Application Narrative

A. Provide the Vision and Mission of the school. How have they been consistently implemented throughout all aspects of the school?

Mission: The mission of Aspire Charter Academy (Aspire or school) is to offer a high quality education that emphasizes the learning of core academic knowledge and foundational character values. Parents, students, and staff work together to create a safe and caring environment where quality scholarship, punctuality, and good citizenship are developed; and to encourage in our pupils the desire and capacity to be lifelong learners.

Vision: To better educate more children.

Evidence that Aspire's mission and vision are consistently implemented throughout all aspects of the school is evident from the moment you enter the building. The school's goals, which are aligned with its mission and vision, are posted throughout the hallways and classrooms. All communications with students, parents, and staff include references to the school's mission and vision. Each classroom has a data wall which monitors student performance throughout the school year to ensure the school is fulfilling its mission and vision.

Additionally, the school strives to maintain a positive school culture to ensure the mission is fulfilled. Behavior expectations are posted throughout the school and a positive reward system is consistently implemented to recognize students who demonstrate quality scholarship, punctuality, and good citizenship. Staff climate and culture is also a consistent focus at Aspire. Leadership has implemented peer recognition programs and monthly staff outings to promote a sense of team. Leadership provides staff with "on-the-spot" rewards, which include small tokens of appreciation (i.e., gift certificate for coffee) for team work.

B. Provide the Goals for the school. What are the actions implemented to attain each of the goals?

Academic Goals

<u>Goal</u>: Cohorts of students at Aspire Charter Academy will reduce the academic gap between baseline performance and grade level as measured with the NWEA MAP Subject assessment.

- Measurement 1: The subset cohort of students who are designated as below grade level on the baseline test shall demonstrate a rate of growth greater than 100% for the period of interest. (A greater than 100% rate of growth will reduce the amount of academic delay on (state test proficiency and grade level proficiency).
- Measurement 2: The subset cohort of students who are designated as below grade level on the baseline test shall maintain their percentile ranking or increase the median percentile ranking during the period of interest.

<u>Goal Results:</u>
- In 2009-10, Aspire met Measurement # 1 and #2 in reading as all grades achieved a rate of growth greater than 100% and increased the median percentile ranking. In

that same year, 50% of the grades achieved a rate of growth greater than 100% in math with 75% of the cohort of students increasing their median percentile ranking.

- In 2010-11, Aspire had 20% of its students tested using the NWEA assessment achieving at rate of growth greater than 100% in the subjects of math and reading. In reading, 20% of the cohort of students increased their median percentile ranking in 2010-11 from the previous year. Forty percent of the students achieved that goal in Math.

The below chart highlights Aspire's performance relative to these measures:

Subject	Year	Grade	N	Measurement 1 Spring to Spring Rate of Growth	Measurement 2	
					Previous Year Median RIT Percentile	Current Year Median RIT Percentile
Reading	2009-10	3	39	107.7%	16	25
		4	37	100.0%	21	24
		5	27	125.0%	24	27
		6	29	180.0%	19	33
	2010-11	3	35	63.6%	22	17
		4	43	125.0%	27	29
		5	38	80.6%	27.5	25
		6	29	60.0%	27	24
		7	26	70.8%	30	27
Math	2009-10	3	39	84.6%	22	16
		4	43	90.0%	22	27
		5	31	175.0%	20	30
		6	31	216.7%	21	44
	2010-11	3	32	69.2%	33	22
		4	45	120.0%	16	29
		5	41	87.5%	20	25
		6	26	50.0%	25	21
		7	23	33.3%	30	21

Actions implemented to attain goals: The Leadership Team at Aspire, in conjunction with National Heritage Academies (NHA), continuously monitors the school's progress toward reaching the charter goals throughout the school year, through the daily formative assessment process, as well as the utilization of NWEA MAP and Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+). By monitoring the curriculum, instructional methods, and practices continually, (opposed to only at predefined yearly increments) school leadership are better positioned to make changes that more swiftly impact student achievement.

Fundamental to the design of Aspire Charter Academy is an emphasis on the need for student achievement data and the ability to interpret that data to make informed decisions about the curriculum and instruction that will positively affect student achievement. NWEA assessments are administered to all students in Kindergarten through grade 8, three

times every year – fall, winter, and spring. This allows the Leadership Team and school staff to make immediate adjustments to curriculum and instruction to assure that students are making continued academic growth. The school Leadership Team further uses this information to identify gaps in the intended and/or implemented curriculum and to address those issues with specific improvement goals.

In addition to the on-going instructional and curricular reviews, the school's Leadership Team reviews the curriculum on an annual basis, and adjusts according to student need. As the Leadership Team is responsible for providing developmental assistance and feedback on teaching methods, demonstrating lessons/model teaching, identifying professional development needs for teachers, and coordinating with cross-grade curriculum, they will be best equipped to recognize any deficiencies that may need to be addressed in the curriculum.

Based on the analysis of Aspire's student achievement data, the Leadership Team determined the need for and implemented an intervention strategy for students. Recognizing the degree of academic deficit of incoming students, Aspire has implemented an intensive learning program, which provides targeted small group instruction for students below grade level. Aspire Intensive Learning Program (ILP) is based on the principals of Response to Intervention (RTI). In particular, the program focuses on five foundational concepts:

1. Early Identification of at-risk students.
2. Evidence based intervention.
3. Frequent measurement of student progress.
4. Tailoring interventions based on student response.

Aspire identified 264 students in ELA and Math that receive small group instructional support. This required the school to hire 13 instructional staff for 2011-12; four at-risk school teachers and nine paraprofessionals.

Aspire believes that monitoring school performance is a necessary component in providing a high quality educational program. With the internal and external monitoring processes that have been implemented at the school, we believe that the educational program and curriculum will continue to develop and further meet the needs of each student at Aspire Charter Academy.

Stretch Goals

Stretch Goal 1: For the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, cohorts of students at Aspire Charter Academy will reduce by one-half the gap between the baseline performance and grade level on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Reading and Math Battery.
- *Third Grade:* Students in the third grade cohort that are below grade level on the spring second grade NWEA reading and math assessments will obtain at least one year's growth plus reduce their academic delay by 50% as measured by the spring grade level RIT score. Students in the third grade cohort that are at or above grade level on the spring second grade NWEA reading and math assessments will maintain their grade level status and meet or exceed their RIT target or better on the spring third grade NWEA reading and math assessments.

- *Fourth Grade:* Students in the fourth grade cohort that are below grade level on the spring third grade NWEA reading and math assessment will obtain at least one year's growth plus reduce their academic delay by 50% as measured by the spring grade level RIT score. Students in the fourth grade cohort that are at or above grade level on the spring third grade NWEA reading and math assessments will maintain their grade level status and meet or exceed their RIT target or better on the spring fourth grade NWEA reading and math assessments.
- *Fifth Grade:* Students in the fifth grade cohort that are below grade level on the spring third grade NWEA reading and math assessment will obtain at least one year's growth plus reduce their academic delay by 50% as measured by the spring grade level RIT score. Students in the fourth grade cohort that are at or above grade level on the spring third grade NWEA reading and math assessments will maintain their grade level status and meet or exceed their RIT target or better on the spring fifth grade NWEA reading and math assessments.

Stretch Goal 1 Results:

Measure A - Reading Previous Year Below Grade Level

Year	Grade	N	Spring to Spring % Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth	% of Students Reducing Gap by 50% or More	Average % Gap was Reduced
2009-10	3	39	60.5%	107.7%	30.8%	29.4%
	4	37	51.4%	100.0%	21.6%	18.2%
	5	27	63.0%	125.0%	40.7%	30.0%
	6	29	65.5%	180.0%	51.7%	50.0%
2010-11	3	35	34.3%	63.6%	28.6%	-15.4%
	4	43	62.8%	125.0%	41.9%	40.0%
	5	38	42.1%	80.6%	26.3%	8.6%
	6	29	31.0%	60.0%	20.7%	-15.8%
	7	26	46.2%	70.8%	30.8%	5.5%

Measure B - Reading Previous Year At/Above Grade Level

Year	Grade	N	Spring to Spring % Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth	% At/Above Grade Level	Average Gap in RITs
2009-10	3	19	42.1%	12.5%	63.2%	3.0
	4	18	61.1%	108.3%	61.1%	6.0
	5	13	46.2%	80.0%	61.5%	4.0
	6	12	50.0%	66.7%	91.7%	5.5
2010-11	3	30	40.0%	82.9%	66.7%	5.5
	4	21	28.6%	42.9%	61.9%	1.0
	5	21	28.6%	20.0%	61.9%	4.0
	6	13	53.8%	100.0%	84.6%	5.0
	7	19	47.4%	66.7%	84.2%	6.0

Measure A - Math Previous Year Below Grade Level

Year	Grade	N	Spring to Spring % Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth	% of Students Reduced Gap by 50% or More	Average % Gap was Reduced
2009-10	3	39	42.1%	84.6%	17.9%	-6.7%
	4	43	46.5%	90.0%	34.9%	13.3%
	5	31	77.4%	175.0%	41.9%	30.4%
	6	31	74.2%	216.7%	67.7%	80.0%
2010-11	3	32	40.6%	69.2%	21.9%	-30.0%
	4	45	55.6%	120.0%	33.3%	22.2%
	5	41	48.8%	87.5%	24.4%	-11.1%
	6	26	34.6%	50.0%	15.4%	-15.7%
	7	23	26.1%	33.3%	8.7%	-33.3%

Measure B - Math Previous Year At/Above Grade Level

Year	Grade	N	Spring to Spring % Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth	% At/Above Grade Level	Average Gap in RITs
2009-10	3	20	35.0%	82.6%	70.0%	2.5
	4	12	33.3%	80.0%	75.0%	2.0
	5	9	77.8%	200.0%	100.0%	11.0
	6	10	90.0%	183.3%	100.0%	13.5
2010-11	3	33	27.3%	63.6%	54.5%	1.0
	4	19	52.6%	100.0%	89.5%	8.0
	5	18	61.1%	112.5%	77.8%	4.5
	6	16	50.0%	91.7%	75.0%	7.0
	7	22	50.0%	91.7%	81.8%	8.0

Stretch Goal 2: For the 2007-08 school year, cohorts of students at Aspire Charter Academy will reduce the gap between baseline performance and proficiency on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) in ELA and Math.
- *Fourth Grade*: The fourth grade cohort will reduce by one-fifth the gap between the average scaled score on the third grade ELA and Math Assessment and the scaled score equivalent of scoring at the proficient performance level on the eighth grade Reading and Math Assessments.
- *Fifth Grade*: The fifth grade cohort will reduce by one-fourth the gap between the average scaled score on the fourth grade ELA and Math Assessments and the scaled score equivalent of scoring at the proficient performance level on the eighth grade Reading and Math Assessments.
- *Sixth Grade*: The sixth grade cohort will reduce the one-third the gap between the average scaled score on the fifth grade ELA and Math Assessments and the scaled score equivalent of scoring at the proficient performance level on the eighth grade Reading and Math Assessments.

Stretch Goal 2 Results:

Year	Subject	Current Year (CY) Grade	Proficient Cut Score	Prior Year Avg SS	Target CY Avg SS	CY Avg SS	Met Target
2009-10	ELA	3	417	--	--	--	--
2009-10	ELA	4	437	402	424	427	Met
2009-10	ELA	5	468	421	443	467	Met
2009-10	ELA	6	478	450	470	487	Met
2009-10	ELA	7	501	--	--	--	--
2009-10	ELA	8	508	--	--	--	--
2009-10	Math	3	413	--	--	--	--
2009-10	Math	4	445	372	405	412	Met
2009-10	Math	5	463	414	445	472	Met
2009-10	Math	6	487	431	467	497	Met
2009-10	Math	7	511	--	--	--	--
2009-10	Math	8	537	--	--	--	--
2010-11	ELA	3	417	--	--	--	--
2010-11	ELA	4	437	416	435	445	Met
2010-11	ELA	5	468	434	453	451	Not Met
2010-11	ELA	6	478	459	476	471	Not Met
2010-11	ELA	7	501	492	500	510	Met
2010-11	ELA	8	508	--	--	--	--
2010-11	Math	3	413	--	--	--	--
2010-11	Math	4	445	390	420	437	Met
2010-11	Math	5	463	414	445	466	Met
2010-11	Math	6	487	460	486	491	Met
2010-11	Math	7	511	500	519	523	Met
2010-11	Math	8	537	--	--	--	--

Non-Academic Goals

1. Parent Satisfaction shall be a minimum average of 90% each year.

   Outlined in the chart below is the overall parent satisfaction for each year of Aspire's charter term.

Aspire Charter Academy - Parent Satisfaction			
Season	**Satisfied**	**Highly Satisfied**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Spring 2009	27.83%	64.22%	**92.05%**
Spring 2010	36.49%	55.79%	**92.28%**
Spring 2011	34.23%	54.95%	**89.19%**
Spring 2012	Not available yet		

Aspire met its goal in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years and has averaged 91% parent satisfaction in the last three years. School leadership has instituted several parent involvement initiatives to continually improve parent involvement and satisfaction. Examples include:

- Coffee with the Principal – Parents are invited to the school once per month to have coffee with the Principal. This is an open forum for parents to ask questions and provide feedback.
- WatchDog Dads – The purpose of this program is to provide adult male volunteers in the school. A typical day for a Watchdog Dad includes: serving as a crossing guard before & after school; patrolling hallways and campus grounds (ensuring all entrances are secure); assisting teachers with their in-class activities; mentoring students as requested by a teacher; eating in the cafeteria with his son or daughter and their classmates.
- Parent Room – Aspire provides parents with a dedicated space to gather at the school.
- Parent Nights – Parent Nights are held throughout the year and provide parents with information about events at the school, school initiatives, and tips for helping their child(ren) at home.
- AtSchool.com and Teacher Email – Teachers distribute their email information allowing parents to communicate with their child's teacher at any time. Additionally, the school ensures all parents have access to AtSchool.com which provides up to date information on their child's academic progress.

2. Parent/teacher conferences shall have a goal of 90% attendance by parents/guardians and teachers.

Outlined in the chart below is the parent/teacher conference attendance for each year of Aspire's charter term.

Aspire Charter Academy Parent-Teacher Conference Attendance								
Conference	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
Total # of Students Enrolled @ Time of Conferences	414	403	500	496	595	574	663	Not available yet
Total # of Conferences Held	397	372	418	410	501	453	536	Not available yet
Percent Attendance	95.9%	92.3%	83.6%	82.7%	84.2%	78.9%	80.8%	Not available yet

Aspire met its goal in the 2008-09 school year and has averaged 82% attendance in the last three years. School leadership has instituted several parent involvement initiatives to improve parent involvement. Aspire leverages parent involvement activities to ensure parents understand the importance of conference attendance. Examples include:

- Coffee with the Principal – Parents are invited to the school once per month to have coffee with the Principal. This is an open forum for parents to ask questions and provide feedback.

- WatchDog Dads – The purpose of this program is to provide adult male volunteers in the school. A typical day for a Watchdog Dad includes: serving as a crossing guard before & after school; patrolling hallways and campus grounds (ensuring all entrances are secure); assisting teachers with their in-class activities; mentoring students as requested by a teacher; eating in the cafeteria with his son or daughter and their classmates.
- Parent Room – Aspire provides parents with a dedicated space to gather at the school.
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- AtSchool.com and Teacher Email – Teachers distribute their email information allowing parents to communicate with their child's teacher at any time. Additionally, the school ensures all parents have access to AtSchool.com which provides up to date information on their child's academic progress.

3. New Teacher Training will be attended by 100% of new teachers.

Since Aspire's opening, ninety-eight percent (98% or 52 of 53) of the teachers hired attended New Teacher Orientation (NTO). Only one teacher did not attend NTO and this was because she worked at the National Heritage Academies (NHA) Service Center training Library Technology Specialists and then moved to Aspire to serve as the school's Library Technology Specialist. Aspire works closely with NHA's Coaching and Learning Department to ensure each new teacher receives the training needed to be successful in their position.

Proposed Performance Goals for the New Charter Term
For the term of the next charter, Aspire proposes to implement the accountability goals listed below. We propose to focus our efforts on these revised goals (in place of those listed in the original charter) as we believe they will better focus our efforts on the three main areas for which we are accountable: growth, proficiency, and college readiness.

English Language Arts
Goal: Students will be proficient in English Language Arts
I.   Objective: Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year performing at or above proficient on the ISTEP+ ELA assessment in each tested grade will, in 50% or more of the grades, exceed the average of the residential composite district.
II.   Objective: Each year, the school will be in the 50th percentile or higher of public schools nationally as measured by the percentage of students that meet or exceed beginning of year to end of year growth in reading/language usage as measured by a nationally normed test.
III.   Objective: Each year, eighth graders enrolled in at least their third consecutive year will demonstrate measureable progress toward the achievement target on the ACT Explore test in Reading.

Mathematics
Goal: Students will be proficient in Mathematics.
I.   Objective: Each year, the percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year performing at or above proficient on the ISTEP+ Math assessment in

each tested grade will, in 50% or more of the grades, exceed the average of the residential composite district.

II. Objective: Each year, the school will be in the 50th percentile or higher of public schools nationally as measured by the percentage of students that meet or exceed beginning of year to end of year growth in math on a nationally normed test.

III. Objective: Each year, eighth graders enrolled in at least their third consecutive year will demonstrate measurable progress toward the achievement target on the ACT Explore test in Mathematics.

Is the School an Academic Success/School Has Accomplished Its Mission and Goals
1. What levels of progress have the students made on required statewide assessments?

a. **After completing the Data Charts, provide the following analysis of your student performance data.**

What do these data tell you? Consider the following questions in your analysis.
i. **What areas of weakness are indicated by these data? Does the state data, the achievement data and the individual student data align to support your conclusions?**

After reviewing all available data, Aspire has identified the following weaknesses which are supported by state, achievement, and individual student data:
- Overall proficiency levels: While the school is closing the gap with the district, overall proficiency rates are still below expectations. Aspire also views proficiency trends in grades 5 and 6 as a particular weakness.
- English language arts: Aspire is focused on English language arts proficiency as an area for improvement. Specifically, the area of writing and informational text.

ii. **What areas of strength are apparent?**

After reviewing all available data, Aspire has identified the following strengths which are supported by state, achievement, and individual student data:
- Improvement on ISTEP+: Since the school opened in fall 2008, student performance on the ISTEP+ has improved in grades 3 and 4. Consider the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
ELA	3	37.1%	40.3%	48.6%	60.3%
ELA	4	44.4%	43.1%	46.7%	67.1%
Math	3	17.1%	34.7%	32.4%	62.0%
Math	4	33.3%	37.3%	26.7%	43.8%

- Additionally, performance on ISTEP+ has improved for all grades in all subjects over time as evidenced in the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
All Subjects	All Grades	33.2%	36.2%	39.5%	47.6%

- Demand for the school: Since the school opened in fall 2008, enrollment has been consistently strong. Aspire is fully enrolled and holds a lottery each year to fill any openings.
- Attendance: Student attendance is strong.   The school has averaged ninety-five percent daily attendance since opening in fall 2008.
- Teacher and grade level team stability: Aspire has benefited from a stable teaching staff, particularly in grades 4, 5, and 7. The school has retained over eighty percent (81%) of its staff each year. At least one teacher has remained at the school in almost every grade level since its opening in fall 2008.
- Intervention: In order to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met, Aspire Charter Academy implemented a research-based response to intervention program which includes a three-tier approach to intervention. This approach was selected because it is a proactive approach to addressing the academic needs of students.

  Early results from Aspire's new intervention program are encouraging. Consider the following recent NWEA growth data between fall 2011 and Winter 2012:

Subject	% Students Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth
Math	65.9%	140.0%
Reading	62.9%	160.0%

iii. **What factors have contributed to these results, and how have these factors contributed to student performance results?**

   a. **Do the areas of weakness affect many or few students? Is it a particular subgroup of students? Is there a trend in one content area or across all content areas?**

   While overall proficiency levels are not yet 100% in all grades and all subjects, the school has demonstrated improvement over time. Aspire has identified a weakness in grades 5 and 6 in English language arts and in grade 6 mathematics where additional improvement is still needed.

   b. **Have ALL students performance been analyzed, what progress monitoring tools do you have in place that provide this information?**

Aspire Charter Academy utilizes a comprehensive assessment approach in order to measure every student's performance. Evidence of student learning is gathered frequently and through multiple means, and teachers use this evidence of learning to understand how students are progressing and adjust instruction as needed to support student needs. Student performance is analyzed and progress is monitored using the following assessments.

Assessment Name	Grades	Description and Dates/Months Used	Rationale for Use	Reporting Frequency & Audience(s)
ISTEP+ Reading and Math Tests	3-8	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/ Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
ISTEP+ Science Tests	4 & 6	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/ Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
ISTEP+ Social Studies Tests	5 & 7	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
Northwest Evaluation Association MAP for Primary Grades	K-1	• Norm-referenced, growth modeled assessment administered to measure student growth and performance in Reading, Language Usage (Gr. 2-8 only), and Math • 3 x per year/Fall, Winter, & Spring	Enables school to measure: 1) student performance and growth over time; 2) comparative school and student performance among nationally normed sample; and 3) teaching and schooling effectiveness. Fall testing serves as a baseline measure of student performance, and helps identify students at risk of academic failure. Winter testing is used to serve as a check-point to measure progress and informs mid-course corrections in instruction. Spring testing shows student learning growth, as well as year-over-year student, grade and school growth.	• NWEA performance reports published three times/year • For parents, teachers, and school leaders
Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	2-8			
ACT Explore	8	• National criterion-referenced exam linked to ACT used to measure	Exam results help students and parents plan high school course work. Also, results help the	• ACT Explore performance reports published once/year

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		academic progress in English, reading, mathematics, and science to guide high school planning • 1 x per year/March	school measure school progress in ensuring college readiness for all students.	• For parents, teachers, and school leaders
LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment	K-8	• Students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) participate in annual assessment of proficiency in English. As needed, students will be identified as ELLs through the LAS Links Placement Test. • 1 x per year/January-February	Student progress through the levels of proficiency in English will be measured. Specific language domains requiring additional instruction are revealed through the assessment. Evaluation of the school's programming for ELLs will be facilitated through test results and the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs).	• LAS Links performance reports published as needed • For parents, teachers, and school leaders
Teacher-developed Common Unit Assessments	K-8	• Common assessments developed in grade-level teams, used to measure student mastery of Educational Objectives. • Correspond to unit-level instruction • Weekly/Bi-weekly	Common grade-level unit assessments inform instructional decisions and focus on pacing of unit plan implementation. Teacher collaboration results in shared instructional best practices. Through examination of student work, teachers identify knowledge or skill gaps and use evidence to develop strategies to meet student learning needs.	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers and school leaders
Building Block Assessments	K-8	• Weekly	Building Block Assessments inform instructional design and focus within delivery of unit-level instruction and also enable teachers to track student progress toward mastery of learning goals. Results of Building Block Assessments enable students to track their individual learning progress as well. Instruction is adjusted, and enrichment and supplemental support will be provided, based on results.	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers and school leaders
Ongoing Teacher Assessments (Opportunities to Check for Understanding)	K-8	• Teacher-developed assessments to measure student learning in terms of daily instructional objectives • Daily	Data gathered through multiple means informs teachers' understanding of student progress regarding daily and unit learning goals. The use of multiple assessment approaches provides teachers with regular and frequent feedback on student progress toward mastery of learning goals.	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers

Additionally, in fall 2011, Aspire implemented an additional assessment tool to monitor progress of its intervention program. Progress monitoring is completed after approximately ten intervention sessions to ensure appropriate progress is being made. Aspire utilizes progress monitoring tools provided by Wireless Generation in the content areas of reading and mathematics (mClass DIBELS Next and mClass math).

Aspire also utilizes Acuity benchmark assessments to provide teachers with information at regular intervals throughout the year regarding each student's progress towards academic proficiency.

c. **Explain what research-based interventions you are using and why you chose them?**

In order to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met, Aspire Charter Academy utilizes a research-based response to intervention program which includes a three-tier approach to intervention. This approach was selected because it is a proactive approach to intervention and allows teachers to make appropriate adaptations or modifications in order to meet the needs of all students—including those who may initially struggle with demonstrating proficiency on administered norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments. Aspire's intervention program is described more fully below.

In the **first tier** of intervention, classroom teachers respond to student learning needs for all students within the context of regular classroom instruction. All students complete a screening assessment at the beginning of each school year, providing useful information for planning more effective instruction. Students who struggle to demonstrate mastery are provided with supplemental support within the classroom, and corrective approaches can include re-teaching, cooperative learning opportunities, differentiated instructional strategies targeting individual student need, learning centers, and the provision of alternative materials.

If students do not master content through the first tier of intervention, then a more prescriptive **second tier** of intervention is utilized. This intervention is referred to as the Intensive Learning Program (ILP). Students who are offered services through the ILP are recommended for services based on a systematic review of the following:
- Teacher referral; data from classroom assessments administered through daily opportunities to check for understanding, formative assessments, and end-of-instruction assessments
- NWEA results
- ISTEP+ results
- Interim assessment results

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- Parent input

Students receive supplemental interventions using programs and approaches that are proven to accelerate student learning (Wireless Generation suite of products including Burst Reading and mClass mathematics, as well as Math in a Nutshell and Literacy Navigator).

Other intervention strategies are provided in the classroom in a workshop setting, or may be delivered through supplemental support outside of the general education classroom, during non-core educational programming. These can include one or more of the following: (1) Small group intervention services to provide more individualized assistance for students with similar academic needs; (2) Extended learning time before or after school for students needing more time to master content; and (3) Summer learning programs for students requiring extended learning opportunities during the summer months.

If data demonstrates that some students continue to struggle to make appropriate progress, then the teacher and Dean refer the student for **tier three** interventions. Interventions in this third tier include an intensified approach that focuses on fewer high-priority reading and math skills. Also, one-on-one concentrated and focused tutoring is considered as needed.

If the third-tier of intervention is successful, then the teacher and Dean continue to monitor student progress on a regular, frequent basis. However, if the intervention does not successfully promote student learning, the school's Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) conducts a referral meeting to decide whether psycho-educational or other testing is needed to determine if the student has special needs as defined by the IDEA. The IAT generally consists of a student's classroom teacher(s), parent/guardian, a special education teacher, and other specialists, and includes as needed a speech occupational therapist, psychologist, school social worker or any other person who has pertinent knowledge about the student. The IAT reviews current intervention strategies, monitors student progress, and works together as student learning progresses.

Early results from Aspire's new intervention program are encouraging. Consider the following recent NWEA growth data between fall 2011 and Winter 2012:

Subject	% Students Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth
Math	65.9%	140.0%
Reading	62.9%	160.0%

iv. **What are your school's next steps?**

To ensure student progress and improvement, Aspire will continue to focus its efforts on implementation of the following two key initiatives:
- Initiative #1 - Response to Intervention: Continue to implement the school's research-based intervention program in reading and mathematics, utilizing supplemental tools such as Wireless Generation's mClass DIBELS Next , Burst Reading, and mClass mathematics, as well as Math in a Nutshell and Literacy Navigator.
- Initiative #2 - Use of Data: Analysis of data from the school's comprehensive assessment system will continue. Aspire staff will drill down on all available data and adjust its instructional approach to ensure all students are achieving at high levels.

Please see response to question 4 for more detail on the school's intervention and assessment programs.

v. **How will you know if it is working?**

Aspire Charter Academy will analyze results from its comprehensive assessment approach (as described above and in question 4) to ensure student progress. Evidence of student learning will continue to be gathered frequently and through multiple means, and teachers will continue to use this evidence to adjust instruction as needed to support student needs.

Aspire's new intervention program is already being measured and the results are encouraging. Consider the following recent NWEA growth data between fall 2011 and Winter 2012:

Subject	% Students Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth
Math	65.9%	140.0%
Reading	62.9%	160.0%

b. **Provide meaningful comparisons to district-of-residence student performance over time. Where possible, present multi-year data for baseline purposes and use cohort data if available. Are you out-performing the non-charter schools?**

Aspire Charter Academy attracts a large number of its student population from the Gary Community School Corporation District ("Gary Community"). Historically, ninety-five percent of student population served by Aspire resided in Gary Community in school year 2008-09 and ninety-one percent in the 2009-10 school year. In 2010-11, ninety-three percent of students attending Aspire Charter Academy resided within the Gary Community. In that same year, Aspire served 598 students in grades K-7 with a ninety-seven percent Black or African American student population and ninety percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch.
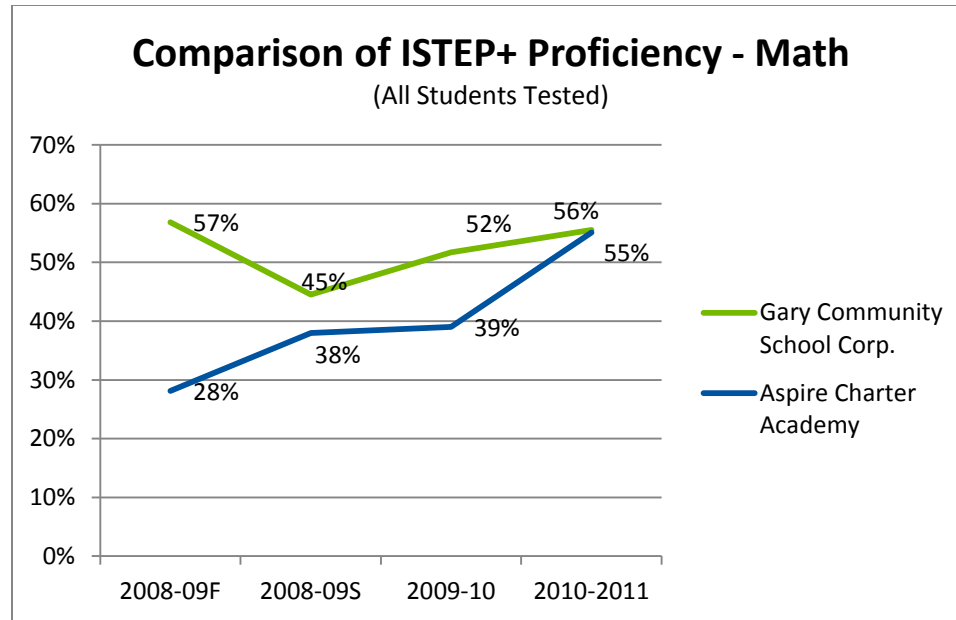
While Aspire is not yet out-performing non-charter schools, the performance gap between the school and the Gary Community School Corporation, as measured by the ISTEP+, has been closing since the schools inception. In the school's first year of ISTEP+

testing, 2008-2009, English language arts (ELA) proficiency levels at Aspire Charter Academy were twelve percentage points lower than those of the Gary Community School Corporation; Aspire Charter Academy's proficiency levels were 42% whereas those of the Gary Community School Corporation were 54%. By the 2010-11 administration of the ISTEP+, the gap between the school and the Gary Community School Corporation had closed to just six percentage points. This is illustrated through the graphs below.

Comparison of ISTEP+ Proficiency - ELA
(All Students Tested)
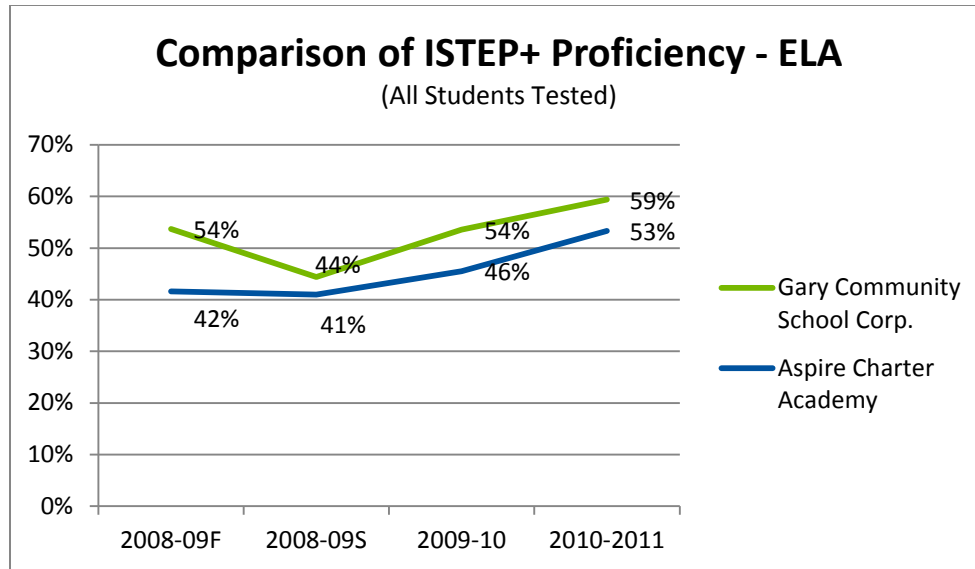
Similarly, Aspire has narrowed the gap in mathematics performance as well. While Gary Community School Corporation's performance has been fairly stable, with proficiency levels at 57% in 2008-09 and at 56% in 2010-11, Aspire Charter Academy has increased performance by 27 percentage points. The school's performance now approximates that of the Gary Community School Corporation, despite a gap of 29 percentage points in 2008-09. The closing of this gap between Aspire Charter Academy and the Gary Community School Corporation is clearly depicted through the following graph.

Comparison of ISTEP+ Proficiency - Math
(All Students Tested)

Please see chart below for a detailed comparison of Aspire's performance by grade and subject for each academic school year.

Comparison of ISTEP+ Proficiency

(All Students Tested)

Subject	Grade	Gary Community School Corp				Aspire Charter Academy			
		2008-09F	2008-09S	2009-10	2010-11	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
ELA	3	68.8%	62.8%	69.9%	73.7%	37.1%	40.3%	48.6%	60.3%
ELA	4	57.8%	53.5%	64.3%	71.8%	44.4%	43%	46.7%	67.1%
ELA	5	63.1%	47.1%	52.0%	60.2%	44.4%	42%	38.3%	36.2%
ELA	6	57.3%	44.2%	61.2%	61.8%	--	--	46.0%	41.9%
ELA	7	37.7%	33.4%	35.9%	49.1%	--	--	--	57.1%
ELA	8	39.1%	26.5%	37.1%	36.3%	--	--	--	--
Math	3	65.9%	53.9%	64.5%	62.6%	17.1%	35%	32.4%	62.0%
Math	4	60.3%	46.1%	56.9%	59.8%	33.3%	37%	26.7%	43.8%
Math	5	63.4%	55.2%	64.6%	76.5%	37.0%	42%	46.8%	55.1%
Math	6	65.5%	56.3%	62.3%	62.7%	--	--	60.0%	56.8%
Math	7	50.3%	29.0%	31.8%	35.1%	--	--	--	60.4%
Math	8	36.4%	27.2%	31.3%	35.8%	--	--	--	--

c. **Describe and discuss the school's past and current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status in the context of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards.**
   i. **Include the discussion of both primary and secondary indicators regarding AYP status.**

   Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations are based on student performance and participation rates on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+), attendance rates for elementary and middle schools and graduation rates

for high schools. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) allows schools to make AYP through the provision of safe harbor when a subgroup has greatly improved in a tested area since the previous year, even though the subgroup did not meet the state target.

In 2008-09, Aspire Charter Academy first opened its doors serving grades K through 5. The Indiana Department of Education did not issue an AYP status to Aspire in its first year of operation. In 2009-10, Aspire Charter Academy missed AYP as the following subgroups did not reach the safe harbor benchmarks: Overall student population in English; African American students in English, and Free/Reduced Lunch students in English and Math. The school, however, did meet both the attendance and participation rate targets of ninety-five percent.

While Aspire did not meet the state's threshold for proficiency on the ISTEP+ in 2009-10, we are encouraged that the school made significant progress in reducing the number of students not meeting performance targets over the previous year.

In 2010-11 Aspire also missed AYP as it failed to meet the attendance rate target for its Free/Reduced subgroup. The subgroup's attendance rate was actually 95.2%, but was inaccurately reported to the state as 94.7%. This error was not corrected within the designated window and the subgroup's attendance rate remained at 94.7% which was below the required rate of 95%. Because the Free/Reduced Lunch subgroup failed to meet the attendance rate target, the subgroup became ineligible to meet AYP through safe harbor and thus caused the school to miss AYP in the Free/Reduced Lunch subgroup for both Math and English. The school has since implemented procedures to ensure future compliance with attendance reporting requirements.

Since the school did not demonstrate AYP in English Language Arts and Math for two consecutive years, it has been identified as a school in need of improvement, or Improvement Year 1, Focused Improvement.

Outlined below is a summary of Aspire's AYP performance by individual indicator over the term of the charter.

AYP Data	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12 (YTD)
English Performance				
All Students	n/a	45.3%	54.9%	n/a
Black	n/a	44.2%	54.5%	n/a
Hispanic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Free/Reduced	n/a	43.2%	52.4%	n/a
LEP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
English Participation				
All Students	n/a	100.0%	99.1%	n/a
Black	n/a	100.0%	99.5%	n/a
Hispanic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Free/Reduced	n/a	100.0%	99.2%	n/a
LEP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Math Performance				
All Students	n/a	39.1%	57.3%	n/a

AYP Data	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12 (YTD)
Black	n/a	38.2%	57.0%	n/a
Hispanic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Free/Reduced	n/a	36.8%	56.4%	n/a
LEP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Math Participation				
All Students	n/a	100.0%	99.5%	n/a
Black	n/a	100.0%	99.8%	n/a
Hispanic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Free/Reduced	n/a	100.0%	99.6%	n/a
LEP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

d. Describe and discuss the school's past and current PL221 category/Grade including the Growth Model information given by the Indiana Department of Education.
   i. Show the history of your category placement since the opening of the school.

PL221
In 2010 Aspire Charter Academy received its first PL221 status determination based on the percentage of students that both passed and improved on the English and Math ISTEP+ tests in grades 3-8. Forty-three percent (42.8%) of the students in grades 3-6 passed the ISTEP+ assessment at Aspire in 2009-10. This was a two percent (1.9%) improvement from the previous year on the ISTEP+. Based on these percentages, Aspire received the PL221 letter grade of F, Academic Probation –high priority.

In 2010-11 the percent of student's proficient on the ISTEP+ in both English and Math improved to fifty-five percent (55.4%) of the students in grades 3-7 passing the test. This was a six percent (5.9%) improvement over the previous year. As a result, this allowed Aspire Charter Academy to move from Academic Probation to Academic Progress - Letter Grade C.

PL221 Data	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12 (YTD)
Performance	n/a year 1	42.80%	55.4%	n/a
Improvement	n/a year 1	1.90%	5.90%	n/a
Category	n/a year 1	Academic probation	Academic Progress	n/a

Growth Model
Based on ISTEP+ scores, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) uses the data to calculate each student's progress on the assessment. The IDOE Growth Model is based on the data contained in the table below.

Subject	2008	2009	2010
Math			
% passing	37.5%	39.0%	55.1%
Median Growth	n/a	39th	50th
Growth Model Quadrant	n/a	Lower Growth Lower Achievement	Lower Growth Lower Achievement

English			
% passing	41.5%	45.5%	53.3%
Median Growth	n/a	40th	45th
Growth Model Quadrant	n/a	Lower Growth Lower Achievement	Lower Growth Lower Achievement

Aspire Charter Academy has seen increased improvement in the percentage of students passing the ISTEP+ in both Math and English. Also encouraging is the continued academic growth gains the school is making in comparison to its academic peer group based on Indiana's Growth Model.

e. **Include the following statistics for <u>alternative</u> proficiency assessments to the extent applicable for your school.**
   o **the percent and number of students tested,**
   o **percent and number of eligible students who did not take the test,**
   o **percent and number of students who qualified as Pass+, Pass and Did Not Pass.**
   o **list the assessments and which grade levels were tested using each assessment.**
       (Present results by year and test subject for at least the last four years.)

In the 2010-11 school year, students were assessed using the Indiana Modified Achievement Standards Test (IMAST). Twenty-one students were assessed in ELA and Math in Grades 3-7. In Science, seven (7) students were tested in grades 4 and 6, and in grades 5 and 7, eight (8) students were assessed in Social Studies.

2010-11 Aspire IMAST Proficiency by Grade, Subject, & Performance Level

Subject	Grade	N Tested	%Und.	%DNP	%Pass	%Pass+	%Proficient
ELA	3	6	0%	0%	33%	67%	100%
ELA	5	5	0%	20%	60%	20%	80%
ELA	6	7	0%	71%	29%	0%	29%
ELA	7	3	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
ELA	**All**	**21**	**5%**	**38%**	**33%**	**24%**	**57%**
Math	3	6	33%	0%	50%	17%	67%
Math	5	5	0%	20%	80%	0%	80%
Math	6	7	14%	43%	43%	0%	43%
Math	7	3	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Math	**All**	**21**	**14%**	**19%**	**62%**	**5%**	**67%**
Science	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Science	6	7	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Science	**All**	**7**	**0%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Social Studies	5	5	0%	60%	40%	0%	n/a
Social Studies	7	3	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Social Studies	**All**	**8**	**13%**	**63%**	**25%**	**0%**	**25%**

f. **In the absence of expected achievement, what are the identified problem areas and what are the proposed changes in curriculum and/or instruction in order to address the issues.**

After reviewing all available data, Aspire has identified the following areas for improvement:

- Overall proficiency levels: While the school is closing the gap with the district, overall proficiency rates are still below expectations. Aspire has also identified overall proficiency in grades 5 and 6 as a particular opportunity for improvement.
- English language arts: Aspire is focused on English language arts proficiency as an area for improvement. Specifically, the area of writing and informational text.

In order to improve in these areas, Aspire will continue to focus its efforts on implementation of the following two key initiatives:

- Initiative #1 - Response to Intervention: Continue to implement the school's research-based intervention program in reading and mathematics, utilizing supplemental tools such as Wireless Generation's mClass DIBELS Next, Burst Reading, and mClass mathematics, as well as Math in a Nutshell and Literacy Navigator.
- Initiative #2 - Use of Data: Analysis of data from the school's comprehensive assessment system will continue. Aspire staff will drill down on all available data and adjust its instructional approach to ensure all students are achieving at high levels.

Please see response to question 4 for more detail on the school's intervention and assessment programs.

Is the School an Academic Success?/High Quality Instruction is Evident in All Classrooms Throughout the School
2. Provide the instructional goals and methods for the school, which at a minimum; include teaching and classroom instruction methods that are used to provide students with the necessary knowledge, proficiency, and skills to reach the goals of the school.

a. **Provide a description of the teaching and classroom instruction methods that have been used.**

Aspire Charter Academy believes that nothing has a greater impact on student learning than the presence of great teaching in every classroom. If a student does not master the material that has been taught, then teaching and instruction methods must be adjusted to meet that student's learning needs. Research indicates that the quality of instruction strongly predicts the level of learning in a classroom—more strongly than does a student's race or income. Therefore, teachers are accountable for the learning environment and for ensuring that students achieve individual student and class learning goals.

Teaching and classroom instruction methods utilized by teachers at Aspire are designed to promote student engagement, to ensure clarity of instructional intent, and to be rigorous. Student learning requires that teachers shift the cognitive load to students in a purposeful and intentional way, so teachers develop students' knowledge, understanding, and skill incrementally through appropriately-sequenced lessons and

units of instruction. Depending on the intended learning goals, instruction takes various forms, including focused lessons, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent work.[1] Specific instructional methods, and related strategies and techniques, are contextually driven and contingent upon students' progress toward meeting instructional goals.

Focused lessons include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, development of metacognitive awareness, and/or teacher think-alouds. They are conducted in whole-group or small-group settings, as student need dictates. Guided instruction is provided with small, need-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks. Guided instruction, when provided in small-group settings, allows teachers to differentiate instruction in purposeful, meaningful ways in order to meet individual student needs. Collaborative learning is used, when appropriate, in order to provide opportunities for students to learn from peers, to discuss or debate ideas and information, or participate in collaborative, inquiry-based learning of curricular content. Finally, independent work is used to provide students with time to practice applying skills or knowledge that has been previously learned, to extend individual learning through the application of knowledge and skills to novel situations, or to promote the individual development of higher order thinking skills. Instruction is designed to meet the needs of all learners within the classroom, and therefore promotes high expectations and achievement for all students.

Instructional strategies utilized by teachers at Aspire Charter Academy include those that have a high probability of effectiveness and, like the methods mentioned previously, their use is contextually driven and based on student learning needs. Instructional strategies include those identified as highly effective by researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL): (1) Identifying Similarities and Differences; (2) Summarizing and Note Taking; (3) Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition; (4) Homework and Practice; (5) Nonlinguistic Representations; (6) Cooperative Learning; (7) Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback; (8) Generating and Testing Hypotheses; and (9) Cues, Questions, and Advanced Organizers.[2]

As part of Aspire Charter Academy's effort to manage instruction, the school's instructional leadership works with teachers on an individual basis to ensure that appropriate teaching and classroom instruction methods are being used to enhance student learning and promote high expectations for all students. Teachers receive support through focused professional development and through observations and subsequent coaching and feedback sessions in order to ensure that they successfully implement techniques that have been shown to promote student learning. Such techniques include, among others: (1) Redirecting; (2) Start-up routines; (3) Do it again; (4) Use of attention signals; (5) Circulation; (6) Calm voice; (7) Prompts; (8) Transition routines; (9) Precise praise; (10) Clear directions; (11) Notes; (12) Do Now; (13) I Can statements; (14) Differentiation; and (15) Checking for understanding. These practices

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[1] Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, *Better Learning through Structured Teaching* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2008).
[2] See Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock, *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc, 2001.

are reflective of many practices that have been identified as "best practice" techniques that should be used to optimize learning for students.[3]

The use of these methods, strategies, and techniques ensures that the school's teachers deliver high-quality instruction to all students attending Aspire Charter Academy.

i.   Have they been successful? How do you know?

The teaching and classroom instruction methods utilized by Aspire Charter Academy teachers have been successful in improving student performance. This success is most clearly manifest through the increase in absolute proficiency levels over the course of the school's first charter term, as illustrated through the graph below.

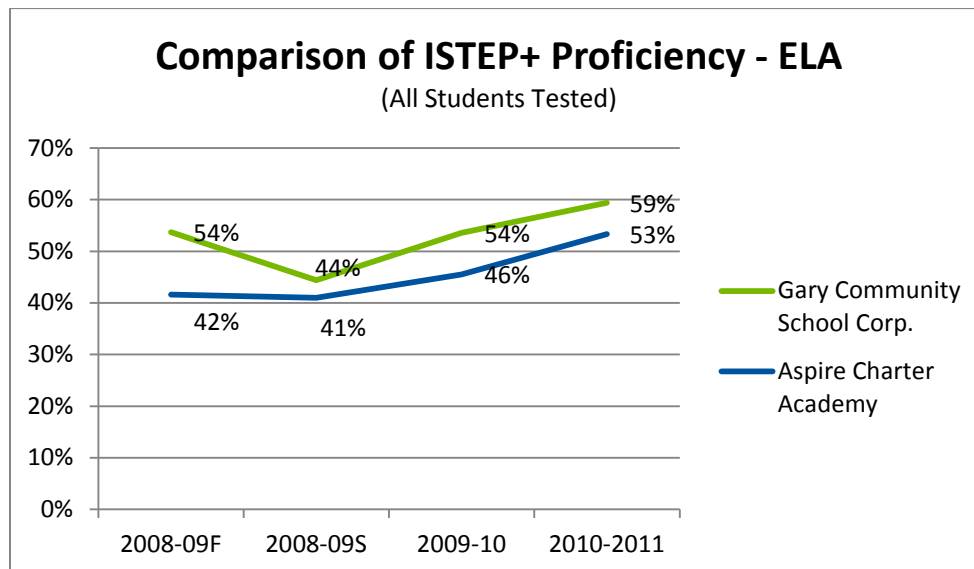**ISTEP+ Proficiency for Aspire Charter Academy**
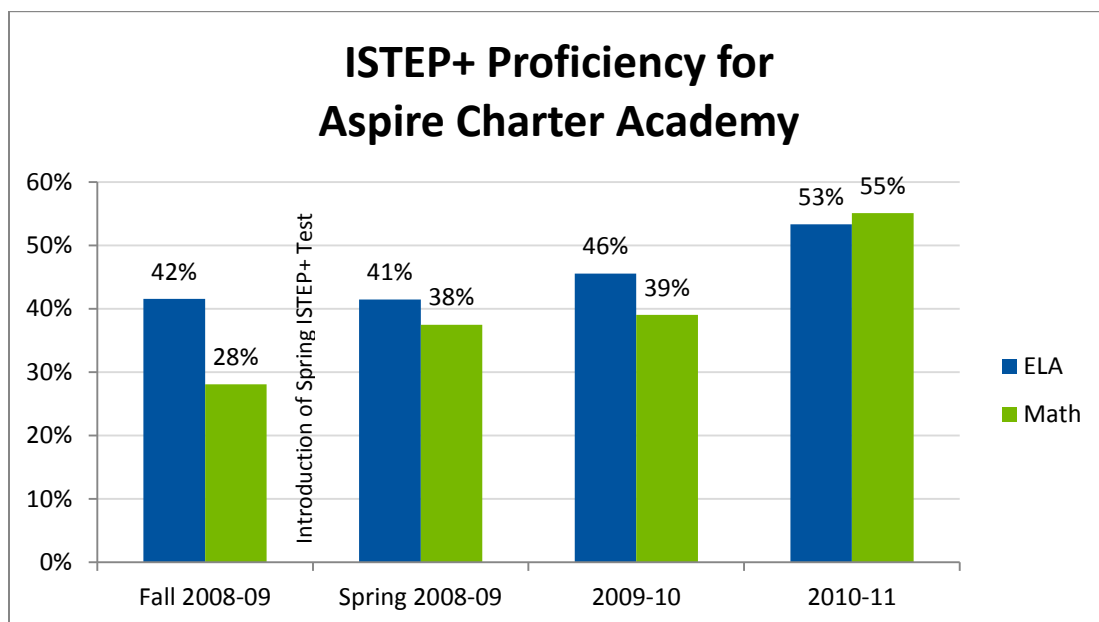
As the graph shows, proficiency levels in ELA and Math are at an all-time high for Aspire. In ELA, absolute proficiency levels have increased from 42% proficient to 53% proficient as measured by the ISTEP+. This change reflects an improvement in proficiency levels by 11 percentage points. A more significant increase has been seen in Math, where absolute proficiency has increased from 28% as measured by the 2008-2009 ISTEP+ to 55% as measured by the 2010-2011 ISTEP+. This reflects an improvement of 27 percentage points.

Improvements have also been seen in Science and Social Studies. While overall Science proficiency levels have increased from 22% in 2008-2009 to 31% in 2010-2011, Social Studies proficiency levels have increased from 28% to approximately 30% proficiency over the same time period.

Notably, the success of Aspire Charter Academy's teaching and classroom instruction methods is also manifest by the fact that the performance gap between Aspire and the Gary Community School Corporation, as measured by the ISTEP+, has been closing since
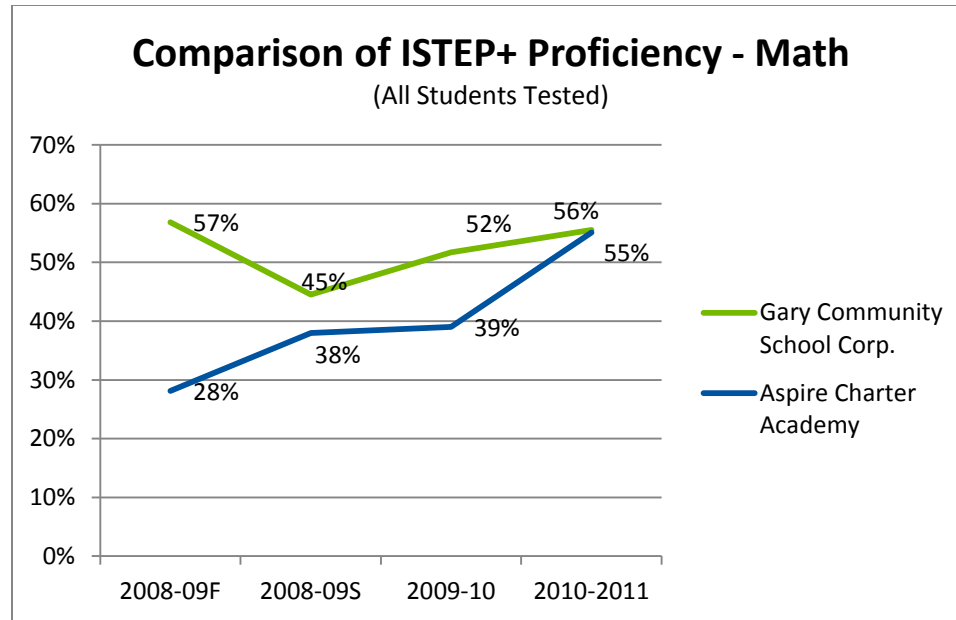
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[3] See Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

the schools inception. In the school's first year of ISTEP+ testing, 2008-2009, ELA proficiency levels at Aspire Charter Academy were twelve percentage points lower than those of the Gary Community School Corporation; Aspire Charter Academy's proficiency levels were 42% whereas those of the Gary Community School Corporation were 54%. By the 2010-11 administration of the ISTEP+, the gap between the school and the Gary Community School Corporation had closed to just six percentage points. This is illustrated through the graph below.

Similarly, Aspire Charter Academy has narrowed the gap in the Math performance as well. While Gary Community School Corporation's performance has been fairly stable, with proficiency levels at 57% in 2008-09 and at 56% in 2010-11, Aspire Charter Academy has increased performance by 27 percentage points. The school's performance now approximates that of the Gary Community School Corporation, despite a gap of 29 percentage points in 2008-09. The closing of this gap between Aspire Charter Academy and the Gary Community School Corporation is clearly depicted through the following graph.

Comparison of ISTEP+ Proficiency - Math

(All Students Tested)

That Aspire Charter Academy has demonstrated increases in absolute proficiency and has narrowed the gap between its performance and that of the Gary Community School Corporation suggests the relative effectiveness of its educational program. Indeed, students at Aspire Charter Academy are benefitting from the teaching and the instructional methods employed by the school.

b. **Provide an instructional plan that includes the current curricula for each grade and year.**

Aspire Charter Academy teachers collaborate in grade-level teams in order to develop an instructional pacing framework for each school year. This year-long planning process results in the sequencing of all curricular objectives and assessment opportunities within each core content area for each specific grade level. Consequently, teachers have a yearly instructional plan for the school's curricula for each grade level. Year-long plans are adjusted by teachers over the course of the year, as student need dictates, and these plans serve as the outline by which teachers develop detailed unit plans, organize daily instruction, and update year-long plans for subsequent school years (see Section 2(c) for further information). Please refer to the sample Year-Long Plans uploaded to *Sapphire* to review the school's detailed instructional plans.

c. **If original instructional methods outlined in the original application have changed, provide a justification of this as well as to the efficacy of this modification.**

The school's original charter application did not include a detailed description of instructional methods to be used by the school's teachers. However, the charter application did indicate that teachers would plan daily lessons utilizing both the school's curriculum and identified curricular resources in order to promote student mastery of identified learning goals. Given the absence of specific instructional strategies to be utilized by teachers at Aspire Charter Academy, the school has worked to clarify the instructional methods, strategies, and techniques to be utilized by the school's teachers—as identified in Section 2(a) above. These high-leverage teaching strategies and techniques have been embedded within the school's Teacher Observation Protocol (see Attachment B), and teachers receive weekly observations, coaching, and

feedback on the effectiveness of their instruction and their utilization of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques.

Moreover, because effective teaching is the result of intentional planning, the instructional methods utilized Aspire Charter Academy teachers are driven by three interrelated types of planning: year-long-planning (as introduced in Section 2(b) above), unit planning, and daily planning. As the school seeks to manage instruction, its deans support teachers both in their planning efforts and as they implement instruction. Planning efforts ensure all that students are provided with high-quality instruction that leads to high levels of learning. Teachers work collaboratively, in grade-level teams and under the direction of an instructional leader, to successfully organize instruction and determine appropriate instructional methods that best support student learning. Each aspect of the school's approach to planning is detailed below.

Year-long Planning
As noted in Section 2(b), Aspire Charter Academy teachers collaborate with grade-level team members in order to develop an instructional pacing framework for each school year. This year-long planning process sequences all objectives and assessment opportunities within each core content area for each grade level and serve as the outline used by teachers to implement the curriculum and to ensure high-quality instruction.

Unit Planning
During unit-level planning, teachers collaborate to develop units of instruction for curricular objectives and determine opportunities to formatively assess student learning during the instructional process. As they develop unit plans, teachers develop end-of-instruction assessments and plan for opportunities to make adjustments to instruction based on student learning progress.

Teachers use the formative assessment process to implement the curriculum. Although various definitions and practices exist with respect to formative assessment, the school has adopted W. James Popham's definition: "Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics." Popham identifies a number of characteristics that complement this definition of formative assessment, noting that it:
- Is a *process*, not any particular test.
- Is used not only by teachers, but also *by students.*
- Takes place *during the instructional process.*
- Provides *assessment-based feedback* to teachers and students.
- Helps teachers and students make *adjustments* that will improve students' achievement of intended educational objectives.[4]

The steps of the formative assessment process are: (1) Identifying Objectives and Determining End-of-Instruction Assessments; (2) Developing Building Blocks; (3) Analyzing Evidence; and (4) Responding to Evidence. These steps, which are detailed further below, help to ensure the effectiveness of the school's instructional approach.

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[4] James W. Popham, *Transformative Assessment* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2008).

Identifying Objectives and Determining End-of-Instruction Assessments
During the formative assessment process, teachers first collaborate to identify objectives for units of instruction based on the year-long plan. Then, teachers determine end-of-instruction assessments to determine students' status at the end of each unit. Assessment methods are selected based on the learning goal and sound assessment design. This "assessment-influenced" approach is important, for through it teachers "exemplify the curricular aim or aims being sought … and ultimately decide what mastery of those aims looks like—what its mastery calls for a student to be able to do."[5]

Developing Building Blocks
After the objectives are reviewed and appropriate end-of-instruction assessments are determined, grade-level teams identify building blocks of instruction that scaffold student learning toward mastery of each objective. These building blocks are used to construct a variety of formative assessments that are woven into daily instruction and serve as check points during the learning process. Grade level teams utilize building block assessments across their classrooms. The school's electronic Gradebook allows teachers to record student scores on these assessments, and both teachers and students track student progress over time.

Analyzing Evidence
Whether gathered through building block assessments or end-of-instruction assessments, teachers analyze evidence of student learning. The specificity of the building block assessments enables teachers to determine exactly what knowledge or skills need further development for particular students. As teachers meet to examine student work, they gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and determine students' degree of mastery of the curricular objectives. They analyze evidence to discover student misconceptions and to identify knowledge or skill gaps that may inhibit student learning success. Grade-level teams also analyze assessment evidence to ensure that the curriculum is coherent across classrooms within the school.

Responding to Evidence
As units are prepared, teachers identify opportunities for planned instructional adjustments in case students do not learn as expected. Teachers then make these adjustments during the course of unit instruction, as prompted by evidence from the building block or summative assessments. If learning progresses more quickly than expected, then instruction moves at an accelerated rate through the unit plan. However, if learning progresses more slowly than expected, then more time is spent delivering instruction within the unit. Teachers consider end-of-instruction assessment evidence as they develop subsequent units of instruction.

Daily Planning
Daily planning allows teachers to connect curricular objectives with instructional resources, effective teaching strategies and techniques, and instructional methods that best support student learning (see Section 2(a) for additional information). Daily planning allows teachers to plan opportunities to check for understanding on an ongoing basis and determine if learning activities are providing intellectual engagement and appropriate rigor for each student. Teachers work backward from the unit plan to structure instruction in the way that best leads to mastery of the objectives. In addition,

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[5] James W. Popham, *Instruction that Measures Up* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2009).

the teacher's daily instructional objectives are presented in student-friendly language through "I Can" statements. These "I Can" statements are incorporated into lessons so that students know precisely what their learning goal is and can articulate it in their own terms.

d. How are the educational needs of the special populations such as ELL and Special Education students met by the curriculum and instructional program of the charter school?

ELL Students
Aspire Charter Academy believes all teachers are teachers of ELL students and is committed to ensuring that ELL students will have access to high-quality education and instruction.

Further, we believe that the academic success of English Language Learners is a responsibility shared by all educators, the family, and the community,[6] and that ELLs:
- Should be held to the same high expectations of learning established for all students.
- Will develop full productive and receptive proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with those for all students.
- Will reach challenging content and performance standards in all content areas, including reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the fine arts, health and physical education, consistent with those for all students.
- Will receive instruction that builds on their previous education and cognitive abilities and that reflects their language proficiency levels.
- Will be evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and that take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds of the students.

These beliefs provide the foundation for a two-part ELL Program: Sheltered English Immersion ("SEI") occurs in the general classroom, and English Language Development ("ELD"), specific language acquisition instruction, is provided for students requiring specific instruction in English language. Sheltered English Immersion is the vehicle for the acquisition of grade-level content, while English Language Development is driven by the need to bring students' English proficiency (specifically academic English) up to the level where the student can begin accessing grade-level content in the general classroom. We believe our two prong approach will meet the educational needs of our ELL students: SEI will ensure that students are presented with the challenging academic content from the NHA Curriculum in a comprehensible and easy to access manner, while ELD will specifically address individual student needs in acquiring English.

Instructional strategies are implemented to ensure that students are able to access the grade level curriculum, despite their level of proficiency in English. This may include the use of regalia, scaffolding, text modifications, specific vocabulary instruction, strategies to increase comprehensible input, and an approach that builds student background knowledge purposefully before beginning a new unit of instruction. While the instructional strategies will be modified for ELL students, the curriculum is constant and students will be provided additional supports in order to ensure exposure and

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[6] http://ceee.gwu.edu/ELLs/ELLs.html The Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at George Washington University.

access to the grade level content. As the school will provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum, carefully aligned to the challenging state and Common Core Standards, we believe that ELL students must have every opportunity to acquire English concurrently with core content area instruction in order to be successful in high school, college, and beyond. As the needs of the students are determined, the school may choose to use an additional curricular tool specifically designed for ELL students to assist them in acquiring English and will use accommodations and adaptations of the core curricular tools for ELLs.

Special Education Students
Aspire Charter Academy believes all students with disabilities are considered general education students first and foremost. The professional and support staff are committed to ensuring that all students with disabilities are provided high quality educational programs and services designed specifically to address the unique needs of each child within the least restrictive environment. This includes the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for each child with a disability.

Further, we believe all students with disabilities must be exposed to grade level content/common core with same grade/age peers to maximize their learning potential as determined appropriate by the Case Conference Committee (CCC). This determination must be made within the context of the provision of services within the least restrictive environment. To support this goal of inclusion, members of Aspire Charter Academy are expanding their knowledge and skills through participation in professional development and consultation activities. Their development includes learning how to: differentiate and modify curricular materials; differentiate instructional practices and activities; and, expand upon instructional and behavioral support strategies used within the general education classroom so that each student's needs are appropriately addressed and supported.

Specialized instruction delivered by highly qualified special education staff includes the use of research/evidence based practices implemented to support and enhance student access to and progress within the general education curriculum. The curricular focus within special education programs and services aligns with the general education curriculum with emphasis placed on closing the gap in support of grade level achievement in the areas of reading, listening, speaking, writing and mathematics. For some students additional supports needed may include addressing their social, emotional, behavioral and/or sensory needs.

As the school provides a guaranteed and viable curriculum, carefully aligned to the challenging state and Common Core Standards, we believe that special education students must have every opportunity to attain proficiency with core content area instruction in order to be successful in high school, college, and beyond. As the needs of the students are determined, the school may choose to use an additional curricular tool specifically designed for the student's need to assist them in attaining proficiency and will use accommodations and adaptations of the core curricular tools for special education students. .Curricular materials utilized to support student learning include resources used by general education and intervention staff, in addition to a variety of supplemental resources (e.g. math manipulatives, computer assisted learning, decoding and fluency strategies, etc.) that are targeted to address specific deficit areas as identified in the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The special education staff provide instruction that includes: preteaching of vocabulary and curricular

concepts, scaffolding instruction into smaller chunks, reteaching and modeling specific skills, providing repetition in support of skill mastery, linking learning to "real life" to reinforce concepts, providing support to bridge new concepts to prior learning, teaching students how to organize their work and use graphic organizers, mnemonics, in addition to other instructional strategies designed to support student learning and skill mastery. Data specific to student performance on IEP goals and objectives is collected and utilized to monitor student performance and to guide instructional decisions made by special and general education staff.

Supplemental aides and/or services including accommodations, modifications, adaptations and access to specialized equipment, are designed to support the needs of students with disabilities and to enable their access to and progress in the general education curriculum. These support services are provided based upon student eligibility and/or need and may include support provided by an: occupational therapist, physical therapist, Speech and Language Pathologies, School Social Work and/or consultants (VI, HI, behavioral specialist). Specialized equipment designed to support a child's access to their instruction, sensory and/or motor needs many include but is not limited to: a sound-field system, FM system, therapy ball/equipment, changing table, prone stander, assistive technology, software, etc.

The provision of specialized instruction provided by highly qualified and licensed special education staff, in combination with the supplemental aides and services as identified within the IEP, are designed to support the unique needs of each student with a disability so that they have access to and can benefit from their education. Aspire Charter Academy staff are dedicated to providing all children, including children with a disabilities with a high quality educational experience that promotes grade level skill development and development within the least restrictive environment.

e. **Does the plan comply with all legal requirements?**

Aspire Charter Academy's plans for serving ELL and Special Education students comply with all legal requirements.

Is the School an Academic Success?/A Clearly Defined Rigorous Curriculum That Prepares Students to Meet State Performance Standards
3. Is the school implementing its educational program as described in the original charter application? Describe the educational philosophy and provide detail on the unique and innovative features in the educational program?

a. **Identify the schools philosophical approach to educating students and how the school has focused on improving student learning and outcomes.**

As noted in the school's original charter application, Aspire's educational program is grounded in *Effective Schools Research*. The initial charter application noted the importance of the effective school correlates identified by Lawrence Lezotte in *Learning for All*; the effective schools correlates include a clear school mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, opportunity to learn and student time on task, safe and orderly environment, and home-school relations.

While these correlates serve to undergird the school's educational program, Aspire has refined its expression of these correlates through the adoption of a set of practices that are intended to promote the development of academic success in all students and help

the school make certain that it fulfills its commitment to the families and students of Aspire Charter Academy. The school's philosophical approach to educating students is characterized by these high-probability, research-based educational practices—which are uniquely employed in a systematic, proven way in order to achieve consistent results in terms of student learning. Research on effective schools consistently demonstrates the relationship between these practices and positive student outcomes:

- Measure Results
- Behave with Care
- Calendarize Priorities
- Manage Instruction
- Essential Learning Goals for All Students
- Teach Virtues
- Formative Assessment Process
- Utilize Common Curricular Tools
- Classrooms Exemplify Engagement, Clarity of Instructional Intent, and Rigor
- Engage Parents
- Best Practices Become Common Practice

In order to know that it is fulfilling its responsibility to promote student learning, Aspire measures results at the student, classroom, teacher, and school level. These results inform all of the school's decisions, from accountability to intervention. With data to inform decisions, relationships with students and amongst adults enable school leaders and teachers to act on evidence. An intentional school climate and culture has been established where all in the school behave with care for each student as a family does for its children, with the goal of self-managed classrooms.

Time is a critical resource for learning. Given this, classroom and school schedules reflect the principle that it must calendarize priorities: math and ELA are scheduled in the morning when possible, and science and social studies are a focused priority; collaborative teacher planning time guides the implementation of the curriculum; teachers create, share, and refine lessons and units in a professional learning community; and teachers examine evidence of student learning together with a focus on improving instruction and student learning.

The school's curriculum is deliberate in its college-preparatory design by defining essential learning goals for all students—and these learning goals closely align with the expectations outlined by the Indiana Academic Standards and those outlined through the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Since college and life success require more than academic aptitude, the school teaches virtues as an integrated and explicit part of the curriculum. The formative assessment process, which is a planned process through which teachers and students use frequent, varying, and ongoing assessment-based evidence to adjust instruction, is utilized to implement and assess the school's curriculum. Additionally, the school utilizes common curricular materials that effectively support instruction and align with the school's curriculum.

A shared expectation across the school is that classrooms exemplify engagement, clarity of instructional intent, and rigor. This is accomplished through effective instruction, classroom management, and classroom curriculum design techniques. Further, teachers, staff, and school leaders work to engage parents by initiating a positive relationship

between the school and home. Ultimately, Aspire Charter Academy is a place where best practices become common practice.

In order to implement these practices and all other aspects of our educational model with fidelity, it is imperative that teachers have the necessary support to thrive in their profession. To that end, Aspire Charter Academy has implemented a Distributed Leadership Model. The school's leadership team consists of a principal and three deans, each of whom shares leadership responsibilities. Having this team of individuals leading the school creates a culture and atmosphere of high expectations and strong instructional support. The school utilizes this proven leadership structure so that the principal personally manages the members of the leadership team and a small number of additional staff. This allows the principal to focus on her primary role as instructional leader of the school. This leadership model creates a working environment that allows our administrators to make decisions sensitive to the demands of students and determine staff structuring based on skill and performance to best serve the needs of students.

Each dean is responsible for a team of grade-level staff (e.g., K-2, 3-5, and 6-8). Deans serve as the direct managers for teachers and assist the principal with administrative duties. By organizing Aspire Charter Academy in this manner, teachers receive ongoing coaching and instructional support through weekly classroom observations. There are also one-on-one meetings, including written and verbal feedback, that encourage teachers to continuously improve the quality of their instruction and classroom management to increase student learning, along with regular grade-level and cross-grade-level team meetings.

Beyond professional development and support, the school's distributed leadership model is also designed to prepare strong leaders from within. Developing a pipeline of leaders ensures that the school has the depth and breadth of leadership needed to build an enduring culture of learning. Each dean receives training o increase his or her level of knowledge about content and pedagogy, classroom management, instructional excellence, and data analysis.

Faithful implementation of the aforementioned practices, along with the school's distributed leadership structure, has enabled Aspire to focus on improving student learning and outcomes during its first charter term.

b. **How do we know the school design has improved educational outcomes for the student population?**

Aspire's school design has improved educational outcomes for students as evidenced by student performance on ISTEP+.   ISTEP+ proficiency has improved for all grades in all subjects over time as evidenced in the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
All Subjects	All Grades	33.2%	36.2%	39.5%	47.6%

Since the school opened in fall 2008, student performance on the ISTEP+ has improved the most in grades 3 and 4. Consider the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
ELA	3	37.1%	40.3%	48.6%	60.3%
ELA	4	44.4%	43.1%	46.7%	67.1%
Math	3	17.1%	34.7%	32.4%	62.0%
Math	4	33.3%	37.3%	26.7%	43.8%

c. **Provide evidence of a fully developed curriculum for all content areas.**

As noted in the school's original charter application, the educational program of Aspire is based in its curriculum, which includes defined learning goals for all students (the intended curriculum), the lessons that are taught in the classroom (the implemented curriculum), and the learning goals and objectives actually mastered by students (the assessed curriculum). The curriculum includes fully developed learning goals in all content areas, including the core areas of learning including ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as in other areas such as the arts, music, and physical education. Because individual responsibility, integrity, personal character, and effort are important contributors to success in school and life, and because character traits such as perseverance are highly correlated with college success, character development and the teaching of virtues is also an explicit and integrated component of the curriculum.[7] When coupled with the high-quality teaching methods referenced in Section 2(a) above, with solid curricular tools to support instruction, and rigorous assessment, the curriculum promotes academic success for students by equipping them with the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to meet or exceed the performance standards currently established by the Indiana State Board of Education and the Indiana Department of Education.

The School's curriculum includes clear, coherent, and sequential learning standards, or objectives, for all grade levels and in all content areas. The curriculum's standards have been collectively and comprehensively developed by NHA from the "best of the best" of various state standards, national organizations, and national assessment experts, including groups such as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), ACT®, Achieve, Inc., the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, the National Council of Teachers of English, The National Mathematics Advisory Panel, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Council for Social Studies. NHA comprehensively researched what students need to know to be successfully prepared for rigorous high school and college educational programming, and then worked backward to develop a curriculum that defines the expertise needed by students in kindergarten through eighth grade to enter high school on the path to college readiness. The standards within the NHA Curriculum have been crafted to promote high levels of

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[7] See Matthew Davidson and Thomas Lickona, *Smart & Good High Schools: Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond* (Cortland, NY: Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, 2005). Respect and Responsibility / Washington D.C.: Character Education Partnership.

learning in all students and have been aligned with the expectations of the Indiana Academic Standards and those outlined by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

A description of the school's curriculum, including core content areas and co-curricular areas, is included below. Please see the alignment documents uploaded to *csapphire* for a comprehensive overview of the alignment between the NHA Curriculum and Indiana's Academic Standards as well as the alignment between the NHA Curriculum and the Common Core State Standards.

Core Content Areas

English Language Arts
Literacy, including reading and writing, is a critical component of college readiness. "Low literacy levels often prevent high school students from mastering other subjects" and struggling readers are often excluded from academically challenging courses.[8] Developing reading proficiency and strong literacy skills in elementary and middle grades is essential to ensuring that students are on a college-readiness trajectory. The ELA curriculum is designed to produce highly literate students who are proficient readers and strong writers. The curriculum enables students to read, comprehend, write, and respond thoughtfully to what they encounter in the classroom and the world around them through its reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing components.

In early grades, the curriculum emphasizes the five components of reading instruction as outlined by the National Reading Panel, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The curriculum also helps students develop the intellectual processes needed to remember, understand, analyze, evaluate, apply, and extend the ideas they encounter while reading. Student learning is enhanced through reading a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts, including a wide range of expository/informational and literary genres. Through writing, students learn the technical skills and processes necessary to produce different types of texts, with appropriate conventions, but also learn to write creatively and critically. And through speaking, listening, and viewing, students become collaborative and reflective in their learning processes. Students who master the ELA curriculum are prepared to read for deep meaning and understanding, write and speak effectively to communicate ideas and information while using appropriate language conventions, listen actively and critically as they encounter new information and ideas, and generate new ideas based on what they encounter both inside and outside the classroom.

Beyond this, the curriculum in grades K-2 focuses on and supports the process of learning to read. Decoding, word recognition, and building vocabulary are important as students begin to develop understanding and fluency. In grades 3-5, the curriculum supports a transition from learning how to read to reading in order to learn; learning shifts to understanding that texts have specific purposes and reading with those purposes in mind. Students are introduced to informational text in addition to a variety of literary texts. Reliance on the basal reader decreases and additional resources like novels, newspapers, magazines, and web-based resources are used to support reading instruction. In grades 6-8, the curriculum focuses on extending reading and

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[8] ACT, Inc., *Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading* (Iowa City, IA, 2006).

comprehension skills, developing deep evaluation and analysis skills and the ability to make connections within and between texts.

The language arts curriculum supports learning in language conventions, mechanics, spelling, and writing. In the earliest grades, students learn how to write words and sentences using appropriate mechanics and grammar and begin to use the writing process to convey information and narrative through written text. In middle grades, the curriculum develops in students a deeper understanding of writing through a focus on prewriting strategies, organizational formats, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing. The curriculum ensures that students learn to write for different purposes; writing includes narratives, stories, poems, interpretive responses, essays, and descriptive pieces. In later grades, the curriculum continues to extend students' writing skills through narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical writing, and technology enhances students' ability to write, revise, edit, and publish their work. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and writing conventions are taught as part of language arts for students in all grades.

Mathematics
If students are to be well-equipped for college and beyond, students must be prepared through their K-8 education to take Algebra II and other advanced mathematics courses in high school. "A strong grounding in high school mathematics through Algebra II or higher correlates powerfully with access to college, graduation from college, and earning in the top quartile of income from employment."[9] The development of a deep understanding of mathematical concepts makes such success possible. The school's mathematics curriculum is designed to ensure that all students complete Algebra I by eighth grade, thus placing students on a college- and career-readiness trajectory. Students who successfully complete Algebra I prior to entering high school are much more likely to complete Algebra II and other more advanced mathematics prior to graduating high school, which means they will be "more than twice as likely to graduate from college" than students who don't complete it.[10]

The National Council for Teachers of Mathematics has recognized the importance of the study of algebra in developing mathematical fluency and has also noted the importance of the study of other mathematics components such as number sense and number operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and problem solving. The curriculum focuses on each of these components beginning in kindergarten. Number Sense is developed through a variety of concrete models, allowing students to use the area of the brain used for the comprehension of mathematical knowledge. Students are prepared to be fluent in computation using formal algorithms and also learn essential measurement and data analysis skills. Students also learn to make connections and apply mathematical knowledge through problem solving and inquiry.

In grades K-2, algebraic awareness, number sense, and computational fluency are the main focus of students' learning. Students develop the skills necessary to progress into higher level mathematics; through open-ended problem solving, they increase their critical thinking skills and ability to see connections across mathematics as well as other subjects. In grades 3-5, learning shifts from computation to fractional awareness. The

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[9] National Mathematics Advisory Panel, *Foundations for Success: The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2008).
[10] *Ibid.*

part-to-whole relationships that are developed in these early grades lead to a deeper understanding of fractions, percents, decimals, and computation. Algebraic skills move from pattern recognition and development to the creation of equations and the use of variables. As students move into grades 6-8, the focus shifts to the study of algebra and functions. Number sense remains a critical focus area through the study of integers, rational and irrational numbers, exponents, and absolute values. Conceptual ideas are integrated through lab activities that provide exploratory opportunities for students to explicitly connect abstract ideas to concrete examples.

The mathematics curriculum also ensures that students become effective as mathematical communicators by engaging them in thinking, reading, and writing about mathematics to help them understand the foundational concepts necessary for success in more complex mathematical coursework.

Science
As the Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Council on Science explain, developing college-ready and scientifically literate students involves teaching a mixture of content knowledge, the practices and skills of scientists, and information on the nature of science. The curriculum, which includes study in Life Science, Physical Science and Earth and Space Science, is designed to develop content knowledge about the results of scientific discoveries regarding the natural world. The teaching of practices and skills of scientists requires that students participate in the scientific process of inquiry and discovery through conducting investigations, using instruments, and applying mathematical skills that model the process used by scientists to learn about the universe. The curriculum provides students with the opportunity to participate in the scientific process, in addition to read, write, discuss and experiment with science through high level thinking and problem solving. It also ensures that students use the scientific processes and skills through lab work and investigations.

The content of the science curriculum in grades K-2 focuses scientific learning primarily through the study of events and phenomena in nature that can be observed with the five senses. Investigations at this level are modeled, simple, and structured, allowing students to write journals on their discoveries, create simple pictographs of data, and draw conclusions from observations under the direction of the teacher. The incorporation of non-fiction readers on each topic provides students the opportunity to develop grade level appropriate science vocabulary.

Building on these foundational skills, including the integration of skills from English language arts and Math, the curriculum for grades 3-5 directs students to begin exploring cause and effect connections between events (e.g., the sun rises every day and it gets warmer during the day, ergo, the sun provides heat to earth). Investigations for students in grades 3-5 are still often modeled, but they are more complex and involve more detailed measurements, use a variety of tools such as balances and microscopes, and require students to control for multiple variables. Students engage in the practices of scientists as they chart data, complete lab reports, and create graphs in order to communicate results of investigations orally and in writing while defending their conclusions.

The curriculum for students in grades 6-8 includes further exploration of cause and effect relationships while also connecting knowledge of concepts to real world examples

and solidifying congruence between students' understanding of phenomena to that of the scientific community. Investigations are more student-directed, from the guiding question through the scientific procedures to the organizing, analyzing and reporting of data. The scientific method is consistently integrated into content units throughout the year, and students will conduct science investigations through both closed lab investigations and through open investigations in response to the questions being raised during content studies.

Social Studies
The Social Studies curriculum ensures that students are not only prepared for high school and college, but also prepared for the rest of their lives as global citizens. According to ACT, developing students' understanding in the disciplines of history, culture, economics, and civics ensures that they are ready for college. In addition to supporting learning in these areas, the Social Studies curriculum also allows students to develop and utilize critical thinking skills by making connections, inferences, and arguments around the content and skills they are learning in these disciplines. This focus on content, skills, and critical thinking produces students who are knowledgeable in Social Studies and who are prepared to participate in society as informed citizens.

The curriculum emphasizes the Social Studies disciplines that will best prepare students to be intelligent members of society. Students who master the Social Studies curriculum understand how geography and economics interact in a global society. Through exposure to primary and secondary sources, students develop knowledge of our shared national and world history and are able to make connections between the past and present and between cultures and government systems that are familiar and those that are not.

Specifically, the Social Studies curriculum in grades K-2 focuses on students being able to describe basic historical events, people, and conflicts and to develop an understanding of their own culture and local community. In these early grades, students begin to become exposed to the history and cultures of places around the world to expand their knowledge beyond what is in close proximity to them. By grades 3-5, the curriculum helps students describe historical happenings in more detail while allowing them to comment on how these happenings had an impact on other historical occurrences in American and world cultures. By grades 6-8, students are regularly practicing how to make connections between historical events in the United States and the world and current events, as well as developing their knowledge of the relationship between geography, history, economics, and culture.

The Social Studies curriculum also supports learning geography, economics, and civics. In the primary grades, students become familiar with basic geographical representations, economic concepts and resources, and functions of government by studying local examples of their community and school. In the intermediate grades, the curriculum gives students opportunities to extend this basic knowledge to gather more complex information, describe concepts in more detail, and deepen their understanding of the relationship between geography, economics, and civics. Third through fifth grade students extend their learning by studying these relationships through national examples. In the middle school grades, the curriculum helps the students use their knowledge of geography, economics, and civics to make generalizations about countries

around the world, to compare these countries to the United States, and to describe how these disciplines work together in a global society.

Co-Curricular Areas

Art
Study in art allows students to explore the many different aspects of this subject while acquiring an understanding of the significant role art has played and plays in the expression of ideas throughout history and the current age. Students in lower grades learn to recognize and describe art forms from a variety of historical eras and places, and they also learn that art takes many forms and has many purposes. Students study and reproduce styles and techniques used by artists and discuss the qualities of art by examining that of artists and critiquing their own work. Students in upper elementary and middle school grades focus on comparing and contrasting artwork from different time periods, cultures, artists, and mediums. Historical and contemporary art are studied as students create a variety of original works using appropriate styles and mediums to express and communicate themes, tone, mood, and images. The school's dedicated art room ensures that students in grades K-8 have appropriate access to art materials and resources that support arts learning.

Music
In music, students study the basics of music theory, music appreciation, and great composers and their works. Students first learn to identify basic music forms and patterns, to describe the elements of music using appropriate music vocabulary, and to sing and play basic classroom instruments. By listening to a variety of music, students also compare and contrast music from different composers, historical periods, cultures, styles, and genres. Students continue to refine their musical knowledge and skills through singing, playing, improvising, and composing. They learn to identify and use key signature, meter signature, notation, bass and treble clef, tempo, and dynamic markings and they also learn to perform and respond to the cues of the conductor and make necessary adjustments. Students also continue to listen to and evaluate many types of music from historical eras, genres, composers, and cultures and describe how music communicates mood, tone, and images. The school's dedicated music room ensures that students in grades K-8 have the opportunity to benefit from a comprehensive music program at Aspire Charter Academy.

Physical Education
Physical education includes a sequence of developmental experiences whereby children learn through movement. Students initially learn and practice basic non-locomotor skills and locomotor skills, learn to manipulate objects through throwing, catching, striking, pushing, pulling, and climbing, and take part in a variety of individual and group activities and games in order to increase their body awareness, practice new skills, and learn to move safely with respect to other people. Students also begin to learn about the physical and mental benefits of a healthy lifestyle that is characterized by physical activity. Students then use locomotor skills in more complex ways and the concepts of fairness, positive attitude, teamwork, and sportsmanship are learned. Students learn to recognize the correlation between practice and mastery of skill and complete various types of drills and routines in order to increase their own abilities. Students ultimately refine all the simple and complex skills necessary for physical activity of various types and focus on healthy lifestyles through nutrition and fitness.

The school's gymnasium and the school's athletics field provide students with the space and resources they need to fully engage in the school's physical education program.

Library and Technology
The Library and Educational Technology Program is designed to expose students to a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, to instill a life-long love of reading, and to develop their information literacy skills. The library and educational technology collections contain specific materials that support the curriculum and provide students with quality literature and a variety of informational and technological resources. The Library and Educational Technology Program is built on the expectations for students derived from the *Big6* model for teaching information skills created by Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz (1998) and Information Literacy Standards developed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). Technology has a supporting role in the context of the core academic curriculum. The school's Library Technology Specialist will work with classroom teachers to help plan and integrate lessons and provide resources, and students will use technology to research, compose, and present information related to topics studied in other content area classes. The school has a designated area that serves as the library and computer lab, enabling students to access technology necessary to support the school's technology program. Moreover, students have access to a computer within their regular classrooms, promoting the integrated use of technology to support content-area learning.

Moral Focus Curriculum
Because teaching virtues is integral to the development of children and to preparedness for high school and college, the curriculum includes explicit, integrated character development. This component of the curriculum, which is labeled Moral Focus, identifies the skills, behaviors, character traits, and virtues that students need to apply their academic learning as citizens and to be successful learners in high school and college. A comprehensive character development approach, drawing from both the *Smart & Good Schools Initiative*[11] and the Greek Cardinal Virtues, is focused through the study of moral character, performance character, and social character.

Moral character guides students towards becoming their best self. Through the curriculum, students learn that character is defined by the virtues that they incorporate as a consistent part of their behavior. They also learn that they, as individuals, bear the responsibility for developing these virtues. This aspect of the curriculum consists of a school wide focus around nine monthly virtues, which were derived from the Greek Cardinal Virtues. Students develop these virtues through explicit teaching and integrated practice until they become settled habits. Each monthly virtue is comprised of three focus virtues that build from kindergarten to eighth grade. This allows students to acquire a deep understanding of each virtue. Each monthly focus virtue within the curriculum is clearly defined within the curriculum and includes expected student behavior as it relates to that virtue.

Performance character helps students grow in their ability to do their best work. Through the study of performance character, students learn that effort creates ability

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[11] See Matthew Davidson and Thomas Lickona, *Smart & Good High Schools: Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond* (Cortland, NY: Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, 2005). Respect and Responsibility / Washington D.C.: Character Education Partnership.

and that achievement must be earned. Students learn to strive for excellence in all that they do, work hard to overcome obstacles, find joy in a job well done, and develop the work and study habits needed to succeed in school and life. Students develop the skills to take ownership of their learning, and they acquire the tools needed to be able to define, prioritize, and complete tasks independently and utilize their time efficiently. In addition to these academic strategies, students learn to set goals for improvement and to monitor their progress in meeting those goals.

Social character focuses on the skills students need to interact best with others. The social character aspect of the character development curriculum enhances students' ability to listen and be understood by others. Students learn to identify and manage their emotions in order to regulate their behavior and make wise choices. They consider possible outcomes, alternatives, and consequences to their choices with the understanding that they alone are responsible for their actions. Students also acquire the tools needed to have effective and lasting interpersonal relationships with others.

Students learn to internalize these concepts through the intentional and consistent focus on the application of character development concepts throughout all aspects of school life. The character development curriculum is not another subject to be taught during the school day. It defines the character traits and behaviors that need to be consistently and intentionally modeled for and exhibited by students at all times throughout the day; complete integration is thus essential for students to learn the importance of developing and maintaining a strong personal character and the qualities necessary for success as both a student and a citizen. Through consistent modeling and integration of the virtues and behaviors identified in the character development curriculum, staff and students create a learning environment built on a foundation of respect and care where everyone works hard to achieve academic goals and improve school culture.

d. Describe any modifications pertaining to the educational program that the school intends to request should it be renewed for an additional charter term.

The school has begun to implement a three-tier, response to intervention approach to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met. This approach enables teachers to make appropriate adaptations or modifications to their instruction in order to meet the needs of all students—including those who are struggling to demonstrating proficiency on standardized norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments. Students who do not make necessary progress in the core instructional program receive additional support through supplemental intervention instruction. This intervention, referred to as the Intensive Learning Program (ILP) and provided to students in the second and third tier, is designed to complement the core instruction that all students receive and provides support in the students' specific areas of need.

The school intends to continue to implement the ILP over the course of its next charter term. Please see Section 4(c) below for more detail on the school's new intervention program.

Is the School an Academic Success?/Data Gathering System That is utilized to Improve Instruction and Student Learning
4. Describe the plan for evaluating student academic achievement at the public charter school and the procedures for remedial action that will be used by the school when the academic achievement of a student falls below acceptable levels.

    a. Provide a detailed framework of the school's assessment system, including those that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and state performance standards.

Aspire Charter Academy utilizes a balanced assessment approach in order to measure student progress toward mastery of each of the curriculum's objectives as well as the learning standards identified by the Indiana Department of Education. Evidence of student learning is gathered frequently and through multiple means, and teachers use this evidence of learning to understand how students are progressing and adjust instruction as needed to support student needs.

All assessments are used to support the educational program through the provision of data used by teachers and administrators to determine the effectiveness of the school's curriculum and instruction. The school's assessment system comprises the following assessments in particular.

Assessment Name	Grades	Description and Dates/Months Used	Rationale for Use	Reporting Frequency & Audience(s)
ISTEP+ Reading and Math Tests	3-8	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/ Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
ISTEP+ Science Tests	4 & 6	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/ Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
ISTEP+ Social Studies Tests	5 & 7	• Criterion-referenced assessment administered as required for state and federal accountability purposes • 1 x per year/Feb-May	Required by Indiana Department of Education; provides data regarding student performance in relation to accountability goals	• ISTEP+ performance reports published once/year through Annual Education Report • For parents, public, and governing board, and authorizer
Northwest Evaluation Association MAP for Primary Grades	K-1	• Norm-referenced, growth modeled assessment administered to measure student growth and performance in Reading, Language Usage (Gr. 2-8 only), and Math • 3 x per year/Fall, Winter, & Spring	Enables school to measure: 1) student performance and growth over time; 2) comparative school and student performance among nationally normed sample; and 3) teaching and schooling effectiveness. Fall testing serves as a baseline measure of student performance, and helps identify	• NWEA performance reports published three times/year • For parents, teachers, and school leaders
Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic	2-8			

Progress (MAP)		students at risk of academic failure. Winter testing is used to serve as a check-point to measure progress and informs mid-course corrections in instruction. Spring testing shows student learning growth, as well as year-over-year student, grade and school growth.	
ACT Explore	8	• National criterion-referenced exam linked to ACT used to measure academic progress in English, reading, mathematics, and science to guide high school planning • 1 x per year/March	Exam results help students and parents plan high school course work. Also, results help the school measure school progress in ensuring college readiness for all students.	• ACT Explore performance reports published once/year • For parents, teachers, and school leaders
LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment	K-8	• Students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) participate in annual assessment of proficiency in English. As needed, students will be identified as ELLs through the LAS Links Placement Test. • 1 x per year/January-February	Student progress through the levels of proficiency in English will be measured. Specific language domains requiring additional instruction are revealed through the assessment. Evaluation of the school's programming for ELLs will be facilitated through test results and the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs).	• LAS Links performance reports published as needed • For parents, teachers, and school leaders
Teacher-developed Common Unit Assessments	K-8	• Common assessments developed in grade-level teams, used to measure student mastery of Educational Objectives. • Correspond to unit-level instruction • Weekly/Bi-weekly	Common grade-level unit assessments inform instructional decisions and focus on pacing of unit plan implementation. Teacher collaboration results in shared instructional best practices. Through examination of student work, teachers identify knowledge or skill gaps and use evidence to develop strategies to meet student learning needs.	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers and school leaders
Building Block Assessments	K-8	• Weekly	Building Block Assessments inform instructional design and focus within delivery of unit-level instruction and also enable teachers to track student progress toward mastery of learning goals. Results of Building Block Assessments enable students to track their individual learning progress as well. Instruction is adjusted, and enrichment and	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers and school leaders

			supplemental support will be provided, based on results.	
Ongoing Teacher Assessments (Opportunities to Check for Understanding)	K-8	• Teacher-developed assessments to measure student learning in terms of daily instructional objectives • Daily	Data gathered through multiple means informs teachers' understanding of student progress regarding daily and unit learning goals. The use of multiple assessment approaches provides teachers with regular and frequent feedback on student progress toward mastery of learning goals.	• No formal reporting • Evidence analyzed by teachers

b. Explain the process for systematically collecting and analyzing diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. How is the information shared with the school staff and community of parents?

As noted in Section 3(a), Aspire Charter Academy believes that measuring results is essential to ensuring school and student success, and the school measures results at the student, classroom, teacher, and school level. In order to systematically collect and analyze diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, the school maintains high-quality, integrated data system and also employs processes that ensure that data is collected and analyzed on a regular and frequent basis. These systems and processes, taken together, ensure that assessment data is readily available to be systematically analyzed by school leaders and teachers, providing them with the information they need to make informed instructional decisions that positively affect student achievement.

At the core of the school's integrated data system is the school's curriculum, which identifies precisely what students need to know, understand, and be able to do in each subject and at each grade level. This curriculum is guaranteed and viable and is aligned with State standards, and thereby ensures that individual student learning progresses appropriately within the school. As teachers implement the curriculum through the formative assessment process (see Section 2(c) above), student performance relating to the curriculum's objectives is entered into the school's electronic Gradebook; this Gradebook is designed to allow standards-based reporting based on the curriculum itself. Tracking student performance against the criteria embedded within the curriculum enables the school to regularly measure individual student success and promote accountability for student learning.

Another key element of this integrated system is the collection of standardized measurements that are used to complement and verify student performance with respect to the school's curriculum. Results from the standardized assessments utilized by the school, as identified in Section 4(a)—and including the ISTEP+, the NWEA MAP, and ACT Explore—are integrated into the school's data warehouse environment. This warehouse serves as a repository for all student assessment data, and it is through the various reporting processes utilized by the school, and supported by NHA, that school leadership, teachers, support staff, and parents have access to real-time, user-specific information provided to them.

In particular, teachers gain information through an online user platform, called "MyNHA.com," that has been designed to provide them with information and resources

to be more effective in their teaching. MyNHA.com provides teachers with student-specific and aggregate academic information relating to student performance against the curriculum's objectives, performance on standardized tests, and performance on other diagnostic assessments as well. Since this platform is connected with the school's student information system, information is also available regarding student attendance and discipline. Ultimately, this resource provides powerful data views to help teachers more effectively coordinate their efforts to improve teaching effectiveness. Administrators and school leaders also gain access through MyNHA.com to a broad spectrum of data, information, and resources intended to help them fulfill their primary roles of instructional leadership within the school. And finally, parents gain access to academic and other information related to their child specifically, including homework, resources for homework assistance, assessment scores and information, attendance and discipline information, teacher and school newsletters, and school calendars.

In order to systematically utilize data to improve the school's instructional program, grade-level teams and instructional leaders will use the aforementioned resources along with multiple sources of other educational program data, such as aggregate and disaggregate formative assessment data, ISTEP+ data, NWEA data, and other summative assessment data. All of these are utilized to identify areas for instructional focus and improvement. Likewise, the school's leadership team leads an annual school improvement process to identify areas of need and determine high-leverage strategies and action items to improve overall school and student performance, in accordance with the school's overall performance goals.

c. **Outline details of your plan for intervention and remediation when students fail to demonstrate proficiency on norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment.**

The school's educational program has been designed to ensure that all students achieve at high levels. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that students master the grade level content expected of them, as articulated through the school's curriculum and the State's Academic Standards. For that reason, if students struggle to master content or if they are not yet on a learning trajectory that corresponds with college readiness, then instruction must be adjusted and, if needed, intervention or remediation must be provided.

In order to effectively ensure that students' individual learning needs are met, Aspire Charter Academy has begun to utilize a three-tier, response to intervention approach. This approach allows teachers to make appropriate adaptations or modifications in order to meet the needs of all students—including those who may initially struggle with demonstrating proficiency on administered norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments.

In the **first tier**, classroom teachers respond to student learning needs for all students within the context of regular classroom instruction. All students complete a screening assessment at the beginning of each school year, providing useful information for planning more effective instruction. Students who struggle to demonstrate mastery are provided with supplemental support within the classroom, and corrective approaches can include re-teaching, cooperative learning opportunities, differentiated instructional strategies targeting individual student need, learning centers, and the provision of alternative materials.

If students do not master content through the first tier of intervention, then a more prescriptive **second tier** of intervention is utilized. This intervention is referred to as the Intensive Learning Program (ILP). Students who are offered services through the ILP are recommended for services based on a systematic review of the following:

- Teacher referral; data from classroom assessments administered through daily opportunities to check for understanding, formative assessments, and end-of-instruction assessments
- NWEA results
- ISTEP+ results
- Interim assessment results
- Parent input

Students receive supplemental interventions using programs and approaches that are proven to accelerate student learning (Wireless Generation suite of products including Burst Reading and mClass mathematics, as well as Math in a Nutshell and Literacy Navigator).

Other intervention strategies are provided in the classroom in a workshop setting, or may be delivered through supplemental support outside of the general education classroom, during non-core educational programming. These can include one or more of the following: (1) Small group intervention services to provide more individualized assistance for students with similar academic needs; (2) Extended learning time before or after school for students needing more time to master content; and (3) Summer learning programs for students requiring extended learning opportunities during the summer months.

If data demonstrates that some students continue to struggle to make appropriate progress, then the teacher and Dean refer the student for **tier three** interventions. Interventions in this third tier include an intensified approach that focuses on fewer high-priority reading and math skills. Also, one-on-one concentrated and focused tutoring is considered as needed.

If the third-tier of intervention is successful, then the teacher and Dean continue to monitor student progress on a regular, frequent basis. However, if the intervention does not successfully promote student learning, the school's Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) conducts a referral meeting to decide whether psycho-educational or other testing is needed to determine if the student has special needs as defined by the IDEA. The IAT generally consists of a student's classroom teacher(s), parent/guardian, a special education teacher, and other specialists, and includes as needed a speech occupational therapist, psychologist, school social worker or any other person who has pertinent knowledge about the student. The IAT reviews current intervention strategies, monitors student progress, and works together as student learning progresses.

Is the School an Academic Success?/Supports Special Populations to Overcome Obstacles and Barriers to High Achievement
5. How is your school effective in providing educational services and outcomes for Special Populations?

a. **Describe the strategies and processes in place to ensure that your school enrolls a diverse student population? What steps do you take to retain these populations?**

In order to achieve and maintain a diverse racial and ethnic student body, Aspire continually reaches out to as many families in the Gary Community as possible using the following strategies:

- Aspire employs an Admissions Representative who is responsible for implementing grassroots marketing efforts in the greater Gary area to increase community awareness and to ensure the school reaches its enrollment goals. This person is also responsible for helping to organize, advertise and facilitate enrollment information meetings, open houses and conduct tours of the school to anyone who requests them.
- Create, produce and distribute various marketing materials that reflect the diversity of the school.
- Distribute flyers, postcards and posters throughout the community inviting families to attend information meetings at the school.
- Provide translators/interpreters as needed for families who do not speak English as a first language.
- Partner with community organizations (recreation centers, child care providers, churches, local businesses, etc.) to make families aware of the school and its offerings.
- Participate in community events by having a booth or activity where we distribute school marketing materials.
- Connect with local media to gain positive exposure for events happening at the school.
- Leverage current families to recruit family, friends, neighbors, etc. to consider the school.
- Hold an Open Enrollment period each year where all applications are considered equally and hold a random lottery at the end of that time period to accept students into open seats. After Open Enrollment applications are accepted on a first-come first-serve basis and students are accepted as seats become available.
- Place legal notices advertising the Open Enrollment period in local newspaper(s).
- Have applications, and other marketing materials, available in various languages, including English and Spanish.
- Maintain a school Facebook page.
- Maintain a dedicated school website that includes but is not limited to the following:
  - Information about the school and its curriculum
  - Photographs showing the diversity of the school
  - Content about who we are, including vision and mission statements
  - Link to online student application form
  - A schedule for upcoming enrollment events
  - A link to "Contact Us" to allow potential parents to ask questions

b. **Describe the services homeless children receive in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.**

Aspire Charter Academy actively identifies and removes barriers to enrollment and education for homeless students to ensure that all students at Aspire Charter Academy are provided with a high-quality education. Aspire Charter Academy believes that students experiencing homelessness may require intervention and support to promote grade level academic proficiency and ensure college opportunity. Aspire Charter Academy follows the federal definition of homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as outlined in Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X,

Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act). This legislation defines homeless children and youth as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
    - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
    - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
    - living in emergency or transitional shelters;
    - abandoned in hospitals; or
    - awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

All students that enroll at Aspire Charter Academy will complete a "Student Residency Questionnaire" to determine if the student is experiencing homelessness. If a student desires to enroll at Aspire Charter Academy and is currently experiencing homeless, the student will be immediately enrolled. If there is a waiting list and the student cannot be enrolled (due to space, charter contract limit, etc.), the school will immediately add the student to the top of the waiting list with FERPA protections provided as to the rational for this move in the waiting list. Unaccompanied youth may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or the liaison. Enrollment will not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, any unpaid school fees, lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to the school's dress code or any factor related to the child's living situation.

The school will coordinate the transfer of school records with other schools by contacting the child's previous school. Initial placement of a child whose records are not immediately available will be made based upon the child's age and information gathered from the child, parent, and previous schools or teachers. If no immunization records are available, the school office will refer students to the identified homeless liaison to assist with obtaining these records from state registries and/or community based clinics. When applying any school policy regarding tardiness or absences, any tardiness or absence related to a homeless child's living situation will be excused. Additional student needs, such as uniforms and school supplies, will also be provided to students experiencing homelessness to ensure academic success.

Homeless children will have access to the same educational services provided to other students attending Aspire Charter Academy. These services may include, but are not limited to:

- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Title I services
- School nutrition programs (the school will provide free meals to the homeless child as all homeless children are automatically eligible for free meals)

- Gifted and talented programs
- Access and transportation to extracurricular activities offered by the school

c. Describe how your school identifies students with disabilities?

Consistent with the legal requires of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)and Indiana special education requirements, Aspire Community Schools activity engages in Child Find activities in an effort to locate, identify and evaluate all children suspected of having a disability. This includes children who receive passing grades and advance from grade to grade. Parents, teachers or others who suspect that a child/student may have a disability, regardless of the potential severity of their disability, may initiate a special education referral by contacting the school and requesting a special education evaluation.

The types of disabilities that may cause a child to need special education and related services includes: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Blind or Low Vision (BLV), Cognitive Disability (CD), Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH),Deaf-Blind (DB), Developmental Delay (DD) (early childhood only), Emotional Disability (ED) Language or Speech Impairment (LSI), Multiple Disabilities (MD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay. Annually, the school provides notice describing the identification activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of personally identifiable information.

The school's staffs actively engage in identification activities to find children who are suspected of having a disability that may interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. Identification activities include the following types of screening activities: review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in academics and/or behavior and determining the student's response to attempted interventions/remediation. Parent(s) input is also an information source for identification. After a child is identified as a child with a suspected disability, he or she is evaluated after receiving written/signed parental permission for their child to be evaluated. The assessment results, observational information, information provided by the parent and any outside evaluations are used as the basis for determining eligibility for special education services under IDEA and Article 7 Special Education Rules.

Included within our practice are procedures for identifying transfer students who come to our school with an active IEP.

d. Summarize how your education program guarantees that students with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Include the following:
- **Have access to the general education curriculum**

   Special education programs and/or services are provided to eligible students with disabilities to support their access to the general education curriculum. The nature and extent of the special education services provided is specific to the individual student and their unique needs. Modifications and accommodations are provided to support student access and success within the general education curriculum. Indiana's

Academic Standards and the common core serve as the basis of Aspire Charter Academy's curriculum.

- **Integrate with their non-disabled peers**

  Students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible with removal from the general education classroom taking place only when supplemental aids and related services would not make it possible for the student to remain in their general education classroom and make progress. This determination is made on an individual student basis by the members of the IEP Team consistent with state and federal law. Consideration of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is an integral part of this placement decision in addition to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). It is important to note that LRE and FAPE decisions are based on the individual needs of children and are based on a specific disability. In addition, LRE may change from child to child and may look different from grade to grade. In the event that the IEP Team determines that a child should require a more restrictive placement than is available within the school setting then the school administration, with support of the NHA Special Education Supervisor, would seek external services provided on a contractual basis to address this student's specific needs, consistent with the provisions of FAPE.

- **Receive related services in settings that include non0disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate**

  The provisions of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) are applied by the Case Conference Committee (CCC) when identify and selecting "related services" (including developmental, corrective and other support services) for inclusion in a student's IEP. Students are only pulled from a general education setting to a special education setting when the nature and extent of the child's needs is such that removal from the general education classroom is needed in order to support progress on IEP goals and objectives.

- **Participate in standardized testing with accommodations and modifications, as required by their IEP**

  Students with disabilities are required to participate in all general state and school assessments consistent with the requirements of IDEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Indiana's Article 7 Special Education Rules. Assessment accommodations and modifications implemented during standardized testing must be consistent with those identified in the student's IEP for state assessments. In addition, accommodations and modifications identified for state assessment must be align the accommodations and modifications routinely implemented on a regular basis throughout the school day/week and as identified within the child's IEP. The state assessment selected for implementation is a Case Conference Committee determination and can include the ISTEP+, ISTAR or the Indiana Modified Achievement Standards Test (IMAST) or the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR). Under certain circumstances a Case Conference Committee may determine that a student needs to participate in both the ISTEP+ and IMAST assessment based on identified needs. Testing accommodations are arranged for and provided by special education staff consistent with testing requirements.

- **Are included in educational and/or culture-building activities.**

    Students with disabilities are considered general education students first and actively participate in educational and cultural-building activities along-side their typically developing peers. These activities include: participation in fieldtrips, assemblies, school sponsored afterschool enrichment special events and attending special presentations delivered within the general education classroom.

e. **Describe how the school identifies students from non-English speaking backgrounds: (1) assesses English language proficiency of all students identified as coming from a non-English speaking background; (2) instructs students identified as English Language Learners (ELL); (3) annually assesses the English language proficiency of all identified ELLs.**

    All students new to the school each year are provided the Home Language Questionnaire ("HLQ"). If it is indicated that the student's home language is English, the screening process is discontinued.

    If it is indicated that a language other than English is spoken in the student's home, an informal interview will be conducted. If the interview confirms that the student speaks a language other than English, the student will be given a standardized valid screening instrument in order to assess the student's proficiency in English (LAS Links Placement Test).

    If the student scores at the full English proficiency level, then the screening process is discontinued. If the student scores at the beginner, early intermediate, intermediate, or advanced level, the student will be classified as an ELL student and placed in the school's ELL program.

    All students will have a Language Acquisition Plan ("LAP") created that details their level of proficiency in English, as measured by the initial placement exam or the annual assessment of English proficiency, that contains specific goals for each student to speedily acquire both social and academic proficiency in English. The LAP will also contain information on accommodations and modifications to be implemented in the classroom, as well as on standardized assessments.

    Progress Monitoring of English Proficiency
    Every spring, the school will administer the LAS Links Assessment ("LAS Links") in order to measure progress in acquisition of English at the student, grade, and school levels. In order to successfully exit the ELL Program, a student must score at the full English proficiency level on the LAS Links, which assesses student listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension skills. The results of this assessment are utilized, along with teacher observation and input, to determine the services provided within the ELL Program for each student individually.

    Exit Criteria and Assessments
    In order for an ELL student to exit the program, the student must meet the exit criteria identified by the State of Indiana: students must score at the "Full English Proficiency Level-5" for one year and are then informally monitored for a year. Students are reassessed the following year and must score at the "Full English Proficiency Level-5" again to be formally exited and begin the formal two year monitoring period. In addition, data will be examined

to verify that the student's classroom performance and assessment results, such as ISTEP+ and the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP,) also indicate that the student is ready to exit the ELL program and be successful without additional supports and programming). If a student is exited from the ELL program and found to be experiencing difficulty due to language constraints, the student may be re-assessed and re-enter the ELL program.

Evaluation of the Program
The ELL program will be continually assessed to ensure best-practices are implemented for ELL students. The school will monitor the number of ELL students increasing in English proficiency each year, the number of ELL students achieving proficiency in English each year, as well as the number of ELL students who are demonstrating proficiency on state assessments. These measures will help to determine the effectiveness of the ELL program and modifications will be made as necessary.

Additionally, the school will use various other assessments, such as the school's NWEA assessments, curricular assessments, and teacher created assessments, to monitor the progress of ELL students individually and as an aggregate group. NWEA assessment results will be available to teachers of ELL students, enabling them to identify specific skills as strengths and weaknesses for individual ELL students. The results of the NWEA assessments will be examined for the ELL subgroup to determine where modifications need to be made to the current ELL Program.

Is the School an Academic Success?/Promotes a Culture of Learning and Scholarship
6. Explain the code of behavior and discipline of the school.

a. **Describe the school's policies regarding student behavior and discipline; include the standards of behavior and the school's approach to encouraging positive behavior.**

A safe and orderly learning environment at Aspire goes beyond just rules and procedures and includes a culture where all students feel welcomed and supported. Fostering the growth of a positive school culture is an integral component to the success of Aspire Charter Academy. As such, Aspire implements the *Behave with Care* program. This program ensures the school provides a safe, orderly and high-achieving learning environment for students and staff. Emphasis is placed on the prevention of problem behavior, development of pro-social skills, and the use of data-based problem solving to address negative behaviors. This program establishes common expectations of conduct in each classroom as well as throughout the school building for morning drop-off, hallway conduct, recess, dismissal, etc. Expectations are common among classrooms and among grades, so that students have clear expectations and feel supported by their teachers; this helps teachers develop self-managing classrooms and reduce disruptive behavior. The program is based on research based programs for correcting problem behaviors, setting clear expectations, and building teacher-student relationships, including: Positive Behavior Support, CHAMPS, Capturing Kids' Hearts, and Mindset.

The details of Aspire's system for managing behavior are outlined below in the School-wide Behavior Management System and more detail can be found in Attachment A.

Behave with Care: We believe that students do best when they are cared about and treated fairly and have clear behavior expectations.

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- School-wide Behavior Expectations are implemented.
  - o Behavior expectations from the NHA School-wide Behavior Expectations chart are posted in the area in which the corresponding behavior takes place.
  - o 85% of students are following the school-wide behavior expectations without prompting.
  - o When students do not follow the posted NHA school-wide behavior expectations, appropriate redirection occurs.
- Social contracting happens in every classroom.
  - o A social contract that has been signed by all students is prominently posted in the front of the classroom.
  - o Teachers use a time-out signal when the social contract needs to be reinforced.
  - o Teachers use reflective questioning when reinforcing the social contract.
  - o Students use non-verbal cues to check one another's behavior.
- A school-wide positive behavior system is implemented.
  - o Effort Creates Ability messaging is displayed prominently throughout the building and in school communications with parents.
  - o Positive student behavior is recognized weekly in moral focus assemblies.
  - o A positive referral program involving principals, deans and teachers is implemented.
- A 6-level behavior management guide is implemented.
  - o Students start on green at the beginning of the day.
  - o Consequences for misbehaviors are aligned with NHA's 6-level behavior management guide and are displayed prominently at the front of every classroom.
  - o Teachers enter all level 2 – 3 behavior data into At School.
  - o Administrators enter all level 4 – 6 behavior data are entered into At School.

Additionally, Aspire implements a positive behavior reward system. Students receive stamps each day for their positive behavior which can be used to purchase rewards from the school's Positive Behavior Reward Cart (Cart). The Cart visits classrooms weekly and students can select rewards of their choice based on the amount of positive behavior stamps they have accumulated. Additionally, classroom celebrations take place to recognize positive behavior and individual students are honored at monthly moral focus assemblies.

b. **Detail how these policies will create an environment for learning?**

Aspire's policies and practices create a high level of accountability for individual behaviors. This in turn creates a safe and orderly environment which includes strong relationships based on trust and accountability that opens the path to student learning. A shared responsibility allows all members of the school to focus on learning by creating a climate and culture that is rigorous and engaging.

Is the School an Academic Success?/Professional Development Supports Teachers in Continuous Educational Learning
7. How is your school providing the on-going professional learning opportunities for their staff?

a. **Provide evidence of an aligned professional development plan which provides detail of how the plan has been implemented. Speak specifically to the fidelity of the implementation and supports for the plan.**

The Coaching and Learning Department at NHA supports Aspire by providing learning opportunities intentionally designed to meet the needs of the school staff. The school is assigned a Coaching and Learning Consultant who will work with the principal to customize a professional development plan that meets the school's performance goals and learning objectives. Each year, Aspire develops a comprehensive professional development plan based on the results of its comprehensive needs assessment. Aspire's professional development plan for the 2011-12 school year is outlined below. The plan provides specific training, dates, and a list of attendees. The plan is continually updated throughout the year and monitored by the Coaching and Learning Consultant and principal to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Aspire Professional Development Plan School Year 2011-2012

NHA-University

The following staff members from Aspire attended NHA-University during the week of July 25th-28th, 2011.

	Name	Position	Courses
1	Tyneasha Banks	Dean	New Leadership/Special Education Discipline
2	Angela Grayson	Dean	New Leadership/ Utilizing Paraprofessionals
3	Rasheeda Green	Principal	Teaching in Urban Schools/Conquering Urban Education
4	LaShonda Huff	Teacher	Teaching in Urban Schools/Bully Blockers
5	Sofia Hughes	Dean	New Leadership/ Utilizing Paraprofessionals
6	Anthony Laingren	Teacher	Data to Differentiation/ Process Champions
7	Therese Lesko	Teacher	Utilizing Paraprofessionals
8	Jaclyn Peterson	Teacher	High Engagement Strategies
9	Tricial Rowland-Walton	Teacher	Utilizing Paraprofessionals
10	Jane Shimala	Teacher	Data to Differentiation/ Process Champions
11	Cedra Sims	Dean	New Leadership/6+1 Traits Writing
12	Jennifer Pulido	Teacher	Process Champions

Principal Series

The Principal attended the Principal Series session on July 29, 2011.

The Principal attended the Principal Series session on November 29th and 30th, 2011.

The Principal is planning on attending the Principal Series sessions on April 19th an 20th, 2012.

School Based Professional Development

The staff memebers at Aspire have or will participate in the following professsional development:

8/8/2011   TOPs, Employee Engagement Survey, Champs

8/9/2011   Capturing Kids Hearts

8/10/2011	Cultural Competency Training with Tyrone Howard
8/11/2011	Acuity State Assessment Training
8/12/2011	Grade Level Team PD
8/15/2011	Teach Like A Champion
10/28/2011	Capturing Kids Hearts – Momentum
12/2/2011	Writing (ISTEP)
2/3/2012	ISTEP Data/Acuity
4/10/2012	Acuity Data Review
6/8/2012	Employee Engagement Survey

Gayle Boring Writing Consultant

Gayle Boring will facilitate 13 sessions with the staff at Aspire to improve student writing.
- November 7 – 11
- January 23-27
- April 10-12

Wireless Generation

Members of the Intervention Team received mClass math, Beacon, DIBELS, and Burst Reading Training.

August 29th- September 2nd

Americas Choice

4th- 6th General Education Teachers received Literacy Navigator Intervention Training.

August 16th

Book Study

All Aspire staff members will complete the Mindset Book Study (Book Clubs March 7 – May 9)

Dean Training: Assessment Literacy

The following staff members received training on November 4-5, 2011.

Cedra Sims   Dean

b. **Provide supporting documentation of how the professional development has impacted student achievement.**

Since the implementation of the school's first professional development plan in fall 2008, improvement has been seen on ISTEP+. Specifically, performance on ISTEP+ has improved for all grades in all subjects over time as evidenced in the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
All Subjects	All Grades	33.2%	36.2%	39.5%	47.6%

Additionally, student performance on the ISTEP+ has improved in grades 3 and 4. Consider the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
ELA	3	37.1%	40.3%	48.6%	60.3%
ELA	4	44.4%	43.1%	46.7%	67.1%
Math	3	17.1%	34.7%	32.4%	62.0%
Math	4	33.3%	37.3%	26.7%	43.8%

In fall 2011, Aspire implemented a new intervention approach which required training in new programs by Wireless Generation and America's Choice. Early results from Aspire's new intervention program are encouraging. Consider the following recent NWEA growth data between fall 2011 and Winter 2012:

Subject	% Students Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth
Math	65.9%	140.0%
Reading	62.9%	160.0%

c. **How are you evaluating the effectiveness of the PD and transferring its content to classroom practice?**

The effectiveness of the Aspire's professional development and transfer of content to classroom practice is measured by surveys and assessments completed through the Teacher Observation Protocol. The Teacher Observation Protocol (TOP) is a system in which teachers select 3-7 skills to improve and then are observed and provided feedback weekly on those skills until mastery is attained. The professional development at Aspire includes introduction to skills through formal classroom training and then is enhanced and supported through the TOP.

A copy of the Teacher Observation Protocol is included as Attachment B.

> **Is the school an Effective Viable Organization?/School has Strong Instructional Leadership**
> **8. What is the plan for the Instructional Leadership and Administration of the school?**

a. **Clearly describe and delineate the roles and responsibilities of the school leader(s).**

Aspire operates under the management of the school's Principal. The Principal serves as the general manager and instructional leader of the school. She provides guidance to the staff, implements policies approved by the Board of Directors (Board), and expends funds according to the Board-approved budget.

b. **List all leadership positions (teacher and administrative) and provide related job descriptions.**

Aspire's Leadership Team is comprised of several key positions including
- Principal

- Deans
- Academic Intervention Coach

Job Description: Principal
The Principal is a leader whose duties include working with students, families and staff on behalf of the school to create thriving students, happy parents, energetic and enthusiastic staff while becoming the best educational solution in the community.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- Provide leadership and direction to staff
- Hire and evaluate staff
- Administer scheduling, enrollment and. curriculum
- Facilitate parent education and involvement
- Make formal reports to management company, authorizing agent and state
- Implement and follow policies and procedures
- Provide a safe environment for learning
- Implement budget

Qualifications:
- Must meet state requirements for elementary principal certification or be certified.
- Demonstrated successful leadership as a school principal or administrator.
- Demonstrated successful teaching experience.
- Exhibited leadership in working with professional staff, students, and the community.

Job Description: Dean
Deans hold leadership positions within the school and must share their colleagues' commitment to achieving the mission of Aspire Charter Academy and NHA. They must possess an unrelenting drive to change lives, make a difference, transfer knowledge, and create opportunity.   Deans will effectively manage people, demonstrate the ability to build culture, and aspire to model the virtues adopted in the moral focus program.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- Management and oversight of their assigned area and staff within Aspire Charter Academy
- Observe and provide feedback to staff regarding instructional practices and opportunities to improve classroom management and outcomes
- Work with parents and volunteers to achieve the academies goals and objectives

Qualifications:
- Must meet state (if any) for school administrators in Indiana
- Possess a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree or higher and a minimum of 3-5 years of experience in teaching.
- Demonstrated success in leading, motivating and coaching a team of teachers, who have mastered instructional best practices
- Demonstrated ability to lead others who are continuously seeking new and better approaches to teaching and learning

Job Description: Academic Intervention Coach

The Academic Intervention Coach will provide intervention staff with supplemental coaching, modeling, and professional development that deepens the intervention staff knowledge and skills, and provides them with improved research-based instructional strategies that can be implemented immediately in the classroom.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
- Explore new instructional strategies through application, reflection, and assessment of impact and its relevance to student learning
- Provide guidance and support for intervention staff needing additional assistance in effective instructional practice and curriculum implementation which promotes student achievement
- Analyze student learning results data to assess and tune intervention programs
- Meet with intervention staff at grade level meetings, as well as one-on-one to discuss classroom visits, develop instructional goals, and explore professional development opportunities
- Support curriculum implementation, delivery, and assessment
- Facilitate intervention staff as they set professional goals as well as individual student goals which correspond with the school's improvement plan and formative assessment data

Qualifications:
- Must meet state (if any) for school administrators in Indiana
- Possess a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree or higher and a minimum of 3-5 years of experience in teaching.
- Demonstrated success in leading, motivating and coaching a team of teachers, who have mastered instructional best practices
- Demonstrated ability to lead others who are continuously seeking new and better approaches to teaching and learning

c. **If there have been any additional roles or consolidations of roles since the original charter, please include and justify.**

Distributed Leadership ("The Dean Model")
Supported by research, we believe that having one single person – the principal – manage nearly every employee in the school does not set our school up for success. [1] In order to create a different kind of school culture, both a principal and other school leaders are needed. A "strong leadership team," including "the principal and other administrators operating as key players and working with a dedicated group of classroom teachers" is essential to the success of the school.[2] In order to effectively manage instruction, Aspire has adopted a distributed leadership model through which the principal is supported by three deans. This model allows teachers to receive frequent classroom observation and feedback from school leaders.

Our school has utilized this proven leadership structure so that the principal personally manages the members of the leadership team and a small number of additional teachers and staff. This allows the principal to focus on his/her primary role as instructional leader of the school while each dean is responsible for a team of grade-level teachers and staff.

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[1] Robert Marzano, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action (*Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2003).
[2] *Ibid.*

Having this team of individuals leading the school will create a culture and atmosphere of high expectations and strong instructional support.

Deans serve as the direct managers for their grade level teachers (e.g. K-2, 3-5, 6-8) and assist the principal with administrative duties. We believe this will create an environment where teachers are encouraged to continuously improve the quality of their instruction and classroom management to increase student learning.

Enhanced Student Intervention Services
Instructional quality is the single greatest driver of student attainment. Instructional coaching boosts student attainment through an increase in intervention staff reflection, action research, collaboration and informed decision-making[12]. Due to the high number of educationally disadvantaged students in high poverty schools, supplemental coaching is needed to assist intervention staff with strategies for accelerating student proficiency. An intense form of intervention, in the form of a dedicated instructional coach, is needed to improve intervention staff quality, thereby impacting student achievement.

d. **Describe the teacher evaluation system in place. (*Include a copy in the Appendix*)**

The NHA evaluation system for teachers has four main components: (1) Student Learning Results, (2) Teacher Observation Protocol (TOPs), (3) Parent Engagement and (4) Professional Accountabilities.

Student growth data is measured by using NWEA results. Competence in classroom management, instructional and professional practices is determined through multiple observations, feedback and coaching. This system allows for a fluid discussion around performance and informs professional development goals and opportunities for our teachers.

Teachers are formally evaluated twice per year in all four components using a five category scale of exemplary, highly effective, effective, minimally effective and ineffective. All evaluation data is used to inform compensation, retention, promotion, and termination decisions. During the mid-year evaluation cycle trend data is analyzed to determine trajectory toward year-end goals. The interim results provide a foundation for discussions with each teacher focused on meeting those goals. Both mid-year and year-end evaluations are used to inform professional development goals for teachers.

Rubrics are mapped based on primary position and include the following components:
- Student Learning Results
  - Rate of Growth and %MTG (teachers with NWEA data)
  - Personal Effort Towards Student Achievement rubric (teachers without NWEA data)
  - Instructional Planning rubric (all teachers)
- Teacher Observation Protocol - Instructional and Classroom Management Practices
- Parent Engagement
  - Percent of Parents Highly Satisfied (teachers with more than 20 responses)
  - Parent Engagement rubric (teachers less than 20 responses and without data)
- Professional Accountabilities (all teachers)

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[12] For a complete overview of instructional coaching research, please reference Cathy A. Toll's *The Literacy Coach's Survival Guide.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc., 2005.

- o Dependability
- o Sincere Interest
- o Communication
- o Teamwork

Please see Attachment C for a copy of Aspire's teacher evaluation system.

Is the school an Effective Viable Organization?/The School has Established a Well-Functioning Organizational structure with Staff, Systems and Procedures that Allow School to Carry Out Its Academic Program

9. Is the school's governance and administration stable and effective?

a. **Provide the evidence that school-wide accountability measures are taking place; including board oversight, administration and staff roles.**

Each month, Aspire's Principal submits a report to the Board, which includes information on staff changes, enrollment updates, school calendar of activities and professional development opportunities. Importantly, academic performance and accountability measures are included in the report and are discussed at each Board meeting.

Any request for use of the Board Discretionary Account, are presented by the Principal and discussed at the monthly Board meetings.

All information discussed is recorded in the meeting minutes.

b. **Provide an assessment of board strengths and weaknesses and leadership challenges. How do you propose to overcome them?**

The Board is composed of five members who meet regularly to evaluate the progress of the school. All members have regular attendance and come prepared to each meeting. There are no vacancies on the Board. There is a consistent communication flow between the Board and the school to ensure that the Board is informed and aware of activities occurring at the school. The entire Board is from the local area and has long-standing relationships within the local community. The Board is diverse in their professional experiences and demonstrates their support for the school and NHA consistently. There are no weaknesses or leadership challenges with the Aspire Board.

c. **Describe how the board and administration have completely addressed organization challenges and have responded effectively to all stakeholders' complaints.**

The Board regularly reviews school academic progress and behavior issues. When academic performance was not meeting state expectations, the Board spent time doing a deeper dive into understanding how academic progress is measured at the school level, the classroom level, and at the student level. This provided members with a better understanding of assessments and the state's accountability system and, therefore, allowed them to monitor academic progress more closely.

Board members frequently visit the school to support events and activities hosted by the student body. Because the Board is of the Gary community, they are acquainted with many of the school's parents. When the opportunity presents itself, the Board often speaks with parents to gauge parent satisfaction and engagement.

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There have been few stakeholder complaints at Aspire. Any complaint the Board receives is considered during its monthly meeting and is managed collaboratively and effectively by the Board and school leadership.

Is the school an Effective Viable Organization? /The Board has Worked Effectively to provide Oversight for the Total Educational Program to Achieve the School's Mission.
10. How has the Board provided fidelity and oversight for the Mission and future of the school?

a. **Describe how the school leader keeps the Board apprised of the academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational structure of the school?**

Each month, Aspire's Principal submits a report to the Board, which includes information on staff changes, enrollment updates, school calendar of activities and professional development opportunities. Importantly, academic performance and accountability measures are included in the report and are discussed at each Board meeting.

Additionally, any request for use of the Board Discretionary Account, are presented and discussed at these meetings. The Board receives and reviews financial statements and audit reports at regular intervals throughout the school year.

b. **Describe the administrative evaluation in place.**

The school's principal is evaluated by NHA twice each year. The evaluation system has two components: (1) Six Critical Success Factors and (2) Professional Accountabilities. The Six Critical Success Factors includes six rating categories and Professional Accountabilities includes four rating categories. Student achievement data is measured using NWEA and state accountability assessment results. Student achievement data informs the most significant portion of a school leader's evaluation. Professional competence is determined through multiple observations, feedback and coaching. By examining data alongside professional practice, performance can be an on-going process focused on school success.

The principal is evaluated in all ten categories using a five point scale of exemplary, highly effective, effective, minimally effective and ineffective. All evaluation data is used to inform compensation, retention, promotion, and termination decisions. Both mid-year and year-end evaluations are used to inform professional development goals for school leaders.

The 6 Critical Success Factors are:
- Academic Proficiency based on NWEA scores and state accountability tests
- Academic Growth based on NWEA growth scores
- Strong Instructional Team based on employee satisfaction scores
- Full Enrollment based on student enrollment
- Manage Expenses based on budget management
- Stakeholder Engagement based on parent satisfaction

The 4 additional Professional Accountabilities are:
- Dependability
- Sincere Interest
- Communication
- Teamwork

c. **How does the Board conduct on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness?**

The board held a Strategic Planning session in December 2008 to 1) reflect on the school's opening and 2) discuss a strategic plan for connecting the school to the local community. Several initiatives were discussed, including: a) What are the social needs of the student population and the most efficient and effective ways to provide them? b) What additional learning opportunities can we provide in the areas of literacy and nutrition? c) How can we increase parents' understanding and involvement in their child's academic success? d) How can we provide communication to the community regarding job opportunities at the school?

The board continues to re-evaluate these initiatives regularly at board meetings. It was agreed that the school must first focus on getting performance in alignment to expectations and then roll-out these and other initiatives as appropriate. A date for the next retreat currently is being discussed.

d. **How does the Board pursue further governance training and development; (2) how does the Board train new members?**

The Board is committed to its own continuous improvement and development as demonstrated by its attendance at both the National Charter School Conferences and the Board Symposium hosted by National Heritage Academies. See specific Board Member training information below:
- 2008 NHA Board Symposium – Denise Dillard
- 2009 NHA Board Symposium – Lacretia Lott
- 2010 – National Charter School Conference – Richard Comer, Denise Dillard
- 2011 NHA Board Symposium – Richard Comer, Sherilyn McCrady
- 2011 – National Charter School Conference – Richard Comer, Denise Dillard

The Board partners with NHA to ensure any new board member(s) receive training and an orientation to Board roles and responsibilities.

Is the school an Effective Viable Organization? /The Board has Implemented, Maintained and Abided by Appropriate Laws, Policies, Systems and Processes.
11. Provide the rules and policies for governance and operation of the school.

a. **Explain the key rules and reference the policies that will provide for the governance and operation of the school, including the composition of the governing board, the terms of its members, the officers and committees.**

The Board has adopted a set of By-Laws that provide guidelines for the board's governance. Additionally, the Board is further supported by its management partner, NHA, to ensure that the Board and school are compliant with all local, state and federal statutes, and requirements of the authorizer.

Please see Attachment D for more detail on the key rules and policies regarding Aspire's school governance.

b. **Provide a copy of the conflict of interest policy.**

Aspire's conflict of interest policy is embedded within its By-Laws. Please see Attachment D for a copy of this policy.

c. **Describe the decision-making process of how the Board reviews and updates the school's policies.**

The Board, with support from its management partner, NHA, and legal counsel, annually monitors changes in state and federal laws affecting the school. As required, the Board is presented policies for review and adoption each year. All policies are contained in a file for Board use and reference throughout the year.

d. **Describe how the Board and the school have met the provisions of the Open Door law.**

The Board's meetings are held in accordance with the Open Door Law, IC 5-14-1.5 as applicable. With the exception of executive sessions as provided for therein, meetings are open at all times for the purpose of permitting members of the public to observe and record them. Notice of all public meetings is posted and minutes are available for public inspection.

Is the school an Effective Viable Organization? /Parents, Guardians and Students are Pleased with the School
12. How have the plans for parental and community involvement been realized?

a. **How have the plans for parental and community involvement stated in the original charter application been fulfilled?**

Since the school's opening, parental and community involvement have been part of the fabric of Aspire Charter Academy. Evidence of parent and community involvement can be seen each time you enter the school building. Parents and grandparents are volunteering in classrooms, in the office, and at recess. Community organizations are routinely in the school providing supplemental social services for students and families.

Outlined below is a comprehensive list of all parental and community initiatives for which Aspire is involved.

Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement Initiative	Benefits of Initiative
Parent Room	Provide parents with a dedicated space & resources to gather at the school.
Family Nights	Provide families with opportunity to spend time together and help enrich their child's academic life.
Parent Night	Provide parents with an opportunity to understand the resources available at the school and to understand the academic expectations for their child.
Watch D.O.G.S and field trip chaperones	Provide parents with an opportunity to be actively involved in child's education.

Test Prep for Students GED Prep Courses for Parents	Provide parents with information to prepare children at home for academic success. Provide parents with an opportunity to obtain their GED.
AtSchool.com	Provide parents with immediate access child's academic records and status.
Parent-Student Compact	Parents, student, and teachers sign an agreement for academic excellence each year.
Teacher email	Provide parents & staff with an opportunity to communicate regularly regarding the child's academic and/or behavioral status.

Community Involvement

Partner Name	Benefits of Partnership
• Gary Public Library	Access to library cards and books for students
• Indiana University • Northwestern University	Student teachers; improved instruction – small groups; potential teaching candidates
• Field Museum of Natural History • Museum of Science and Industry • Shedd Aquarium • Iron Oaks Foundation • Du Sable Museum	Build student background knowledge
• Sylvan Learning • Tee Tees Place • Boys and Girls Club • No Limit Dancers • Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center • Main Sporting Goods	Additional student academic resources/experiences
• Church of Deliverance in Christ • Highly Flavored Ministries	Facilities needs Mentoring services
• Smile Kids • Moses Eye Center	Health and wellness services
• Catholic Charities/Foster Grandparents	Volunteer and mentoring services
• Northwest Indiana Educational Service Center	Community partnership for professional development

b. **Describe how family and community involvement in the school's operation relates to the fulfillment of the school's mission and overall program.**

The mission of Aspire Charter Academy (Aspire or school) is to offer high quality education that emphasizes the learning of core academic knowledge and foundational character values. Parents, students, and staff work together to create a safe and caring environment

where quality scholarship, punctuality, and good citizenship are developed; and to encourage in our pupils the desire and capacity to be lifelong learners.

Through the school's strong family and community involvement, Aspire is able to fulfill its mission and educational program. Aspire believes that strong parental involvement and support are key ingredients for a successful school. Many studies illustrate that a leading indicator of student academic success is the active involvement of parents in their child's education. Aspire strives to make parents feel welcome in the school and provides families with a dedicated space to gather and volunteer in the school. Parents are present in the building every day and support the school's educational goals by reinforcing academic and behavior expectations.

Additionally, strong community involvement, as described above, compliments the school's academic program by providing students with social and emotional support (i.e., mentoring, health and wellness services, etc). Organizations such as libraries, museums, universities, and local churches and charities provide students with additional resources that may not be readily available in the home environment. These community partnerships allow Aspire to educate the whole child.

c. **Provide evidence that partnerships with educational institutions or community organizations have supported the school's mission and program.**

See response to question 12a above.

Is the School Fiscally Sound? /School has Operated Effectively Utilizing a Long-Range Plan
13. Operating budget, past, present and future?

a. **Explain any significant variances between your actual financial performance and your budgeted financial performance over the last five (5) years.**

There have been no significant variances between Aspire's actual financial performance and the budgeted financial performance. The financial performance of the school has been well aligned with the budget during the first charter term. Enrollment has grown slightly faster than originally projected and revenues and expenditures have paced accordingly. The Aspire Board reviews budgets three times annually, with the first preliminary budget presented each year in the spring for the upcoming school year, amended in the fall and again in the spring for the final time.

b. **Provide enrollment projections for the next five (5) years, including the minimum and maximum enrollment projections for each year that demonstrate financial feasibility.**

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, Aspire will reach the full complement of grades and classrooms intended for the school. The school opened in 2008-09 with grades K-5 and has added a grade each year. Enrollment is expected to remain relatively constant now that all classrooms are utilized.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Max	762	762	762	762	762
Min	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

NOTE: Aspire does not have a minimum enrollment projection because the budget is adjusted based on enrollment projections. Demand is consistently strong at Aspire and, therefore, our enrollment projections and budget are expected to remain constant.

c. **Describe any significant changes in revenue sources and /or in expenditure items over the next five (5) years.**

There are no significant changes in revenue sources and/or in the expenditure items over the term of the next charter period.

Is the School Fiscally Sound? /The School has maintained Appropriate Internal Controls and Procedures
14. Describe the method for conducting annual audits of the financial, administrative and program operations of the school.

a. **Describe your school's purchasing and payroll procedures and identify who will have purchasing authority.**

Purchasing
Purchase orders are used for most purchases. Requests are entered into the school's purchasing software system (Lawson) by the designated front office staff member. The principal then receives notification of the request that needs approval. Unless some special situation exists, the purchase order is then automatically emailed to the supplier (or faxed if the supplier prefers faxing). Requests over $1,500 are reviewed by the NHA Purchasing Department. Requests over $5,000 are also reviewed by the NHA Finance Department. Competitive bidding practices are followed when applicable.

Payroll
Aspire's management partner, NHA, utilizes a human resources management software system to manage payroll (Lawson). All employees are paid on a bi-weekly pay cycle. Paychecks are sent directly from ADP to each school location and are to be distributed by the designated secretary on Thursdays (no earlier). When school is not in session, checks are mailed by ADP to the home address listed on the check. Wages are calculated based on time records for the preceding two weeks (ending on Saturday of the week prior to payday).

b. **Provide regulations/guidelines on travel, professional development activities, student field trips and reimbursement of travel expenses.**

Travel
Employees are expected to follow the NHA guidelines when conducting business travel. All business travel expenses must be incurred for a valid business purpose. No business expense will be reimbursed without proper approval and documentation as required by the travel guidelines.

Employees must complete an Expense Report Form and submit it with original itemized receipts to their supervisor (Principal or Dean) or appropriate individual for approval. The NHA Financial Services Department audits submitted Expense Report Forms for compliance with travel guidelines, resolves conflicts, issues and distributes reimbursement checks.

Professional Development
The Coaching and Learning Department at NHA supports Aspire by providing learning opportunities intentionally designed to meet the needs of a new staff. The school is assigned

a Coaching and Learning Consultant who will work with the principal to customize a professional development plan that meets the school's performance goals and learning objectives. E-learning modules are available for additional learning resources.

Field Trips
For all field trips, the school completes a field trip packet which includes permission slips from parents, medical authorizations, insurance waivers, authorization and release forms for all volunteers (requiring appropriate criminal background checks be on file or completed if not on file), and proof of insurance for any drivers. All field trips require approval of the principal.

c. **Describe how the Board and Administration have developed and implemented an effective system to ensure responsible fiscal oversight.**

The Board has the benefit of partnering with an experienced NHA accountant who serves as its Treasurer. She regularly reviews all financial documents for the school and presents her findings at the Board meetings.

Additionally, the Aspire Board receives monthly financial statements, monthly board fund reports, and a quarterly detailed financial report comparing actual to budget. The Board also approves a budget three times per year; a spring budget for the upcoming school year, a fall amended budget, and a final amended budget in the spring.

d. **Have there been any negative audit findings and how did the Board and school develop and implement a corrective action plan?**

Yes, an audit report issued by the State Board of Accounts (SBA) for the years ending June 30, 2009 and June 30, 2010 included negative audit findings. These audit findings were reviewed carefully by the school's Board and discussed with NHA. The Board and NHA developed a Corrective Action Plan, which was included with the audit report published by the SBA. In addition, with the guidance of independent counsel, the Board has contracted with an independent accountant to perform agreed upon procedures to ensure the Corrective Action Plan has been appropriately implemented. This report will provide the Board additional assurance that NHA has met the requirements of the Corrective Action Plan so that negative audit findings can be avoided in the future.

e. **Describe your process for complying with regulatory requirements when hiring independent contractors.**

When hiring an independent contractor that provides direct services to students, it is be the expectation of the contractor to comply with the same regulations of an employee of the school, including submittal to a criminal background check that meets Indiana Code for school employment. In addition, contracted staff will have the required certification and highly qualified documentation as relevant to their positions. The school and/or NHA shall audit the contractor regularly to ensure compliance with applicable law.

Is the School Fiscally Sound? /The School has Complied with Financial Reporting Requirements
15. How has the school demonstrated sound and viable responsibility?

a. **Discuss how the school provides timely and accurate management financial reports.**

The Aspire Board receives monthly financial statements, monthly board fund reports, and a quarterly detailed financial report comparing actual to budget. The Board also approves a budget three times per year; a spring budget for the upcoming school year, a fall amended budget, and a final amended budget in the spring.

b. **Describe and provide evidence of how school leadership and the Board are involved in financial decision making.**

Various departments at NHA (i.e. Curriculum, Coaching and Learning, Purchasing, etc.) coordinate with the school leadership on specific needs of the school for the upcoming year which will be covered under the general budget. The Intervention Services Department meets with the school leadership to discuss the best uses of grant revenues. Formal and informal meetings are held throughout the year. The school leadership presents to the Board requests for using the board's discretionary funds for the upcoming year. The Board is presented with school budgets which combine all but the board discretionary at three designated meetings (spring budget for the upcoming year, fall budget amended based on the actual student count, end-of-year spring budget to reflect changes for the current year). Each budget presentation includes a variety of analysis as well as explanations of specific line items. Questions on the budget are addressed by school leadership or another NHA representative. This is documented in meeting minutes.

Is the School Fiscally Sound? /The School has Maintained Adequate Financial Resources to Ensure Stable Operations
16. Demonstrate how the school is sufficiently able to operate and manage cash flow on a daily basis.

a. **Provide evidence that the school is fiscally solvent and that all debts are current.**

Pursuant to its service agreement with NHA, the school does not hold any debt. Any shortfalls in revenue or overages in expenses are covered by NHA.

b. **Do you have any debts and if so what are the repayment plans and schedule?**

Pursuant to its service agreement with NHA, the school does not hold any debt. Any shortfalls in revenue or overages in expenses are covered by NHA.

c. **How do you manage your cash flow?**

NHA is responsible for paying all expenses on behalf of the school despite any potential shortages in cash flow.

Is the School an Academic Success? /Reviewing the Academic Performance of Schools Supported by the EMO
17. For schools that have an affiliation with an EMO, the following questions apply.

a. **Provide a description of summary report(s) of the academic performance in English/ language arts and mathematics over the last three (3) years (both aggregated and disaggregated by grade) on state assessments and including the percent of students in each school who are eligible to receive free-lunch (excluding reduced-price lunch). If three years of state data are not available for a school, please also include standardized norm-referenced test results.**

Please see chart below for the academic performance of NHA partner schools in English language arts and mathematics over the last three years (both aggregated and

disaggregated by grade) on state assessments. This chart also includes the percentage of eligible free lunch students at each school.

| School/Grade | 2008-2009 | | | | 2009-2010 | | | | 2010-2011 | |
	Math	ELA/ Reading	% Free Lunch	Math	ELA/ Reading	% Free Lunch	Math	ELA/ Reading	% Free Lunch
Achieve Charter Academy	**--**	**--**	**--**	**96.6%**	**95.6%**	**8.0%**	**95.9%**	**95.4%**	**9.1%**
3	--	--		100%	98.8%		100.0%	97.6%	
4	--	--		96.3%	93.8%		98.8%	95.2%	
5	--	--		95.0%	92.5%		90.5%	95.2%	
6	--	--		94.9%	97.4%		91.6%	92.8%	
7	--	--		--	--		98.8%	96.3%	
Alliance Academy of Cincinnati	**38.8%**	**40.6%**	**86.1%**	**47.5%**	**49.8%**	**86.4%**	**51.5%**	**61.5%**	**87.2%**
3	45.0%	47.7%		30.4%	32.8%		77.8%	58.5%	
4	45.3%	30.2%		73.5%	59.2%		46.2%	64.1%	
5	36.7%	36.7%		36.7%	30.6%		36.4%	38.6%	
6	34.1%	43.2%		69.6%	78.3%		60.0%	80.0%	
7	38.5%	43.6%		39.4%	45.5%		65.5%	75.9%	
8	25.8%	41.9%		26.5%	58.8%		28.0%	56.0%	
Andrew J. Brown Academy	**70.9%**	**64.8%**	**66.6%**	**60.0%**	**57.6%**	**71.7%**	**78.8%**	**69.5%**	**75.8%**
3	59.5%	69.6%		43.2%	55.4%		85.9%	82.8%	
4	73.7%	67.1%		63.9%	56.9%		63.0%	61.6%	
5	71.8%	74.4%		72.6%	45.2%		92.8%	68.1%	
6	81.7%	63.4%		68.5%	69.8%		73.1%	53.8%	
7	73.3%	51.7%		55.9%	71.2%		83.7%	81.6%	
8	61.3%	51.6%		56.3%	51.0%		74.5%	70.2%	
Apex Academy	**41.1%**	**45.4%**	**81.4%**	**26.8%**	**45.6%**	**86.7%**	**46.2%**	**61.9%**	**87.2%**
3	55.8%	45.2%		30.1%	40.8%		62.9%	58.2%	
4	39.8%	54.2%		24.2%	45.5%		38.6%	54.3%	
5	16.3%	20.9%		12.9%	28.6%		24.6%	41.5%	
6	42.3%	60.3%		41.7%	62.5%		54.4%	80.9%	
7	50.0%	46.8%		25.5%	36.4%		58.5%	61.5%	
8	50.0%	48.1%		24.5%	63.3%		37.3%	78.4%	
Aspire Charter Academy	**28.1%**	**42.0%**	**77.5%**	**39.7%**	**46.3%**	**79.5%**	**55.1%**	**53.3%**	**82.3%**
3	16.7%	36.6%		33.3%	50.0%		62.0%	60.3%	

4	34.6%	47.1%		26.7%	47.3%		43.8%	67.1%	
5	37.0%	44.4%		47.8%	39.1%		55.1%	36.2%	
6	--	--		61.2%	46.0%		56.8%	41.9%	
7	--	--		--	--		60.4%	57.1%	
Atlanta Heights Charter School	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**59.3%**	**75.3%**	**87.7%**
3	--	--		--	--		53.2%	72.6%	
4	--	--		--	--		51.0%	70.6%	
5	--	--		--	--		75.5%	83.7%	
Bennett Venture Academy	**56.1%**	**71.6%**	**54.3%**	**58.9%**	**70.5%**	**53.0%**	**56.8%**	**68.7%**	**60.1%**
3	77.4%	79.5%		78.7%	82.1%		69.3%	70.7%	
4	69.0%	80.3%		55.0%	77.5%		66.7%	82.7%	
5	36.8%	64.5%		52.8%	56.3%		42.3%	55.1%	
6	52.7%	83.8%		63.0%	79.0%		54.2%	78.3%	
7	44.9%	57.1%		58.1%	67.1%		62.5%	56.3%	
8	46.8%	51.1%		39.2%	52.9%		43.9%	68.2%	
Brooklyn Dreams Charter School	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**32.7%**	**21.6%**	**74.1%**
3	--	--		--	--		32.7%	21.6%	
Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School	**95.2%**	**84.3%**	**89.9%**	**78.6%**	**59.7%**	**83.4%**	**74.1%**	**57.3%**	**85.5%**
3	99.0%	83.8%		60.8%	67.1%		76.9%	64.1%	
4	99.1%	88.8%		83.0%	68.0%		57.7%	55.1%	
5	95.8%	91.7%		79.0%	71.0%		81.7%	52.7%	
6	100%	95.7%		85.9%	59.8%		80.6%	67.7%	
7	95.5%	65.9%		86.7%	46.7%		77.6%	56.5%	
8	72.0%	62.0%		72.5%	15.0%		63.6%	41.8%	
Brooklyn Scholars Charter School	**--**	**--**	**--**	**69.2%**	**42.3%**	**73.5%**	**73.1%**	**41.3%**	**78.6%**
3	--	--		69.2%	57.7%		59.6%	28.8%	
4	--	--		69.2%	26.9%		88.5%	57.7%	
5	--	--		--	--		84.6%	50.0%	
Buffalo United Charter School	**87.4%**	**71.4%**	**78.7%**	**47.3%**	**37.3%**	**81.3%**	**57.2%**	**35.1%**	**82.5%**
3	90.9%	75.6%		66.3%	54.2%		49.3%	45.1%	

4	90.5%	70.7%		28.8%	24.7%		70.7%	48.0%	
5	92.8%	83.1%		63.0%	45.2%		54.7%	42.2%	
6	95.8%	80.3%		67.6%	46.5%		46.4%	44.9%	
7	77.1%	60.0%		24.3%	27.0%		60.8%	17.6%	
8	64.3%	46.8%		23.4%	17.0%		60.0%	14.1%	
Burton Glen Charter Academy	**73.1%**	**69.8%**	**64.8%**	**71.2%**	**76.6%**	**71.4%**	**73.1%**	**72.5%**	**83.8%**
2	100%	100.0%		50.0%	--		--	--	
3	88.6%	80.3%		91.1%	89.9%		88.5%	77.9%	
4	79.2%	54.2%		91.6%	69.9%		83.3%	74.4%	
5	57.1%	69.6%		63.3%	75.3%		64.9%	74.0%	
6	69.4%	80.0%		67.6%	76.7%		67.1%	74.4%	
7	72.5%	66.7%		66.2%	71.1%		64.9%	55.7%	
8	69.7%	68.0%		46.2%	78.8%		69.4%	79.5%	
Canton Charter Academy	**97.4%**	**95.0%**	**5.8%**	**95.9%**	**95.5%**	**7.9%**	**97.3%**	**96.7%**	**7.7%**
3	100%	96.1%		100%	97.4%		100.0%	97.6%	
4	100%	97.3%		98.7%	96.0%		98.8%	92.7%	
5	93.3%	94.7%		93.4%	97.3%		95.0%	97.5%	
6	93.7%	92.4%		97.4%	97.4%		92.3%	96.1%	
7	98.7%	93.4%		98.8%	93.8%		100.0%	97.4%	
8	98.7%	96.0%		87.7%	91.1%		97.5%	98.8%	
Chandler Woods Charter Academy	**94.5%**	**92.4%**	**14.8%**	**94.7%**	**96.5%**	**17.9%**	**96.3%**	**93.8%**	**17.4%**
3	98.7%	98.7%		100%	98.7%		100.0%	92.1%	
4	96.1%	89.3%		97.4%	97.4%		96.2%	96.2%	
5	89.6%	85.7%		92.0%	94.4%		92.3%	96.2%	
6	92.1%	94.7%		95.8%	97.2%		95.8%	91.7%	
7	93.9%	89.4%		95.6%	98.5%		100.0%	95.6%	
8	96.8%	96.8%		85.0%	91.9%		93.8%	90.6%	
Cross Creek Charter Academy	**94.8%**	**92.9%**	**13.2%**	**95.5%**	**94.6%**	**17.0%**	**96.5%**	**94.9%**	**21.7%**
3	98.7%	97.3%		100%	98.7%		100.0%	97.4%	
4	97.4%	93.4%		98.7%	94.7%		98.7%	96.1%	
5	97.3%	94.7%		96.1%	97.3%		100.0%	96.1%	
6	94.1%	92.6%		98.6%	94.6%		92.1%	93.5%	

7	90.5%	86.5%		91.9%	96.1%		93.5%	92.1%	
8	90.0%	92.9%		87.1%	85.5%		94.4%	94.3%	
Detroit Enterprise Academy	**66.6%**	**60.9%**	**76.6%**	**74.6%**	**79.7%**		**78.6%**	**73.2%**	
3	89.7%	83.6%		94.9%	89.7%		98.7%	79.7%	
4	67.6%	51.5%		81.7%	79.2%		87.8%	65.9%	
5	48.5%	52.9%		67.1%	74.7%		68.6%	75.7%	
6	64.9%	63.0%		77.5%	72.5%		75.3%	65.4%	
7	70.3%	53.4%		82.9%	77.6%		77.8%	79.0%	
8	59.2%	61.6%		42.5%	84.9%		63.1%	73.8%	
Detroit Merit Charter Academy	**82.7%**	**81.8%**	**71.7%**	**91.4%**	**90.1%**	**75.5%**	**87.6%**	**87.1%**	**80.1%**
3	100%	94.5%		97.5%	93.8%		95.1%	90.1%	
4	83.5%	68.4%		100%	85.1%		92.6%	84.0%	
5	78.2%	80.8%		88.2%	92.0%		83.1%	88.0%	
6	77.6%	75.0%		86.1%	86.1%		89.7%	89.7%	
7	89.2%	92.3%		85.3%	88.0%		84.9%	80.8%	
8	67.6%	82.4%		91.7%	96.6%		77.8%	90.5%	
Detroit Premier Academy	**64.5%**	**59.3%**	**80.3%**	**75.2%**	**75.1%**	**83.8%**	**81.2%**	**73.4%**	**85.5%**
3	72.6%	61.0%		94.9%	82.3%		100.0%	85.1%	
4	73.3%	48.8%		84.0%	70.7%		88.9%	71.6%	
5	59.0%	56.6%		65.5%	65.9%		67.8%	71.3%	
6	63.2%	61.6%		59.8%	82.6%		75.0%	71.3%	
7	63.5%	63.0%		75.9%	69.9%		76.3%	66.2%	
8	54.3%	66.2%		72.7%	80.6%		81.6%	76.0%	
Eagle Crest Charter Academy	**93.1%**	**91.5%**	**24.8%**	**96.8%**	**98.0%**	**26.6%**	**96.4%**	**96.1%**	**29.1%**
3	98.7%	96.1%		100%	96.2%		100.0%	98.6%	
4	97.2%	93.1%		98.7%	98.7%		97.3%	92.0%	
5	90.5%	93.3%		98.6%	100.0%		96.1%	97.4%	
6	90.4%	84.9%		93.3%	98.7%		97.3%	97.3%	
7	93.3%	92.0%		96.8%	98.4%		98.7%	98.7%	
8	86.9%	88.5%		93.4%	96.1%		88.2%	92.6%	

Emerson Academy	**66.1%**	**64.2%**	**81.1%**	**56.9%**	**64.8%**	**81.3%**	**62.8%**	**64.6%**	**86.2%**
3	77.1%	67.8%		74.6%	68.0%		72.5%	51.9%	
4	61.8%	63.2%		53.8%	75.0%		62.9%	67.7%	
5	44.2%	48.9%		50.7%	50.7%		44.9%	52.6%	
6	75.0%	87.5%		41.7%	62.5%		68.2%	80.3%	
7	60.0%	50.0%		65.8%	73.7%		56.8%	66.7%	
8	69.6%	47.8%		50.0%	54.5%		78.4%	81.1%	
Endeavor Charter Academy	**81.4%**	**80.7%**	**39.4%**	**80.2%**	**86.4%**	**44.4%**	**82.5%**	**84.0%**	**48.1%**
3	84.7%	78.6%		88.5%	88.5%		98.8%	90.0%	
4	92.5%	75.9%		88.9%	79.0%		88.9%	77.2%	
5	74.2%	72.6%		68.9%	88.6%		64.9%	75.7%	
6	70.4%	88.6%		82.0%	85.2%		81.4%	89.7%	
7	89.6%	83.3%		79.1%	89.6%		79.3%	84.7%	
8	76.4%	87.3%		68.8%	89.4%		77.1%	89.4%	
Excel Charter Academy	**91.0%**	**85.5%**	**25.9%**	**90.9%**	**89.5%**	**29.4%**	**90.5%**	**89.8%**	**27.9%**
3	96.1%	87.0%		96.1%	90.8%		97.4%	89.7%	
4	98.6%	84.5%		96.1%	89.6%		91.0%	85.9%	
5	83.1%	77.5%		94.7%	96.0%		84.6%	92.3%	
6	96.0%	92.0%		82.7%	90.7%		91.5%	94.4%	
7	85.3%	89.0%		96.1%	82.7%		87.8%	87.5%	
8	86.6%	82.1%		77.9%	86.8%		90.8%	89.5%	
Flagship Charter Academy	**52.6%**	**47.8%**	**86.3%**	**70.5%**	**64.7%**	**90.1%**	**68.9%**	**65.1%**	**88.9%**
3	70.0%	60.8%		87.8%	74.3%		95.0%	66.3%	
4	44.1%	39.1%		88.3%	53.8%		82.5%	60.0%	
5	31.5%	32.1%		42.7%	61.8%		55.6%	71.6%	
6	58.0%	56.9%		61.5%	67.3%		59.0%	56.4%	
7	--	--		67.9%	69.8%		55.8%	61.5%	
8	--	--		--	--		56.6%	77.4%	
Forsyth Academy	**75.9%**	**63.3%**	**47.4%**	**81.8%**	**71.6%**	**52.6%**	**81.5%**	**66.4%**	**52.8%**
3	71.4%	65.7%		83.3%	58.4%		79.2%	62.3%	
4	68.7%	62.7%		69.6%	65.7%		71.6%	54.1%	
5	78.7%	51.7%		78.7%	78.3%		78.9%	68.0%	

6	72.2%	63.4%		87.7%	79.3%		89.7%	77.9%	
7	88.1%	67.2%		80.6%	74.3%		81.0%	75.4%	
8	77.6%	69.1%		91.3%	77.1%		89.9%	63.6%	
Fortis Academy	**85.3%**	**82.7%**	**28.4%**	**86.7%**	**87.5%**	**36.5%**	**90.1%**	**87.6%**	**43.3%**
3	96.1%	82.4%		93.8%	92.6%		97.5%	86.1%	
4	92.7%	81.5%		94.2%	79.6%		97.5%	89.9%	
5	70.2%	79.8%		83.1%	91.6%		81.5%	86.4%	
6	85.3%	86.5%		83.1%	94.0%		85.0%	87.5%	
7	87.0%	84.1%		89.6%	78.9%		92.6%	85.4%	
8	75.0%	82.7%		71.0%	90.3%		86.5%	90.4%	
Foundations Academy	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**75.5%**	**78.1%**	**8.4%**
3	--	--		--	--		79.3%	84.1%	
4	--	--		--	--		78.2%	72.7%	
5	--	--		--	--		67.3%	74.5%	
Great Oaks Academy	**71.5%**	**66.1%**	**55.5%**	**78.5%**	**75.1%**	**65.9%**	**79.6%**	**75.8%**	**74.1%**
3	90.0%	68.4%		88.0%	78.7%		91.3%	78.3%	
4	76.6%	70.3%		90.4%	73.6%		86.1%	70.3%	
5	58.0%	55.6%		77.2%	70.9%		78.3%	73.5%	
6	64.5%	66.2%		73.8%	74.1%		79.2%	75.6%	
7	74.1%	66.7%		80.3%	75.0%		76.9%	75.6%	
8	65.6%	71.4%		52.2%	80.4%		67.5%	81.8%	
Greensboro Academy	**94.0%**	**93.2%**	**5.0%**	**94.4%**	**92.1%**	**3.5%**	**94.2%**	**93.6%**	**3.5%**
3	82.7%	87.7%		88.9%	86.4%		95.1%	92.6%	
4	96.3%	96.2%		88.8%	88.9%		92.6%	88.9%	
5	92.6%	92.6%		93.8%	87.7%		86.3%	88.9%	
6	96.3%	96.3%		97.5%	96.2%		97.5%	98.7%	
7	98.8%	91.1%		98.7%	94.7%		98.8%	96.3%	
8	97.5%	95.1%		98.8%	98.8%		95.0%	96.3%	
Hamtramck Academy	**83.8%**	**75.1%**	**88.4%**	**86.1%**	**85.3%**	**90.0%**	**85.5%**	**77.2%**	**90.7%**
3	91.7%	80.0%		96.2%	82.6%		92.2%	78.0%	
4	88.1%	62.7%		87.7%	87.5%		91.8%	63.9%	

5	74.0%	71.4%		84.0%	81.3%		80.4%	89.1%	
6	78.0%	78.0%		90.0%	86.8%		88.2%	76.0%	
7	84.0%	74.0%		86.7%	87.5%		87.9%	81.8%	
8	84.8%	90.9%		66.7%	86.5%		71.1%	77.8%	
Inspire Charter Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	**39.7%**	**43.1%**	**87.1%**
3	--	--		--	--		49.4%	45.5%	
4	--	--		--	--		32.7%	50.0%	
5	--	--		--	--		29.5%	29.5%	
Keystone Academy	**90.8%**	**80.4%**	**13.8%**	**92.1%**	**91.4%**	**16.4%**	**90.8%**	**87.4%**	**18.9%**
3	97.4%	91.0%		96.2%	97.5%		97.5%	98.7%	
4	96.1%	76.3%		96.3%	90.0%		96.3%	86.3%	
5	86.7%	76.0%		86.3%	87.5%		93.8%	93.8%	
6	85.7%	77.9%		97.4%	87.2%		81.0%	76.3%	
7	96.1%	86.8%		79.5%	90.4%		94.7%	86.7%	
8	80.6%	72.6%		96.9%	96.9%		80.8%	82.2%	
Knapp Charter Academy	**91.0%**	**86.9%**	**38.6%**	**87.1%**	**91.4%**	**42.4%**	**89.0%**	**89.3%**	**40.9%**
3	93.3%	86.7%		100%	97.4%		97.6%	91.6%	
4	96.2%	83.3%		94.9%	88.6%		97.6%	90.4%	
5	90.4%	86.5%		83.5%	93.7%		82.9%	85.4%	
6	84.7%	86.1%		78.0%	95.5%		85.9%	92.3%	
7	91.4%	88.6%		85.2%	85.5%		85.7%	88.9%	
8	89.2%	90.8%		76.9%	86.4%		82.1%	86.6%	
Landmark Academy at Reunion	**69.5%**	**74.3%**	**6.9%**	**75.4%**	**79.2%**	**7.7%**	**69.9%**	**80.5%**	**8.7%**
3	77.2%	76.6%		82.3%	76.3%		75.0%	79.5%	
4	67.1%	68.1%		86.3%	74.4%		87.5%	77.5%	
5	64.3%	68.6%		73.3%	77.3%		76.3%	73.4%	
6	68.4%	86.0%		76.9%	90.9%		71.9%	90.6%	
7	--	--		44.4%	75.6%		44.1%	86.4%	
8	--	--		--	--		42.9%	77.1%	
Lansing Charter Academy	--	--	--	**77.4%**	**75.9%**	**56.1%**	**78.9%**	**72.4%**	**59.7%**
3	--	--		91.5%	85.4%		86.7%	71.1%	

4	--	--		62.5%	56.3%		75.5%	67.3%	
5	--	--		72.2%	80.6%		64.9%	64.9%	
6	--	--		--	--		85.2%	83.3%	
Laurus Academy	**71.6%**	**68.6%**	**46.8%**	**78.1%**	**84.4%**	**52.0%**	**78.4%**	**79.9%**	**58.3%**
3	84.6%	84.6%		93.2%	91.9%		94.7%	89.5%	
4	84.8%	56.4%		87.0%	83.3%		85.9%	84.6%	
5	64.1%	56.3%		70.8%	79.2%		65.4%	79.0%	
6	64.6%	71.1%		72.3%	86.2%		75.0%	77.6%	
7	70.4%	77.8%		71.2%	82.2%		84.2%	70.1%	
8	55.6%	64.2%		71.1%	82.6%		66.3%	78.8%	
Legacy Charter Academy	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**--**	**61.7%**	**51.1%**	**96.5%**
3	--	--		--	--		69.1%	38.2%	
4	--	--		--	--		67.8%	49.2%	
5	--	--		--	--		46.4%	68.4%	
Linden Charter Academy	**68.5%**	**66.1%**	**78.7%**	**80.3%**	**75.7%**	**78.9%**	**82.8%**	**79.9%**	**83.5%**
3	75.6%	75.3%		93.3%	80.2%		95.3%	77.9%	
4	81.9%	67.1%		95.1%	76.5%		92.2%	87.8%	
5	56.5%	64.7%		77.8%	81.5%		81.9%	91.7%	
6	75.6%	68.3%		90.4%	86.1%		79.1%	77.9%	
7	70.7%	58.5%		79.1%	59.3%		79.0%	74.1%	
8	49.3%	62.7%		46.3%	72.0%		67.5%	69.1%	
Metro Charter Academy	**87.6%**	**79.7%**	**40.6%**	**87.4%**	**84.7%**	**47.2%**	**87.9%**	**83.8%**	**46.2%**
3	98.8%	86.9%		97.6%	95.1%		97.5%	87.5%	
4	92.7%	73.2%		97.5%	91.4%		93.9%	90.4%	
5	86.5%	86.1%		79.8%	78.7%		80.5%	83.9%	
6	78.1%	69.0%		85.5%	81.6%		88.5%	81.6%	
7	80.0%	75.4%		85.7%	82.9%		89.6%	77.9%	
8	87.1%	87.1%		75.0%	76.7%		76.1%	80.6%	
North Dayton School of Discovery	**34.9%**	**43.0%**	**78.5%**	**37.9%**	**49.7%**	**82.3%**	**43.3%**	**58.4%**	**87.3%**
3	38.2%	42.9%		49.4%	53.1%		59.7%	51.8%	
4	34.3%	40.0%		47.1%	60.0%		53.2%	66.1%	

5	23.7%	34.5%		28.1%	31.3%		19.7%	43.9%	
6	39.7%	60.3%		46.7%	60.0%		48.1%	78.8%	
7	34.6%	30.8%		28.9%	53.3%		31.4%	40.0%	
8	37.9%	49.2%		16.3%	39.5%		38.9%	75.0%	
North Saginaw Charter Academy	**79.6%**	**77.6%**	**60.0%**	**78.0%**	**74.9%**	**69.3%**	**79.9%**	**75.0%**	**69.5%**
3	94.2%	86.5%		81.3%	80.6%		95.0%	88.5%	
4	80.3%	73.8%		91.9%	75.8%		80.0%	67.8%	
5	73.8%	85.0%		74.2%	73.4%		81.1%	87.0%	
6	75.6%	75.6%		85.9%	84.5%		85.5%	65.5%	
7	73.2%	63.4%		58.3%	58.3%		73.1%	69.2%	
8	79.6%	77.6%		65.7%	68.6%		58.1%	69.8%	
Orion Academy	**52.3%**	**51.0%**	**90.1%**	**60.9%**	**59.6%**	**93.2%**	**55.3%**	**56.1%**	**95.1%**
3	69.8%	62.1%		61.4%	50.6%		64.6%	52.9%	
4	40.0%	55.4%		68.9%	70.3%		55.1%	62.3%	
5	32.4%	18.9%		47.8%	45.7%		42.6%	42.6%	
6	60.5%	57.9%		72.7%	72.7%		54.5%	68.2%	
7	40.6%	37.5%		59.2%	65.3%		60.9%	47.8%	
8	56.0%	52.0%		50.0%	61.1%		56.5%	65.2%	
Paragon Charter Academy	**87.2%**	**83.2%**	**37.1%**	**82.9%**	**88.1%**	**41.0%**	**88.1%**	**87.1%**	**45.9%**
3	94.7%	92.1%		97.5%	93.8%		96.4%	94.0%	
4	93.2%	78.4%		98.6%	94.6%		97.4%	88.3%	
5	84.0%	79.0%		60.0%	75.0%		83.8%	89.7%	
6	87.0%	83.3%		78.1%	86.5%		78.5%	75.4%	
7	77.4%	78.8%		84.6%	85.0%		86.7%	80.0%	
8	81.8%	88.6%		67.4%	90.7%		78.0%	95.1%	
Paramount Charter Academy	**85.1%**	**80.1%**	**31.2%**	**86.5%**	**86.1%**	**32.8%**	**86.9%**	**84.9%**	**34.5%**
3	98.7%	83.3%		95.8%	88.9%		97.2%	94.4%	
4	95.0%	82.7%		96.2%	83.3%		92.5%	70.1%	
5	82.4%	81.1%		87.2%	92.3%		91.2%	89.6%	
6	76.5%	80.9%		80.8%	91.9%		81.0%	89.7%	
7	78.9%	72.9%		83.3%	77.4%		70.4%	85.2%	
8	74.5%	79.2%		71.7%	80.0%		81.8%	75.8%	

School / Grade									
Pathway School of Discovery	**74.1%**	**79.3%**	**39.3%**	**74.4%**	**78.4%**	**42.5%**	**75.0%**	**82.6%**	**46.8%**
3	80.5%	80.7%		77.3%	80.6%		81.4%	81.5%	
4	79.8%	85.7%		82.6%	82.6%		73.6%	90.8%	
5	60.5%	81.6%		73.0%	75.3%		61.2%	72.9%	
6	70.0%	73.8%		76.8%	80.5%		82.8%	90.8%	
7	75.9%	72.4%		64.9%	71.9%		81.2%	75.4%	
8	79.2%	79.2%		65.4%	76.9%		67.4%	82.6%	
Pinnacle Academy	**55.5%**	**60.6%**	**64.4%**	**50.3%**	**52.5%**	**69.3%**	**52.0%**	**56.1%**	**74.9%**
3	64.4%	64.9%		48.7%	46.7%		65.3%	63.3%	
4	50.0%	62.9%		41.0%	49.4%		39.7%	42.6%	
5	53.6%	53.6%		51.5%	34.8%		44.6%	42.2%	
6	42.9%	51.4%		61.7%	65.4%		67.1%	70.0%	
7	65.0%	63.3%		37.0%	58.0%		58.4%	59.7%	
8	58.2%	69.1%		70.0%	62.0%		38.5%	59.5%	
PreEminent Charter School	**51.4%**	**43.9%**	**50.2%**	**56.7%**	**46.1%**	**54.7%**	**62.9%**	**50.7%**	**60.7%**
3	62.1%	44.1%		55.8%	32.9%		54.9%	44.0%	
4	53.8%	43.1%		67.3%	58.2%		73.8%	52.5%	
5	41.5%	36.6%		47.5%	44.3%		56.1%	61.5%	
6	47.1%	48.5%		46.8%	55.1%		57.4%	57.7%	
7	51.9%	42.3%		57.1%	39.3%		70.7%	41.5%	
8	48.3%	46.4%		80.0%	65.0%		62.7%	47.1%	
Prevail Academy	**82.3%**	**79.6%**	**36.8%**	**78.6%**	**84.2%**	**45.8%**	**83.2%**	**79.8%**	**49.8%**
3	91.5%	83.1%		89.0%	85.4%		98.4%	90.3%	
4	87.8%	76.5%		82.5%	78.8%		91.7%	80.6%	
5	79.7%	76.8%		75.0%	85.7%		62.7%	68.7%	
6	81.2%	80.0%		81.3%	90.7%		84.2%	76.3%	
7	81.7%	81.7%		89.7%	84.8%		84.5%	77.1%	
8	60.0%	80.0%		46.7%	79.0%		78.4%	86.5%	
Queen's Grant Community School	**88.1%**	**83.4%**	**7.8%**	**87.7%**	**83.4%**	**8.4%**	**89.2%**	**83.9%**	**10.2%**
3	93.9%	80.5%		88.9%	83.5%		96.4%	90.4%	
4	88.8%	76.3%		86.9%	85.5%		93.7%	86.1%	

5	84.8%	89.9%		84.0%	77.8%		83.5%	84.8%	
6	86.1%	88.6%		88.6%	88.9%		85.7%	80.5%	
7	87.0%	80.5%		89.6%	79.5%		87.3%	79.7%	
8	88.0%	84.6%		88.5%	85.0%		88.2%	81.6%	
Quest Charter Academy	**--**	**--**	**--**	**78.3%**	**70.5%**	**57.3%**	**79.2%**	**71.7%**	**62.5%**
3	--	--		81.6%	75.5%		92.5%	72.8%	
4	--	--		90.5%	64.3%		83.1%	72.9%	
5	--	--		60.5%	71.1%		70.9%	72.7%	
6	--	--		--	--		62.3%	67.3%	
Reach Charter Academy	**66.4%**	**57.7%**	**45.7%**	**78.0%**	**83.1%**	**49.2%**	**76.3%**	**74.7%**	**53.7%**
3	75.0%	52.5%		87.7%	87.7%		92.5%	85.0%	
4	69.4%	55.6%		77.8%	73.6%		85.9%	70.6%	
5	56.5%	63.8%		67.2%	86.2%		53.1%	67.9%	
6	--	--		76.5%	86.3%		76.4%	81.8%	
7	--	--		--	--		72.4%	69.0%	
Research Triangle Charter Academy	**70.4%**	**56.2%**	**33.9%**	**75.1%**	**57.9%**	**33.9%**	**67.6%**	**61.6%**	**42.0%**
3	68.4%	45.6%		63.2%	54.5%		60.6%	58.3%	
4	74.2%	72.1%		74.7%	57.1%		65.8%	56.0%	
5	53.6%	49.3%		81.8%	66.2%		68.4%	74.7%	
6	73.2%	62.7%		62.5%	56.2%		60.0%	59.6%	
7	80.0%	65.0%		86.3%	62.0%		62.9%	54.1%	
8	77.4%	45.3%		92.0%	52.0%		100.0%	65.9%	
Ridge Park Charter Academy	**84.8%**	**80.3%**	**58.5%**	**87.1%**	**84.5%**	**63.9%**	**88.1%**	**82.6%**	**65.4%**
3	90.7%	74.0%		96.0%	85.3%		98.6%	90.0%	
4	85.0%	70.7%		90.8%	81.6%		94.5%	80.8%	
5	86.9%	80.3%		83.6%	87.7%		80.0%	81.5%	
6	82.4%	83.6%		83.6%	88.1%		82.2%	83.6%	
7	76.7%	93.0%		78.0%	79.3%		89.2%	80.0%	
8	83.3%	86.0%		88.6%	85.3%		84.2%	78.9%	

Riverton Street Charter School	--	--	--	--	--	--	**80.4%**	**49.0%**	**67.3%**
3	--	--		--	--		80.4%	49.0%	
South Arbor Charter Academy	**97.1%**	**94.9%**	**9.4%**	**95.9%**	**95.6%**	**13.2%**	**96.7%**	**95.5%**	**15.5%**
3	98.7%	97.4%		96.3%	87.7%		97.5%	96.3%	
4	98.8%	93.2%		97.5%	98.8%		95.1%	90.1%	
5	96.6%	94.4%		93.5%	97.8%		97.7%	97.7%	
6	93.8%	93.9%		97.8%	94.6%		97.7%	95.4%	
7	96.5%	92.9%		95.4%	96.6%		100.0%	97.8%	
8	98.6%	98.6%		95.2%	97.6%		91.6%	95.2%	
Southside Academy Charter School	**88.5%**	**75.1%**	**81.6%**	**50.9%**	**32.5%**	**82.9%**	**42.6%**	**27.0%**	**81.0%**
3	90.0%	68.1%		38.2%	27.9%		31.4%	27.1%	
4	89.3%	77.3%		57.5%	23.6%		47.9%	26.8%	
5	89.7%	80.8%		49.4%	35.8%		22.2%	20.8%	
6	80.0%	76.1%		58.6%	35.7%		62.2%	36.5%	
7	86.4%	81.8%		54.8%	42.9%		40.8%	22.5%	
8	93.8%	65.6%		38.9%	33.3%		58.8%	29.4%	
Stambaugh Charter Academy	**37.3%**	**48.8%**	**87.3%**	**39.4%**	**48.0%**	**89.9%**	**50.3%**	**64.5%**	**93.6%**
3	37.0%	35.5%		66.0%	57.9%		55.9%	66.7%	
4	53.4%	70.7%		61.3%	64.5%		80.0%	72.0%	
5	30.9%	34.5%		21.8%	20.0%		32.1%	49.1%	
6	23.0%	49.2%		41.7%	55.3%		44.7%	78.7%	
7	42.2%	54.7%		25.0%	43.8%		48.4%	62.5%	
8	--	--		17.9%	44.6%		39.6%	58.3%	
Taylor Exemplar Academy	**90.0%**	**79.5%**	**36.9%**	**89.2%**	**90.0%**	**41.5%**	**84.5%**	**85.7%**	**45.6%**
3	97.5%	92.5%		95.1%	91.5%		97.6%	94.0%	
4	91.0%	66.7%		97.5%	90.0%		85.3%	81.3%	
5	79.2%	76.6%		81.5%	91.5%		75.0%	86.9%	
6	96.2%	86.8%		87.3%	91.1%		82.9%	80.3%	
7	86.8%	75.5%		92.7%	94.5%		87.0%	84.4%	
8	--	--		77.6%	78.0%		76.0%	86.0%	

Timberland Charter Academy	**72.4%**	**52.0%**	**79.8%**	**70.7%**	**68.0%**	**82.4%**	**70.4%**	**63.9%**	**83.6%**
3	90.2%	70.6%		93.0%	89.5%		98.0%	75.5%	
4	73.2%	39.3%		81.0%	65.5%		84.6%	67.3%	
5	67.4%	58.1%		67.3%	61.8%		65.3%	73.5%	
6	63.8%	43.5%		66.7%	77.8%		65.4%	57.7%	
7	68.2%	44.2%		57.9%	52.6%		51.4%	54.1%	
8	68.4%	57.9%		46.3%	53.7%		47.4%	50.0%	
Triumph Academy	**80.2%**	**76.6%**	**33.6%**	**80.9%**	**86.4%**	**39.5%**	**85.8%**	**85.5%**	**42.2%**
3	92.1%	80.3%		94.6%	93.2%		93.8%	86.4%	
4	82.2%	79.5%		92.5%	82.5%		93.5%	84.4%	
5	80.3%	76.1%		64.8%	87.0%		82.7%	84.0%	
6	67.7%	70.8%		81.7%	87.3%		77.6%	87.9%	
7	79.5%	72.7%		72.7%	83.0%		86.4%	84.8%	
8	73.3%	80.0%		69.4%	83.3%		75.5%	85.7%	
Vanderbilt Charter Academy	**89.7%**	**81.7%**	**57.0%**	**89.3%**	**85.1%**	**60.9%**	**91.6%**	**83.9%**	**61.4%**
3	96.2%	94.2%		100%	96.2%		100.0%	92.3%	
4	94.2%	76.5%		97.9%	80.9%		94.6%	87.3%	
5	88.2%	82.4%		82.2%	90.9%		91.7%	87.5%	
6	82.5%	74.4%		81.4%	81.4%		84.1%	80.0%	
7	97.2%	88.6%		87.5%	74.2%		90.0%	77.5%	
8	76.9%	74.4%		81.3%	80.6%		81.0%	66.7%	
Vanguard Charter Academy	**90.8%**	**89.6%**	**30.3%**	**92.8%**	**94.6%**	**36.7%**	**93.2%**	**93.7%**	**37.2%**
3	98.7%	97.4%		98.6%	100.0%		100.0%	97.4%	
4	92.1%	81.8%		94.8%	96.1%		94.8%	91.0%	
5	90.7%	94.7%		90.5%	97.3%		85.7%	94.8%	
6	92.3%	92.2%		94.7%	94.7%		92.1%	93.5%	
7	90.7%	87.8%		94.6%	92.0%		94.9%	94.9%	
8	78.5%	82.8%		82.4%	86.8%		91.5%	90.1%	
Vista Charter Academy	**76.1%**	**70.4%**	**73.5%**	**79.6%**	**78.1%**	**74.5%**	**81.9%**	**82.1%**	**74.8%**
3	94.5%	87.3%		94.0%	91.6%		96.3%	82.7%	
4	94.9%	68.4%		90.4%	75.9%		90.1%	82.7%	
5	64.8%	64.3%		81.0%	68.4%		75.3%	91.5%	

6	65.8%	71.8%		70.0%	83.8%		81.9%	77.1%	
7	76.7%	65.3%		72.6%	76.2%		85.9%	74.0%	
8	58.0%	65.2%		62.7%	69.8%		62.7%	84.1%	
Walker Charter Academy	**92.5%**	**91.9%**	**22.8%**	**90.4%**	**93.3%**	**26.5%**	**92.0%**	**91.5%**	**29.1%**
3	95.0%	90.0%		97.5%	97.5%		98.8%	95.1%	
4	97.5%	88.9%		92.4%	88.6%		96.3%	90.1%	
5	86.3%	91.8%		83.1%	95.7%		79.0%	92.6%	
6	92.4%	91.1%		83.3%	90.3%		91.3%	88.8%	
7	92.8%	97.1%		95.7%	91.3%		93.2%	89.0%	
8	90.0%	93.3%		89.6%	97.0%		93.8%	93.8%	
Walton Charter Academy	**75.1%**	**76.2%**	**61.6%**	**77.9%**	**80.0%**	**70.0%**	**77.3%**	**80.1%**	**72.5%**
3	93.8%	75.0%		94.0%	81.0%		91.4%	86.3%	
4	76.5%	70.1%		91.5%	81.0%		82.6%	69.9%	
5	72.0%	80.5%		66.7%	72.2%		67.4%	86.0%	
6	66.7%	77.5%		75.9%	79.3%		80.5%	75.6%	
7	85.9%	81.8%		81.5%	82.7%		78.8%	83.5%	
8	55.7%	72.2%		57.5%	84.0%		63.4%	79.3%	
Warrendale Charter Academy	**66.3%**	**62.7%**	**74.9%**	**66.9%**	**72.9%**	**82.8%**	**72.5%**	**77.3%**	**88.7%**
3	85.9%	71.8%		92.4%	78.5%		94.9%	81.3%	
4	74.3%	48.6%		74.1%	65.4%		84.0%	84.0%	
5	39.7%	59.2%		59.3%	69.5%		51.3%	77.5%	
6	61.8%	53.3%		55.8%	71.4%		79.0%	75.6%	
7	78.9%	77.6%		65.8%	72.2%		68.7%	75.9%	
8	56.9%	65.3%		54.3%	80.2%		57.0%	69.6%	
Windemere Park Charter Academy	**83.7%**	**80.0%**	**33.2%**	**82.5%**	**86.1%**	**43.4%**	**86.7%**	**86.5%**	**42.8%**
3	96.1%	80.3%		98.6%	87.8%		97.3%	97.3%	
4	90.8%	78.9%		88.9%	84.7%		92.1%	85.5%	
5	84.4%	76.6%		75.3%	88.3%		81.3%	88.0%	
6	62.3%	71.4%		83.1%	92.3%		83.8%	82.4%	
7	89.6%	87.0%		74.6%	76.7%		88.7%	77.4%	
8	78.1%	87.3%		71.9%	85.7%		70.5%	86.4%	

Winterfield Venture Academy	59.1%	68.9%	63.1%	57.1%	69.5%	73.7%	50.7%	59.3%	78.1%
3	73.3%	68.8%		55.3%	70.0%		53.9%	52.9%	
4	70.3%	71.9%		55.7%	64.6%		58.0%	65.2%	
5	36.4%	62.1%		43.4%	50.9%		31.9%	47.2%	
6	57.7%	71.2%		78.0%	82.0%		59.5%	66.7%	
7	45.5%	68.2%		62.3%	77.4%		58.1%	58.1%	
8	77.3%	77.3%		47.2%	77.8%		50.0%	76.1%	

b. **Provide state assessment results for the district in which the school is located**.

EMO District Comparison

Academic Year	NHA School Name	Comparison District Name	Subject	NHA % Proficient	Comparison District % Proficient
2010-11	Achieve Charter Academy	Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	Math	95.9%	94.8%
2010-11	Achieve Charter Academy	Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	Reading	95.4%	91.8%
2010-11	Alliance Academy of Cincinnati	Cincinnati City	Math	52.7%	62.1%
2010-11	Alliance Academy of Cincinnati	Cincinnati City	Reading	63.3%	68.4%
2010-11	Andrew J Brown Academy	Indianapolis Public Schools	ELA	69.5%	56.2%
2010-11	Andrew J Brown Academy	Indianapolis Public Schools	Math	78.8%	57.9%
2010-11	Apex Academy	East Cleveland City School District	Math	46.7%	38.9%
2010-11	Apex Academy	East Cleveland City School District	Reading	62.6%	54.8%
2010-11	Aspire Charter Academy	Gary Community School Corp	ELA	53.3%	63.9%
2010-11	Aspire Charter Academy	Gary Community School Corp	Math	55.1%	59.4%
2010-11	Atlanta Heights Charter School	Atlanta Public Schools	ELA	74.1%	84.3%
2010-11	Atlanta Heights Charter School	Atlanta Public Schools	Math	59.3%	71.3%
2010-11	Atlanta Heights Charter School	Atlanta Public Schools	Reading	75.3%	83.1%
2010-11	Bennett Venture Academy	Toledo City	Math	57.3%	55.9%
2010-11	Bennett Venture Academy	Toledo City	Reading	70.1%	66.8%
2010-11	Burton Glen Charter Academy	Flint City School District	Math	73.1%	68.7%
2010-11	Burton Glen Charter Academy	Flint City School District	Reading	72.5%	62.0%
2010-11	Canton Charter Academy	Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	Math	97.3%	94.4%
2010-11	Canton Charter Academy	Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	Reading	96.7%	91.5%
2010-11	Chandler Woods Charter Academy	Rockford Public Schools	Math	96.3%	93.9%
2010-11	Chandler Woods Charter Academy	Rockford Public Schools	Reading	93.8%	93.1%
2010-11	Cross Creek Charter Academy	Byron Center Public Schools	Math	96.5%	94.6%
2010-11	Cross Creek Charter Academy	Byron Center Public Schools	Reading	94.9%	93.2%
2010-11	Detroit Enterprise Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	78.6%	65.0%
2010-11	Detroit Enterprise Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	73.2%	62.1%
2010-11	Detroit Merit Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	87.6%	65.0%
2010-11	Detroit Merit Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	87.1%	62.1%
2010-11	Detroit Premier Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	81.2%	65.0%
2010-11	Detroit Premier Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	73.5%	62.1%
2010-11	Eagle Crest Charter Academy	West Ottawa Public School District	Math	96.4%	88.6%
2010-11	Eagle Crest Charter Academy	West Ottawa Public School District	Reading	96.1%	87.5%
2010-11	Emerson Academy	Dayton City	Math	62.4%	44.6%
2010-11	Emerson Academy	Dayton City	Reading	66.4%	55.4%
2010-11	Endeavor Charter Academy	Battle Creek Public Schools	Math	82.5%	77.8%
2010-11	Endeavor Charter Academy	Battle Creek Public Schools	Reading	84.0%	70.0%
2010-11	Excel Charter Academy	Kentwood Public Schools	Math	90.5%	86.7%
2010-11	Excel Charter Academy	Kentwood Public Schools	Reading	89.8%	86.4%
2010-11	Flagship Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	68.9%	65.0%
2010-11	Flagship Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	65.1%	62.1%
2010-11	Forsyth Academy	Forsyth County Schools	Math	81.3%	81.9%
2010-11	Forsyth Academy	Forsyth County Schools	Reading	65.2%	67.7%
2010-11	Fortis Academy	Ann Arbor Public Schools	Math	90.1%	93.6%
2010-11	Fortis Academy	Ann Arbor Public Schools	Reading	87.6%	91.7%
2010-11	Foundations Academy	BRIGHTON 27J	Math	96.4%	92.1%
2010-11	Foundations Academy	BRIGHTON 27J	Reading	97.4%	89.8%

2010-11	Great Oaks Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	79.6%	65.0%
2010-11	Great Oaks Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	75.8%	62.1%
2010-11	Greensboro Academy	Guilford County Schools	Math	93.2%	81.9%
2010-11	Greensboro Academy	Guilford County Schools	Reading	92.7%	68.4%
2010-11	Hamtramck Academy	Hamtramck Public Schools	Math	85.5%	71.1%
2010-11	Hamtramck Academy	Hamtramck Public Schools	Reading	77.2%	61.1%
2010-11	Keystone Academy	Van Buren Public Schools	Math	90.8%	81.8%
2010-11	Keystone Academy	Van Buren Public Schools	Reading	87.4%	78.6%
2010-11	Knapp Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Math	89.0%	68.8%
2010-11	Knapp Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Reading	89.3%	65.4%
2010-11	Landmark Academy at Reunion	BRIGHTON 27J	Math	93.8%	87.5%
2010-11	Landmark Academy at Reunion	BRIGHTON 27J	Reading	95.5%	89.6%
2010-11	Lansing Charter Academy	Lansing Public School District	Math	78.9%	79.3%
2010-11	Lansing Charter Academy	Lansing Public School District	Reading	72.4%	76.7%
2010-11	Laurus Academy	Southfield Public School District	Math	78.4%	78.4%
2010-11	Laurus Academy	Southfield Public School District	Reading	79.9%	77.0%
2010-11	Legacy Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	61.7%	71.4%
2010-11	Legacy Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	51.1%	66.1%
2010-11	Linden Charter Academy	Flint City School District	Math	82.8%	68.7%
2010-11	Linden Charter Academy	Flint City School District	Reading	79.9%	62.0%
2010-11	Metro Charter Academy	Romulus Community Schools	Math	87.9%	78.1%
2010-11	Metro Charter Academy	Romulus Community Schools	Reading	83.8%	73.5%
2010-11	North Dayton	Dayton City	Math	44.9%	44.6%
2010-11	North Dayton	Dayton City	Reading	60.4%	55.4%
2010-11	North Saginaw Charter Academy	Saginaw City School District	Math	79.9%	74.6%
2010-11	North Saginaw Charter Academy	Saginaw City School District	Reading	75.0%	72.1%
2010-11	Orion Academy	Cincinnati City	Math	57.8%	62.1%
2010-11	Orion Academy	Cincinnati City	Reading	58.7%	68.4%
2010-11	Paragon Charter Academy	Jackson Public Schools	Math	88.1%	77.8%
2010-11	Paragon Charter Academy	Jackson Public Schools	Reading	87.1%	73.1%
2010-11	Paramount Charter Academy	Kalamazoo Public School District	Math	86.9%	75.9%
2010-11	Paramount Charter Academy	Kalamazoo Public School District	Reading	84.9%	72.9%
2010-11	Pathway School of Discovery	Dayton City	Math	77.0%	44.6%
2010-11	Pathway School of Discovery	Dayton City	Reading	84.7%	55.4%
2010-11	Pinnacle Academy	Euclid City	Math	53.5%	51.0%
2010-11	Pinnacle Academy	Euclid City	Reading	57.5%	62.0%
2010-11	PreEminent Charter	Wake County Schools	Math	62.6%	85.2%
2010-11	PreEminent Charter	Wake County Schools	Reading	49.7%	76.2%
2010-11	Prevail Academy	Mt. Clemens Community District	Math	83.2%	75.6%
2010-11	Prevail Academy	Mt. Clemens Community District	Reading	79.8%	69.6%
2010-11	Queen's Grant Community	Union County Public Schools	Math	88.3%	91.4%
2010-11	Queen's Grant Community	Union County Public Schools	Reading	82.3%	82.0%
2010-11	Quest Charter Academy	Taylor School District	Math	79.2%	85.0%
2010-11	Quest Charter Academy	Taylor School District	Reading	71.7%	78.0%
2010-11	Reach Charter Academy	East Detroit Public Schools	Math	76.3%	76.1%
2010-11	Reach Charter Academy	East Detroit Public Schools	Reading	74.7%	73.6%
2010-11	Research Triangle Charter	Durham Public Schools	Math	66.5%	70.4%
2010-11	Research Triangle Charter	Durham Public Schools	Reading	61.0%	55.8%
2010-11	Ridge Park Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Math	88.1%	68.8%
2010-11	Ridge Park Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Reading	82.6%	65.4%

2010-11	South Arbor Charter Academy	Ann Arbor Public Schools	Math	96.7%	93.6%
2010-11	South Arbor Charter Academy	Ann Arbor Public Schools	Reading	95.5%	91.7%
2010-11	Stambaugh Charter Academy	Youngstown City Schools	Math	51.2%	42.8%
2010-11	Stambaugh Charter Academy	Youngstown City Schools	Reading	65.7%	55.7%
2010-11	Taylor Exemplar Academy	Taylor School District	Math	84.5%	79.7%
2010-11	Taylor Exemplar Academy	Taylor School District	Reading	85.7%	74.7%
2010-11	Timberland Academy	Muskegon City School District	Math	70.4%	72.4%
2010-11	Timberland Academy	Muskegon City School District	Reading	63.9%	68.1%
2010-11	Triumph Academy	Monroe Public Schools	Math	85.8%	80.7%
2010-11	Triumph Academy	Monroe Public Schools	Reading	85.5%	79.2%
2010-11	Vanderbilt Charter Academy	Holland City School District	Math	91.6%	83.9%
2010-11	Vanderbilt Charter Academy	Holland City School District	Reading	83.9%	81.9%
2010-11	Vanguard Charter Academy	Wyoming Public Schools	Math	93.2%	84.2%
2010-11	Vanguard Charter Academy	Wyoming Public Schools	Reading	93.7%	82.1%
2010-11	Vista Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Math	81.9%	68.8%
2010-11	Vista Charter Academy	Grand Rapids Public Schools	Reading	82.1%	65.4%
2010-11	Walker Charter Academy	Kenowa Hills Public Schools	Math	92.0%	85.6%
2010-11	Walker Charter Academy	Kenowa Hills Public Schools	Reading	91.5%	86.2%
2010-11	Walton Charter Academy	Pontiac City School District	Math	77.3%	67.5%
2010-11	Walton Charter Academy	Pontiac City School District	Reading	80.1%	60.3%
2010-11	Warrendale Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Math	72.5%	65.0%
2010-11	Warrendale Charter Academy	Detroit City School District	Reading	77.3%	62.1%
2010-11	Windemere Park Charter Academy	Lansing Public School District	Math	86.7%	72.1%
2010-11	Windemere Park Charter Academy	Lansing Public School District	Reading	86.5%	70.5%
2010-11	Winterfield Venture Academy	Toledo City	Math	53.4%	55.9%
2010-11	Winterfield Venture Academy	Toledo City	Reading	61.1%	66.8%

c. **Please provide answers to the following questions:**

i. **Does the EMO have performance goals for schools it supports? If so what are they?**

Aspire's management partner, NHA, has defined the following goal areas for the schools it supports: 1) Academic Proficiency; 2) Academic Growth; 3) Strong instructional team; 4) Full enrollment; 5) Manage Expenses; 6) Engage Stakeholders.

ii. **What is the role of the EMO in cases where a school does not meet the academic performance goals?**

NHA is accountable for the academic performance of Aspire and knows that it must not relent in its commitment to strategically invest in the needed instructional personnel, and organizational, academic and financial resources to help each child become college ready. If the school does not meet its goals, additional resources are invested in the school, including additional personnel, professional development, supplies, materials, or other resources based on the specific need(s) of the school.

iii. **Have any schools under the EMO's management been closed or not renewed? If yes, please explain. What states were they in and what year did it occur?**

Since 1995, NHA has partnered with a total of 72 charter schools. Seventy-one of these schools maintain their partnership with NHA and are currently operating. One NHA-partner school, Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School, was not

renewed in 2005. The school was closed by its authorizer (the State University of NY Board of Trustees, or SUNY) because it failed to meet, over the term of the charter, the educational achievement benchmarks agreed upon by NHA, the school's board, and the authorizer.

Specifically, SUNY's Charter School Institute said:
"Overall, then, the Institute finds that the *personnel, programs and structures* in place, in quantity or quality, while having improved from the level they were at in the first four years of the charter, are not sufficient in terms of quantity or quality to make it likely that the school would meet its Accountability Plan goals—or make significant and consistent progress towards them—if the school were given more time." (Report to Board of Trustees, Feb. 18, 2005).

The closure provided powerful transformational lessons for NHA and led to today's far more rigorous, student achievement focused school quality processes. NHA is a significantly different organization today because of the following changes, instituted in the aftermath of Rochester Leadership:

A. **School Quality –** NHA critically evaluated people and people systems. Lessons from that experience led to four operational model changes:
   - Principal is the instructional leader (gives frequent feedback to teachers and observes classrooms often).
   - Principal support processes established (Director of School Quality, or DSQ, was added): these directors coach and mentor the principal, monitor the school for progress and success, and serve as major resource and reservoirs of experience. DSQ visits occur at least monthly.
   - Board support: Each partner board receives more and clearer information and more regular interaction with its board relations liaison.
   - School management has now been refined to utilize Core Leadership Teams that consist of a principal and three deans, each with responsibility over a group of grades. A fourth senior leader focuses solely on the school's Intensive Learning Program.
   - Under this distributed leadership model, the principal will only manage, at most, 10 employees; and every member of the Core Leadership Team will also manage no more than 10 employees.

B. **Monitoring –** NHA instituted a robust process to monitor instruction and school culture:
   - Principals visit classrooms regularly.
   - At a minimum, DSQs visit the school on two consecutive days each month.
   - NHA hired a third-party evaluator to ensure that the most rigorous internal review process was established to meet and exceed outside reviewers expectations.
   - A system of 11 "Simple Rules" was created and instituted as the basis for school operations. These rules cover everything from how teachers and student treat each other to protocols for teacher mentorship and principles for parent engagement.

C. **Use of Data –** NHA is a data driven organization:
- Created a Department of Measurement, Research and Accountability that analyzes formative and summative assessment data for each child in each grade. Information is utilized to inform classroom instruction. Regular dashboards are created for each school.
- NHA now rigorously uses two or more sources for to inform instructional practice: existing local or state assessment processes, NWEA, and internal teacher assessment.
- NHA disaggregates data to student level (what topics are students mastering; what topics need more instruction; is the teaching method successful for this topic or standard, or should it be adjusted; are the free and reduced lunch student progressing as well as the others).

Key results are as follows:
- NHA continues to partner with 71 schools in some of America's neediest communities in Atlanta, East Baton Rouge, Detroit, Milwaukee, New York City, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana and Colorado. NHA's schools serve more than 44,700 students, more than 60% of which qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program.
- New York authorizers have recognized NHA schools for meeting their goals:
  - Brooklyn Excelsior and Buffalo United Charter Schools have merited full five-year renewals from SUNY – the same authorizer that closed Rochester Leadership.
  - Southside Academy Charter School (Syracuse, NY) has been renewed twice by the New York State Board of Regents.
  - The NYC Department of Education authorized Brooklyn Scholars Charter School, which opened in East New York (Brooklyn) in September 2009, and Riverton Street Charter School, which opened in Queens in September 2010.
  - The SUNY Board of Trustees approved Brooklyn Dreams Charter School for a needy area in Flatbush. Brooklyn Dreams opened in September 2010.
- For the past three years, NHA has averaged in the top quartile of the nation's public schools based on the percentage of students who met or exceeded typical academic growth.

iv. **Has the EMO ever been terminated by a school? If yes, please provide details.**

No.

v. **Has the EMO ever been sued by one of its schools? If yes, please provide details.**

Yes, on one occasion. Following the closing of Rochester Leadership Academy Charter School, the school board filed suit in New York state court against NHA. The parties agreed to private mediation of the dispute and a confidential resolution was reached between the parties.

1. Explain the unique need for this particular school in the community it serves and the target student population.

Aspire serves a high academically at-risk and high poverty student population in West Gary. New students enroll at Aspire with very low levels of proficiency and ninety percent (90.1% in fall 2011) of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch. The school's mission is to offer the families of Gary with a high quality education that emphasizes the learning of core academic knowledge and foundational character values. Families residing in Gary are in need of educational options. As illustrated below, the Gary Community School Corporation's academic performance over time is in need of improvement.

Corporation Name	2011 PL221 Category	2010 PL221 Category	2008 PL221 Category	2007 PL221 Category	2006 PL221 Category	2005 PL221 Category
Gary Community School Corp	F (Probation)	Watch	Probation	Probation	Probation	Probation

Aspire provides the families of Gary with an educational option that would not otherwise be available. Students attending Aspire are growing and receiving individualized academic services that they would not otherwise receive in the Gary Community School Corporation.

2. What are the strengths of this charter school? *(Identify the strengths in each of the five (5) areas of the Performance Accountability Framework.)*
  a) High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Aspire has identified the following high academic attainment and improvement strengths:
  - Improvement on ISTEP+: Since the school opened in fall 2008, student performance on the ISTEP+ has improved in grades 3 and 4. Consider the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
ELA	3	37.1%	40.3%	48.6%	60.3%
ELA	4	44.4%	43.1%	46.7%	67.1%
Math	3	17.1%	34.7%	32.4%	62.0%
Math	4	33.3%	37.3%	26.7%	43.8%

  - Additionally, performance on ISTEP+ has improved for all grades in all subjects over time as evidenced in the chart below.

ISTEP+ Proficiency					
(All Students Tested)					
Subject	Grade	2008-09F	2008-09(S)	2009-10	2010-11
All Subjects	All Grades	33.2%	36.2%	39.5%	47.6%

- The school's category designation according to PL221 has improved year over year.

PL221 Data	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12 (YTD)
Performance	n/a year 1	42.80%	55.4%	n/a
Improvement	n/a year 1	1.90%	5.90%	n/a
Category	n/a year 1	Academic probation	Academic Progress	n/a

- Early results from Aspire's new intervention program demonstrate strong academic growth. Consider the following recent NWEA growth data between fall 2011 and Winter 2012:

Subject	% Students Meeting Typical Growth	Rate of Growth
Math	65.9%	140.0%
Reading	62.9%	160.0%

b) **Responsive Educational Program and Environment**

In addition to the school's strong educational program, detailed in question 3, Aspire also benefits from the strength of its newly implemented response to intervention program.

In order to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met, Aspire Charter Academy implemented a research-based response to intervention program in fall 2011 which includes a three-tier approach to intervention. This program was selected because it is a proactive and highly responsive approach to addressing student learning needs. The program allows teachers to make appropriate adaptations or modifications in order to meet the needs of all students—including those who may initially struggle with demonstrating proficiency on administered norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments.

Aspire's intervention program is described more fully in question 4.

c) **Responsible School Leadership, Governance, and Management**

School leadership, governance, and overall management is strong at Aspire. As public stewards of the school and holders of the charter, the Board operates as a strong, visible, and accessible governing entity that is focused on results and accountability. The Board holds regular public meetings, where it conducts the school's general business, including reviewing policy issues and approving the budget.

At each meeting, the principal provides a Principal's Report on such areas as academics, organizational matters, financial matters and other key issues as they arise. Specifically, the principal reports on student performance that show trends on such items as state assessments, NWEA assessments, enrollment, student attendance, student discipline, at-risk student populations, special education, parent satisfaction results, and parent-teacher conference attendance. The Board uses this data to assess the school's progress towards the goals specified in its charter. All of these data components help the Board effectively govern

the school and ensure that NHA and the leadership team of Aspire are maintaining a positive environment conducive to students' academic and social growth.

d) Financial Sustainability and Internal Controls

Through its partnership with NHA, the school is financially viable. NHA prepares an annual budget for Aspire that is based on conservative, yet realistic, assumptions based on the experience NHA has with managing budgets for the schools is serves. Pursuant to its service agreement with NHA, the school does not hold any debt. Any shortfalls in revenue or overages in expenses are covered by NHA.

Additionally, controls are in place to ensure the school continues to remain financially viable. The following are examples of these controls:
- The Board reviews and approves the school budget three times per year.
- The Board reviews financial statements at least quarterly.
- The school receives a financial audit through an independent CPA once per year.

e) Strong Culture and Supportive Relationships

Aspire students benefit from a strong school culture and supportive relationships. Aspire provides students and staff with a safe, caring and nurturing environment. Fostering the growth of a positive school culture is an integral component to the success of the school and its policies and practices create a high level of accountability for individual behaviors. This in turn creates a safe and orderly environment which includes strong relationships based on trust and accountability that opens the path to student learning. A shared responsibility allows all members of the school to focus on learning by creating a climate and culture that is rigorous and engaging.

Examples include:
- Capturing Kids Hearts: The Capturing Kids Hearts program at Aspire provides staff with the tools to:
    - develop safe, trusting, self-managing classrooms;
    - improve classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance;
    - decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, drug use and other risky behavior;
    - utilize the EXCEL Model™ and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching; and
    - develop students' empathy for diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Moral Focus Curriculum: Teaching virtues is integral to the development of Aspire students. The curriculum includes explicit, integrated character development. This component of the curriculum, which is labeled Moral Focus, identifies the skills, behaviors, character traits, and virtues that students need to apply their academic learning as citizens and to be successful learners in high school and college. A comprehensive character development approach, drawing from both the *Smart & Good*

Schools Initiative[13] and the Greek Cardinal Virtues, is focused through the study of moral character, performance character, and social character.

- Bully Prevention Program: The Bully Prevention program at Aspire provides staff with the tools to:
    - Create a positive classroom and school climate
    - Provide adult leadership and active teacher/staff involvement
    - Encourage and motivate student involvement
    - Teach students skills to deal with bullying, problem solving, and making and keeping friends
    - Involve parents and the community in the anti-bullying program
    - Provide adult supervision in bully-prone locations and settings
    - Identify interventions for chronic victims and bullies.

Parent involvement in the school is strong. Parents are in the building daily and support the school's academic and behavior expectations. Parents regularly participate in Parent Nights, monthly coffee with the principal, and many other activities. Aspire has provided parents with training on the following topics:

- Creating an overall awareness that families are welcomed and valued at school.
- Understanding the teacher's job; increased comfort in school interactions and carryover of school activities at home.
- Developing self-confidence in the ability to work in school and with children, or take steps for own education or work (basic skills courses in Reading and Math, GED).
- Understanding school programs and policies.
- Monitoring and awareness of child's progress.
- Interacting with teachers and how to effectively communicate with school and teachers.

The school's staff relationships are also strong. Each week, staff recognizes their peers for positive contributions to the school environment and the leadership team identifies a teacher each week to recognize at staff meetings. There are monthly staff outings and team building activities that enhance the working relationships at Aspire.

3. **Discuss the organizational challenges you have overcome during this charter period.**

Aspire's biggest organizational challenge during the term of the charter period was addressing the academic needs of its at-risk students in a systematic way. Aspire is pleased with the academic gains students have made, but not yet satisfied. The school is confident that the implementation of its response to intervention program will provide Aspire with the tools needed to continually improve student performance. This research-based program was selected because it is a proactive and highly responsive approach to addressing student learning needs. The program allows teachers to make appropriate adaptations or modifications in a systematic way and ensures that the academic needs of all students are met.

4. **What changes have been or will be made as a result of your data analysis of the charter school's academic, financial and administrative performance?**

After reviewing all available data, Aspire has identified the following areas for improvement:

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[13] See Matthew Davidson and Thomas Lickona, *Smart & Good High Schools: Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work, and Beyond* (Cortland, NY: Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, 2005). Respect and Responsibility / Washington D.C.: Character Education Partnership.

- Overall proficiency levels: While the school is closing the gap with the district, overall proficiency rates are still below expectations. Aspire has also identified overall proficiency in grades 5 and 6 as a particular opportunity for improvement.
- English language arts: Aspire is focused on English language arts proficiency as an area for improvement. Specifically, the area of writing and informational text.

In order to improve in these areas, Aspire will continue to focus its efforts on implementation of the following two key initiatives:
- Initiative #1 - Response to Intervention: Implement the school's research-based intervention program in reading and mathematics, utilizing supplemental tools such as Wireless Generation's mClass DIBELS Next, Burst Reading, and mClass mathematics, as well as Math in a Nutshell and Literacy Navigator.
- Initiative #2 - Use of Data: Analysis of data from the school's comprehensive assessment system will continue. Aspire staff will drill down on all available data and adjust its instructional approach to ensure all students are achieving at high levels.

There will be no changes to the school's financial or administrative practices.

5. **Name the areas in which the charter school needs to improve, and briefly address how the changes proposed in the application address those areas.**

Aspire has identified the following areas for improvement:
- Overall proficiency levels: While the school is closing the gap with the district, overall proficiency rates are still below expectations. Aspire has also identified overall proficiency in grades 5 and 6 as a particular opportunity for improvement.
- English language arts: Aspire is focused on English language arts proficiency as an area for improvement. Specifically, the area of writing and informational text.

The schools educational program, assessment system, and intervention program, as described in questions 3 and 4, will directly address the need for improvement in these areas.

6. **What barriers to success exist and how do you anticipate overcoming them?**

As with any new program, staff acceptance and consistent execution of Aspire's new intervention program will be the key to success. Aspire believes that staff understanding and the provision of staff incentives are key to ensuring staff acceptance and implementation of the new program. As such, the school hired a dedicated Academic Intervention Coach (AIC) to manage the program. The AIC provides ongoing professional development and coaching for staff working with the intervention program. Professional development for staff includes the reasons for selecting the program and understanding how it will impact student attainment.

The AIC also ensures the faithful execution of the program, including the provision of consistent student services and ongoing progress monitoring. The AIC is a member of the school's leadership team and ensures intervention services are coordinated with the school's general education program.

To further address staff acceptance, Aspire has intentionally invested a portion of its federal Title II-A grant funds in performance-based bonuses for teachers who demonstrate high academic gains in the classroom. These supplemental funds are intended to reward and retain high quality and high performing teachers who accelerate student performance.