

NEW BEGINNINGS FAMILY ACADEMY

Annual Report

2013-2014



New Beginnings Family Academy
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Mission Statement

OUR MISSION

New Beginnings Family Academy provides its students a rigorous education that ensures **academic success** and builds **character** in partnership with their families.

OUR CULTURE

We believe our entire community (students, faculty, parents, administrators, staff and board) must commit to a culture that is unique and, in fact, will be counter to some of the cultural norms of today's society. The hallmark of our culture will be a community that is **positive, uplifting, forward thinking and hard-working**, ever reaching for the stars.

To meet these expectations, NBFA has identified social values, which are both demonstrable and measurable, that articulate the school's mission and goals:

1. **Self-controlled** - I regulate my own emotions and demonstrate positive interactions with every person in my school.
2. **Thoughtful** - I am kind and considerate of all members of my school community.
3. **Responsible** - I am accountable for my actions and how they affect those around me. I make sure to complete all assignments and meet my deadlines.
4. **Empathetic** - I relate to how others may feel. I take others' perspective into account and work together to accomplish a task.
5. **Tenacious** - I am determined to achieve my goals despite any obstacles.
6. **Conscientious** - I do well in all my classes because I work to the best of my ability. I take great care in the quality of my work.
7. **Hardworking** - I put my best effort forward and ask for help when needed because I want to learn and grow.

OUR VALUES

Every member of the NBFA community is expected to follow the school's fundamental values:

Be Respectful. Be Responsible.

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A letter from the Director of the School and Governing Board Chairperson

Dear Commissioner Pryor,

We would like to acknowledge the incredible work you have done to advance education reform during your short tenure in Connecticut. We know that this has not been easy. Thank you for having a vision of high quality public education for all Connecticut children and working with educators from all sectors to provide public school parents viable educational options. Your accomplishments will be your legacy.

In 2013-14, New Beginnings Family Academy (“NBFA”)’s 12th academic year, the Board of Directors made two critical decisions: (1) it changed the organizational structure of the school to a business model, fashioned after other successful charter organizations and (2) it participated in a four-day Theory of Change workshop that resulted in a new clarity of mission, strategic goals and a three-year implementation schedule.

NBFA is now run by a Chief Executive Officer, who serves as head-of-school and district superintendent and whose small department functions as a central office; a Chief Academic Officer, a certified (092) administrator responsible for the school’s curriculum, instruction and assessment programming; and a Chief Operating Officer, a CPA who handles finance and operations.

The school’s revised mission statement - *New Beginnings Family Academy provides its students a rigorous education that ensures academic success and builds character in partnership with their families* - reinforces the school’s long-practiced belief in the importance of educating the whole child in a collaborative, collegial environment that requires meaningful parent engagement from day one of the partnership.

Perhaps most excitedly, the school broke ground to construct classrooms for NBFA’s expansion into Pre-K. Although NBFA did not receive early childhood seats, *per se*, such an expansion and the state’s financial support of the construction would not have been possible if not for your and the Governor’s commitment to providing high quality educational opportunities for our youngest learners.

May you have much success in your next venture.

Respectfully,

David

David C. Schlakman, Chairman of the Board

Ronelle

Ronelle P. Swagerty, Chief Executive Officer

About Our School

New Beginnings Family Academy (NBFA) opened Bridgeport's first elementary charter school in September 2002, serving 156 students in grades K-3. By 2005, NBFA had expanded into the city's first charter middle school, serving roughly 260 students. Today, New Beginnings Family Academy annually enrolls 400 students from kindergarten through grade 8, providing a strong foundation that prepares them for outstanding academic success in high school, college and beyond. NBFA students are selected through a blind lottery. There is no admissions criterion.

Founded by a career educator and a Southport businessman, New Beginnings Family Academy seeks to improve the lives of low-income urban students by providing a free, high-quality public education in a small school with a proprietary curriculum that organically weaves ethics and character-building into everyday instruction. Each NBFA homeroom is named after an historical figure – Sir Isaac Newton, Helen Keller, Benjamin Banneker, Eleanor Roosevelt, to name a few – whose life personifies “intellect and character,” the tenets of NBFA. Classrooms are interactive places filled with “good noise.” They are led by certified teachers who use their individual talents and techniques, combined with best practices, to intrigue and educate children. Mistakes are viewed as teachable moments that build resiliency. This model fosters a love of learning and work ethic in NBFA students.

Now in its 13th academic year, NBFA's student achievement outcomes demonstrate the school's efficacy. The single-school district has consistently outperformed Bridgeport (its host district) as well as neighboring urban districts (including New Haven, Waterbury and Hartford) on state standardized exams. For example, in 2012, the most recent year for which comparative data is available, NBFA's 8th graders outperformed their district and state peers in reading, with 82.1% testing at or above “goal” – the high bar – compared to 76.8% statewide and 44.5% in the district. Perhaps most impressive are NBFA students' long-term outcomes. Since 2008, when NBFA graduated its first class of 8th graders, approximately 70% of alumnae have earned admittance into such competitive high schools as Greens Farms Academy, Fairfield Prep, St. Luke's and Hopkins.

The leadership team at New Beginnings Family Academy comprises a Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”), Chief Academic Officer (“CAO”), Chief Operating Officer (“COO”), two deans and a director of development. The CEO is head-of-school and functions as the district superintendent. The Chief Academic Officer, a certified administrator, is responsible for the school's curriculum, instruction and assessment programming. The COO handles finance, purchasing and operations. The Academic Dean and Dean of Student and Family Services function as Assistant Principals, with one supporting direct instruction and the other focused on school climate and culture, respectively. The Development Director works with the Board of Directors and CEO to raise funds to close the school's guaranteed operating budget gap due to Connecticut's underfunding of public charter schools.

The CEO reports to a Board of Directors comprised of engaged professionals, community partners and local educators. Members serve for two years. Terms are renewable. Teachers and parents are welcome, but not required, to serve on the Board.

New Beginnings Family Academy began constituting its School Governance Council, called the New Beginnings Family Alliance (“NBFAAlliance.”) This body, comprised of parents, teachers and community members, works

with administration to ensure that NBFA lives up to its mission to provide its students a rigorous education that ensures academic success and builds character in partnership with their families.

STUDENT ADMISSIONS

New Beginnings Family Academy enrolls an average of 40 children per grade each year. There are typically two classes per grade. A blind lottery is held each spring. The number of available seats for new students is reduced by siblings of current students who enter as a result of the school's sibling policy. In the past, the average number of seats for new NBFA students has averaged 21, after siblings were enrolled. In 2013-14, the State Department of Education waived the school's enrollment cap, approving 70 additional seats to help meet demand for enrollment in the 2014-15 academic year.

STUDENT INFORMATION

2013-14 School Year

Grade	Applications	Seats Taken	Waitlisted
K	106	37	69
1	30	5	25
2	29	5	24
3	26	3	23
4	14	7	7
5	20	6	14
6	8	0	8
7	6	1	5
8	5	0	5
TOTALS	244	64	180

2014-15 School Year

Grade	Applications	Seats Taken	Waitlisted
Pre-K	89	40	49
K	90	69	21
1	25	2	23
2	33	6	27
3	19	0	19
4	19	0	19
5	23	1	22
6	9	1	8
7	6	1	5
8	5	0	5
TOTALS	318	120	198

Curriculum Design and Instructional Method and Modification

At New Beginnings Family Academy, inquiry-based learning that encourages critical thinking is key to setting students on a path for success and has resulted in delightful testimonials from high school guidance counselors on how well NBFA alumni test on entrance exams and adjust in their first year. However, NBFA's leaders are fully aware that such outcomes are not just the result of academic training. They are a consequence of a counter-cultural belief system that continually shifts the focus of NBFA students away from the allure of their neighborhoods and onto the value of a strong work ethic leading to future success. Thus, to eradicate risk factors, NBFA has designed an outcomes-based model that builds both knowledge and character to achieve positive life outcomes for its students. Program elements include:

A. Culture of achievement and accountability. New Beginnings Family Academy defines and measures the social and emotional growth and development of its students using S-T-R-E-T-C-H principles, which are introduced to families during the application process and continually reinforced throughout the academic year. In 2013-14, NBFA revised its S-T-R-E-T-C-H principles, selecting tenets that more closely align with the five essential life social and emotional skills that lead to academic success, according to research by the Tauck Family Foundation and Child Trends, a national leader in measuring children's development and well-being. The suite of skills identified by Child Trends includes self-control, persistence, mastery orientation, academic self-efficacy and social competence. NBFA's revised principles (underlined and in color) and the skills with which they align are below.

1. **Self-controlled** - I regulate my own emotions and demonstrate positive interactions with every person in my school. **(self-control)**
2. ***Thoughtful*** - I am kind and considerate of all members of my school community.
3. **Responsible** - I am accountable for my actions and how they affect those around me. I make sure to complete all assignments and meet my deadlines.
4. ***Empathetic*** - I relate to how others may feel. I take others' perspective into account and work together to accomplish a task. **(social competence)**
5. **Tenacious** - I am determined to achieve my goals despite any obstacles. **(persistence)**
6. **Conscientious** - I do well in all my classes because I work to the best of my ability. I take great care in the quality of my work. **(academic self-efficacy)**
7. ***Hardworking*** - I put my best effort forward and ask for help when needed because I want to learn and grow. **(mastery orientation)**

B. More time on task. Once students and families contractually agree with the principles of NBFA's culture, the journey begins. New Beginnings offers an extended school day that keeps students actively engaged in 7½ hours of "regular" instruction daily, compared to the 6¾ hours offered in traditional public school districts. NBFA also follows an 11-month academic calendar, which adds three weeks of instruction to the school year. The total number of instructional days offered at NBFA during a calendar year is 10% higher than that offered at traditional public school districts throughout the state. Keeping kids off the streets in a safe, structured, nurturing environment where they are focused on learning is a critical step in building the academic and character foundation required for life-long success.

C. Targeted remediation. (1). Five full-time interventionists offer language arts or math remediation in small groups and one-on-one settings, both inside and outside the classroom, during the regular school day. This includes re-teaching content until proficiency is achieved and pre-teaching the next day's assignments to build knowledge and self-confidence. This extra help during the regular school day has moved 60% of children from "basic" to "proficient" or higher, as measured by the CMT, since the beginning of the academic year. (2). Approximately 25% of the student body attends STRETCH Academy, NBFA's after-school remediation and enrichment program. STRETCH Academy runs Monday-Thursday from 3:45-6:15 p.m., further extending students' time on task by 2½ hours while reinforcing a positive image of school. During the day, STRETCH staff serves as teaching assistants in their students' classrooms. In the afternoon, they make the seamless transition into the after school program with their students. This model allows STRETCH staff to have first-hand knowledge of the curriculum, their students' strengths and weaknesses, and the teachers' instructional styles. It also gives them the opportunity to build a rapport with classroom teachers, which improves the partnership on behalf of students. During the first quarter marking period, students who attended STRETCH Academy scored, on average, 39% higher than they did on Blue Ribbon assessments conducted in September.

D. Family engagement and support. (1). Parental involvement is the bedrock of New Beginnings Family Academy's philosophy and was the impetus for a revision of the school's mission: New Beginnings Family Academy provides its students a rigorous education that ensures **academic success** and builds **character in partnership with their families**. NBFA expects parents to be active education partners and advocates. Research shows that the children of parents who actively engage in their education have better success in school and life outcomes than those who do not.¹ Such a high level of parental involvement contributes greatly to NBFA's family-oriented culture and helps hold children accountable for their behavior. (2). NBFA's Office of Student and Family Services works with students and their families to improve academic outcomes through increased parental involvement, behavior intervention plans, counseling and social service referrals. (3). NBFA strives to improve parent literacy and skills attainment through events aimed at bolstering comprehension and encouraging life-long learning. This is done because research shows that youngsters whose parents have attained higher education are more likely to value education and have greater life outcomes. NBFA's Parent Teacher Association coordinates, in conjunction with OSFA, a number of activities that promote adult education, including a Pajama Party for Literacy, financial seminars and health and wellness workshops.

E. Early Reading Success. This program aims to enhance literacy instruction for all K-2 students, support the individual learning needs of struggling students and challenge gifted students whose skills surpass their grade level. Key components of the program include teaching assistants in all K-2 classrooms; the Waterford Reading Program, an adaptive computer-based learning system; and three full-time reading specialists who work with students individually or in small groups. This level of support is needed because one-third of NBFA students have no school readiness training before entering kindergarten. The lack of school readiness training results in problems with dexterity, deficient fine motor skills, severe vocabulary deficits and attention disorders.

F. The arts. All students participate in physical education and library/media center classes at New Beginnings Family Academy, but it is the school's commitment to arts education that is particularly noteworthy. Going against the trend at many districts, including charter schools, NBFA firmly believes in the value of arts education. To that end, every student receives weekly instruction in studio art and music. NBFA students annually participate in an exhibit at the Fairfield Museum and History Center. The school also partners with the Westport Arts Center and Creative Connections, a Norwalk-based non-profit that arranges for international youth dance troupes to spend a day at NBFA performing and bonding with students over lunch and in classrooms. This year, NBFA teachers and students will benefit from cultural exchanges with schools in The Gambia and South America. These cross-cultural global connections help fan children's flame for school, making it a fun place of creative expression and cultural exploration. A more immediate effect occurs when NBFA's art and music teachers work across the curriculum on interdisciplinary projects with their colleagues in the core academic subjects. One such example is NBFA's current Emancipation Proclamation project involving collaboration among the art, social studies and language arts teachers.

G. Ongoing professional development. All NBFA instructional, support and administrative staff receive ongoing training to improve upon their craft. Staff development includes research, education and planning in best practices for math, reading, writing, and science, along with review of common practices that include student engagement and higher order thinking instructional strategies. Sessions cover a myriad of topics including enhancing math instruction, teaching reading strategies, differentiating instruction, supporting struggling readers and disaggregating data. Additionally, NBFA staff annually attends such conferences as the National Council on Teaching Mathematics (NCTM), Readers and Writers Workshop at Teachers College, the Black Alliance for Educational Options Annual Symposium, National Charter Schools Conference and the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Internally, five teacher leaders work with administrators to mentor, train and hold junior teachers accountable. Lead teachers engage in learning walks, or focused visits to colleagues' classrooms, to observe instruction and share constructive feedback. These informal peer visits support a strong professional learning community where the focus is on teachers helping one another become masters of their craft.

The programs and services described above ensure that NBFA students spend about 10% more time in school actively learning than their traditional district peers; get the academic support and challenge they need for skill mastery; and become responsible citizens who value a quality education. To date, this has manifested in a high rate of acceptance into competitive high schools, zero high school drop outs, a college placement rate more than twice that of Bridgeport and an engaged alumni base.

School Goals

I. Educational Progress of Students

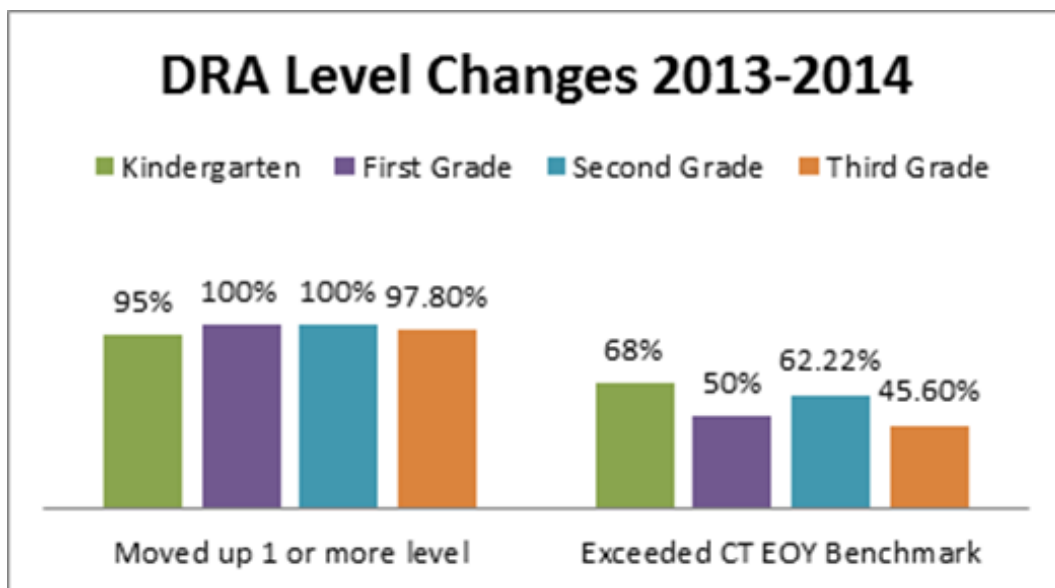
1) GOAL A/Section I: NBFA STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE CONSISTENT SKILL ATTAINMENT AND INCREASING MASTERY IN READING.

A. **Measurable Objective A.1:** At least 90% of students will reach year-end reading benchmarks.

Measurement Tool: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), a diagnostic reading tool that identifies the key characteristics and behaviors of good readers.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

GRADES K – 3:



DRA2 results indicate that more than 98% of NBFA students, grades K-3, moved up one or more reading level during the 2013-14 academic year. Those who did not are classified students. Of the 98%, an average 56% reached CT year-end benchmarks. Specifically:

- Kindergarten had 39 out of 41 students move up 1 or more levels. (The 2 that stayed the same have an IEP.) 28 out of those 41 met or exceeded CT's end of year benchmark (level 4).
- First Grade had 62 out of 62 students move up 1 or more levels. 31 out of those 62 first grade students met or exceeded CT's end of year benchmark (level 18).
- Second Grade had 45 out of 45 students move up 1 or more levels. 28 out of those 45 second grade students met or exceeded CT's end of year benchmark (level 28).
- Third Grade had 45 out of 46 students move up 1 or more levels. (Only 1 student stayed the same). 21 out of those 46 students met or exceeded CT's end of year benchmark (level 38).

GRADES 4 – 8:

NBFA	Benchmark Level	Benchmark Level at start of 2013-2014	Benchmark Level at end of 2013-2014
4	40	53%	70%
5	50	20%	28%
6	60	24%	58%
7	70	20%	54%
8	80	42%	47%

Students in grades 4-8 all displayed substantial progress in their DRA levels. The percentage of students on grade level in grade 7 increased by over 30 percentage points over the course of the 2013-2014 school year. Additional gains of five to 34 percentage points were made in grades 4, 5, 6, and 8.

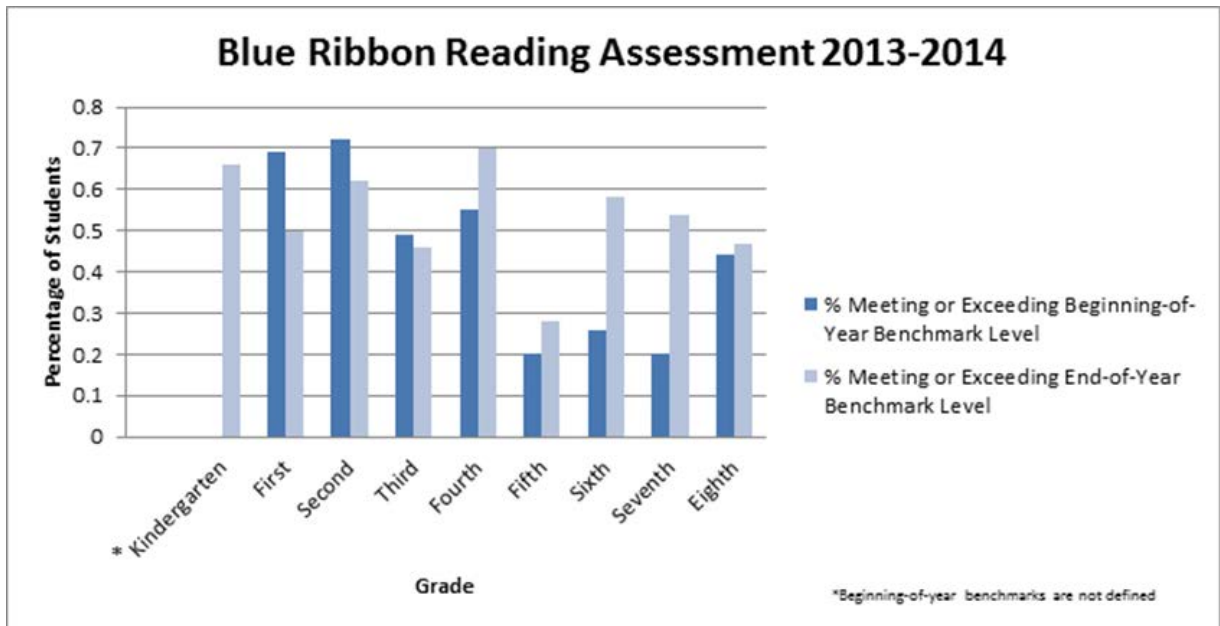
Modification in Objective A.1 for the 2013-14 year: N/A

Improvements Planned for 2014-15: New Beginnings Family Academy has implemented a daily “book club” for all students which provides 20-25 minutes every day of small-group independent reading. Discussions of the book also take place to help students process and understand the materials. One of the primary goals of the book club is to incite an intrinsic desire and appreciation of reading among our students. Additionally, more targeted, early intervention for students identified through the SRBI process will enable the three reading interventionists to help students meet their benchmark goals.

B. Measurable Objective A.2: At least 75% of NBFA students, grades 2-8, will achieve proficient or better in reading by the end of the academic year.

Measurement Tool: The Blue Ribbon Test, a short, formative online assessment that mirrors the strands of the Connecticut Mastery Test.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:



While students in grades 4-8 showed significant growth in reading, data shows that much work continues to be needed for students to attain mastery across all grades.

Modification in Objective A2 for the 2013-14 School Year: N/A

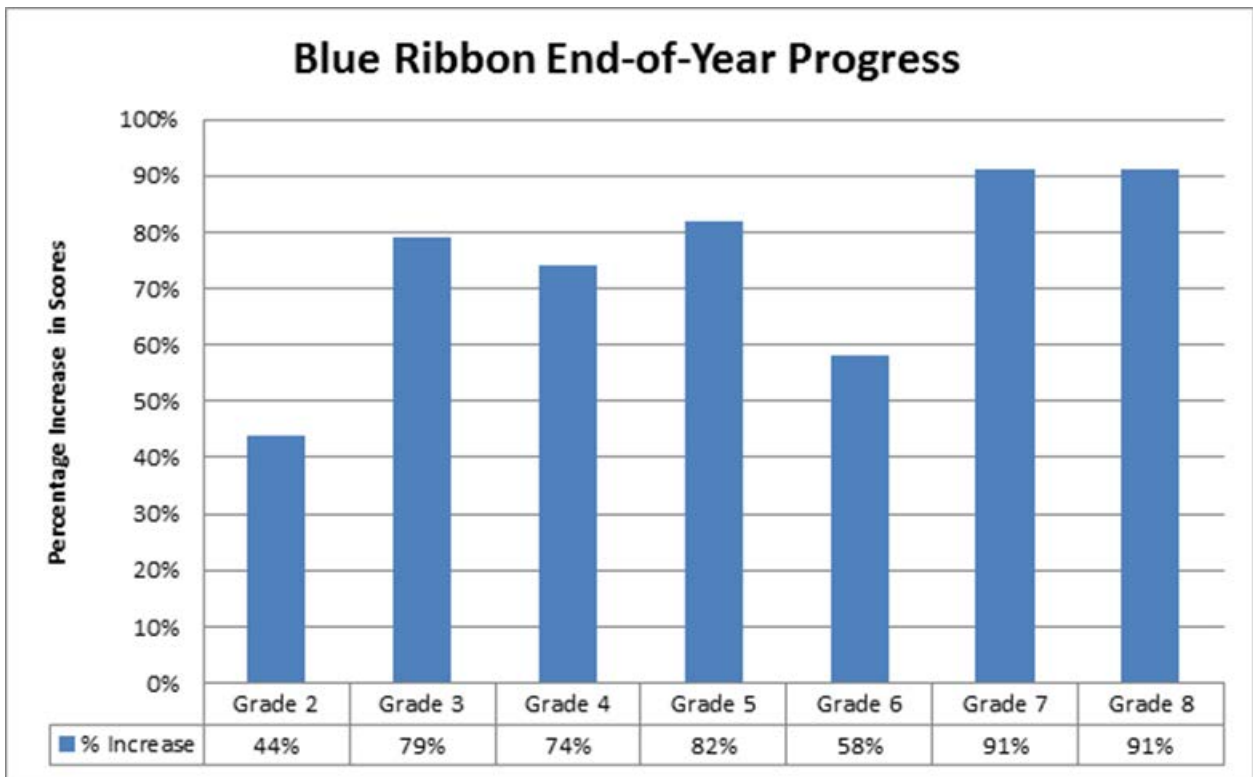
Improvements Planned for 2014-15: New Beginnings Family Academy has chosen i-Ready as its CCSS aligned diagnostic and instructional tool. Diagnostics will take place at the start of the academic year, in January (midway through the academic year) and in June (at the end of the academic year). The students will receive at least one hour each week of i-Ready practice/instruction, which will provide real-time data to determine which domains may require more targeted instruction and/or intervention. Additionally, New Beginnings Family Academy will be utilizing Testwiz as an assessment tool which has CCSS aligned question banks for ELA and Math and Next Generation Science Standards aligned questions for science.

2) GOAL B/SECTION I: EVERY CHILD WILL DEMONSTRATE CONSISTENT SKILL ATTAINMENT AND INCREASING MASTERY IN MATH.

A. Measurable Objective B.1: At least 75% of NBFA students, grades 2-8, will achieve proficient or better in math by the end of the academic year.

Measurement Tool: The Blue Ribbon Test, a short, formative online assessment that mirrors the strands of the Connecticut Mastery Test.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:



On average, 71% of NBFA students, grades 2-8, achieved proficiency or better in EOY Blue Ribbon assessments. School-wide, grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 achieved the goal.

Improvements Planned for 2014-15: New Beginnings Family Academy will utilize i-Ready and Testwiz. Both standardized assessments are CCSS-aligned.

3) GOAL C/SECTION I: EVERY CHILD WILL DEMONSTRATE CONSISTENT SKILL ATTAINMENT AND INCREASING MASTERY IN WRITING.

Measurable Objective A.1: At least 75% of students, grades 3-8, will achieve proficiency or better in writing.

Measurement Tool: The Connecticut Mastery Test, a state standardized exam.

Progress in Meeting the Goal: N/A

Modification in Goal C for the 2013-14 School Year: Discontinued, as NBFA will assess students writing ability in GOAL A.

NEW STRATEGIC GOAL A:

NBFA WILL STRENGTHEN ITS DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH SCHOOL-WIDE, TEACHING BOTH ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- **NEW OBJECTIVE A.1: General education students will make at least a year's growth in core academic subjects**
 - Measurement tool: iReady, Test Wiz
- **NEW OBJECTIVE A.2: At least 60% of students will perform proficient or better in all core subjects on year-end standardized assessments**
 - Measurement tool: iReady, Test Wiz, SBAC
- **NEW OBJECTIVE A.3: Classified students will demonstrate growth in core academic subjects, as defined by their Individualized Education Plan goals**
 - Measurement tool: Aimsweb, DRA
- **NEW OBJECTIVE A.4: On-time grade promotion of all 8th grade students**
 - Measurement tool: PowerSchool, Schoolrunner
- **NEW OBJECTIVE A.5: At least 60% of 8th grade students will gain admission into competitive high schools**
 - Measurement tool: PowerSchool, Schoolrunner

NEW STRATEGIC GOAL B:

NBFA WILL STRENGTHEN ITS SCHOOL-WIDE APPROACH TO BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT

- **NEW OBJECTIVE B.1: NBFA will align its STRETCH Principles with the five essential skills needed for academic success (self-control, persistence, academic self-efficacy, mastery orientation and social competence)**
 - Measurement Tool: Schoolrunner, etc.
- **NEW OBJECTIVE B.2: NBFA will improve classroom management skills**
 - Measurement Tool: Schoolrunner
- **NEW OBJECTIVE B.3: NBFA will improve overall behaviors, thereby decreasing detentions and suspensions**
 - Measurement Tool: Schoolrunner

II. Accomplishment of Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus

1) Goal A/Section II: NBFA STUDENTS IN GRADES 5-8 WILL GAIN ACCEPTANCE INTO COMPETITIVE HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS.

Measurable Objective A.1: NBFA staff will partner with parents of high ability students to pursue high quality educational options for their children.

Measurement Tool: Attendance and meeting notes.

Progress in Meeting the Goal: In addition to being available at regular PTA conferences, New Beginnings' guidance counselor works with the parents of grade 5-8 students to gain their children

admittance into top high schools. Increased collaboration between the parents resulted in 74% of NBFA graduates being admitted into competitive admission high schools.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year: N/A

Improvements Planned for 2014-15: New Beginnings Family Academy will develop a parent engagement framework and, through its Office of Student and Family Services, work collaboratively with families to articulate long-term education goals for each student and the steps it will take to achieve them.

2) Goal B/Section II: NBFA WILL INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

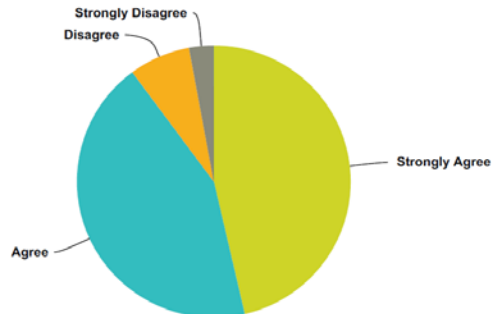
Measurable Objective B.1: Seventy percent of parents will participate in three or more PTA activities.

Measurement Tool: PTA attendance as well as parent surveys.

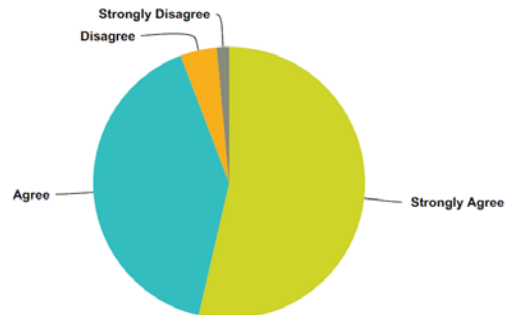
Benchmark: Parent engagement in meetings, parent conferences, academic events and socials.

Progress in Meeting the Goal: An end-of-year parent satisfaction survey was administered in June 2014 with responses captured from June 4, 2014 until June 23, 2014. Sixty-nine respondents completed the survey, representing about ten percent of our parent population. The results of this survey were overwhelmingly positive.

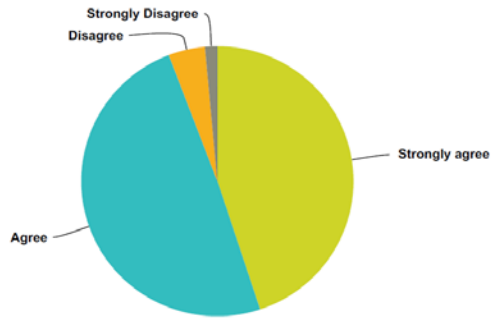
- 89.9% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “New Beginnings Family Academy offers many ways for me to be involved in my child(ren)’s education.”



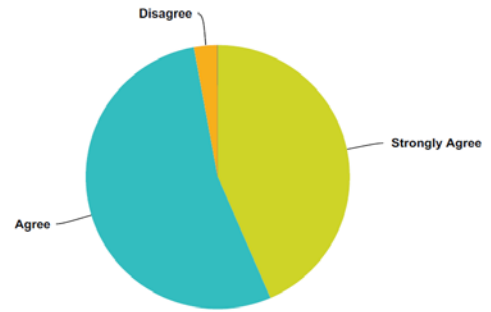
- 94.2% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I often communicate with my child(ren)’s teacher(s). Communication may include emails, telephone calls, in person conversations, and written communication.”



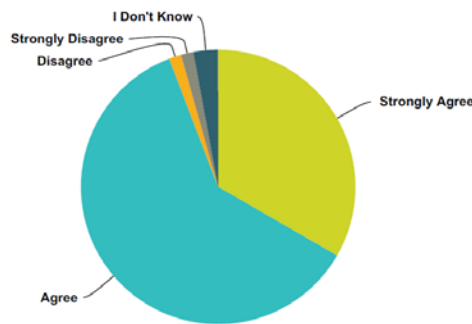
- 94.2% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I talk with my child(ren)’s teacher(s) about my child(ren)’s schoolwork, challenges, and academic progress.”



- 97.1% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The school environment supports learning.”



- 94.2% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “My child is safe at New Beginnings Family Academy.”



Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year: N/A

Improvements Planned for 2014-15: Through its Office of Student and Family Services, New Beginnings Family Academy will develop a parent engagement framework and work collaboratively to recruit and engage student families.

NEW GOAL B/SECTION II:

NBFA WILL DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO RECRUIT AND ENGAGE STUDENT FAMILIES WHO WILL PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN THE PRO-EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE SCHOOL.

- MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE B.1: NBFA will develop a consistent, codified program to recruit and engage student families
- MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE B.2: NBFA will increase family engagement through its School Governance Council called the New Beginnings Family Alliance (NBFAAlliance), parent/teacher conferences, school-based workshops, events and volunteerism
 - Measurement tool: Schoolrunner

III. Efforts to Reduce Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation and to Increase the Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Student Body

Goal A/Section III: New Beginnings will increase community partnerships and collaborations that offer students cross-cultural experiences and broaden their general knowledge base.

Measurable Objective A.1: New Beginnings Family Academy will partner with schools in neighboring towns to expose students to their suburban peers.

Progress in Meeting the Goal: NBFA has seen a demographic shift among its student body, with 15% identifying as Hispanic and 2% identifying as Caucasian, in the past year. This is an exciting change in the racial dynamic of the school.

Even with the racial diversity, most NBFA students (83%) qualify for free and reduced priced lunch, an indicator of poverty. To address the lack of socio-economic diversity at the school, NBFA participates in a number of cross-cultural programs and exchanges that allow students to attend academic enrichment and remediation session with students from many of the suburban towns surrounding Bridgeport.

Additionally, NBFA collaborates with other non-profits, including the Fairfield Museum, Unquowa School and Creative Connections to offer rich, cross-cultural experiences that broaden students' general knowledge.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year: N/A

Improvements Planned for 2013-14: N/A

Efforts to Effectively Attract, Enroll and Retain Students from Among High Need Populations

The majority of NBFA students, 83%, qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, an indicator of poverty. Most are bused to school from neighborhoods throughout Bridgeport, one of Connecticut's largest and poorest cities. Although NBFA does not provide busing to out-of-district children, it enrolls students from such neighboring towns as Stratford, Derby, Ansonia and West Haven.

In 2013-14, the student body was 83% Black, 15% Hispanic and 2% Caucasian. Thirteen percent (13%) were classified and qualified for special education services; five percent (5%) received accommodations under a 504 plan.

New Beginnings Family Academy collaborates with its parents to retain students and serve their families' needs. To strengthen the home-school collaboration, NBFA established the Office of Student and Family Services in January of 2012. Some highlights of the Office of Student and Family Services include:

- Parenting Lecture Series – focuses on raising healthy kids physically, educationally and emotionally (i.e. nutrition with hands-on cooking demonstrations, stress mediation for families, internet safety, child development).
- Lending Library –provides a variety of books and media to NBFA families.
- Home Visits – establish the home/school bridge that allows families in crisis to access the clinical services provided by NBFA's professional staff and interns. School based resources include group support, individualized counseling both at school and in the home, and community based referrals when appropriate.
- Social Functions – in collaboration with the PTA, activities community-building activities include family movie nights, potluck dinners, links to community events, discount tickets to sports, plays, museums and more.
- Partnerships – with local agencies to ensure quick responses to NBFA students and families whenever a need develops.

New Beginnings Family Academy believes that the strength of its partnership with families is key to retaining students from its target population of high needs students from Bridgeport.

Financial Information

**NEW BEGINNINGS FAMILY ACADEMY
BUDGET
DETAIL
2014-2015**

		BUDGET <u>2014-2015</u>
INCOME		
		\$
	Per Pupil	5,170,000
	Titles I to V	177,000
	Construction Grant	269,516
	Security Grant	125,063
	State Food Grants	13,355
	City of Bridgeport Services	43,860
	City of Bridgeport Reimbursement of SPED Salaries	139,444
	Meal Reimbursements	
	Parents	39,050
	Breakfast	67,648
	Lunch	170,269
	Snack	50,786
	Other	1,020
	Total Meal Reimbursments	328,774
	Federal contribution to Internet & telecommunications through USAC	18,000
	Development	805,900
	Student fees, Merchandise, Res. for Meal Reimb.	28,200
	Change in Interest in Friends	(9,600)
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	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 7,109,512
 EXPENDITURES		
	Salaries	
	Teachers	1,754,587
	Instructional Assistants	446,944
	After School Program	87,483
	Support Services	428,601
	Substitutes	81,290
	Maintenance & Cafeteria	166,791
	Office Support	121,142
	Administration	806,605
	Total Salaries	<hr/> 3,893,443
	Payroll Taxes	236,000
	Employee Benefits	762,000

Depreciation and Amortization		242,631
Meals		
	Breakfast	58,859
	Lunch	206,938
	Snacks	21,834
	Total Meals	287,630
Subcontractors		
	Legal	13,000
	Audit	30,700
	Technology	67,685
	E-Rate	5,000
	Interns	0
	After School	0
	Pre-K Consultant	10,000
	Other	65,000
	Total Subcontractors	191,385
Other Purchased Services		
	Professional Development	30,000
	Alarm & Fire Systems	10,800
	City of Bridgeport Services	43,860
	Transportation	47,125
	Printing and Marketing	9,500
	Travel	14,000
	Field Trips	9,000
	Testing & Evaluation	8,000
	Curriculum	98,147
	Insurance	56,685
	Software	24,779
	Communications	20,500
	Total Purchased Services	372,396
Facilities		
	Rent-School	119,119
	Electricity	82,328
	Heat	15,953
	Water	8,193
	Trash Removal	12,683
	Repairs & Maintenance	43,326
	Exterminator	1,620
	Cleaning Service	96,910
	Landscaping & Snowplowing	23,608
	Total Facilities	403,740
Supplies		
	Instructional	
	Art	3,000
	Music	300

	Physical Education	2,526
	Library	22,887
	Pre-K	30,000
	Classroom/General Supplies	46,021
	Custodial	15,094
	Cafeteria	3,994
	Total Supplies	123,822
Other		
	Machine Rentals	36,000
	Interest & Finance Charges	3,000
	Dues & Subscriptions	9,853
	Bank Fees	1,165
	Payroll Service	10,268
	Staff Recruiting	4,100
	Staff Relocation	0
	Property Taxes	0
	Development Special Event Expenses	99,000
	Student Activities	24,000
	Staff Activities	5,400
	Meetings	4,600
	School Store	2,300
	Legal Settlements & Deductibles	0
	Miscellaneous	2,200
	Awards & Scholarships	0
	Bad Debts	0
	Total Other	201,886
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	6,714,933
		\$
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS		394,579

Best Practices

Monitoring, Accountability and Assessment

NBFA's Instructional Team collaborates extensively on various ways to determine the best approach to assessment and progress monitoring for all students. A systematic instruction delivered in a variety of forms - whole group, small group and independent learning opportunities – comprises the NBFA model. In all classes, teachers provide instruction that is tailored to students' academic levels and with the students' learning styles in perspective. Grade level teams operate as professional learning communities to collaborate on effective teaching practices, as well as to analyze data and share strategies for improving student achievement. To ensure accountability on the part of teachers, a standards-based pacing guide anchored on the Common Core State Standards is provided, along with the resources needed for instruction.

A combination of formative and summative assessments determines students' abilities, as well as their deficiencies. All students in grades K-8 complete a bi-weekly formative assessment, based on the instructional focus for the period. Real time data is then provided to staff so that consideration for re-teaching/remediation of certain skills can be made, as necessary. Additionally, students across grade levels take the Beginning-of-Year diagnostic assessments, Mid-Year progress monitoring and End-of-Year assessments. These assessments, as well as students' portfolio, exit tickets, work samples, and other informal methods are used to determine the need for intervention in reading or math.

Through an SRBI model, all students receiving intervention are progress monitored to determine eligibility for specialized services. Instruction and assessments are highly interwoven to ensure that students are able to not only meet CT Core Standards, but also to achieve at the higher standards set by the school's mission. Students participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessments and, for 5th and 8th graders, the science CMT.

NBFA continues to follow the teacher evaluation plan established by the State of Connecticut. Teachers are expected to set different goals around student learning objectives, with their summative rating scores derived from parent feedback, student learning objectives, school-wide learning indicators and a review of practice. Summative ratings range from Below Standard to Exemplary. Alongside this evaluation plan is the goal of supporting staff who do not end at the exemplary range, especially those at the below standard.

Curriculum and Instruction

NBFA teachers use a standards-based pacing guide to provide instruction across all subject areas. Materials aligned to the CCSS are procured in Math, Language Arts, and Social Studies, while instruction in science is geared toward meeting the Next Generation Science Standards. All students are exposed to rigorous whole-group instruction in each class, followed by small group instruction aimed at meeting each student at his/her current level. Students receiving specialized services, in terms of 504 and IEPs, receive the needed support through a push-in model. The sped teacher works collaboratively with the regular education teachers to provide a seamless layer of instruction. The use of technology, academic choices, exit tickets and other best practices enhance the quality of instruction from class to class. Instructional tools such as I-Read and Read Works, for example, extend learning beyond the classroom and provide invaluable independent student practice of pre-assigned skill sets.

Status of Charter Renewal Findings and Follow-Up Activities

During its February 2010 site visit to New Beginnings Family Academy, the state-appointed renewal team (SAR) identified two issues requiring corrective action:

1. **Issue:** Four teachers were not properly certified.
Action Taken: All NBFA teachers were properly certified during 2013-2014.
2. **Issue:** The Dean of Students did not have proper certification to suspend students.
Action Taken: NBFA's Dean of Students holds the required (092) certification to perform this task.

Governance

Governing Board Meetings held in 2013-14

New Beginnings Family Academy held 10 meetings during the academic year, including an off-site strategic board retreat in August.

In November 2013, the Board of Directors participated in an on-site, four-day Theory of Change Workshop facilitated by DKH Consulting. The workshop resulted in a new strategic plan, mission statement, goals and objectives for New Beginnings Family Academy.

Summary of Major Policy Decisions in 2013-14

- i) The Board of Directors determined that all new members would serve on NBFA's fiscal calendar (July 1 – June 30)
 - ii) The Board of Directors approved a new organizational structure for the school, following the business model of other successful charter schools. NBFA's head of school is the Chief Executive Officer, the instructional leader is Chief Academic Officer and finance and operations are managed by the Chief Operating Officer
 - iii) The Board of Directors adopted a new mission: New Beginnings Family Academy provides its students a rigorous education that ensures academic success and builds character in partnership with their families
 - iv) The Board of Directors set new strategic goals, listed above
 - v) The Board of Directors voted to use the SEED Model for educator evaluation and support
 - vi) The Board of Directors ratified the school's Blueprint and Timeline, a 3-year strategic plan
 - vii) The Board of Directors approved flexibilities in NBFA's educator evaluation and support plan
 - viii) The Board of Directors voted not to *require* teacher and parent members on the board. Teachers and parents interested in board participation are invited to follow the process outlined for all other candidates, which includes volunteering at the school, submitting their resume for vetting by the Governance Committee, attending a board meeting and having their candidacy vote upon by the full board.
 - ix) The Board of Directors revised NBFA's bylaws to include explicit language on conflicts-of-interest and nepotism.
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