorporating techniques and materials that foster students’ active participation in lessons;
- b. Continuing to implement lessons that emphasize hands-on experimentation and make use of BOCES prepared science kits (Science 21 Program) that complement the school’s core pedagogy;
- c. Continuing to incorporate a problem solving approach that presents students with “real life” problems and working in groups, which analyze data/information to come up with solutions to the problems, all of which leads students to a deeper appreciation of cause and effect relationships; and
- d. Continuing to provide supplemental support to students who are not progressing as expected.
- e. Leveraging technology and online platforms to ensure a rich and rigorous science curriculum while students work remotely from home.

### METHOD

During the 2020-2021 school year, BBL administered internally developed assessments that were aligned to state standards. These assessments included teacher made tests and quizzes,

anecdotal evidence based on student engagement with curriculum, and problem-based learning projects. Furthermore, science teachers collaborated with our ELA teachers on essential questions to further integrate writing into science. Online programs such as Kidblog, IXL, BrainPop, and Generation Genius were used to progress monitor student growth in vocabulary acquisition and science concepts.

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning 2 had only its second 4<sup>th</sup> grade class in 2020-2021. We set our internal targets as we would have set our external targets. The three science teachers (grades 3, 4, and 5) met weekly to ensure the grade-level and vertical alignment of the standards. While science labs and experiments were limited because of remote learning, teachers continued to find creative ways show students scientific concepts and phenomenon.

### SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCIENCE GOAL

Our science goal is for students to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning. We believe that our efforts to meet this goal have proven effective. As shown above, our work in the science department continues to focus on academic rigor, the scientific method and problem-based learning projects. This approach, coupled with the success of our students on past state science exams prove that we continue to provide a sound and enriching science education for all our students. We remain committed to providing a rigorous, high-quality education that promotes independence, autonomy and success, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, below is our action plan for success in science.

### ACTION PLAN

While student performance in science continues to be laudable, Bronx Better Learning 2 will refine and improve its program through:

1. Instructional Rigor: The science program will continue to focus on facilitating the development of effective analytical skills for all students through:
  1. Academic Leaders, who have been placed at each grade level to ensure consistent delivery of a rigorous and meaningful instructional program, including facilitating the ongoing process of collaborative planning, the review of weekly lesson plans and aligning of the overall instructional program with the high expectations articulated through the common core standards. More specifically, BBL 2 will have an Academic Leader dedicated to science instruction support and planning.
  2. Science Curriculum Coordinator: A Science Curriculum Coordinator has been

## 2020-21 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

appointed and continues to facilitate instructional planning and curriculum refinement.

3. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Frequently scheduled interim assessments will help monitor student progress and identify where the instructional program requires modification to better support student learning.
2. **Focus on At-Risk Students:** The science program continues to support students identified as being at-risk and with special needs through:
    1. **Experienced Teachers:** The Academic Leaders, who represent some of BBL's most experienced and effective teachers, will serve as the support teachers for the at-risk students, with the in-house professional development specialists working directly with them and their students to ensure the precision of each student's instructional program.
    2. **Special Education Instructional Options:** Students identified in need of special education support services will continue to have access to a variety of services, including cooperative teaching intervention (CTI) classes, SETSS provided as either push-in or pull-out services.
    3. **English Language Learner (ELL) Program/Support:** The ELL Coordinator's schedule ensures the effective delivery of needed support for students identified as ELL.
  3. **Professional Development:** The science program will ensure that all teachers are effectively prepared to provide students with the highest quality of instruction through:
    1. **Weekly Institutes:** The in-house Professional Development Specialists and the Academic Leaders have arranged a weekly Institute schedule that will focus on the continued application of the school's pedagogy throughout the school.
    2. **In-Class Support:** Professional development will continue to push-in to the classrooms to provide teachers and assistants with direct feedback on instructional practices and to provide examples that illustrate in "real situations" the effectiveness of the school's approach.
    3. **Technology Training:** The Technology department and Professional development department will continue to partner to ensure that teachers are prepared to leverage online platforms and online problem-based learning opportunities in science.

## GOAL 4: ESSA

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

### Goal 7: Absolute Measure

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

## METHOD

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

## RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning II is in Good Standing.

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning II will continue to provide a rigorous academic program in ELA, Mathematics and Science/Social Studies with support for students to meet expectations set forth in our Accountability Plan.

Accountability Status by Year

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