the project school

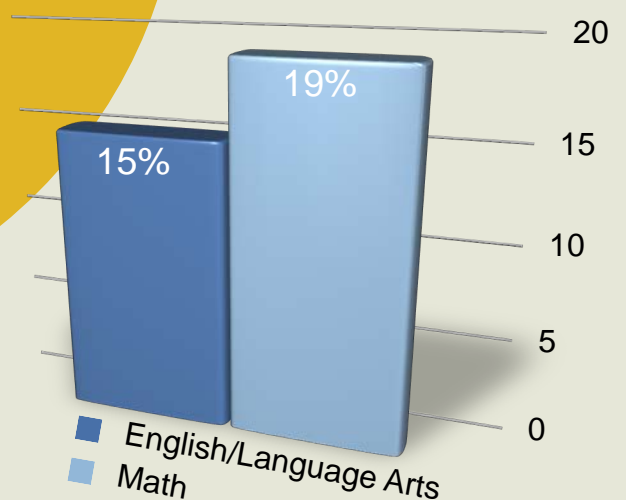## heart | mind | voice

Bloomington, Indiana
founded 2009
School Leaders: Catherine Diersing and Daniel Baron
Authorized by the Charter School Office at Ball State University

The vision of the Project School is to eliminate the predictive value of race, class, gender and special abilities on student success in our school and in our communities by working together with families and community to ensure each child's success.

[97%]

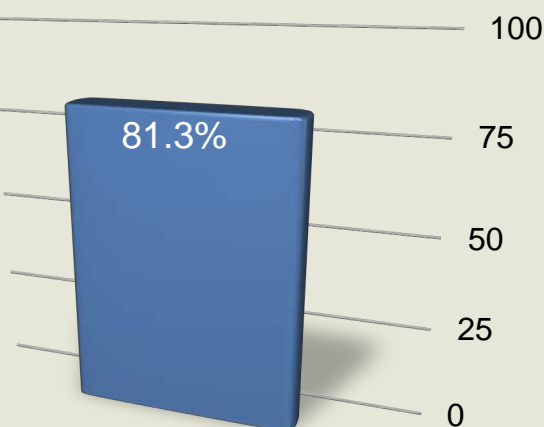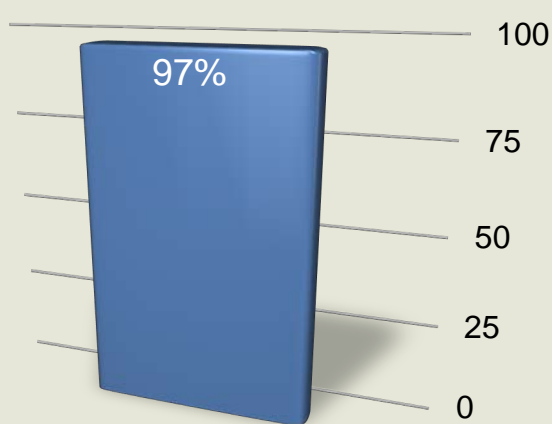of students who remained in the area returned for the 2013-14 school year

[23%]

of students are identified for special education services

195

students on the waiting list post lottery

[95%]

attendance 2012 - 2013

[85%]

classroom teacher retention

[100%]
school leader retention

[100%]
of classes have wait lists

ISTEP Improvement Over 4 Years

- 15% — English/Language Arts
- 19% — Math

2012-2013 ISTEP Passing Both ELA/Math

81.3%

2012-2013 3rd Graders Passing iRead

97%

A

2013 Department of Education Grade

- 2013 iRead Improvement: 5% (Average Indiana School), 16% (Project School)
- 2013 ISTEP+ Improvement: 2% (Average Indiana School), 13% (Project School)

Average Indiana School
Project School

The Bloomington Project School, 349 S. Walnut, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 www.theprojectschool.org 812.558.0041

"My oldest daughter started at TPS in their first year and she is now a sophomore at Bloomington North High School. She is a straight "A" student and simply a good person that will undoubtedly continue to grow and be a productive leader no matter where her life journey takes her. I couldn't be more proud of her and I give much of the credit for that to the environment created at The Project School. I see my girls and all the kids at TPS blossoming intellectually, creatively, responsibly, and socially every day because of that school. When they are off for any type of extended break, they cannot wait to go back! That speaks volumes to me." - TPS parent of 3 children and 1 graduate

Welcome to the renewal document of The Project School (TPS). This document serves as the official telling of our story. It is the next iteration of the most important elements of our school that are now a reality - not simply our best thinking on paper, as was our original charter. This document will be most effectively read electronically, due to color-coded information and live links that are included in many of the appendices. This document will provide the reader with a vivid picture of our school, the living manifestation of our mission, vision, and core beliefs, and the evidence of our school specific goals being met. We hope that this document speaks to your heart, mind and soul, as the work of our school community does for us every day.

I. Executive Summary

I.A. Enrollment and Demographic Overview

2013-14 ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		
	#	%
Total Enrollment	267	
# of Students on Waiting List	150 (195 at lottery)	
Gender		
# Male	155	58
# Female	112	42
Ethnicity/Race		
# White	200	75
# Black	11	4
# Hispanic	19	7
# Asian	13	2
# Native American	0	0
# Multiracial	24	12
Special Populations		
# Students with IEPs	62	23
# English Language Learners	14	2
# Homeless Students	0	0
# Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch	91	34

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total Student Enrollment	199	231	272	269	267

ELL[1] STUDENT POPULATION CHART[1]							
Year 1		**Year 2**		**Year 3**		**Year 4**	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
7	4	11	5	19	7	20	7
HOMELESS STUDENT POPULATION							
Year 1		**Year 2**		**Year 3**		**Year 4**	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
7	4	3	1	11	4	1	0.5

"My 9-year old son has multiple disabilities and is in his third year at Project School. TPS has provided him with a full-time aide and a place in a regular classroom, and has welcomed his service dog. His reading, writing and comprehension are flourishing in a rigorous, individualized literacy program, supported by weekly speech, occupational and music therapy sessions. The TPS schedule provides him with hours of weekly music and art classes, and lots of playground time for strengthening his body and organizing his emotions. The TPS teachers, administrators and children are truly supportive of his gifts and strengths, and parents have made a point of telling us how much their children benefit from having our autistic, minimally verbal, socially unusual child in their classes. He has friends who value him for who he is." - TPS Parent

Special Education Population By Category									
		2009-2010		**2010-2011**		**2011-2012**		**2012-2013**	
Code	Description	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec
1	Multiple Disabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
3	Blind or Low Vision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	Emotional Disability (FT)	0	0	4	0	2	0	6	0
6	Emotional disability (Other)	6	0	5	0	6	0	0	0
7	Specific Learning Disability	13	0	20	1	27	1	17	1
8	Developmental Delay (Ages 3-5 only)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
9	Speech/Language	0	8	0	7	7	13	7	20
10	Mild Cognitive Disability	2	0	3	0	2	1	3	0
11	Moderate Cognitive Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Severe Cognitive Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	Deaf-Blind	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Autism Spectrum disorder	3	0	7	0	8	0	11	0
16	Traumatic brain injury	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
17	Other Health Impairment	10	3	15	3	12	6	13	5
	TOTAL	**35**	**12**	**55**	**12**	**68**	**22**	**60**	**27**

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[1] This data includes all students from the Language Minority report. All students in this data are at a Level 5. As a result, the students do not receive ELL services.

I.B. Academic Performance Overview

	AYP	PL 221	A-F	Data Results Under Intervention /Assessment Policy (2009)	Data Results Under Intervention /Assessment Policy (2012)	NWEA % meeting reading growth target	NWEA % meeting LA growth target	NWEA % meeting math growth target	ISTEP % Passing Math	ISTEP % Passing ELA	ISTEP % Passing Math & ELA
SY 2009-2010	No	Probation	F	N/a	N/a	-	-	-	62.10%	68.55%	57.26%
SY SY10-11	No	C (Acad Progress)	C	Meets requirements	Does not meet standard	51.7%	48.6%	49.4%	69.87%	78.06%	65.58%
SY 2011-12	No	N/a	C	*Not applicable due to IDOE policy change*	Does not meet standard	44.3%	49.5%	51.3%	71.52%	79.27%	68.29%
SY 2012-13	N/a	N/a	A	N/a		63.6%	61.8%	66.9%	85.0%	87.9%	81.3%

I.C. Written Overview

The Project School was founded in 2009 with **the *mission* to uncover, recover, and discover the unique gifts and talents that each child brings to school everyday; and the *vision* to eliminate the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special abilities on a child's success in school and in life**. Our school partners with families, community members, and social service agencies to solve real world problems. We teach students to become contributors to the greater good, and stewards of the environment.

Now fully established in its fifth year, The Project School educates 267 children – kindergarten through grade eight – from throughout the region's culturally and socio-economically diverse community. Thirty-six percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Twenty-three percent of the students are categorized as having special educational needs. **All of the students are fully integrated into an interdisciplinary, inclusive, whole-child approach to education** that fully prepares them for high school and beyond, equipping them for a lifetime of active participation in the building of community.

Through our unique curricular design process, instructional delivery, and ongoing assessment - all which include on-going reflection and revision as needed - our teachers shape the experiences to ensure that each child progresses. We believe every student deserves a curriculum that is individualized, engaging, relevant, and rigorous. Our educational programs of excellence develop the heart, mind, and voice of each student, with a focus on educational equity, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Also due to the unique curricular design, work is differentiated for every learner, not just those on the extreme ends of the academic spectrum.

Some key pieces of data that highlight our success in student achievement include:

- The Project School ranked in the top 25% of all schools on IREAD performance and the top 20% of K-8 schools on ISTEP+ performance (top 30% overall) in 2013.
- The Project School has increased both their ELA and Math ISTEP+ performance each year since 2010 - a feat accomplished by less than 2% of schools statewide.

- The Project School has increased their ISTEP+ passage rate by 24% since 2010, placing them in the top 3% of all schools in ISTEP+ improvement over that period.
- In 2013, The Project School outperformed Monroe County Community School Corporation on both the ISTEP+ and IREAD assessments while serving a near identical student population.

The data analysis completed by INISchools is available in its entirety in Appendix A.

The Project School is proud to have maintained strong and consistent leadership through the Board and the school leadership. We are thrilled when looking at the growth in student achievement over time, as well as the retention of students and outstanding classroom teachers. We continue to be awed by the superior return rate of families each year and by the extensive waiting list that remains annually. We can hardly wait to see what is accomplished in the next five years.

The commitment to the mission, vision, and core beliefs that was evident in the initial Charter application is alive and exhibited in everyday practice at TPS. These guiding, living documents have always been, and will continue to be, the driving force of the work that we do. They are utilized on an on-going basis to evaluate our implementation versus our theory. They are among the rigorous criteria that we use to assess our success as a school. While the mission and vision will remain the same, our school specific goals will be a reflection of where we presently are and where we plan to be in five years. Included with each goal are some of the key strategies that will be employed for meeting these goals.

Goals, Key Strategies and Deliverables for the next five-year charter term:

Goal 1: The Project School will develop systems and structures that will ensure sustainability beyond the founders of TPS. (Organizational-Academic-Financial)

Key Strategies to Achieve Goal 1:
- **Systemize the Story of TPS:** It is time to systemize the way that we tell the story of TPS by developing a tool, a "documentary" of sorts, to use with guests, families, new staff, and the broader community. The tools that will be developed will also have the power to support developing schools and may, over time, be able to serve as an income source for TPS. We will utilize a newly designed website as one of our story telling tools, as a method for engaging with the community.
- **Going Deeper with Data:** By creating a part-time Data Analyst and Documentarian position, we will successfully systemize the use of data, with a focus on looking at student growth. This person will guide deeper interpretation to inform instruction. She will create structures and systems that coordinate school-wide data beyond the classroom and team levels. She will work in collaboration with INISchools, the Curriculum Coach, and the School Leader to guide teachers in even more effective data use. She will also focus teachers on the power of action research in their classrooms and the school that will result in improvements in our practice.
- **Enhancing Evaluation:** The leadership team, along with teachers and Board representatives, will work to expand the evaluation system of teachers and administrators, to ensure an evaluation system that meets all legal requirements and that, most importantly, results in the celebration of great work and the improvement of performance.
- **Expanded Use of Technology in Assessment**: We are ready to develop a cohesive school-wide system for building digital portfolios for every student. Some teachers are currently piloting the

program "Evernote"[2] to compile student work and pass it on to future teachers so that work across the life of a student at our school can be archived. However, this is still an area in which we need to create realistic systems and protocols as a whole faculty in order to move forward.

Deliverables from Goal 1:
- **Systems and tools that will ensure sustainability of TPS**
- **A systemized data structure**
- **A strengthened evaluation system for all staff**
- **Digital portfolios for all students**

Goal 2: On average, based on the NWEA student growth summary (using the NWEA Percent of Projection), students will make no less than one year's academic growth in reading, writing, and math. (Academic)

Key Strategies to Achieve Goal 2:
- **Continue the use of the curricular elements** (Reader's Workshop, Writer's Workshop, Math, and P3) that were in the initial charter and have clearly created success, as well as those **additions and changes** (LLI, Bridges, Origo, College Preparatory Math) that have been made since the inception of TPS that also have strong evidence of success**.**
- **Focus of the Data Analyst to collect, analyze, and use data,** working with the Curriculum Coach to make responsive changes in instruction as needed for individual students.
- **Establish a Math Task Force** to further evaluate the math trends and to determine additional changes that might be needed in math curriculum and instruction.
- **The Enhanced Evaluation System will include data relevant to this goal.**

Deliverables from Goal 2:
- **Strong, effective curriculum and instruction that have proven successful in the first five years of TPS.**
- **More frequent progress monitoring that ensures intervention at the earliest points of concern.**

Goal 3: For students who have been with TPS for three years or longer, there will be a decrease in the percentage of students who are performing below grade level. The current percentages of students performing below grade level are: Reading: 18%; Writing: 22%; and math: 15%. To calculate this, TPS will utilize NWEA and at least one other form of data (Academic)**.**

Key Strategies to Achieve Goal 3:
- **Continue the implementation of Reader's and Writer's Workshop.** Each year, our ISTEP+ results have increased and our NWEA data is showing steady progress as well. Because of this, as well as other forms of data, we believe that our current curricular model for Reader's and Writer's Workshop are effective.
- **Continue the commitment to professional development**. While our data shows that math is our most important and urgent area of growth, TPS will bring in experts in the field to support the growth of our teachers.

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[2] **Evernote** is a suite of software and services that are designed to archive work and keep track of information along the way. Individual "notes" are created which can be text, links, pictures, voice memos, handwritten work that is scanned in, or file attachments. These individual notes can then be sorted into folders, tagged to attach to multiple notebooks, annotated, edited, given comments, searched and exported as part of a notebook.

- **Continue to search for math resources** that can accelerate our math achievement. While we think the current resources we use are showing tremendous growth, we still believe there is room for improvement.
- While we have always offered staff members the opportunity to attend workshops to improve their practice, we are going to **establish a yearly expectation for professional development** that occurs by outside experts (and not housed at TPS/with our staff). We believe that this provides greater opportunities to learn from other teachers in other schools as well as from experts who are not in the position to travel to TPS.
- Expand the **use of professional goal setting** to reinforce the focus on specific professional development.
- **The Enhanced Evaluation System will include data relevant to this goal.**

Deliverables from Goal 3:
- **A fewer number of students who are working below grade level.**

Goal 4: The Project School will create a system to improve the transition from TPS to high school. (Organizational-Academic)

Key Strategies to Achieve Goal 4:
- **Bring together a focus group** that includes staff, parents, and community members, to explore the possibility of creating a new free, public, charter high school that is aligned with the mission, vision, and core beliefs of TPS, or consider the addition of high school grades to the current Charter. This is a direct result of parents and graduates creating a compelling argument for this need in our community.
- **If the results of the focus group and accompanying research are to develop a high school option, create an action plan for how this will happen.**
- **Create a systematic transition plan** to inform graduating students and families of their choices in the community. If TPS was to be involved in developing a high school, the results would not be immediate and some families and students would still matriculate to the large, comprehensive, traditional high schools in the community.
- **Develop ways that TPS graduates can matriculate to other secondary options with a positive lens and plan of action for how to be successful in a culture that can be very different from what they know and have experienced.**

Deliverables from Goal 4:
- **A decision about whether or not a high school is in the future of TPS. If so, a Charter application for said school.**
- **A plan that supports a healthy and successful transition to various secondary options.**

Goal 5: The Project School will continue to build strong financial solvency and community partnerships to ensure long-term viability for the organization. (Organizational-Financial)

Key Strategies to Achieve Goal 5:
- **The Board will be expanded to include a stronger business and financial perspective.** While there is absolute brilliance and broad representation on The Project School Board, there is a need for additional expertise in the business and financial sectors.
- **Additional, non-traditional (beyond State and Federal funds), funding sources will be pursued in order to reduce facilities debt and increase flexible income.** Funding to provide greater support for curriculum and instruction, deeper and more extensive professional development, and the increase of direct services will be pursued.

- TPS will work toward having a part time Development Director/Community Engagement Coordinator. The purpose is to increase internal capacity for financial resources, as well as additional and deeper partnerships. The goal is to seek funding for this position through private foundations and/or grants, until sustainability is created within the position.

Deliverables from Goal 5:
- **Expanded board that has broader expertise and representation**
- **Greater level of financial security, with expanded ability to provide additional services**
- **Develop a Board Policy Manual**

These are the goals, key strategies, and deliverables that we have established through the process of "Looking Back Through The Record and Analysis of Performance" and "Looking Froward Into The Next Charter Term."

II. Looking Back: The Record and Analysis of Performance

"The public school system in Monroe County is very strong, but it doesn't work for all students. My youngest daughter was literally terrified of school. She cried every day and made herself sick so that she wouldn't have to be in school. Even as an involved parent, I could not find a solution to make her situation better. This charter school changed everything; today she never wants to miss school and is making incredible academic strides. The school's focus on social justice and educational equity creates a classroom atmosphere ripe for exploring, learning, and respect." - TPS Parent

While TPS has six school-specific goals from the original charter that are important and that relevantly reflect the focus of our school, two goals with the most direct academic focus are summarized in the "Looking Back" section. ***The assessment of performance related to goals three through six is included in Appendix B, rather than the main renewal document. While critically important to The Project School charter, they are less connected to the requested information in the renewal document.***

II. A. Academic Performance (Student Progress Over Time and Student Achievement)

At TPS, when we know better, we do better. We have never been, nor will we ever be, a school that waits for someone else to tell us that we have a problem. Over the course of our ~4 ½ years as a school, we have made modifications to our work as our data has shown the need. We are not fearful to admit that something we are doing is not as successful as we had hoped. We have a deep commitment to look at our practice critically and make improvements in a timely fashion. ***The TPS Curriculum and Instruction document (updated 12/2013) is available in CSAPPHIRE.***

Throughout our existence, our data has consistently shown that Language Arts is curriculum and instruction strength. Anecdotal, formative (both standardized and not), and summative (both standardized and not) assessments have confirmed that the structures in place to teach students to read and write well are effective. With the transition to the Common Core State Standards, we purchased additional materials to support curriculum development in Reader's and Writer's Workshop to ensure that we continue to lift the level of rigor expected out of our students. Teachers College at Columbia University has developed much of the curriculum that we have used to teach our literacy-based workshops historically. Two years ago, they published new curriculum called *Common Core Reading and Writing Workshops: A Curricular Plan for the Reading/Writing Workshop.* **This directly ties the rigorous work of the Common Core Standards to the Workshop model used at TPS.**

While we will always work towards continued growth in reading and writing, a heavier focus has been placed on improving our math curriculum and instruction. As noted in the CSAPPHIRE Curriculum

Document, we have made some major changes to the math curriculum K-8. While the belief about how to best teach mathematics has not changed, the materials used to guide our instruction have. **We have placed a larger emphasis on computational fluency, mastery, and problem solving.** According to our curriculum-based assessments, NWEA, and ISTEP+, our modifications from Investigations to Bridges, Origo, and College Preparatory Math are working to improve our students' mathematical achievement.

Growth Over Time
Over the past four years The Project School has made great strides on the ISTEP+. During that time, The Project School has increased the passage rate by an astonishing 24%, improving each year and **placing the school in top 3% of all schools in improvement over the past four years**. All of this improvement has culminated in 81% of Project School students passing both the ELA and Math ISTEP+ in 2013, well above the state average (74%).
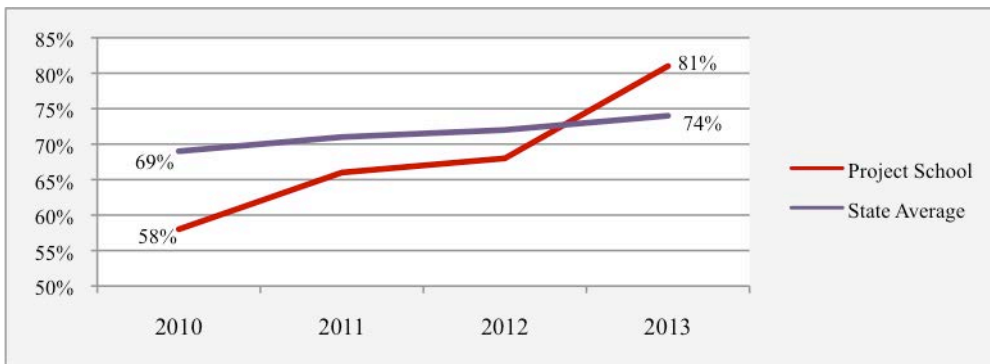
TPS has a strong history of performance and improvement on the ISTEP+ and is one of less than 2% of Hoosier schools that can say they have improved on both the ELA and Math portions of the ISTEP+ each of the past four years. When this improvement is coupled with the school's strong performance in 2013, there is little doubt that **TPS is quickly ascending the list of highest performing (and quality) schools in the state.**

TPS ISTEP+ data is a reflection of significant growth over time for students at TPS. This is clear evidence that we "walk our talk" when we say that when we know better, we do better. Included below is the data for ISTEP that highlights our successes and challenges from multiple lenses. The first chart looks at changes over time by grade level. With one exception, this data is, by all accounts, extraordinary. It is a reflection of multiple elements, including but not limited to:

- The strength of the curriculum and instruction in the initial Charter proposal.
- In-flight corrections, such as the changes in math curriculum to Bridges, OrigoMath, and College Preparatory Math, and the addition of Leveled Literacy Intervention for our most struggling readers. These were all initiated with thoughtful reflection and research, but without delay in implementation.
- The power of outstanding teaching by professionals who know and understand curriculum and instruction and are committed to implementing with fidelity. Along with this is a commitment to providing teachers with focused professional development and feedback, and a willingness to have courageous conversations when something is not working.
- Our deep commitment to student voice. We teach students how to use their heart, mind, and voice to engage them in rigorous work. When hard work is connected to something that students care about, there is less resistant and more engagement.

ISTEP+ Data
Change Over Time By Grade Level

Year	Grade	Eng/la	Pass+	Math	Pass+	Year	Grade	Eng/la	Pass+	Math	Pass+
2013	8th	87%	39%	87%	22%	2013	7th	84%	28%	91%	34%
2012	8th	67%	17%	70%	7%	2012	7th	88%	42%	88%	23%
2011	8th	63%	5%	58%	16%	2011	7th	66%	33%	61%	14%
2010	n/a					2010	7th	54%	10%	43%	10%
Change over time	8th	24%		29%		Change over time	7th	29%		+47%[1]	
2013	6th	94%	52%	94%	30%	2013	5th	71%	31%	72%	28%
2012	6th	80%	30%	74%	17%	2012	5th	74%	41%	71%	19%
2011	6th	78%	26%	78%	15%	2011	5th	78%	37%	71%	15%
2010	6th	64%	32%	71%	0%	2010	5th	79%	29%	79%	4%
Change over time	6th	30%		23%		Change over time	5th	-8%		-7%	
2013	4th	83%	30%	61%	15%	2013	3rd	97%	48%	82%	42%
2012	4th	85%	27%	57%	15%	2012	3rd	78%	19%	67%	15%
2011	4th	80%	38%	58%	27%	2011	3rd	84%	42%	81%	46%
2010	4th	66%	22%	44%	7%	2010	3rd	80%	38%	71%	50%
Change over time	4th	17%		17%		Change over time	3rd	17%		11%	

The one exception to these incredibly positive trends is in 5th grade in both language arts and math. We believe that these trends, which concerned us over time, are due to the following elements:
- The turnover in classroom teachers in this classroom. This is the one classroom that has had significant turn over in our five years as a school (see section 2-C for data related to teacher attrition).
- The fact that this grade level group began significantly higher than all others (except 3rd grade) in the school. While this should not result in a "loss" over time, the high performance at this grade level was unique in the school community this first year.

Cohort Group Data
Another way that it is essential that we consider ISTEP+ data is as a reflection of the experience at TPS is in looking at each cohort group over time.

2011 Grads	2010 (7th)	2011 (8th)			
Eng/la	54%	63%		9%	
Math	43%	58%		15%	

2012 Grads	2010 (6th)	2011 (7th)	2012 (8th)	2013	
Eng/la	64%	66%	67%	N/a	3%
Math	71%	61%	70%	N/a	-1%

2013 Grads	2010 (5th)	2011 (6th)	2012 (7th)	2013 (8th)	
Eng/la	79%	78%	88%	87%	8%
Math	79%	78%	88%	87%	8%

2014 Grads	2010 (4th)	2011 (5th)	2012 (6th)	2013 (7th)	Current 8th
Eng/la	66%	78%	80%	84%	18%
Math	44%	71%	74%	91%	47%

2015 Grads	2010 (3rd)	2011 (4th)	2012 (5th)	2013 (6th)	Current 7th
Eng/la	80%	80%	74%	94%	14%
Math	71%	58%	71%	94%	23%

2016 Grads		2011 (3rd)	2012 (4th)	2013 (5th)	Current 6th
Eng/la		84%	85%	71%	-13%
Math		81%	57%	72%	-9%

2017 Grads			2012 (3rd)	2013 (4th)	Current 5th
Eng/la			78%	83%	5%
Math			67%	61%	-6%

In four of the seven cohort groups, trends were positive and significant in both English/la and math. One cohort group showed only neutral trends while one showed a significant decrease in both English/la and one in math. While we believe the strengths to be very related to those in the last table, we believe the concerns to be a reflection of multiple elements, including but not limited to:

- In the class of 2016, 30% of the students are identified for special education. This is significantly higher than the state average, as well as higher than the TPS school wide average of 23%.
- Over the past three years, we have adjusted curriculum and learning environments for this cohort. Different math curriculum has been adopted and they are in smaller groups with more support. We anticipate that while this may be a group who struggles, we will see growth in the coming years because of adaptations we have made.

Algebra ECA Data

SP 2012-2013 Algebra ECA			FA 2012-2013 (retest of two student who did not pass Spring 2012) Algebra ECA		
N=12	Mean Score	% Passing	N=2	Mean Score	% Passing
TPS	679	90%	TPS	612	100%
State	588	67%	State	588	67%

SP 2011-2012 Algebra ECA			SP 2010-2011 Algebra ECA		
N=23	Mean Score	% Passing	N=25	Mean Score	% Passing

Class	634	87%
State	596	69%

| Class	596	75%
State	562	51%

The TPS trends of Algebra ECA data are incredibly positive for several notable reasons:
- The consistent **percentage passing that is significantly above the state**
- The fact that **all students taking algebra are working above grade level**
- The ongoing **increase in passing scores for the spring test** (75%-87%-90%) are all indicative of the strong algebra curriculum and instruction

While not a part of the original charter, offering algebra was compelled by a group from the first TPS graduating class, as a stated desire to have this course before matriculating to high school. They felt that it was an equity issue for TPS students if they did not have this opportunity and, as a result, we responded to their need. **Since that time - based on student need - we have added Geometry and Algebra II as offerings for students who are ready to take this next step.**

IREAD Data
The Project School ranks among the best schools in the state in IREAD performance due in no small part to The Project School's use of Literacy Workshops – which allows for the individual needs of students to be met in a way that cannot be achieved under a traditional structure. The success of this program is evident by The Project School's strong IREAD-3 results illustrated by the 97% of third grade students in 2013 that were at or above the expected reading level. **This performance ranked in the top 25% of all schools throughout the state.**

2013 IREAD Performance
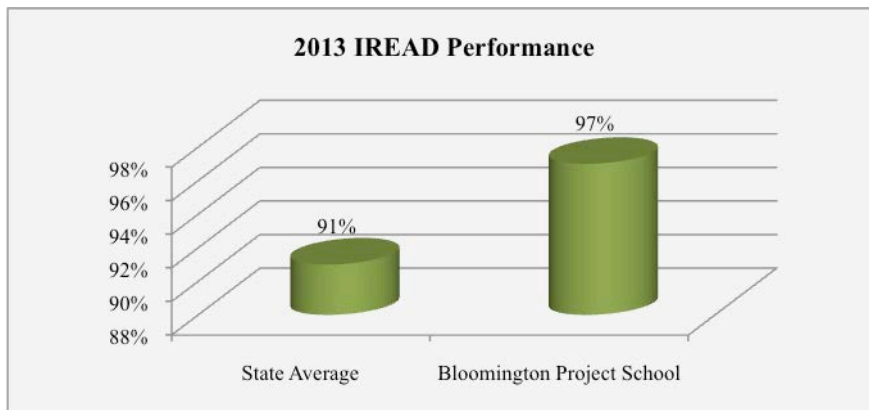
In looking at change over time for IREAD scores, TPS has again had a very positive trend, increasing the passing percentage and outperforming the state average.

SP 2013 IREAD	
N=33	% Passing
TPS	97%
State	91%

| SP 2012 IREAD	
N=27	% Passing
TPS	82%
State	85%

Mission Specific Academic Goals (*Documentation of Goals 3 through 6 is included in Appendix B*)

Reflection on School Specific Goal 1: *On average, students read, write, and compute at or above grade level within the first three years at TPS.*

While the wording of this goal was recommended to the TPS founders during the chartering process, defining "on average" has been a challenge. We believe strongly in the "spirit" of the goal and have worked to develop methodology that would allow us to answer this charge. Teachers used assessments to determine the extent to which each student was on, above, or below grade level. NWEA and ISTEP were the primary assessments used in grades three through eight. The 2011 normed data was used from NWEA to determine distance from grade level. However, when these were in conflict with what a teacher knew about a child, s/he would adjust accordingly. Teachers did NOT increase a child's level based on their anecdotal or classroom assessments; however, on multiple occasions, a teacher did decrease a child's level. For example, sometimes a student will score "at or above grade level" in writing on NWEA based on the "nature" of the assessment, which does not involve any actual writing. When there was a clear discrepancy in the child's actual writing, the teacher would adjust the level down to be more reflective of their actual achievement.

The reality is that if our data and reporting are not authentic, and might become inflated due to the nature of a standardized test such as NWEA when determining "on grade level," it is incumbent upon us to make these adjustments. That said, while there are times that we don't fully trust a score that is lower than the evidence we see, if the child cannot show what s/he knows on the assessment, we do not believe we can say that s/he is above what the test indicates.

Clearly, the goal, of "on average, students read, write, and compute at or above grade level within the first three years at TPS," has been met.
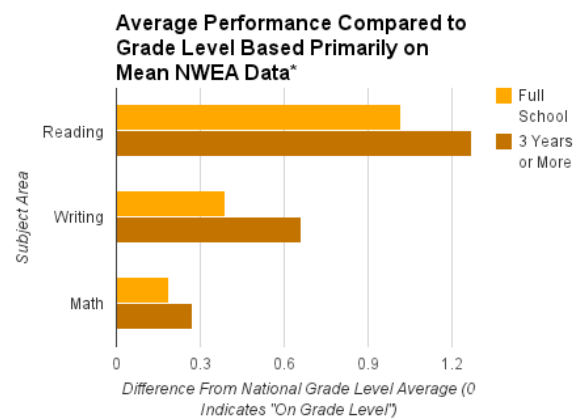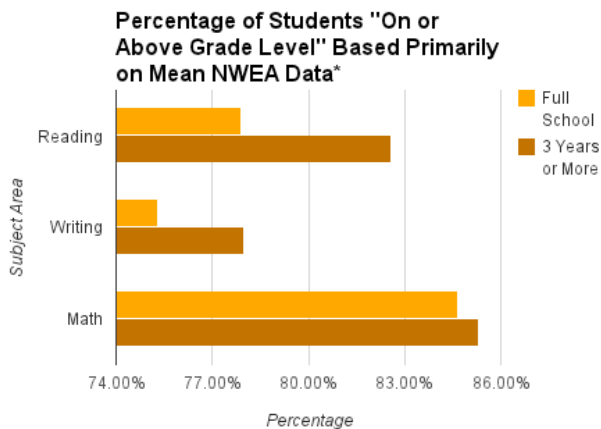
Grade Level	Reading	Writing	Math
Full School	1.02	0.39	0.19
3 Years or More	1.27	0.66	0.27
Increase	24%	69%	42%

Perhaps most compelling in relationship to this goal is that **students attending The Project School for 3 years or more achieve 24% higher levels in Reading, 69% higher levels in Writing, and 42% higher levels in Math than students who were at The Project School fewer than 3 years.**

The resulting revised goal for the next charter period, as introduced in the first section of the renewal document: *For students who have been with TPS for three years or longer, there will be a decrease in the percentage of students who are performing below grade level. To calculate this, TPS will utilize NWEA and at least one other form of data* (Academic).

Reflection on Goal # 2: *On average, students make no less than one year's academic growth each year in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.*

At our core, we believe that we must have consistent evidence that every student in our school is progressing at a reasonable rate in all core subject areas. While we have found measuring this goal to be challenging due to the "on average" language, we believe that the essence of the goal is that we must accurately measure this type of grade-level performance. Regardless of where a student is on the academic spectrum (below, on, or above grade level), we believe our responsibility is to ensure that all students make *at least* a year's worth of growth, and that the school is responding with appropriate instruction and interventions when this does not occur.

In order to keep consistent data regarding the performance of students at TPS, teachers use many forms of assessment. Such forms include:

Reading*:*
• ISTEP+
• NWEA
• Anecdotal data from individual conferences
• Classroom based assessment
• Baseline Assessment System (BAS)[3]
• Running Records from Guided Reading

Writing*:*
• ISTEP+
• NWEA
• Anecdotal data from individual conferences
• Classroom writing samples
• Word study assessments
• Teacher created, unit specific, rubrics which are aligned to the goals of the unit and IAS/CCSS

Math*:*
• ISTEP+
• NWEA
• Anecdotal data from individual conferences
• Curriculum based assessments from Bridges, College Preparatory Math, and Origo Education
• Advantage Math Assessment (K-2 only)

For the purposes of this goal, we elected to use **NWEA Student Growth Summary** data to determine if this goal has been met. We made this decision because it can measure consistent growth for every student in grades 2-8, no matter how much above or below grade level they are. The Student Growth Summary data looks at a student's growth in one year compared to their expected growth as defined by NWEA. NWEA defines this measure as, "the average amount of RIT growth observed for students in the latest NWEA norming study who started the year with the same RIT score as the individual student." We first

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[3] The DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) was utilized through 2012-2013. The decision was made to change from the DRA to the BAS because it is a more recently developed tool that has a stronger comprehension assessment. It also does not use writing as a tool to assess reading, which can be problematic. While the BAS is able to measure growth of a student over time, the measurement tool is limited in that it only measures reading ability up through 8th grade.

divided our student body into four cohort groups because that is the number of groups that have been here for three years or longer. We feel this analysis provides us with a more accurate picture of how a group is doing over time at our school. This also mediates the impact of outlying data points, which can easily skew data in either direction. Any percentage above/below 100% means the cohort is above/below the expected growth. While we provide explanations and responses for the data that is below 100%, teachers at TPS know that these cohorts should be making at least a year's growth in a year's time no matter what. We hope the information provided below will provide context that is useful when looking at this data.

Cohort Group	Reading Growth According to NWEA (%)	Language Growth According to NWEA (%)	Math Growth According to NWEA (%)
Class of 2013	160.8	166.2	145.6
Class of 2014	126.3	182.6	109.9
Class of 2015	115.5	124.8	84.3[4]
Class of 2016[5]	109.3	89.9	92.6

In reading, this goal has been met for every cohort group. For writing, the goal was met for three out of four cohort groups. For math, the goal was met for two of the four cohort groups. As our data shows, much of our growth continues to be about improving our math curriculum instruction and, as a result, math achievement. Our plan for how to do this can be found in "Looking Forward" section of the main renewal document.

Science and Social Studies:
The assessment of science and social studies standards has been a challenge for our school. Currently there is no standardized assessment that will accurately assess these subjects annually and at every grade level. We address science and social studies primarily through our P3 workshops as well as through discipline-based (humanities and science) workshops: at the middle school level, we added these discipline-based workshops at the onset of the 2011 school year based upon a recognized need - driven by our data - to place more of a dedicated focus on these disciplines in addition to the infusion of these subjects within the P3 model.

Science and social studies standards are taught through the P3, humanities, and science curriculum on a 2-3 year rotating basis (depending on the grade span in the classroom) in multiage classrooms. This ensures that all standards for a multi-age grouping are taught within a child's experience in a classroom. All

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[4] Since our first year in operation, this cohort has scored exceptionally well on standardized tests. For example, this cohort was identified as a Third Grade Spring 2010 ISTEP+ Results Leader by State Representative Jeff Thompson and Watch Dog Indiana. They won this distinction because 29% of them received a Pass+ in Language Arts and Math. In 2013, the same cohort had a passing rate in math of 97%. Of the 31 students, 32% of them earned a Pass+. When looking at the math class placements of the same group of students in this school year, they are, on average, .7 years above grade level. From this data, as well from our experience, we conclude that it is difficult for students to maintain a years worth of growth for those who are performing significantly above grade level.

[5] In this particular cohort group, 30% of the students are identified for special education. This is significantly higher than the state average, as well as the TPS school wide average of 23%. 75% of the students in this cohort group have attended TPS for at least three years. Of the students who have attended for three or more years, 33% are identified for special education. This is a disproportionate percentage when compared to the school wide percentage.

Over the past three years, we have adjusted curriculum and learning environments for this cohort. Different math curriculum has been adopted and they are in smaller groups with more support. We anticipate that while this may be a group who struggles, we will see more accelerated growth in the coming years because of adaptations we have made.

classrooms assess students based on the standards taught, using classroom-based assessments and rubrics. This does not translate to "on, above, or below grade level." It does, however, provide data as to whether or not individual students learn particular content and skills, (but not on a global level). Because of this struggle, we are proposing that we change the goal as proposed below. Because ISTEP+ only evaluates science in grades 4 and 6 and social studies in grades 5 and 7, it is not a useful tool in determining if students are making "a year's growth in a year's time." What we do know is that they are engaged in a year's worth of curriculum and instruction in a year's time.

The resulting revised goal for the next charter period, as introduced in the first section of the renewal document: *On average, based on the NWEA student growth summary (using the NWEA Percent of Projection), students will make no less than one year's academic growth in reading, writing, and math.* *(Academic)*

The Project School not only strives to improve as a school, but also places an additional emphasis on improvement by every student it serves. The Project School actively tracks, and holds its students and staff accountable, to ensure that every student is growing at an appropriate level each year.
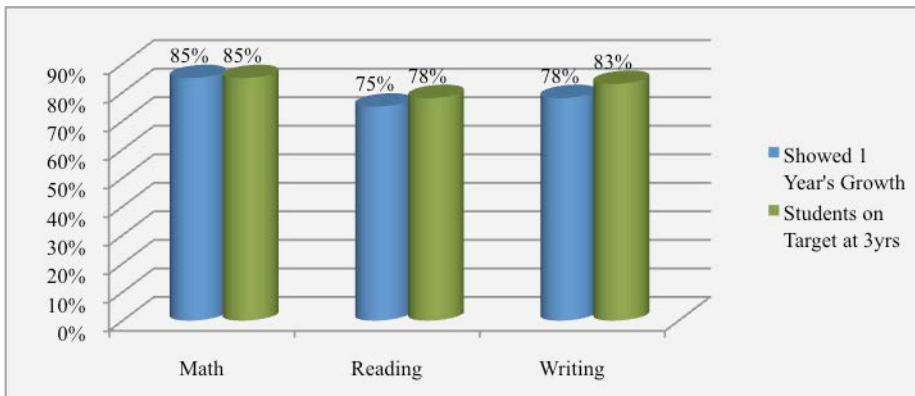
The Project School's emphasis on individual learning, combined with the overall school success and improvement, shows that the school is providing a quality education to its students on par with any other school in state.

II. B. Financial Performance

For the past four years, the Project School has been diligent in creating a school that can assure its constituents that it is financially healthy, resilient, stable, and sustainable. In this critical first phase of our development we have moved from a hypothetical budget and school to a realistic and real-time financially viable and sustainable non-profit organization. In years 1 and 2 of the school - when start-up dollars were prevalent - we scrutinized all purchases and larger financial decisions such as salary, benefits, and debt acquisition, in order to position ourselves to be fully independent of dollars beyond our general fund and entitlements like Title I and II. **In year 5 we have created a realistic budget that addresses our school's core needs without relying on any substantial funding from outside sources that can be unpredictable or may fluctuate based on legislation or grant funding.** Currently TPS is at student enrollment capacity - meaning staff, resource, and debt obligations and needs may be accurately projected for years to come with little reason to believe there will be major variances in any area. This will allow us to project long-term needs and focus our financial resources on building cash reserves rather than adding staff or students. ***For a complete report on the Financial Indicators, see Appendix E.***

<u>**Highlights of Financial Health**</u>:

- TPS teachers' salaries and benefits match or exceed that of neighboring districts. While the salary schedule for the local district is what is used to determine compensation for TPS teachers and administrators, the percentage of reimbursement for insurance benefits is higher than the local district. This results in a slightly higher compensation.
- All non-teaching support staff receives highly competitive wages. Instructional assistants are paid at or above the rate of the same role in the local district. Instructional assistants who are licensed teachers are compensated at a considerably higher wage than in the local district (over $1.40 /hour more). In addition, a position titled "Intern" was developed in year 1 that provides a beginning teacher with the experience beyond an IA but less than a full-time teacher, and compensates him/her with a salary between these two positions. This role has been essential in "growing our own" teachers.
- We have secured the best resources, teaching materials, and professional development including, training from Teacher's College at Columbia University and Project Zero at Harvard.
- In 2012 TPS was awarded one of a limited number of innovation grants to implement one-to-one iPads in the middle school, as well as advanced system and design thinking technology including a state-of-the-art 3D printer and all software and hardware to create and implement a design-based curriculum. Due to this success, there are 140 iPads at TPS.[6]
- In the first 2 years of the school, TPS was able to secure full financing to renovate a community space into a fully functional school with state-of-the-art connectivity.
- TPS has developed and nurtured relationships with community partners such as Foodworks/ Bloomingfoods for food service, and The Boys and Girls Club for transportation, which have saved the school thousands of dollars and have proven to be mutually beneficial for non-profit community organizations with shared values.
- TPS has effectively streamlined all financial systems by researching and contracting with a financial systems service provider that can ensure the best financial data and advice.
- TPS has maintained full enrollment with a significant waiting list since day one of operation. Every year all grade levels have been full with waiting lists. Currently there are 170 kids on the waiting list with a growing waiting list already developing for the 2014-15 school year.

Debt-Service Ratio: TPS's debt ratio is currently 90%, which we realize is higher than the BSU target. This ratio is due almost entirely to our building finance structure. While we have a highly favorable, combined interest rate of ~6% that we were able to secure during a major financial recession, because of

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[6] Since the fall of 2012, the middle school at The Bloomington Project School has had a one-to-one iPad program for all middle school students. Ipads are used daily in a fully integrated experience as a tool for learning in our project-based environment. In the course of a day students use iPads for notetaking, publishing in Writer's Workshop, making presentations, using Googledocs for individual and real-time collaborative projects, research on various P3 topics, recording video or audio reflections on tasks, and composing original music or making videos to demonstrate knowledge of a topic or project. In the spring of 2013, students used their iPads to capture oral histories of people who lived during the civil rights movement. After listening to and viewing several examples, students were able to take their iPads home to do first-hand interviews. Upon returning to school, students used editing software to create final products that were archived on a class website. In the spring of 2014, students will be working on a long-term documentary filmmaking project spanning the entire last quarter of school. This project will fully utilize all technology available including the iPads, video and editing hardware and software, presentation and brainstorming programs, and multiple research tools.

the debt on the renovation and the annual lease obligation to the City of Bloomington we still have a higher debt service ratio than we would like. During the past four years we believe we have proven that we can meet those debt service payments while still keeping enough cash on hand at any given time to meet all other financial obligations.

It is our express goal to refinance the short-term loan we have in place through IFF and continue negotiating with the City of Bloomington for a reduced and long-term lease to lower our overall debt service ratio. We are confident that one or both of those goals will be met in the next 18 months. While we believe we are in good financial health, we believe that these steps will increase our cash reserves, lower our debt-service ratio, and improve our overall financial resilience and sustainability.

We have learned much during our development over the past 4 years. During this time we believe we have created an organization that can - with great confidence and integrity - promise its constituents a school that serves students' needs for many years to come. While we have some very aggressive goals around fundraising and lower debt service ratio, we believe even without major developments in those areas we are and will continue to be in good financial health moving forward. We have developed a school that honors its faculty and staff with competitive salaries, benefits and wages, provides its teachers with high level professional development, puts the best educational materials, resources, and technology in the hands of students, and finances and maintains a facility that students, families, staff, and the community can be truly proud of.

Facility: The Project School is now a phenomenal educational facility, as well as a visual asset, to the downtown Bloomington community. In June of 2009, six months after the lease between TPS and The City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department was intended to commence, TPS was finally able to begin leasing and renovating the dilapidated structure located at 349 South Walnut Street, Bloomington Indiana. The initial lease was expected to begin in January of 2009 and would have provided TPS with 8 months to complete an aggressive renovation of the existing 13,000 sq.ft. and an addition of 9,000.

As a result of the delay, the summer of 2009 was spent renovating the existing structure. The only structures that were retained from the original building were the outside walls, the elevator, the stairways, and some load bearing walls. It was impossible to recognize the original structure in what was created. In April of 2010, renovation began again, with school still in session, to expand the building to a total of 22,000 square feet, providing the needed space for present programming. This process lasted well into the second school year. However, school began on August 30th, with tremendous pride in what was accomplished by a small school, with limited funding - in a building that had an amazing location and fascinating history but nothing else previously in it's favor.

This challenging and arduous process recently resulted in The Project School receiving a Downtown Revitalization award. The previous eye sore is now an award winning facility serving students and families in a way never previously imagined.

Since the completion of the full renovation and addition, only small building projects have been needed. The addition of restrooms on the third floor, soundproofing specific spaces, a ramp to gain access, and changes made for aesthetic purposes, have been the only needs since that time.

A table is included in Appendix E to respond to each element of the Financial Performance Framework. **While figures are detailed in the Appendix, the only areas where the standard is not met relate to the debt load of the facility, which is the greatest challenge of many charter schools, as well as an understanding of BSU as they approved our building projects and connected debt load in**

the first two years of our school. The move to CSMCI and the use of Charter Vision has provided the school leadership and Board an entirely different level of communication and transparency.

"As a first year teacher at TPS I have experienced an exceptionally high level of support and an equally high level of accountability from my fellow educators. Communication, critique, suggestions, support, collaboration, and resources flow daily. The network of mutual support, high expectations, and shared mission serve to make TPS one of the most cohesive schools I have experienced in almost 30 years in education. It is a privilege to work alongside such gifted and dedicated professionals. I count myself lucky to have been invited to join a staff of such caliber and integrity". –TPS Teacher

II.C. Organizational Performance

With respect to Organizational Performance, TPS has no knowledge of any issues of non-compliance, now or at any time in the past. All required documents have been submitted in their most recent version to CSAPPHIRE. ***All Organizational Performance Indicators appear to be met.***

TPS has experienced a highly positive rate of staff retention in the positions of leadership (100%) and classroom teaching (85%). This has provided for great consistency and fidelity to the mission, vision, and core beliefs, as well as the focus on heart, mind, and voice. The consistency of coaching and classroom teachers has ensured fidelity to the curricular model. ***See Appendix D for a chart detailing the changes.***

III.   Looking Forward: Plans for the Next Charter Term

III. A. Academic Data and Educational Strategies

"As a TPS teacher I get to make changes for kids the same day they need them. No child has to be lost while waiting for approval by someone who does not know him or her personally. Decisions for the benefit of each child are made by the people who serve the children on a daily basis. As a TPS teacher I am part of a community that understands their vast responsibilities. Every day I am entrusted with other people's children that deserve what I would want for my own children. With the flexibility to make changes when necessary, I am able to serve kids and families well. This is the only school I am proud and excited to send my own children." –TPS Teacher

As stated in the "Looking Back" section, when we know better we do better. As a result, in the next five years of our charter we will continue to keep a close eye on all data and trends to ensure that our positive trajectory continues and that we have effectively addressed all issues in section 2. **We firmly believe that one of the most important aspects of being a charter is that we can make changes to our practice in a way that has immediate and direct impact on current students. Changes are made with purpose, intentionality and immediacy.**

For example, while we are seeing achievement growth in our math data, we know we can still do better. We are always looking for professional development opportunities for our staff in the area of math education. We have found consistent high quality professional development in the areas of reading, writing, and project based learning that aligns with our charter *(See Appendix C)*. That being said, quality professional development in math has proven to be much more challenging.

Through our on-going efforts to secure highly effective professional development in math, we found and contacted Dr. Ryan Flessner - a professor in the School of Education at Butler University who specializes in Mathematics Education - to provide on-going professional development in the area of math instruction. We are working with him to provide a study group for teachers to evaluate their own mathematical practices and identify areas of growth. He will also work with us on best practices in math instruction. Some of the focus of our work in this area relates to the fact that the trends that we see at the middle school level in math are incredibly positive. However, at the 4-5 level, the growth has been less dramatic

and less consistent. While we believe this to be partially due to the fact that this classroom has had the greatest number of transitions of classroom teachers, we also believe that we may be missing something in relationship to the curricular and instruction piece. In reality, due to the transitions, the same teacher has not taught the same curriculum two years in a row, making it very difficult to "teach smarter" by knowing what must be strengthened in the program and the instruction. In fact, this is the first year that the same teacher in 4-5 has taught the same math curriculum two years in a row. Because of the strength of this team, this consistency will remain long term, bringing the level of implementation and, as a result, success that we are seeing at the other grade levels.

Because ISTEP+ results for the 2013-year were delayed in being delivered to schools (and in fact, we still do not have the break-out group information), we cannot yet fully analyze the data from the 2012-2013 school year. When that data analysis is complete, we will be better able to look at trends over a two-year period with the new math curriculum. That will allow us to look at two year's worth of data to see if it is trending in the right direction at a fast enough pace. If our math scores continue to be below the standard, we will form a math task force to support faster growth in this area. This math task force would include classroom teachers, special education teachers, the curriculum coach, and experts in the field. This task force would work in consultation with Ryan Flessner, (see above), and would also involve a deep study of schools that have a philosophy similar to ours but that demonstrate stronger math achievement. **This task force would make decisions about what the next steps should be to improve our math instruction**.

Continued examination of our own practices – along with ongoing reflection on areas where we can improve and strengthen – will allow for a continued growth trend as both a school and as professionals. We do this through active, participatory, supportive on-going professional development. We believe this must occur through the leadership of experts within the building and beyond. Before each school year, we host our own weeklong staff retreat. The entire week is spent on professional and school wide growth. In addition, every Wednesday, our staff comes together for two solid hours for the purposes of improving our practice and improving our school. Our meetings are structured in a four week cycle* with each Wednesday having a different focus. The rotation includes:

- **Book clubs:** The staff reads a common book (e.g. *The Power of Our Words* by Paula Denton, *How's It Going: A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers* by Carl Anderson, *Pathways to the Common Core* by Lucy Calkins, a math based book club where teachers chose one of four titles depending on the math that they taught)
- **Critical Friends Groups** (CFGs): A CFG is a meeting where teachers meet monthly to take a close look at their own practice. Teachers may look at student work, adult work (i.e. lesson plans/unit plans), and/or bring professional dilemmas for the purpose of receiving feedback from their peers. Teachers also work together to schedule and implement peer observations to learn from and with each other
- **Content Specific Meeting:** Last year our focus was math (which connected with the book club books we were reading). We examined curriculum, standards, and instruction over the course of the year. This year our focus has been on writing conferences (connected with the book the staff read over the summer and discussed at the staff retreat)
- **Data analysis:** Teachers look at data across and within teaching teams. Data analysis may be looking at baseline assessment data, NWEA, ISTEP, curriculum based assessment, Title 1 information, etc.

The schedule does change based on needs that emerge (e.g. Ball State Renewal, receiving ISTEP data, etc.) We work to avoid changes unless absolutely necessary.

TPS also employs a Curriculum and Instruction Coach. TPS employs a Curriculum and Instruction Coach. She observes teachers and gives feedback, supports the development of curriculum, researches new curricula, and provides professional development for our teachers and instructional assistants. Trainings are held for all instructional assistants in Guided Reading and Leveled Literacy Intervention.

TPS also has a strong commitment in learning from experts in different fields. Our teachers are expected to attend as many high quality professional development opportunities as they can that are focused on our curricular components and structures, as well as emerging needs of our students. For example, some of the trainings include: Columbia University's Teachers College Conferences in Reader's and Writer's Workshop, Harvard University's Project Zero, Responsive Classroom, various math workshops including NCTM, Project Based Math and Math Lesson Studies.

For a full description of Professional Development opportunities, see Appendix C.

Because of the strong belief we have to examine our own practice (curricular and instructional decisions), we know that this is a crucial component to why we have seen consistent growth in our students. **We also believe that the consistent reflection of our own practice is the centerpiece to continued growth.** We will continue to support our teachers to grow professionally because we believe that this has a direct correlation to student achievement. The better the teacher, the better the students perform.

We have shown growth over time, as evidenced by multiple assessments. Due to the consistent and faithful implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment that was committed to in our charter, we fully expect to continue our successful growth trajectory. The prior modifications and additions to our curriculum are articulated in this document and in CSAPHPIRE. As we move forward, we know new changes will need to be made based on the most current data. As always, as changes are made, they will be updated into CSAPPHIRE. **In order to ensure that we don't accept complacency around the use of our data, we are proposing the addition of the part time data analysis position as articulated in the goals for the next charter period**.

Well aligned with our ability to know if improvement efforts are working, **assessment spans the entire curricular framework and the Habits of the Heart, Mind, and Voice.** Some assessments are teacher created and very specific to a unit of study, while others are components of a purchased curriculum. Regardless of the type of assessment, or which element of the curriculum is being addressed, the intent remains the same: to provide multiple opportunities for teachers and students to reflect, to provide feedback on authentic work, and to inform the instructional decisions of the faculty. Assessment at The Project School is used to monitor student progress continuously. **The forms of assessment listed below are directly linked to the body of research that supports our curricular decisions, as well as our core beliefs about how students learn best.** While we can look at long-term trends of students, assessments primarily give us information about a student's short-term growth.

This multifaceted approach to assessment was designed to ensure that our teachers always have reliable, authentic, qualitative, quantitative, and real-time data to make curricular and instructional decisions. **The most powerful tool a teacher has in addressing the needs of students is the information from multiple assessments.** For The Project School, success on these common assessments will also help to confirm that the expectations of the state are being met through the meaningful, rigorous, and relevant curriculum and instruction that has been designed and is being implemented.

Forms of Assessment Include (but are not limited to):

Literacy Assessments
- Conferences and other anecdotal data (daily)
- Running Records (weekly for primary/ less frequently for self-extending students)
- Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to assess all readers K-3 and those who will benefit from this tool as a method to inform instruction in 4-8 (at least bi-annually)
- Previously, we used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), but switched this year because we felt it was a more accurate assessment
- Letter/sound assessments (K-1, bi-annually)
- Sight word assessments (K-3, ongoing)
- End of unit assessments

Writing Assessments
- Conferences and other anecdotal data (daily)
- On-demand writing samples are compared to the Teachers College Writing Continuum (pre- and post-unit)
- Word study assessments
- Classroom and unit specific rubrics

Math/Logical Assessments
- Conferences and other anecdotal data (daily)
- Bridges assessments (pre and post assessments every unit)
- College Preparatory Math assessments, anecdotal records (on-going).
- Advantage Math Assessment (K-1 plus 2-3 if needed, bi-annually)

Project, Problem, and Placed Based Work (P3) Ongoing Assessment
- Formal and informal teacher created assessments (as needed)
- Co-constructed instructional rubrics (quarterly)
- Anecdotal records (on-going)
- End of unit assessments

A significant commitment to the use of technology is essential to the curricular work that is being done with students every day at TPS. Our belief is that technology is an equalizer and that it is essential to ending the predictive values that we are so committed to challenging. As a result:

HARDWARE		
	Quantity	Location
Laptop Carts	3 (30 Apple laptops each)	1 dedicated for Arts 1 dedicated for 4/5 1 dedicated for 6/7/8
Desktops	28 (iMac 21-24inch)	Throughout the building
Staff Laptops	31 (Apple laptops)	Professional use
Classroom Media Carts	8 (Carts include projector, document camera, Apple TV)	Presentations
iPad Carts	3 (30 iPad 2s in cases / for middle school 1 to 1 program)	1 to 1 for all 90 middle school students
iPad Cart	1 (30 iPad2s in special rubber cases/ for 2/3 classroom use)	For use in the 2/3 classroom
Makers Cart	1 3D Printer, 1 Vinyl Cutter	Projects for grades 4-8

In 2011, The Bloomington Project School was awarded a $200,000 classroom innovation grant from the IDOE. With the grant, the school integrated a 1 to 1 iPad program into the Middle School, as well as a 1 to 2 program into the 2/3 classroom. Additionally, the grant has provided the support for a Maker's Cart,

which includes a 3D printer, a sign plotter and also paid a portion of the Technology Infusion Coordinator's salary.

Twenty-first century learning tools, with their potential to transform the way students learn, have been fully integrated into The Project School's curriculum and culture. iPad devices, with logical user interface and vast potential, were chosen for the program. Apps were carefully chosen to match curricular objectives and build a suite of productivity tools.

A glimpse into the middle school classroom reveals students moving easily from writing their essay revision in their Google Drive app to the Kahnacademy app where they watch a video on subtracting mixed numbers. After transitioning to Readers Workshop, they access the Poetry app from the National Poetry Foundation and read some of the works they bookmarked. At the end of the day, the student might access their portfolio to add a link to their selected poetry writing.

As for long-term improvements, we see this as an area of growth. We have continuously revised the ways in which we track data, but still believe that there has to be a better way. While we are excited about the possibilities of INISchools/Goodwill Industries, we do not want to put all of our eggs in one basket. We know that - in house - we need to do a better job of tracking long-term growth.   Currently, classroom-based data is in many different places and not in a uniform configuration. **This will become even stronger through the use of the Data Analyst and Documentarian.** This position will also focus teachers on the power of action research in their classrooms and the school that will result in improvements in our practice. The addition of this position will allow us to have more cohesion in how we collect, monitor, and interpret classroom data, with more standardized between classrooms.

III. B. Educational Plans

In five years, we hope to have a school that looks and feels much like it does today. We truly believe in the work we are doing, and do not see that major changes are needed. As stated in multiple places, we know there are areas in our data that show the need to make modification to our curriculum; however, we believe we will always be looking for ways to improve, even when our data shows we are doing well. For example, we were thrilled that our 2013 ISTEP+ scores showed over 80% passing both Language Arts and Math; however, our staff's first response was, "That's great, but we can do better." **In five years, we want to continue to graduate students who have the will, skill, capacity, and knowledge to be contributing members of our local and global communities.**

Our student and teacher retention rate, along with our long waiting list, demonstrates to us that people are happy with the community we have built and believe in the work we are doing. The changes mentioned throughout this document highlight what we believe we need to do; however, we believe they are all "behind the scenes" changes, and that the look and feel of the work inside our walls will be the same moving forward.

III.C. Financial Plans

Current Financial Status: The financial challenges of an Indiana charter school that does not have any external support or resources are extraordinary. Limited facility funds and no transportation funds for any charter school, coupled with the Monroe County reimbursement rate - which is one of the lowest in Indiana - creates for tremendous financial hardship. As we enter year five, the budget of TPS is in the most realistic and strongest financial position to date.

Consistent 100% capacity of our student enrollment (Charter goal for enrollment), sound fiscal management, extremely conservative spending, and a successful transition from the initial years of planning and implementation grants to very limited additional resources have all created a solid financial base for The Project School. While these will continue to be challenges, there is strong evidence in the history of TPS that the school will continue to have sound financial management.

TPS has had a successful grant writing history to date. Over the course of the first five years, the school has received grant awards from City, County, State, Federal, and private foundation sources, in addition to attaining Title I, Title II and Federal and State Special Education funding. We have received grants in the areas of sustainability, gardening, and farm-to-school efforts; technology; classroom innovation; and building accessibility. **In addition to continued substantive grant writing efforts, we are now in the process of establishing an Annual Fundraising Campaign for the school**, which includes: direct mail solicitations; corporate partnership recruitment; fundraising events; online giving; donor stewardship; and social media. We recognize the tremendous potential in cultivating giving by members of our school community, the local business community, and the community at large. As we continue to make a huge difference in the lives not only of our students and families, but also of the community as a whole, **we look forward to growing our fundraising efforts to strengthen the financial position of our school.**

The three most significant financial burdens for TPS are facility costs, staffing, and additional services for students. The combination of the debt related to the lease and leasehold improvements creates the greatest financial challenge that TPS has in the budget. Additionally, necessary staffing cost increases - due to increased years of experience and additional education obtained - are substantial from year to year. Finally, underfunded staffing for special education services is the third greatest budgetary challenge. **The TPS staff and Board have successfully managed these challenges in the first five years and will continue to do so in the years to come.** As a leadership team we are incredibly frugal in the management of our budget. Due to the transparency that we have in sharing the budget with teachers, they are incredibly responsible about requests that are made.

The most obvious financial challenge in the near future relates to the facility cost. A refinancing of the bonds used to complete the facility construction and renovations will occur in the next two years. Initial discussions on this process have begun with the City of Bloomington and a current lender. Considering the fact that ~2.2 million dollars in funding, with no collateral, was secured to transform the facility in 2009 - perhaps the worst time in our lifetimes to borrow unsecured funds - there is every confidence that the refinancing will be completed successfully and may provide for an even better financial picture.

5-year Financial Projections. A complete five-year projected budget was completed with the School Leader, Business Manager, and CSMCI. The budget is an accurate reflection of the most educated projections that can be made at this time, with the current knowledge of both revenue and expenditures.

While no specific figures are included for the refinancing, every effort will be made to secure financing that will maintain the low interest rate and, if possible, improve the financial picture over time related to the cost and schedule of repayments of facility costs.

<u>**III.D. Organizational Plans**</u>

Enrollment Plan: Due to the consistent success that TPS has experienced in enrollment - 100% capacity for all five years in existence - the plan will remain steady as that of the past. Because of a current waiting list of ~170, with a waiting list at every grade level, the success of TPS seems to be

known in the Monroe County community. Focused attention will continue to be paid to children living in poverty, by attending open houses and other opportunities related to the two early child care options in Bloomington that serve this specific population exclusively. Tours are available to any family in the community interested in gathering additional information to consider TPS. Enrollment opens online on 12/1 each year. Access is given to the application through TPS if a family does not have electronic access.

During our third year as a school, we slightly increased our enrollment to 270 to accommodate a small group of 9th grade students whose parents had made a compelling case that they needed one additional year at TPS. After only benefitting from TPS for two years, as the founding 7th graders, this was accomodated for them – with approval from BSU - for the intended one year in a small classroom located at a neighboring site. **With our present space, 267 is the maximum number of students that we can appropriately accommodate. This is, again, 100% enrollment.**

Grade Configuration	Target Number of Pupils	Number of Classroom Teachers	Adult (includes all instructional staff): Student Ratio
K-1	46	2	1:12
1-3	25	1	1:8
2-3	52	2	1:13
4-5	54	2	1:13
6-8	90	3	1:13

Governance and Management: One of the strengths of TPS is the consistency that there has been in both the leadership staff and the Board of Directors. The School Leaders, Business Manager, and Curriculum and Instruction Coach have all been in their positions since the inception of TPS. The Lifeskills Coach - a position that was added through a BSU amendment in the second year - has been in place since year two. **All seven founders of the school still work at TPS and all teaching teams except for one have at least one member who has been with the school for all five years.** There are no significant changes anticipated in Governance or Management. While new members have been added to the Board, overall, there is a strong and consistent presence. **This consistency has provided TPS with the ability and passion to stay focused on the mission and vision of the school**, without any significant learning curve for the leadership and governance team. This has resulted in tremendous consistency with school-specific concepts and language.

While we presently meet the requirement of our board bylaws with the members, we do intend to increase our memebership by adding 1-2 members in the next year who will bring additional expertise focused on business and finance. This will not require a change in bylaws as we will still be in the approved range.

Transportation: The underlying premises for TPS transportation is that no student who has been enrolled in TPS and lives within Monroe County will be excluded from attending based on an inability to get to or from school. Our primary transportation is provided through a partnership with The Bloomington Boys and Girls Club (BBGC). This contracted service provides transportation to multiple satelite stops that are located to meet the greatest needs of both numbers and needs of students. The stops are created responsively and are changed when needed. As BSU is keenly aware, no funds targeted for transportation are received by charter schools in Indiana. Due to the loss of facility funds for this year, one of the budget reductions that had to be considered was in the area of transportation. By eliminating one stop and one bus and increasing ride times, we were able to reduce transportation costs from just over $50,000 down to $35,000. This is a result of both the strong partnership with BBGC and also creative problem solving.

Anticipated Facility Changes: The major anticipated change for the facility is to add solar panels and other "footprint and cost saving" components that will help our organization to further live our ninth core belief around sustainability (currently being revised to more accurately reflect our learning about this concept). Additional grant funding is being actively pursued to match those funds. When this is secured, specific planning for the project - including necessary permissions and permits - will be sought and secured before any changes will commence. Also, structural, safety, and insurance reviews may be in store for the future as a "farm-to-school" component is considered for the roof of our "city" school. While this may be totally out of the realm of possibilities, a review will be completed to know if there is any viability to this idea prior to any steps to move forward.

This facility change aligns with our 9th[7] Core Belief. In a recent gap analysis involving the entire faculty and staff, assessing theory to practice, it was determined that our 9th core belief was not being fully realized in our school community and that it does not represent our now more comprehensive understanding of education for sustainability. As a result, this core belief is being revised during the 2013-2014 school year. Securing funding for facility changes aligns significantly with the critical elements of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Presently, TPS has a commitment from a philanthropic foundation to fund ½ of the cost of solar panels, should we have success raising the additional funds.

Finally, due to the bond funding of our major construction project, some of our funding will have to be refinanced over the next two years. As a result, many avenues - including an attempt at negotiating a reduced lease and/or being included in a bond deal with the City of Bloomington/Parks and Recreation, who serves as our landlord - are being pursued. An initial meeting with Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan took place in October 2013 to express our interest in being included in their major projects financing. Follow up from this initial discussion is expected in January 2014. At this point additional details are not available due to the significant time between now and the refinancing; however, initial action steps have begun to put TPS in good stead for this process.

Educational Service Providers: N/A

I was originally not a proponent of charter schools and I am still against large corporate charters or charters that don't employ qualified, licensed teachers. My perspective changed when the local school district would not listen to administrators and teachers who wanted to try innovative approaches to teaching in district schools. At this point, I became an advocate of educationally sound charter programs. I might add that TPS has some of the finest administrators and teachers. - TPS Parent

Today, a small team of educators came to visit our school from a newly opened inner-city charter school in Detroit, Michigan. They had heard from multiple sources about the work we are doing. They knew of our mission, vision, and core beliefs. They had read of the work in heart, mind, and voice teaching, and wanted to know more. They shared from their visit that they could feel how alive each of these components are in all of the work that we do. They noticed immediately the systems and structures in place for Responsive Classrooms. They recognized the power of workshops. They witnessed to each other and to us that what we put on paper over six years ago is now a part of a living, breathing, organization that we know as The Project School. We respectfully request a full five-year renewal based on the work that you see represented in this document, through the site visit, and in what is still to come.

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[7] The current 9th Core Belief, which is being revised to represent a broader understanding of sustainability is, "The Project School believes in infusing environmentally responsible practices into our school's culture and curriculum."

Table of Contents: Appendices

# Appendix A: INISchools Analysis

The Bloomington Project School Report

Overview
The Bloomington Project School has a unique approach to education blending a focus of developing a child's heart, mind, and voice while still holding that child to Indiana's rigorous standards. Through this blended approach, the Bloomington has experienced incredible growth and some of the highest performance of any school in Indiana.
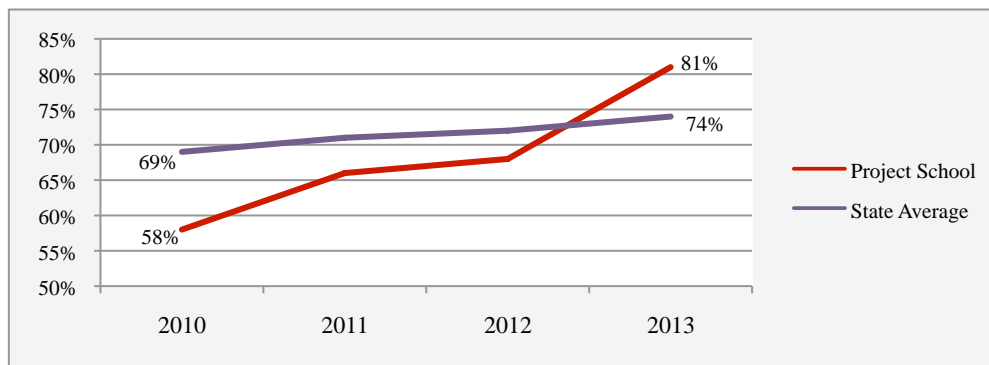
IREAD Performance
The Bloomington Project School ranks among the best schools in the state in IREAD performance due in no small part to the Project School's use of Literacy Workshops – which allows for the individual needs of students to be met in a way that cannot be achieved under a traditional structure. The success of this program is evident by the Project School's strong IREAD-3 results illustrated by the 97% of third grade students in 2013 that were at or above the expected reading level. This performance ranked in the top 25% of all schools throughout the state.

2013 IREAD Performance

|	State Average	Bloomington Project School
	91%	97%
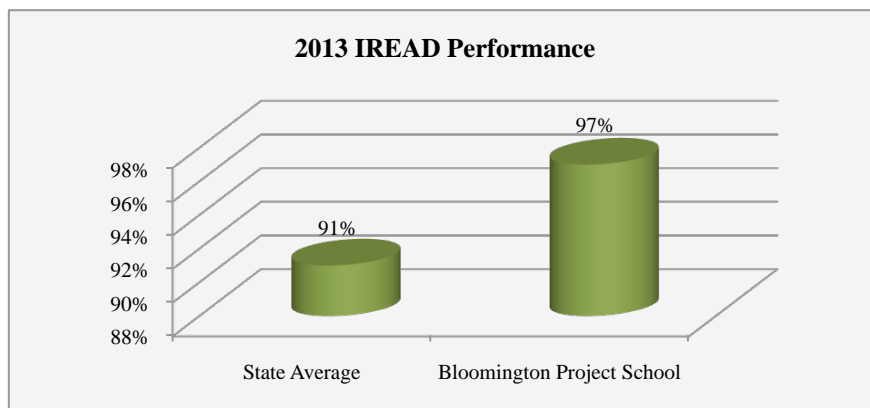
ISTEP+ Performance
Over the past four years the Bloomington Project School has made great strides on the ISTEP+. During that time the Project School has increased their passage rate by an astonishing 24% – improving each year – and placing the school in top 3% of all schools in improvement over the past four years. All of this improvement has culminated in 81% of Project School students passing both the ELA and Math ISTEP+ in 2013, well above the state average (74%).

The Bloomington Project School has a strong history of performance and improvement on the ISTEP+ and is one of less than 2% of Hoosier schools that can say they have improved on both the ELA and Math portions of the ISTEP+ each of the past four years. When this improvement is coupled with the school's strong performance in 2013, there is little doubt that the Bloomington Project School is quickly ascending the list of highest performing (and quality) schools in the state.

Performance Goal
The Bloomington Project School strives not only to improve as school but also places an additional emphasis on every student it serves to improve. The Project actively tracks, and holds its students and staff accountable, to ensure that every student is growing at an appropriate level each year.
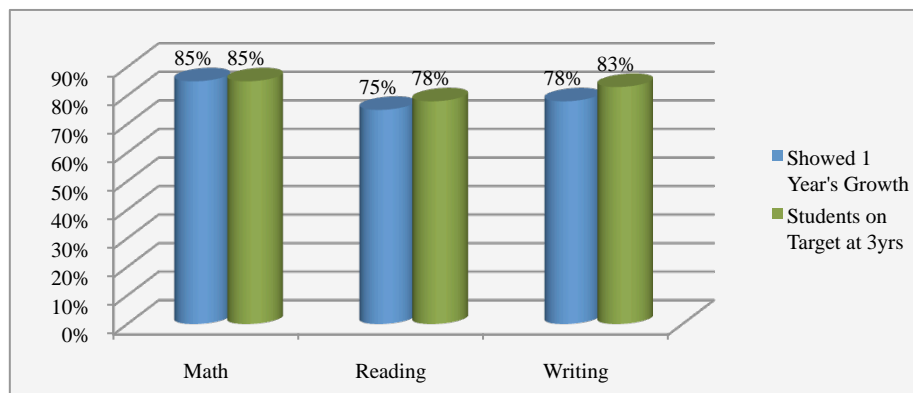
The Project School's emphasis on individual learning, combined with the overall school success and improvement, shows that the school is providing a quality education to its students on par with any other school in state.

Conclusion
Just like every other school across the state, the Bloomington Project School has opportunities for improvement; however, the Project School also has a history of rising up to meet those challenges.
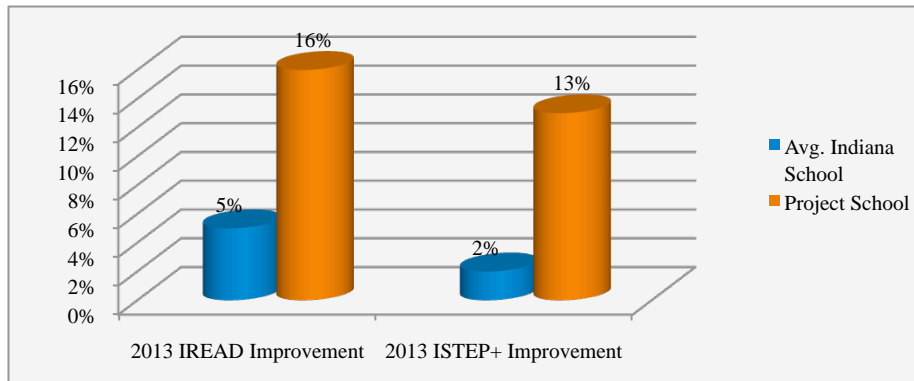
The Project School's ability to blend their individualized learning approach – while also continuing to meet the ever-changing rigorous demands placed on Indiana schools – is an undeniable success. The Bloomington Project School has reputation and a history of performance and improvement that any school would be proud of; however, the greatest testament to their success is in the school's ability to produce high quality, well rounded, students that are well prepared for the future challenges they will face. The Bloomington Project School has a story of rapid improvement and quality performance; but, their story is better told through impact it has on every student that walks through its doors.

Appendix B: Reflection on School Specific Goals #3-6

While TPS has six school-specific goals from the original charter which are important and which relevantly reflect the focus of our school, there are two goals with the most direct academic focus which are summarized in the "Looking Back" section of the main renewal proposal. The assessment of performance, related to goals 3-6, is included here as a part of the appendices because of the indirect connection to the requested content for the renewal document.

Goal 3: Each student successfully completes no less than two substantive projects as measured by the TPS criteria every year.

This goal originates in the idea that the best learning happens when students are immersed in an experience that compels them to learn more about the world around them, think critically about what they are learning, and use that knowledge to create or perform a task that solves a real-world problem. This type of experience is not confined to one lesson or one week of learning. It isn't even best contained within one subject taught in the classroom. This type of experience comes from being students steeped in purposeful instruction, enabling them to use a variety of tools to access knowledge from many different sources both from school and within their community. This is project based learning and - as defined by the Buck Institute - is "an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem or challenge." When the goal was set for students at TPS to complete no less than two substantive projects, we were imagining the time these projects take: the choosing, the planning, the management, the assessment and feedback; the teaching of both academic knowledge and skills to collaborate, communicate, and critically think all take a considerable amount of time. Soon after we opened our doors and found our footing, the goal of at least two substantive projects was far below what was actually happening in our classrooms. We found that when all subjects are taught with a similar purpose, that when all teachers and students are working with the same goal in mind, and that when the classroom and school community are set up in the way to promote the skills needed for project-based work, then this process becomes enhanced and efficient. We found students at our school routinely completing more than two substantive projects each year.

The projects our students embark upon are substantive, and encompass a process that is much more than just a finished product. The following demonstrates an example of the process in the 4th and 5th grade classroom. After weeks of study on climate change, students moved into the project production phase. Responsible for a visual and a written piece, students chose to research one of eleven different topics (solar energy, electric & hybrid cars, reusable playground equipment, landfills, recycling, etc.). Within each topic there were subgroups, focusing on different circles of impact: self, family, school, community, state, country, or world. Student groups created awareness videos on electric car usage, others researched the impact of Halloween candy wrappers and began development of a website. Furthermore, groups designed plans for energy efficient houses by building physical models, drawing to-scale blueprints, and using software to build models online. Children identified an audience, learned new material that built on their four-week unit, and were all able to participate in creating a physical and/or digital end product.

The TPS criteria involve state, school-created, teacher-created and community standards in growth and learning. TPS is progressive and responsive to the habits and values that we hope our students will take with them into life. Habits of the heart, mind, and voice hold student projects to the philosophy of our vision of the citizens that come out of our school. Habits of the heart involve developing socially and emotionally, creating a school responsive to student needs. Habits of the mind involve five kinds of minds - disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical. Habits of the voice speak to the activism and democratic involvement - carrying our work in social justice through all of student learning. These criteria also hold teachers and students accountable to our community. Our annual curricular summit invites all community members to develop a Compelling & Generative Question or Topic, with lines of inquiry that then direct both work and focus throughout the following year in P3.

At this point, it is clear that this goal is met and that this work is fully embedded in the curricular work that we do naturally. This is no longer needed as a monitored goal because it is fully embedded in school culture and performance.

Goal 4: Each student can articulate his/her personal beliefs through artistic expression.

The visual and performing arts infuse all elements of TPS, and play a critical role in how our students see and represent themselves. They support our students' hearts, minds and voices to open and grow with wonder, discipline, confidence, and self-discovery. Students articulate their personal beliefs through a broad range of artistic work. Art production serves as a powerful vehicle for them to learn about and demonstrate who they are and what they think and believe. This section will describe the multiple artistic opportunities from which students have benefited, and will highlight important examples of the personal and collective growth of students over the last five years.

TPS students have an opportunity to create a wide variety of visual, musical, dramatic and literary art work. Spanning all grade levels and subject areas, students compose, create, sing, and play music. They dance and perform; they paint, draw, sculpt, and engage in printmaking. Through these creative and collaborative acts, they constantly analyze and interpret their relationship with each other, and with the greater world.   Students discuss, explain, and justify their artistic decisions, and ask each other questions to better understand a particular perspective. Hundreds of pages documenting student voice through artistic expression have been collected over the years. One 7th grader, in his artist statement for societal allegory collages connected to a study of Jefferson and Aristotle, wrote that, *"I am focusing on gender stereotypes for my art collage. I chose this because a few of my friends like to joke around with this stuff. It impacts me because I don't feel too comfortable when they do this kind of stuff. So, I'm hoping that my artwork will help people re-think about gender stereotypes and consider other perspectives."* He went on to discuss his choice of image and color as conscience choices he made as an artist. Full texts of this and other artist statements are available here:
Jefferson/Aristotle Allegory Artist Statement
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wLFwppoJpwn48Ls_4zcrC_UOQnhM4bUAKbJJ4cqJI6s/edit?usp=sharing

Art exists in all spaces and all classrooms, allowing students to understand the relevance of their voice and its interconnected nature to the arts. Our students, through our Throughlines and P3 Arts Infusion, have an embedded understanding of how their lives relate to our diverse culture. This infusion into students' daily curricula and the arts further promotes a common language, creating an access point for artists to specifically articulate their feelings about their development within the arts. The list of projects stemming from such integrated planning and teaching is incredibly lengthy. However, some examples include: a "dinner party" as part of a study of gender and media; re-used/recycled toys and the design and physics of toys as well as the economics principles related to production and distribution; "qualities of excellent work" conversations which led to website design projects on renewable energy; Map Making; Foundations of Community; student-written creation myths which answered K/1 wonderings about the world we live in (puppets and set pieces were made with 4/5 and k/1 artists, plays were then performed and recorded); fairy tales re-told through artists' books/reader's theater/culminating performances/theatrical improvisation; stained-glass mosaic stepping stones donated to our Middle Way House community garden using words of power from Martin Luther King Jr. speeches; and student designed and implemented murals spanning from Apartheid to the ways our artist's use their voice daily at TPS through Performing and Visual Arts.

We also explore the theme "Hopes and Dreams" at the beginning of each school year, during which students write, read and speak about their "Hopes and Dreams" for the new year. This theme is explored through new forms of artistic expression every year, in K-8. Some examples of 4/5 students visual and musical artistic expression, connecting to their "Hopes and Dreams" are available here:

4th/5th Hopes and Dreams Artwork
https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bw-atEILvZhHWkVyZlE5aDNpb0U&usp=sharing
4th/5th Hopes and Dreams Musical Compositions
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw-atEILvZhHT09VRXVKTUVjckk/edit?usp=sharing

Each multi-age class at TPS produces its own musical or theatrical performance every year. Productions are chosen based on students' strengths, interests, and abilities, as well as academic and curricular standards. Every student participates and is supported throughout the process. We maximize this participation through the use of multiple casting/sharing of roles between students during a single production. Students request the roles they are interested in filling. Throughout the rehearsal and culminating performance, they are able to demonstrate their personal artistic expression through enacting these roles. One example of this was demonstrated by an eighth grade student with many years of learning and behavioral challenges. He showed intense interest in playing the lead role in "Romeo and Juliet." After many weeks of rehearsals in and out of the Performing Arts classroom, he memorized his part and awed his teachers and fellow middle school students with an inspirational performance as Romeo. This was a life-changing experience. There were many times when he was offered the opportunity to cut the part back and simplify the lines, yet he refused and restated his commitment to perform the entire role. The performance changed the way his peers perceived him and became a seminal event in his educational career.
Romeo Photo Examples:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HvojeaOLDEtwhEX7oLm_njxJRU32TF_d2bLXcBm6Ykg/edit?usp=sharing

TPS is committed to supporting an expression of the personal belief of all musicians, including those with accelerated skills. Students with particular musical proficiency have a voice in selecting and composing repertoire, structuring rehearsals and performances, and choosing roles within various

musical ensembles. From fundamental in-class scale projects to multi-faceted orchestral performances, these performing artists are encouraged to fully express themselves through the music.
Examples of such musical expression can be found here:

Musical Expression Examples
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw-atEILvZhHNlY5VXU3WUZaUG8/edit?usp=sharing
More Musical Expression Examples
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw-atEILvZhHTmFvWVhScTBaTlk/edit?usp=sharing

Moving forward, we feel that this goal is now embedded in the work we do every single day. This no longer needs to be monitored by BSU.

Goal 5: Each student demonstrates his/her ability to listen for understanding, support his/her peers' learning, and takes responsibility for his/her learning.

We want our students' learning experiences to be meaningful, relevant, and inspiring because we believe that *how* we learn matters. At The Project School, we are a community of learners who work both independently and interdependently. We want our students to examine and evaluate ideas critically, to hold thoughtful conversations with each other, and to generate and communicate new and evolving ideas. Our ability to wonder about, test , reflect on, adjust, and create new ideas and connections directly shapes our personal opportunities and those of the community in which we live. Because we see our students as contributing participants in their education and community, we strive to cultivate and integrate authentic problem-solving opportunities in which they make sense of things, teach each other, and know what helps them to be better learners.

Across all grade levels, we deeply value students' metacognitive process. We teach them the language of conversation, such as "I agree with ___ because ___", "I disagree with __ because ___", "I don't understand…"   Our students practice the art of critical conversation every day, and articulate **what** they are thinking, **why** they think it, and **how** they arrived at that thought. This type of listening for understanding takes place school-wide in a variety of ways, including morning meeting, whole class discussions, teacher-student conferences, and when students share their strategies during a reading, writing, or math workshop. They also direct comments or questions to each other, and reflect in personal journals or in a small group at the end of each day.

For example, in the K/1 class, children demonstrate this process by gathering each day and responding to questions and wonderings that they generate, record, and pull out of the "heart in the bottle." This is a special time when students listen to each other's wonderings, and respond with their ideas and theories. They integrate and make sense of new, and often opposing ideas that challenge and stretch their understanding of how and why things work the way they do. Many of our 5 and 6 year olds' questions are the same profoundly philosophical questions we continue to ask as adults: "How was time invented?", "Why do people love each other?", "Why were people put on earth?" Attached is a transcript of a conversation from this class, inspired by one child's wondering about the origin of numbers and math.
https://docs.google.com/a/theprojectschool.org/document/d/1jwpMQeLjHe9VyjgvtDUwK2FM0-VNxiTirlddrP3MTBg/edit?usp=sharing Situations in which Sam voices his question, and we listen to

and engage with it sincerely, situations in which new thinking and understanding is articulated, situations in which individual thought grows because of community dialogue with peers, happen daily in our K/1 classroom and across our entire school.

In another math investigation, these same peers supported each other's learning in a different way. Given a situation in which they needed to figure out how tall certain buildings were, based on a the height of a person 4 ft. tall, these students worked to understand how measurement and repeated addition connect. One set of partners discovered that if they took a strip of paper and folded it in the same increments to represent 4 ft., they could move it around to measure different buildings on their page. We gathered in a circle for them to show and teach the group what they had done and why. Immediately after returning to this problem, several other mathematicians attempted to make their own rulers. Nowhere did the teacher explicitly tell these kids how to solve the problem. But because we trusted their ability to generate their own strategies, and we created opportunities for them to teach each other and hone these strategies, a deeper understanding of measurement and multiplication emerged (https://docs.google.com/a/theprojectschool.org/file/d/0B5F56zMHhZD-blZ4TktOYjJvR3M/edit?usp=sharing).

As a school, we strive to facilitate mentoring partnerships across grade levels. Examples include K/1 and 4/5 book buddies, 6/7/8 and 1/2/3 book buddies, and multi-age and student-led Passions classes. We are constantly looking for what kids can teach each other, and set up learning environments and opportunities – actually, a CULTURE - in which we facilitate students' teaching as well as learning from each other. Across our entire school, from kindergarten to eighth grade, students frequently work in partnerships within and between classrooms (https://docs.google.com/a/theprojectschool.org/drawings/d/1sgXebuxbSk5hpw-0WUGBmGOgS_8OXtUub_6MtLfQWLg/edit?usp=sharing). These sustained partnerships have become sustained mentorships that foster a sense of responsibility, caring, and connection between students and their school and local community.

Students demonstrate responsibility for their learning by naming their hopes and dreams, by creating class agreements at the beginning of each year to support each other's hopes and dreams, and by setting goals for themselves during independent work time. At least twice each year, the student voice leads the individual family conferences. These take place in the fall, with family and teachers, to establish academic, social and community goals; and again in the spring, to reflect on growth and next steps.

Students also collaborate to make exhibits of their work in our annual Museum of Authentic Work (MAW), demonstrating their learning process, and evidence of action they took to solve a problem. In preparation for our MAW, students evaluate the work they have produced that year, reflect on their growth, and select writing, reading, mathematical, and scientific thinking to share with family, friends, the school community, and the larger Bloomington community. They construct and arrange exhibits of their work, celebrating the growth they have made, the strategies they can now apply, and the individuals they wish to be. They create a project to engage with a problem and they take some form of action to make change.(https://docs.google.com/a/theprojectschool.org/drawings/d/1A-9Lzo3RLhFcAfdOvaoHZt9OgdFP2vP4xD6sQCGumak/edit?usp=sharing).

Next steps:

While we celebrate our students' achievements and our own professional strengths, we also recognize what we have not yet accomplished. The following are areas in which we see room for growth:

1) We can expand the ways in which we ask kids to demonstrate their understanding, and provide a greater variety of tools they use to record this understanding. We can do this by more consistently integrating digital technology into all units of study, as well as more authentically engaging our students' multiple intelligences.

2) We have not developed a cohesive school-wide system for building digital portfolios for every student. Some teachers are currently piloting the program "Evernote" to compile student work and pass it on to future teachers so that work across the life of a student at our school can be archived. However, this is still an area in which we need to create realistic systems and protocols as a whole faculty in order to move forward.

This goal will now be embedded in the newly created Goal #1: School goal systems and structures to ensure sustainability through the development of digital portfolios.

Goal 6: Each student knows his/her unique strengths and can apply those strengths to overcome academic challenges.

We chose to make this one of our goals because it truly is one of the most important things we can do. Some children come to school and can find success no matter the topic, teaching style, materials, etc. Unfortunately, for all kinds of reasons, this is not true for everyone. At TPS, we make it our mission to find entry points so students can find natural connections to the work we do. One way we go about doing this is to build off of student strengths. Often, but not always, our strengths stem from what we are interested in. We realize that when students are passionate about what they are working on, they will be more willing to do the work expected of them, and will be more engaged and more successful. We seek to help students make deeper and more meaningful connections to the work they do through their interests and strengths. The key to many of our students' successes is that we allow them to pursue what they love and what they are passionate about, while teaching them the habits and skills that are necessary to be successful in the 21st century.

Below is an example of a reflection a student wrote about her experience as a writer at TPS. She came to us as a gifted writer in many ways, but definitely had some much needed areas of growth, with significant gaps in many critical genres. Below is her story of how she has grown as a writer. As teachers committed to building from students' assets, it was clear to us that her success was partially based on our focus on her strengths in order to improve her areas of challenge.

Student Mallory, 8th grade, writes: "As a writer at my old school, I mainly focused on short stories, research papers, and free verse poetry. I had written essays before, but I was still very hazy on them.

Writer's Workshop at TPS was much different from my writing class at my old school; it gave me many more obstacles to overcome, and it challenged me much more to become a better writer. At first I felt a bit overwhelmed; with some types of writing like essays, formatted poetry, expository writing, and memoirs, I had little to no experience. With each mini lesson and project that we did in "writers," I could feel myself growing as a writer. My writing stamina and vocabulary increased, and in each area of writing I learned the proper formatting. I found myself beginning to enjoy writing more and more with every new challenge that I faced. This year writing is one of my favorite subjects, and I have noticed a clear and distinct difference between how I approach it this year and how I did last year. I feel highly confident with many types of writing now, and I can finish writing pieces significantly more efficiently than I did last year. I have grown so much in each subject: math, science, readers, humanities, writers, and arts; and I feel very confident in my abilities. I grew especially in writing, and I know that I definitely could not be as strong of a writer if I had not had the opportunity to learn at The Project School. Without The Project School, I would not be as determined to learn and face challenges, and without a doubt, I would not enjoy academic learning as tremendously as I do now."

Other examples of students overcoming their challenges using their strengths:

Example 1: Robert, a student identified with autism, displayed many destructive behaviors in the classroom. He had a tendency to hide under tables, be verbally and physically abusive to peers and staff, and shred assignments. He required constant supervision and one-on-one instruction the vast majority of the day. Any of these behaviors could have resulted in a more restrictive environment, but they didn't. Staff continued to work with Robert and, little by little, we began to discover his interests. He was encouraged to explore these interests (animals, survival bracelets, environmental concerns). His teachers took these interests and integrated them into his studies (a short story about Carla the guinea pig and her adventures, a persuasive essay on the dangers of plastic bag use), and this eventually led to Robert teaching his own three week daily course with students K-8 on how to create your own paracord bracelet. Robert is a prime example of the commitment TPS staff has to creating just the right learning environment for each student and just what can be accomplished when this happens. This compassion and consistency led to Robert overcoming his classroom fears. Five years later, he's an active participant in all subjects throughout the day and a funny, charismatic, beneficial member of the classroom.

Example 2: When Bryan arrived, he had limited social skills. For instance, when meeting a new teacher for the first time, he walked up grinning and kicked dirt on the teacher's pants and didn't say a word. Three years later, he would walk into a room, greet each person by name and strike up a conversation with almost anyone there. He learned to have confidence in his voice and how to engage others through humor and conversation starters.
Bryan struggled to get more than a sentence down on paper in a forty-five minute period and would freeze up and shut down. When encouraged to use his gifts, talents, and interests in American History, he was able to write page after page of creative historical fiction. In addition, Bryan was able to memorize the Gettysburg Address and present it in a strong voice in front of 50 other middle school students.
Link to Bryan's historical fiction writing
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-Pq-N7nlVBuQmdrU0dOSjJodGs/edit?usp=sharing
Link to Bryan's recitation:
https://docs.google.com/a/theprojectschool.org/file/d/0B-0DMN_AiR4FVkhOQ0ZXVmZ5UE0/edit?usp=sharing

Example 3: Maria, a student diagnosed with CHARGE syndrome, is a middle schooler who has a love of music and performance that was initially sparked by the enthusiasm and inspiration of the Performing Arts teacher at TPS. This passion is being further developed in music therapy sessions to support academic growth. Her challenges have included the need for more focus and attention, staying on task and comprehension of material. Through music therapy, Maria uses accuracy and structure that is inherent in instrument playing as well as collaboration skills with peers in songwriting, movement, and singing to support academic and social progress. She has now shown an increase in focus and attention, retention of material, using eye contact, asking questions and sharing ideas in her academic experience. Teachers and parents agree that over the past four years, Maria has successfully used her strength and passion for music to overcome academic challenges and has continued to grow in a positive direction.

Example 4: Daniel came to TPS at the beginning of his second grade year. When he started, he was well below grade level in reading, writing, and math. He needed frequent movement breaks and a lot of sensory input. He brought in a yoga ball to sit on during his independent work times to help him have the sensory output his body needed. He had a love for helping the environment and a strong sense of justice. He also loved looking at books about history, particularly wars. Knowing he had a strong love of military and history, we gathered additional texts to draw him into reading, allowed him to write about his passion, and at every entry point we could think of, Daniel was allowed to utilize his love of history to acquire the skills he lacked. At the end of his second year at TPS, he was reading above grade level. His stamina in writing improved from a couple of lines of illegible writing to multiple pages, properly spaced and legible. As his confidence rose in reading and writing, we began to see his math skills improve as well. TPS gave him the environment he needed to succeed and the opportunity to explore that in which he was interested.

Revision of Goal: We are proposing that we do not continue to have this be one of our formal goals as measured by BSU. As our mission states, we work to "uncover, recover, and discover the unique gifts and talents that each child brings to school everyday," so it feels redundant to have it here as well.
 This work is embedded in nearly every decision we make regardless of whether or not it is one of our charter goals.

Appendix C: Professional Development at TPS

Continued examination of our own practices – along with ongoing reflection on areas where we can improve and strengthen – will allow for a continued growth trend as both a school and as professionals. We do this through active, participatory, supportive on-going professional development. We believe this must occur through the leadership of experts within the building and beyond. Our professional development consists of the following experiences.

Staff Meetings & Peer Training

Before each school year, we host our own weeklong staff retreat. The entire week is spent on professional and school wide growth. Additionally, every Wednesday, our staff comes together for two solid hours for work toward improving our practice and improving our school. Our meetings are structured in a four week cycle* with each Wednesday of the cycle having a different focus. The rotation includes:

- **Book clubs:** The staff reads a common book (e.g. *The Power of Our Words* by Paula Denton, *How's It Going: A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers* by Carl Anderson, *Pathways to the Common Core* by Lucy Calkins, a math based book club where teachers chose one of four titles depending on the math that they taught)
- **Critical Friends Groups** (CFGs): A CFG is a meeting where teachers meet monthly to take a close look at their own practice. Teachers may look at student work, adult work (i.e. lesson plans/unit plans), and/or bring professional dilemmas for the purpose of receiving feedback from their peers. Teachers also work together to schedule and implement peer observations to learn from and with each other
- **Content Specific Meeting:** Last year our focus was math (which connected with the book club books we were reading). We examined curriculum, standards, and instruction over the course of the year. This year our focus has been on writing conferences (connected with the book the staff read over the summer and discussed at the staff retreat)
- **Data analysis:** Teachers look at data across and within teaching teams. Data analysis may be looking at Baseline Assessment data (reading), NWEA, ISTEP, curriculum based assessment, Title 1 information, etc.

Curriculum & Instruction Coach

TPS employs a Curriculum and Instruction Coach. The coach observes teachers and gives feedback, supports the development of curriculum, researches new curricula, and provides professional development for our teachers and instructional assistants. Trainings are held for all instructional assistants in Guided Reading and Leveled Literacy Intervention.

External Professional Development

Reader's and Writer's Workshop Professional Development

Each summer, our teachers are offered the opportunity to attend a 5 day reading and/or writing institute at the Teachers College at Columbia University. The training is based on the research that is directly related to the Reader's and Writer's Workshops that TPS utilizes. Below are descriptions of these programs, provided by the Teacher's College.

> *During this five-day Reader's Workshop institute, small and large group sections will tackle, headfirst, the following topics and much more: the central role of curriculum development and planning in the teaching of reading, units of study in reading workshop, comprehension strategy instruction, the importance of assessment-based instruction, the role of the read-aloud book, methods of holding our students accountable for doing their best work, helping students grow ideas about literature, and classroom structures that support inquiry and collaboration.*
> http://www.readingandwritingproject.com/institutes/tc-summer-institutes

> *During this five-day Writer's Workshop institute, small and large group sections will tackle, headfirst, the following topics and much more: the central role of curriculum development and planning in the teaching of writing, units of study in writing workshop, helping students write well about reading, genre studies in reading and writing memoir, poetry and short fiction, the importance of assessment-based instruction, methods of holding our students accountable for doing their best work, using literature to help students craft their writing, and classroom structures that support inquiry and collaboration.*
> http://www.readingandwritingproject.com/institutes/tc-summer-institutes

Additionally, the Indiana Partnership for Young Writers offers consistent single and multi-day workshops throughout the year and in the summer. They attract key staff developers in the field of workshops and offer trainings at a reasonable cost. Our teachers are invited to go to every training that is offered.

Project-Based Professional Development
Each summer, our teachers are offered the opportunity to attend the five and a half day institute called the *Project Zero Classroom* at Harvard University. According to their website:

> *Whether teaching or leading curriculum design efforts, it is essential for educators to be responsive to complex social developments and create learning experiences that are engaging and exciting for children. How do you best prepare young people for a future that is hard to imagine? How do you teach for the kind of deep understanding that allows them to solve complex problems and do work that is ethical, excellent and engaging? How do you encourage students to fall in love with learning?*

> *The Project Zero Classroom details various frameworks that enable you to look at teaching analytically, develop new approaches to planning and make informed decisions about instruction. You will learn to recognize and develop students' multiple intellectual strengths; encourage students to think critically and creatively; and assess student work in ways that deepen learning. In a Project Zero classroom, teachers are also learners who model intellectual curiosity and rigor, interdisciplinary and collaborative inquiry, and sensitivity to the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of learning.*
> (http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/programs/prek-12/portfolio/project-zero-classroom.html).

The institute addresses fundamental educational questions, such as: How can we best inspire and nurture creative thinking and problem solving in our students and ourselves? What is understanding,

and how does it develop? What are the roles of reflection and assessment in student and teacher learning? How can participants continue to share and pursue their understanding of Project Zero's ideas with others after the institute?

Math Workshop Professional Development
Investigations in Number, Data, and Space through TERC offers weeklong workshops that teachers may attend (voluntarily or required). There are an array of topics depending on grade level and concepts investigated, such as: *Project-Based Math Training:* Columbus Indiana; National Council for Teachers of Mathematics Annual Conference; Math Lesson Study with professors in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at IU. For a list of workshops, see
http://investigations.terc.edu/workshops_catalog.pdf.

Classroom & School Culture Professional Development

The culture of our school embraces the notion of "it takes a whole village to raise a child." We know that we cannot serve our students to the fullest without family and community support and involvement. In order to tap into this enormous resource, families and community members must feel welcome, helpful, and needed. Students must also see school as an extension of their family. The Project School believes in the school modeling of a caring community, in which social and academic developments are at the heart of everything we do. To help facilitate this important work, we have adopted *The Responsive Classroom* beliefs regarding social and academic development. The seven beliefs are:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum
2. How children learn is as important as what children learn
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction
4. There is a set of social skills that children need in order to be successful academically and socially
5. Knowing the children we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children
7. Teachers and administrators must model the social and academic skills that they wish to teach their children **(Denton, Kriete, 2000)**

To work toward this ideal, our teachers attend a four and a half day institute hosted by either Responsive Classrooms (K-5) or Developmental Designs (6-8).

During the K-5 institute, teachers:

> *"...learn to build a classroom community and use a positive approach to discipline that will help your students learn more. Topics covered in this four-and-a-half-day course include: Morning Meeting, Rule Creation, Interactive Modeling, Positive Teacher Language, and Logical Consequences."* http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/responsive-classroom-i

During the 6-8 institute, teachers:

> *"...learn why social-emotional learning leads to academic achievement, how adolescents' developmental needs shape their learning, how to use advisory time to build a strong, socially-*

skilled learning community, practical structures to help students master learning routines, how to guide students on a pathway to self-control that allows them as much independence as they can handle responsibly, ways to speak to students that encourage as well as correct them, how to rally the whole school community around shared goals and guidelines, ways to energize students and use play to add pleasure to learning, and a structure for building the habit of reflection."

Appendix D: Classroom Teacher Retention Rate

85% Classroom Teacher Retention Rate	2009-10 Year 1	2010-11 Year 2	2011-12 Year 3	2012-13 Year 4	2013-14 Year 5
K-1	1	1	1	1	1
K-1	2	2	2	19	19
2nd-3rd	3	3	3/17	3/5	3/5
2nd-3rd	4	11	11	11	11
2nd-3rd Intern	11	19	19		25
4th-5th	5	5	5/17	17	24
4th-5th	6/10	12	12	21	23
4th-5th Intern				23	
1st-3rd			16	16	16
6th-8th	7	7	18	18	18
6th-8th	8	8	8	8	8
6th-8th	n/a	14	14	14	14
6th-8th	n/a	15	15	20/22	22
Visual Arts	9	9	9	9	9
Perform	n/a	13	13	13	13
		8/9 retained at TPS	**11/12 retained by TPS**	**10/13 retained by TPS**	**11/13 retained by TPS**
Loss due to teacher or school desire		1 resignation-left education	1 returned to traditional, local district		1 resignation-left the classroom
relocation				3 relocations-TX, UT, NY	1 relocation-NYC

Appendix E: Financial Health

Charter Vision®
Financial Health Report

The Bloomington Project School

Financial Ratio	Formula	Current	Target
Current Ratio (Liquidity)	(Current Assets) / (Current Liabilities)	1.95	>1
Cash Ratio	(Cash) / (Current Liabilities)	139.90%	>100%
Defensive Interval	(Cash + Securities + AR) / (Average Expenses past 12 months)	3.41	> 3 months
Debt Ratio	(Total Liabilties) / (Total Assets)	90.17%	< 33%
Asset Ratio	(Current Assets) / (Total Assets)	7.53%	> 90%
Cash on Hand	(Cash)	$128,856.95	-
Days Cash on Hand	(Cash) / ((Average Expenses past 12 months) / (30.4))	96.30	> 45
Cash Reserve Ratio	(Cash) / (Budgeted Annual Expenses)	6.01%	> 10%
Savings Indicator	((Last Closed Revenue) - (Last Closed Expenses)) / (Last Closed Expenses)	-0.02	> 0

Financial Ratio	Description
Current Ratio (Liquidity)	Ability to pay short-term obligations
Cash Ratio	Ability to meet short-term obligations with cash
Defensive Interval	Possible months of continued operations if no additional funds received
Debt Ratio	Proportion of debt relative to total assets
Asset Ratio	Proportion of liquid assets relative to total assets
Cash on Hand	Assets immediately convertible to cash for purchase of goods and services
Days Cash on Hand	Possible days of continued operations using current cash
Cash Reserve Ratio	Ratio of cash to annual expenses expressed as a percentage
Savings Indicator	Increase or descrease in the organization's net assets as a percentage of expenses

Input Values as of 9/30/2013

Cash	$128,856.95
Securities	$10,000.00
AR	-
Current Assets	$179,253.30
Total Assets	$2,379,713.16
Current Liabilities	$92,106.53
Total Liabilities	$2,145,677.68
Last Closed Revenue	$173,765.78
Last Closed Expenses	$177,258.61
Budgeted Annual Expenses	$2,142,852.00
Average Expenses past 12 months	$40,675.67