



**HARLEM LINK  
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**2012-13 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

September 16, 2013

By Steven Evangelista

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Steven Evangelista, Principal, prepared this 2012-13 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Krista Barron	Education committee
Jonathan Barrett	Executive, Finance, Development committees
David W. Brown	Executive, Development committees
Bianna Cardinale	Education committee
Peter Carry	Development committee
Sean Coar	Executive, Finance
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Steven Evangelista	Education, Executive, Finance, Development committees, ex officio, nonvoting
Rachel Field	Executive, Development committees
Michael MacLeod	Development committee
John Reddick	Nonvoting

**Steven Evangelista has served as the Principal since 2011, and served as Co-Director from 2004 to 2011.**

## INTRODUCTION

Harlem Link is an independent charter school initially chartered to serve grades K-4 in Central Harlem. The school opened with grades K-1 in September 2005 with the mission of graduating articulate scholars who meet or exceed state performance standards and active citizens who learn and serve in their communities, and the aim of eventually expanding to grades K-8 with the goal of gaining admission for graduates to high performing, competitive public and private high schools. The school reached a grades K-5 consolidation phase in 2008 and plans to remain at these grades through the next charter period, choosing to focus on honing the academic programs in the elementary grades before pursuing charter authorization for middle school at a future point. The school was granted by SUNY a three year charter renewal in 2010 and a five year renewal in 2013.

The school design is distinguished by an emphasis on teaching students critical thinking skills – as the mission explicitly mentions students taken an active role in their own learning and being empowered to develop good character – as well as an emphasis on collaboration, embodied in the co-teaching model as well as the numerous community institutional partnerships for programming. As such, the school vigorously embraced New York State’s transition to Common Core Standards, in which there is an increased emphasis on literary analysis, mathematical thinking and process, and student discussion. These elements have always been a part of Harlem Link’s instructional vision.

The charter anticipates 54 students per grade, and the school has generally held to this number with the exception of fifth grade. (Since many charter schools and other competitive middle school programs begin in fifth grade, the school experiences and even encourages greater student attrition. In 2012, for example, the school facilitated four top students to gain admission to the Upper West Side’s exclusive Center School, and nominated them as honorary Harlem Link alumni.) Each year, the school has attracted an increasing number of families eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a federal indicator of poverty level. In 2012-13, approximately 88% of Harlem Link students fell into this category. Throughout the eight years of the school’s existence, the ethnic and neighborhood demographics have held fairly constant, approximately 80% of the students being African-American, non-Hispanic (and the balance Hispanic) and approximately 80% from Upper Manhattan (with the balance from the South Bronx). In recent years thanks to a change in the charter law the school’s enrollment has stabilized to include a greater portion of students from Community School District 3, the district of location, though a plurality of students still reside in Community School District 5, which encompasses central Harlem.

### School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2009-10	54	54	54	54	54	40								310
2010-11	48	53	49	53	54	38								295
2011-12	50	50	51	52	52	37								292
2012-13	55	51	51	51	54	40								302

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### **Goal 1: English Language Arts**

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

#### **Background**

Harlem Link uses a balanced literacy approach to teaching English Language Arts (ELA). Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading and other small group instruction, and Independent Reading with teacher conferencing are all elements of the Reader's Workshop instruction. Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Guided Writing, and Independent Writing are all elements of the classroom Writer's Workshop instruction. Teachers use individual conferences and a variety of unit-level and term-level formal assessments to gauge student achievement and to plan differentiated instruction based on individual student needs. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is used as a school-wide reading level benchmarking tool and to plan small group instruction goals.

Harlem Link also employs three Academic Intervention Services (AIS) teachers to provide support to struggling readers and writers through a robust Student Support and Response to Intervention (RTI) process. RTI at Harlem Link is organized through twice-weekly Child Study Team meetings and includes targeted goals, interventions and expected time frames for improvement for each child in the process. The school emphasizes classroom-based interventions, aiming to use the Committee on Special Education sparingly and only when school-based interventions are ineffective, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Despite identifying a small percentage of enrolled students newly as disabled, the school maintains a similar rate of enrollment of students with disabilities to the surrounding community.

In 2012-13, the school implemented for the first time 100% of units of study completely aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the culmination of a process that began with staff administrator and faculty in January 2011. In preparation for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for Career and College (PARCC) assessment, the school modified the Reading and the Writing scopes and sequences in each grade to include more nonfiction reading and persuasive writing.

In terms of staffing, 2012-13 marked the end of a two year phase of high attrition. In the wake of 2010's dramatic statewide test score drop (which disproportionately impacted Harlem Link since due to strong interventions but less of a focus on "teaching to the middle"; the school continued to maintain very few Level 1 students, but had many students clustered around the former Level 3 cut score), a series of personal life changes including out-of-country and-state moves and pregnancies, and the tangible possibility of non-renewal in 2013 led to two years of much greater teacher attrition than the school experienced from 2006 to 2010. In 2012, Harlem Link's assistant principal for the upper grades resigned to take on a principal position at a high-performing charter school in another district. Also in 2012, the school's first on-staff Instructional Coach moved to another state (where she remains connected to the school as a curriculum consultant) after only one year at the school, leading the school to create a new position, Assessment and Coaching Coordinator, and to hire a new person from outside the organization to fill it.

Other than these changes, the school continued on the course it set over the past two years of strategic planning.

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts examination for grades 3-8.<sup>1</sup>

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program English Language Arts assessment to students in third through fifth grade in April 2013. Each student’s raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

**2012-13 State English Language Arts Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>2</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	51	0	0	0	51
4	54	0	0	0	54
5	40	0	0	0	40
All	145	0	0	0	145

**Results**

Harlem Link had 18.3% of students enrolled in at least their second year achieve proficiency.

<sup>1</sup> Because of the state’s new 3-8 testing program, aligned to its high school college and career readiness standards, the Institute is no longer using Time Adjusted Level 3 cut scores. Please report results for previous years using the state’s published results for scoring at proficiency.

<sup>2</sup> Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

**Performance on 2012-13 State English Language Arts Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	11.8%	51	13.9%	36
4	24.1%	54	25.6%	43
5	15.0%	40	13.9%	36
All	17.2%	145	18.3%	115

**Evaluation**

The school did not meet the target in any of the grades tested. In each case except the fifth grade (in which one of the four new fifth grade students passed the test), the students with two or more years' experience in the school outscored the new students who enrolled after BEDS Day 2011.

Overall, the school saw the same drop in percentage points in English Language Arts that occurred across the state: New York State average proficiency fell 24.0 percentage points from 2012 to 2013, and Harlem Link average proficiency for all students enrolled fell 24.3 percentage points in the same time span. However, the school makes no excuses for this drop in performance. There are clear internal reasons for the low proficiency rates, which can be addressed and improved (as discussed in the Action Plan section below).

Staffing had a major impact on the test scores. It is no surprise that while all grades fell short of the target, the fourth grade outscored Grades 3 and 5; in the latter two grades, there was tremendous teacher turnover heading into the 2012-13 school year. In all, seven of the eight teachers in those two grades were new to the school at the beginning of the year, for a variety of reasons related to personal and professional reasons (two teachers left the profession; two moved out of the country; two went to teach in another borough closer to their residences). One of the new teachers hired to teach third grade for the 2012-13 school year actually took a leave of absence (which became a permanent resignation) on the day before the school year began due to a sudden family illness that caused her to move out of the city.

In addition, the Assistant Principal in charge of supervising those teachers was new to the school, his predecessor moving on to become a principal of another charter school. Finally, the school's past Instructional Coach moved to California in the summer of 2012, and the three individuals brought in to replace her function were new to the school.

As a result of the many new personnel, there were some inconsistencies with the full, faithful implementation of the school's program. Specifically, the classrooms in Grades 3 and 5 inconsistently deployed the key elements of the school's reading workshop program; there was less independent reading time, less guided reading time and less focused instruction for struggling

students. By contrast, in Grade 4, three of the four teachers returned from the 2011-12 school year, and the scores were comparatively higher.

The scores demonstrate the school’s long transition from its former school-based learning standards to the New York State Common Core Curriculum Standards. The Common Core transition began in January 2011, but because of the home-grown nature of the school’s curriculum and leadership changes, proceeded in fits and starts and led to a curriculum that was still in development at the start of the 2012-13 school year. The school made major strides in revising elements of the curriculum as part of this process, and improved many units of study, but unit-based assessments lacked consistency in rigor and completeness.

**Additional Evidence**

Harlem Link saw sizable gains in each grade level’s passing rate from 2011 to 2012. However, 2013 began a new Accountability Period for the school with a new test and significantly lower scores. The new Common Core aligned tests, similarly to many schools across the state, led to the school’s lowest test scores in its eight year history.

**English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	46.3%	41	55.2%	29	13.9%	36
4	36.4%	44	52.4%	42	26.6%	43
5	20.0%	30	50.0%	34	13.9%	36
All	35.7%	115	52.4%	105	18.3%	115

Generally, however, students who have been enrolled at the school longer performed better. Only 15.5% of students enrolled fewer than four years passed the state test, compared to 19.7% of students enrolled four or more years.

**2012-13 English Language Arts Performance by Grade Level and Years Attending the School**

Grade	Percent of Students at or above the Level 3 cut score According to Number of Years Enrolled							
	One		Two		Three		Four or More	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	6.7%	15	0.0%	4	11.1%	9	17.4%	23
4	18.2%	11	31.3%	16	22.2%	9	22.2%	18
5	25.0%	4	12.5%	8	0.0%	8	20.0%	20
All	13.3%	30	21.4%	28	11.5%	26	19.7%	61

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

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

**Method**

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state’s learning standards in English Language Arts. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Level Index (PLI) value that equals or exceeds the current year’s English Language Arts AMO. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.<sup>3</sup>

**Results**

The school’s Performance Level Index for 2013 is 80.

**English Language Arts 2012-13 Performance Level Index (PLI)**

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	38	44	18	0

$$\begin{array}{rcccccccc}
 \text{PI} & = & 44 & + & 18 & + & 0 & = & 62 \\
 & & & & 18 & + & 0 & = & \underline{18} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 80
 \end{array}$$

**Evaluation**

*The State Education Department has not recalibrated the AMO to align with the new English Language Arts 3-8 testing program as of this report.*

**Goal 1: Comparative Measure**

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

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to SED’s Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.



## Method

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>4</sup>

## Results

Harlem Link saw only 18.3% of its students pass the state ELA exam, while 45.0% of students from District 3 passed the state test. While most Harlem Link students reside outside of District 3—and those that reside within the district are zoned for low-performing schools in a segregated district, as described below—the Institute uses the district of location for its analysis. Comparison to schools serving a more similar population is provided in the sections below.

**2012-13 State English Language Arts Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	13.9%	36	48.8%	1499
4	26.2%	42	44.5%	1305
5	13.5%	37	41.3%	1394
All	18.3%	115	45.0%	4198

## Evaluation

The school did not meet the measure. The school fell short of the local district measure in each grade level. It should be noted that while the school is technically located in relatively high-performing, diverse District 3, the majority of students live in low-performing, low-income District 5. In District 3, the majority of schools are located on the wealthy Upper West Side, but a few of the schools (including Harlem Link and its co-located schools) are located in the southern part of Harlem. A weighted analysis of the composite student school district average is provided in the Additional Evidence section below.

## Additional Evidence

As the public-information website InsideSchools politely puts it, “District 3 schools are uneven in quality, with some of the best in the city and some that have yet to reach their potential.”<sup>5</sup> Even so, in 2012, the school made gains in closing the gap between District 3 scores and school scores,

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<sup>4</sup> Schools can acquire these data when the State Education Department releases its Access database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The SED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from the World Wide Web on September 11, 2013 from: <http://insideschools.org/districts/manhattan/district-3>

notably in fifth grade. However those gains were lost in 2013 as the school once again fell more than 20 percentage points behind District 3's performance.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	46.3%	61.0%	55.2%	61.7%	13.9%	48.8%
4	36.4%	59.1%	52.4%	65.3%	26.2%	44.5%
5	20.0%	57.3%	50.0%	58.5%	13.5%	41.3%
All	35.7%	59.2%	<u>52.4%</u>	61.9%	18.3%	45.0%

As demonstrated below, the school outperformed both a weighted composite district of all the students enrolled at Harlem Link and the peer district schools with which it does currently or once recently shared space. To create the composite district below, the school weighted the percent passing in each district by its proportional representation within the student body taking the test.

**2012-13 State English Language Arts Exam  
Composite of Student Body by Districts of Residence**

District	Percent Passing	Number HL students resident
Dist. 1	33.2%	1
Dist. 2	54.3%	0
Dist. 3 <sup>6</sup>	16.5%	21
Dist. 4	22.5%	8
Dist. 5	12.0%	66
Dist. 6	16.0%	23
Dist. 7	9.6%	0
Dist. 8	17.9%	3
Dist. 9	11.7%	5
Dist. 10	17.7%	7
Dist. 11	20.5%	8
Dist. 15	40.7%	1
Dist. 17	18.7%	1
Dist. 28	31.3%	1
<b>Composite district</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	
<b>Harlem Link</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, District 3 scores are those achieved by the uptown schools, north of West 100<sup>th</sup> Street: PS 76, PS 145, PS 149, PS 165, PS 180, PS 208, PS 241 and PS 242. The other 12 schools achieved a 58.4% passing rate in Gr. 3-5.

Over the past four years, Harlem Link has outperformed the combined third through fifth grade performance of the schools with which it has shared space. (The school shared space with PS 242M from 2005 to 2009; with PS 129M from 2007 to 2009; and PS 208M since 2009.) With some exceptions (two in 2011, one in 2013), the school has outperformed each individual school each year.

### English Language Arts Performance of School and Comparison Schools by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year and All Students in Comparison Schools Scoring Proficient on State Exam by Year							
		Charter School		P.S. 242M		P.S. 129M		P.S. 208M	
		Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
2009-10	3-5	33.1%	121	29.2%	120	30.3%	198	31.3%	192
2010-11	3-5	35.7%	115	38.2%	102	43.8%	185	29.2%	195
2011-12	3-5	52.4%	105	27.4%	106	42.1%	171	39.5%	172
2012-13	3-5	18.3%	115	13.5%	104	23.1%	160	7.7%	155

#### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English Language Arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.<sup>7</sup>

#### Method

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

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2012-13 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2011-12 results (using free-lunch eligible percentage), the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

#### Results

<sup>7</sup> The Institute will begin using *economically disadvantaged* instead of *eligibility for free lunch* as the demographic variable in 2012-13. Schools should report previous year’s results using reported free-lunch statistics.

While these results are dated from the prior accountability period, they provide context for the success of the school’s English Language Arts program in meeting state test expectations prior to the change to the new state tests.

The school outperformed its expected passing percentage based on its free lunch percentage by a small degree.

**2011-12 English Language Arts Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3	74.6%	52	50.0	41.9	8.1	0.51
4		52	53.8	45.9	7.9	0.50
5		37	48.6	43.9	4.7	0.29
All	74.6%	141	51.0	43.9	7.2	0.45

<b>School’s Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
<i>Higher than expected to a small degree</i>

**Evaluation**

In 2012, the school met the measure, with an Effect Size of 0.45, greater than the 0.3 required.

**Additional Evidence**

2012 was the first year in the prior accountability period that the school met the target, with a lower performance than expected each of the prior two years.

**English Language Arts Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2009-10	3-5	70.9	140	33.6	41.6	-0.50
2010-11	3-5	78.0	143	32.9	40.5	-0.50
2011-12	3-5	74.6	141	51.0	43.9	0.45

**Goal 1: Growth Measure<sup>8</sup>**

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

**Method**

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

*The State Education Department has not yet reported schools' mean growth percentiles for the 2012-13 school year.<sup>9</sup>*

**Results**

Not Yet Available.

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<sup>8</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

<sup>9</sup> See the Guidelines.

**Summary of the English Language Arts Goal**

The school met parts of its English Language Arts goal, but fell short of internal expectations, and far short of the chief absolute goal of 75% passing in this year of transition to new state tests. Even while awaiting analysis from the state’s new Growth Model and the new Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) criteria, it is clear that based on the state exams, the school generally did not meet its Accountability Plan goal in 2013.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state English Language Arts exam will meet that year’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Not Yet Available
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state English Language Arts exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Did Not Achieve (district of location); Achieved (composite dist.)
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English Language Arts exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2011-12 school district results.)	Achieved (2011-12)
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in English Language Arts for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state’s unadjusted median growth percentile.	Not Yet Available

**Action Plan**

Harlem Link’s history of ongoing rigorous internal analysis, feedback and improvement continues in 2013. Prior to reviewing the state exam results in August, the school leadership began to undertake a reform of the English Language Arts program with a sense of urgency that was only heightened and clarified by the statewide precipitous drop in test scores.

**Primary Elements**

*Curriculum*

The school began preparing for the Common Core state assessments in January 2011, with an evaluation of the difference between (then in place) school learning standards and Common Core Curriculum Standards (CCCS). Thus began an overhaul of the school’s Reading and Writing curriculum—based on the shifts required by Common Core—that is winding down but still ongoing as the school tweaks and revises material across the grades.

The school’s 2011-12 ELA curricula were partially based on CCCS, but were designed around shorter units of study to better emphasize genre and to allow for greater emphasis on reading

informational texts. Performance Based Assessments (PBAs), which the school calls “Level 3” (unit-level) assessments, were created for the first time to measure student progress against unit-goal learning standards. In 2012-13, the school amplified this process by completely aligning each unit with CCCS. However, Level 3 assessments were still in process and had varying levels of rigor and thoroughness.

For 2013-14, the school set up a new structure to ensure that each unit has undergone multiple layers of revision and review; that each is rigorously aligned with a Common Core standard; that there is a strong Level 3 PBA that accurately assesses the standard; and that there is a clear rubric for defining and judging acceptable student work. In addition, the school ensured the Standard 1—based on using text evidence—is prominent in each unit of study, given its present and future value on the state exams.

In 2013-14, the school also added nonfiction units in each grade, replacing ineffective or outdated fiction units. In some cases, the school’s first Common Core-aligned curriculum had spent disproportionate time on less-important genres such as drama and poetry, and this fact has been corrected with increased Reading for Information in 2013-14.

Finally, the curriculum has been largely written by teachers, in keeping with the school’s vision. The school leadership believes that strong curriculum is locally designed and goal-oriented, rather than being available off-the-shelf. All of the efforts in the new structure, which includes ongoing curriculum revision during the school year for later units, are designed around achieving coherence despite the many primary authors of units.

#### *Reading and Writing Workshop Coherence and Staff Preparation*

Through a thoroughly revised and greatly increased teacher handbook, and more specific training on the reading and writing workshop than the school has ever provided during its annual Summer Institute, Harlem Link enters 2013-14 with a greater sense of coherence and a more clear structure for English Language Arts than it has had in its eight year history.

Some of the changes that the school has put in place for 2013-14, in response to a variety of data points, include:

- Increased small group instruction, including a standard school-wide start date for Guided Reading and other small group instruction (October 4, 2013), earlier than this critical work has ever started across the school
- Explicit tools for using small group instruction to respond to Level 3 (unit-level) and Level 4 (term-level, including the Developmental Reading Assessment and EdVistas practice state tests) data
- Data talks between assistant principals and teachers based on Level 3 and Level 4 data
- New lesson format and planning routines, to encourage greater ownership across the grade of each lesson plan (as opposed to the sometimes fragmentary jigsaw approach the school had used in the past)
- Literature Circles phased in across the upper grades, to build student investment in understanding and defending ideas around their reading using text evidence

As a result of all these changes, the school’s Instructional Handbook (the third such edition in the school’s history) grew from 40 pages to 68 pages; the sections covering English Language Arts increased from 14 pages to approximately 30 pages, and the school introduced the following new structure for reading workshop in Grades 2-5:

<b>Grades 2-5</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Block 1: Whole-Small-Whole (Mini-lesson and Independent Reading)	45 minutes	Unit genre-based Lesson Objective; Parallel, alternative teaching or whole group. Build stamina. Conference with every child every week.
Block 2: Rotations and Small Group Instruction	45 minutes	Teachers schedule scholars to engage in two of the following structures during this time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided Reading group</li> <li>• Strategy or Re-Teach group</li> <li>• Independent Work</li> <li>• Response to Reading</li> </ul>

School leaders provided training on the elements noted in the above chart during the Summer Institute, and the handbook goes on to explicitly define each term.

Secondary Elements

*Staffing*

In 2012-13, the school had few choices with regard to putting teachers experienced in the school’s model into testing classrooms, other than to raid the non-testing grades where there significantly lower teacher attrition. The table below shows the extraordinary number of teachers new to the school because of attrition for the 2012-13 school year in each grade<sup>10</sup>, and the corresponding number of new teachers in each grade for the coming school year.

**New Classroom Teachers By Grade**

Grade (Note: four teachers in each grade)	2012-13	2013-14
	Teachers new to the school	Teachers new to the school
K	1	1
1	1	0
2	2	2
3	3	1
4	1	0
5	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>10</sup> As noted above, a board exit survey revealed that teachers left for a variety of reasons, including new motherhood, career changes and moves out of the state and country.



Entering 2012, fully two-thirds of the classroom teachers in the testing grades were new to the school. It is no surprise, as noted above, that the fourth grade, which experienced the least attrition among the upper grades, outperformed the others markedly on the state exams in 2013.

Refusing to compromise the increasingly high quality of the lower grades, entering 2012-13 the school kept those lower grades relatively intact (only one-third of those teachers were new), to the detriment of the upper grades where testing occurred. This fact of attrition is especially significant at a school like Harlem Link where, unlike many other high-performing charters, the home-grown curriculum is dependent upon teacher expertise and deep knowledge developed over time. The school does not employ a teacher-proof, test-prep curriculum, following the advisement of Commissioner John King who has stated that the new state exams are not suitable for test prep.

This exposure to the risk of new teachers misunderstanding the school’s approach, inherent in the school’s model, was amplified by the increased attrition over the two years from 2011 to 2012. The chart below shows that high attrition in the context of the school’s prior years of attrition.

**Total Teacher Retention by Year  
(including out of classroom teachers and mid-year attrition)**

Year	Retention
2006	83%
2007	75%
2008	63%
2009	86%
2010	87%
2011	74%
2012	59%
2013	80%

As the chart shows, coming into the 2013-14 school year, the school has had its highest teacher retention since 2010, approaching the average retention of 82% across its first five years.

This teacher retention and attrition issue is significant not only because of the school’s complex curriculum model, but because with fewer new teachers in 2013-14, the school has been able to focus in on the needs of the newer teachers more quickly and target them with specific training for their individual needs more readily.

*Professional Development*

Because of the greater sense of clarity around the reading and writing workshops, the school is better equipped to support the needs of teachers in implementing their elements. Additionally, the individuals providing this front-line support to teachers who were new in 2012-13 are returning in 2013-14 with a year of experience working together and providing a consistent message:

Name	Title	Began at HL	Role
Matthew Bull	Assistant Principal, Grades 3-5	2012	Point person for supervision and evaluation of all upper grade teachers
Nicole Petraglia	Manager of Assessment and PD	2012	Coordinate coaching and assessment; provide direct coaching to teachers
Georgie Marley & Jaime Margolies	Consultants contracted through LitLife	2012	Provide direct coaching to teachers; provide input on improving model

## MATHEMATICS

### **Goal 1: Mathematics**

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

### **Background**

In the eight years of its existence, Harlem Link has built a math curriculum that is standards-based, philosophically aligned with the school's mission, and comprehensive in its approach. This curriculum has gone through a thorough review for the 2013-14 school year, to address gaps between it and the Common Core State Standards identified by school staff in 2012-13.

Harlem Link teachers implement the TERC math program in the classrooms, along with skills practice during Morning Meeting, direct skills instruction through assessment-driven, teacher designed instruction, and the Contexts for Learning program, which supplements conceptual gaps in TERC such as measurement of time and money and basic number sense but uses the same pedagogical philosophy. This combination of programs ensures students have the number sense and basic number fact recall to wrestle with and master conceptual problems. It also allows students to learn to understand and apply mathematical computation and problem solving to situations that arise in everyday life.

As constructivist math programs, TERC and Contexts for Learning foster mathematical thinking. Calendar study provides daily practice with basic skills, and teachers create individualized math stations and lead Guided Math groups to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students.

The school's shift away from Harlem Link school standards to New York State standards and then Common Core State Standards in two overlapping phases has mirrored that of the ELA, but has required much less effort from the leadership and teachers since the school was already substantially teaching in a manner consistent with CCSS. The school has identified two major concepts as key to faithful implementation of CCSS and preparation for PARCC in math: embedding the eight Standards for Mathematical Practice in daily math routines; and a logical sequence of skill development from grades K to 5.

The eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, with their focus on student argumentation, communication, and problem solving, are consistent with the school's structured constructivist approach. The CCSS vertical sequence of skills—particularly the major emphasis on number sense in the early grades, and the comparatively disproportionate focus on fractions in the upper elementary grades—led to a change in the school's use of TERC and Contexts for Learning modules, in many cases pushing units that had been previously taught at the school into a prior grade. The school is well prepared to support teachers in this transition and well practiced in the use of TERC modules to deliver effective math instruction.

**Goal 1: Absolute Measure**

Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics examination for grades 3-8.<sup>11</sup>

**Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program mathematics assessment to students in third through fifth grade in April 2013. Each student's raw score has been converted to a grade-specific scaled score and a performance level.

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

**2012-13 State Mathematics Exam  
Number of Students Tested and Not Tested**

Grade	Total Tested	Not Tested <sup>12</sup>			Total Enrolled
		IEP	ELL	Absent	
3	51	0	0	0	51
4	54	0	0	0	54
5	40	0	0	0	40
All	145	0	0	0	145

**Results**

In 2013, Harlem Link saw 31.3% of its students in at least their second year achieving proficiency.

**Performance on 2012-13 State Mathematics Exam  
By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year**

Grades	All Students		Enrolled in at least their Second Year	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	9.8%	51	8.3%	36
4	51.9%	54	60.5%	43
5	22.5%	40	19.4%	36
All	29.0%	145	31.3%	115

<sup>11</sup> Because of the state's new 3-8 testing program, aligned to its high school college and career readiness standards, the Institute is no longer using Time Adjusted Level 3 cut scores. Please report results for previous year's using the state's published results for scoring at proficiency.

<sup>12</sup> Students exempted from this exam according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP), because of English Language Learners (ELL) status, or absence for at least some part of the exam.

## Evaluation

The school did not meet the measure of 75% of students achieving proficiency.

Similarly to the 2013 English Language Arts scores, the grade with the highest proficiency was the grade with the most returning teachers, Grade 4. In this grade, the school approached the target of 75% passing with a 60.5% mark. In Grade 3, the performance was the lowest, with 8.3% of students passing—a greater percentage (two of fifteen) of new students passed the exam compared to students enrolled for two or more years (three of thirty-six). This phenomenon was also true in fifth grade, where one of four new students passed the same, but only seven of thirty-six returning students did so.

The scores follow a similar—albeit more extreme—pattern to the ELA scores discussed above, highlighting the staffing and consistency of instruction issues noted regarding the ELA scores. The grade team members' familiarity with each other and greater curricular focus in fourth grade, along with better use of small group instruction to respond to unit and lesson-level data, contributed to higher scores. These elements were not present with consistency in the other grades, which featured almost all new teachers to the school in 2012-13.

## Additional Evidence

The chart below shows that students enrolled in the school longer generally fared better than those who were new to the school. Students enrolled within the past two years (58) took the test in approximately equal numbers to students enrolled four or more years (61), and there was a significant difference in their performance: 25.9% of the former passed while 31.1% of the latter passed. The performance of the 26 students enrolled three years fell in between those two extremes.

### Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and Years Attending the School

Grade	Percent of Students at or above the Level 3 cut score According to Number of Years Enrolled							
	One		Two		Three		Four or More	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	13.3%	15	0.0%	4	11.1%	9	8.7%	23
4	18.2%	11	56.3%	16	77.8%	9	55.6%	18
5	50.0%	4	0.0%	8	0.0%	8	35.0%	20
All	20.0%	30	32.1%	28	30.8%	26	31.1%	61

Over the years, the school has substantially met its Mathematics goals.

## Mathematics Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year Achieving Proficiency					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	68.3%	41	69.0%	29	8.3%	36
4	79.5%	44	97.6%	41	60.5%	43
5	43.3%	30	97.1%	34	19.4%	36
All	66.1%	115	89.4%	104	31.3%	115

### Goal 1: Absolute Measure

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

### Method

The federal No Child Left Behind law holds schools accountable for making annual yearly progress towards enabling all students to be proficient. As a result, the state sets an Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) each year to determine if schools are making satisfactory progress toward the goal of proficiency in the state's learning standards in mathematics. To achieve this measure, all tested students must have a Performance Level Index (PLI) value that equals or exceeds the current year's mathematics AMO. The PLI is calculated by adding the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 2 through 4 with the sum of the percent of all tested students at Levels 3 and 4. Thus, the highest possible PLI is 200.<sup>13</sup>

### Results

The school's PLI for 2012-13 is 99, with 29 percent of students passing at Level 3 or Level 4.

### Mathematics 2012-13 Performance Level Index (PLI)

Number in Cohort	Percent of Students at Each Performance Level			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	30	41	26	3

$$\begin{array}{rclclclclcl}
 \text{PI} & = & 41 & + & 26 & + & 3 & = & 70 \\
 & & & & 26 & + & 3 & = & \underline{29} \\
 & & & & & & \text{PLI} & = & 99
 \end{array}$$

<sup>13</sup> In contrast to SED's Performance Index, the PLI does not account for year-to-year growth toward proficiency.

## Evaluation

*The State Education Department has not recalibrated the AMO to align with the new Mathematics 3-8 testing program*

### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

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

### Method

A school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year at the school and the total result for all students at the corresponding grades in the school district.<sup>14</sup>

### Results

In 2013, Harlem Link had fewer of its students in at least their second year (31.3%) pass the state exam, compared to the local school district (48.0%).

As noted in the English Language Arts section above, while the school is physically located in District 3, this high-performing and relatively diverse district does not perform at a comparable level to the schools in Harlem Link's catchment area. A more suitable comparison will be made in the Additional Evidence section below.

**2012-13 State Mathematics Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
3	8.3%	36	52.1%	1507
4	60.5%	43	51.9%	1316
5	19.4%	36	40.0%	1402
All	31.3%	115	48.0%	4225

<sup>14</sup> Schools can acquire these data when the State Education Department releases its Access database containing grade level ELA and math test results for all schools and districts statewide. The SED announces the release of the data on its [News Release webpage](#).

## Evaluation

The school did not meet the measure, falling short by nearly 17 percentage points. The school did best the district in Grade 4, by almost eight percentage points.

## Additional Evidence

While Harlem Link met (in 2011) and surpassed (2012) the challenging target of high-achieving District 3's math proficiency rate, in 2013 with new exams these gains were erased. The school leadership is confident that with this past history, a new focus on curricular, pedagogical and professional development improvements can lift the school back to the comparative levels seen in 2011 and 2012.

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

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least their Second Year Who Are at Proficiency Compared to Local District Students					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
3	68.3%	64.0%	69.0%	66.9%	8.3%	52.1%
4	79.5%	68.9%	97.6%	73.6%	60.5%	51.9%
5	43.3%	65.4%	97.1%	67.5%	19.4%	40.0%
All	66.1%	66.1%	89.4%	69.4%	31.3%	48.0%

As discussed in the ELA section above, Harlem Link's district of location is not representative of the district schools students would be attending should Harlem Link not exist. The composite district performance score below of 17.4% is significantly below Harlem Link's passing rate of 29.0%.

### 2012-13 State Math Exam Composite of Student Body by Districts of Residence

District	Percent Passing	Number HL students resident
Dist. 1	38.7%	1
Dist. 2	63.7%	0
Dist. 3 <sup>15</sup>	17.4%	21
Dist. 4	25.2%	8
Dist. 5	13.5%	66
Dist. 6	19.6%	23
Dist. 7	11.3%	0
Dist. 8	21.9%	3
Dist. 9	13.7%	5

<sup>15</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, District 3 scores are those achieved by the uptown schools, north of West 100<sup>th</sup> Street: PS 76, PS 145, PS 149, PS 165, PS 180, PS 208, PS 241 and PS 242. The other 12 schools achieved a 62.5% passing rate in Gr. 3-5.



Dist. 10	21.4%	7
Dist. 11	23.1%	8
Dist. 15	44.4%	1
Dist. 17	21.1%	1
Dist. 28	36.3%	1
<b>Composite district</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	
<b>Harlem Link</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	

Over the past four years, Harlem Link has by a wide margin outperformed the combined third through fifth grade performance of the schools with which it has shared space. (The school shared space with PS 242M from 2005 to 2009; with PS 129M from 2007 to 2009; and PS 208M since 2009.) Each year in each grade, the school has outperformed each individual school.

### Mathematics Performance of School and Comparison Schools by School Year

School Year	Grades	Percent of Charter School Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year and All Students in Comparison Schools Scoring at or above Level 3 on State Exam							
		Charter School		P.S. 242M		P.S. 129M		P.S. 208M	
		Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
2009-10	3-5	62.8%	121	36.9%	122	46.1%	206	33.5%	194
2010-11	3-5	66.1%	115	48.0%	102	43.7%	190	31.8%	201
2011-12	3-5	89.4%	105	25.9%	108	53.2%	173	43.1%	174
2012-13	3-5	31.3%	115	7.6%	104	20.8%	168	6.4%	157

#### Goal 1: Comparative Measure

Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for students eligible for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.<sup>16</sup>

#### Method

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

<sup>16</sup> The Institute will begin using *economically disadvantaged* instead of *eligibility for free lunch* as the demographic variable in 2012-13. Schools should report previous year's results using reported free-lunch statistics.

Given the timing of the state’s release of economically disadvantaged data and the demands of the data analysis, the 2012-13 analysis is not yet available. This report contains 2011-12 results (using free-lunch eligible percentage), the most recent Comparative Performance Analysis available.

**Results**

In 2011-12, Harlem Link had an aggregate Effect Size of 1.51, highlighted by a Grade 4 Effect Size of over 2.00.

**2011-12 Mathematics Comparative Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Percent of Students at Levels 3&4		Difference between Actual and Predicted	Effect Size
			Actual	Predicted		
3		52	63.4	49.2	14.2	0.75
4		51	96.1	58.1	38.0	2.08
5		37	91.9	56.0	35.9	1.81
All	74.6%	140	82.8	54.2	28.6	1.51

<b>School’s Overall Comparative Performance:</b>
<i>Higher than expected to a large degree</i>

**Evaluation**

The school met the measure in 2011-12, with an aggregate Effect Size that was higher than expected to a large degree. At 1.51, the aggregate Effect Size was significantly higher than the targeted +0.30.

**Additional Evidence**

Harlem Link has continually demonstrated a higher Effect Size than the +0.30 target, and has increased its effect size in each year of the period shown.

**Mathematics Comparative Performance by School Year**

School Year	Grades	Percent Eligible for Free Lunch	Number Tested	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size
2009-10	3-5	70.9	139	61.1	50.6	0.58
2010-11	3-5	78.0	143	65.0	50.1	0.80
2011-12	3-5	74.6	140	82.8	54.2	1.51

**Goal 1: Growth Measure<sup>17</sup>**

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

**Method**

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

*The State Education Department has not yet reported schools' mean growth percentiles for the 2012-13 school year.*

**Results**

Not Yet Available.

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<sup>17</sup> See Guidelines for [Creating a SUNY Accountability Plan](#) for an explanation.

**Summary of the Mathematics Goal**

Harlem Link’s record in meeting the Mathematics Goal is mixed. Ultimately, the school sees a need for tremendous improvement as the school fell far short of the Absolute target in each grade except for fourth grade, in which case the school still fell short of the mark.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State mathematics exam for grades 3-8.	Did Not Achieve
Absolute	Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Level Index (PLI) on the state mathematics exam will meet that year’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state’s NCLB accountability system.	Not Yet Available
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state mathematics exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Did Not Achieve (district of location); Achieved (composite dist.)
Comparative	Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state mathematics exam by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a small degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State. (Using 2011-12 school district results.)	Achieved (2011-12)
Growth	Each year, under the state’s Growth Model the school’s mean unadjusted growth percentile in mathematics for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state’s unadjusted median growth percentile.	Not Yet Available

**Action Plan**

Similarly to the English Language Arts curriculum program, Harlem Link has invested time and resources in a structure for revising units of study to be better aligned with Common Core Curriculum Standards (CCCS).

In the case of Math, this structure has involved several steps:

- Training on the Common Core Math Progressions
- Full-day collaborative teacher revision
- Administrator review and feedback

The Common Core Math Progressions are documents created by Common Core showing the theoretical underpinning for the sequence of the standards. Beginning in the spring of 2013, grade teams met with the school’s longtime contracted math staff developer, Joan Backer, to review the documents and clarify priorities in each grade. Kindergarten teachers, for example, began to see the reason for student automaticity with operations up to the number five—so that first graders are able to navigate ten, then twenty, with fluency. Likewise, understanding tens and twenty in first grade builds the foundation for eventual understanding of multiplication in third grade, and more

complex operations and eventually fractions in fourth and fifth grade. These progressions were covered for each of the domains within Common Core.

For the first time at Harlem Link, early childhood teachers have meaningful access to and time to discuss the upper elementary grade standards.

From there, teachers were allocated a full day in grade team pairs (one teacher from each classroom) to revise one to two units at a time, working together with the advisement of Ms. Backer. Teachers followed a similar process to the Reading and Writing curriculum revision, beginning with the unit assessment and rubric and proceeding to plan objectives from there.

This process was completed for approximately the first four months of the school year by the end of June 2013. Additional days are planned to complete this cycle for all units in the year by the mid-winter of 2014.

Also similarly to ELA, the school modified the planning structure so that all teachers have equal ownership over the lesson planning (as opposed to the past structure, which allowed some teachers to be “math point persons” and therefore inadvertently fostered fragmentation). Focusing on math thinking and the eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, pre-service professional development focused on teacher understanding of the student’s perspective when planning. Teachers are now required, for example, to try out problems and games themselves prior to teaching them, and to document their strategies and the expected confusion or misunderstanding on the part of students. The lesson plan format has changed accordingly to include these elements.

Regarding skill development, the school has determined exit fluency criteria for each grade based on the CCCS. Teachers are developing Level 4 (term-level) assessments to assess student progress against these benchmarks prior to the end of each marking period. These exit criteria are:

Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combinations of 5</li> <li>• Count to 100</li> </ul>
First Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combinations of 10</li> <li>• Add 2-digit numbers</li> </ul>
Second Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combinations of 20</li> <li>• Subtract 2-digit numbers</li> </ul>
Third Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Times table through 10x10</li> <li>• Add/subtract within 1,000</li> </ul>
Fourth Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order unit fractions</li> <li>• Reduce common fractions to lowest terms</li> <li>• Add/subtract within 1,000,000</li> </ul>
Fifth Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-digit multiplication</li> </ul>
Sixth Grade (for advanced students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-digit division</li> <li>• Multi-digit decimal operations</li> </ul>

Finally, staffing and professional development elements noted in the ELA section above—namely, that there is a significantly greater level of staff retention entering the 2013-14 year than in either of the two prior years—apply to math instruction as well as to ELA.

## SCIENCE

### **Goal 3: Science**

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

#### **Background**

Harlem Link uses and supplements the FOSS (Full Option Science System) program, an inquiry-driven set of units that align to New York State Learning and Performance Standards. The school staffs Science instruction with two Specialty Teachers. Students received science instruction three periods per week. The school also sets aside time and when necessary extra funding for external enrichment programs that support science units. The school takes advantage of its proximity to Central Park and the variety of museums in New York City for hands-on experiences that support curriculum units. Internal science assessment is done primarily through the use of curriculum-based measures provided with the FOSS kits.

For the past six years, the school has hired an independent contractor, Garo Tekeyan, with extensive experience in FOSS instruction, to provide professional development. In September 2013, Mr. Tekeyan will return to this role.

For the first time in five years, however, the school will feature a new science teacher. Replacing Tyson Gregg—the school’s upper grade science teacher since 2008, will be Leilani Taylor. Ms. Taylor was a classroom teacher in second grade for the past two years at Harlem Link (and taught science as part of her classroom duties at her previous assignment in another charter school). She left the classroom temporarily for maternity leave in June 2013, and returns in the science role to replace Mr. Gregg, who moved to Long Island because of pressing family matters.

Despite the change in staffing, the school sees no interruption in the science program. The staff member assisting Mr. Gregg for the past five years, Regla Mora, will continue in the role by assisting Ms. Taylor, and despite budget cuts the school was able to retain Mr. Tekeyan on a continuing basis to support Ms. Taylor’s curriculum and content needs.

### **Goal 3: Absolute Measure**

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

#### **Method**

The school administered the New York State Testing Program science assessment to students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in spring 2013. The school converted each student’s raw score to a performance level and a grade-specific scaled score. The criterion for success on this measure requires students enrolled in at least their second year (defined as enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year) to score at proficiency.

## Results

In 2013, the school saw every student enrolled in at least their second year pass the state exam. In fact, 84% of those students scored at Level 4.

### Charter School Performance on 2012-13 State Science Exam By All Students and Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	100.0%	43	Not	available

## Evaluation

The school met the measure, with every student enrolled two or more years passing the exam.

The tremendous consistency of both the school's science program—staffing, curriculum, instruction and professional development—and the content of the state test, as well as the coherence between the two, are the leading causes for this success. Unlike English Language Arts and, to a lesser extent, Math, the state Science exam tests a limited and predictable body of knowledge each year. The test has been little changed through the roller coaster ride of standards, curriculum and assessment changes in other content areas on the state level.

The coherence referred to involves the performance portion of the state exam, in which students must demonstrate application-level knowledge of the scientific method and go through science experiments. Because Harlem Link's science program (beginning in kindergarten) is hands-on, inquiry-based and grounded in the scientific method, students are well prepared to take on these tasks.

## Additional Evidence

Harlem Link has consistently seen all of its students enrolled in at least their second year score at Level 3 or Level 4 on the science exam.

### Science Performance by Grade Level and School Year

Grade	Percent of Students Enrolled in At Least Their Second Year at Proficiency					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	100.0%	44	100.0%	41	100.0%	43
All	100.0%	44	100.0%	41	100.0%	43



**Goal 3: Comparative Measure**

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

**Method**

The school compares tested students enrolled in at least their second year to all tested students in the surrounding public school district. Comparisons are between the results for each grade in which the school had tested students in at least their second year and the results for the respective grades in the local school district.

**Results**

District data are not readily available.

**2012-13 State Science Exam  
Charter School and District Performance by Grade Level**

Grade	Percent of Students at Proficiency			
	Charter School Students In At Least 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		All District Students	
	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested
4	100.0%	43	Not	available

**Evaluation**

While district data are not readily available, the school certainly at least met the district’s mark, as 100% of Harlem Link students enrolled in at least their second year passed the exam.

As noted above, while Harlem Link is technically located in District 3, the performance of the district schools in the school’s catchment area is typically far lower than the average District 3 score.

**Additional Evidence**

In each of the recent years, the local district has maintained a high passing rate, but the school’s 100% rate has been higher each year.

**Science Performance of Charter School and Local District**

**by Grade Level and School Year**

Grade	Percent of Charter School Students at Proficiency and Enrolled in At Least their Second Year Compared to Local District Students					
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District	Charter School	Local District
4	100.0%	85.0%	100.0%	78.2%	100.0%	Not
All	100.0%	85.0%	100.0%	78.2%	100.0%	Available

**Summary of the Science Goal**

The school once again met its Science Goal in 2012-13.

Type	Measure	Outcome
Absolute	Each year, 75 percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State examination.	Achieved
Comparative	Each year, the percent of all tested students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of all students in the same tested grades in the local school district.	Achieved

**Action Plan**

Harlem Link will continue the current program in 2013-14, with no significant changes planned for curriculum or instruction. As noted above, Ms. Taylor is taking over for Mr. Gregg as the science teacher in Grades 3-5.

In the school’s highly collaborative environment, Ms. Taylor has a tremendous amount of support. Jennifer Holliman, the school’s Grades K-2 Science teacher since 2008, collaborated with Mr. Gregg over the years and is familiar with the upper grade science program. She also has a working relationship with Ms. Taylor since the latter was a second grade teacher. The school has arranged for Mr. Tekeyan’s time to be front-loaded to provide extra support to Ms. Taylor. Finally, Ms. Taylor is familiar with most of the students in Grades 3-5 since she taught over one-third of them as their second grade classroom teacher from 2011 to 2013.

## NCLB

### Goal 5: NCLB

The school will make Adequate Yearly Progress.

### Goal 5: Absolute Measure

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

### Method

Since *all* students are expected to meet the state's learning standards, the federal No Child Left Behind legislation stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet state proficiency standards. New York, like all states, established a system for making these determinations for its public schools. Each year the state issues School Report Cards which indicate each school's status under the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.

### Results

Harlem Link Charter School is In Good Standing this year. For 2012-13, the state education department has determined that no new schools will be identified as Focus Schools due to the change in testing administration.

### Evaluation

The school has met the measure.

### Additional Evidence

The school has been deemed In Good Standing each year since inception.

#### NCLB Status by Year

Year	Status
2010-11	In Good Standing
2011-12	In Good Standing
2012-13	In Good Standing