

## I. Executive Summary

### A. Enrollment and Demographic Overview

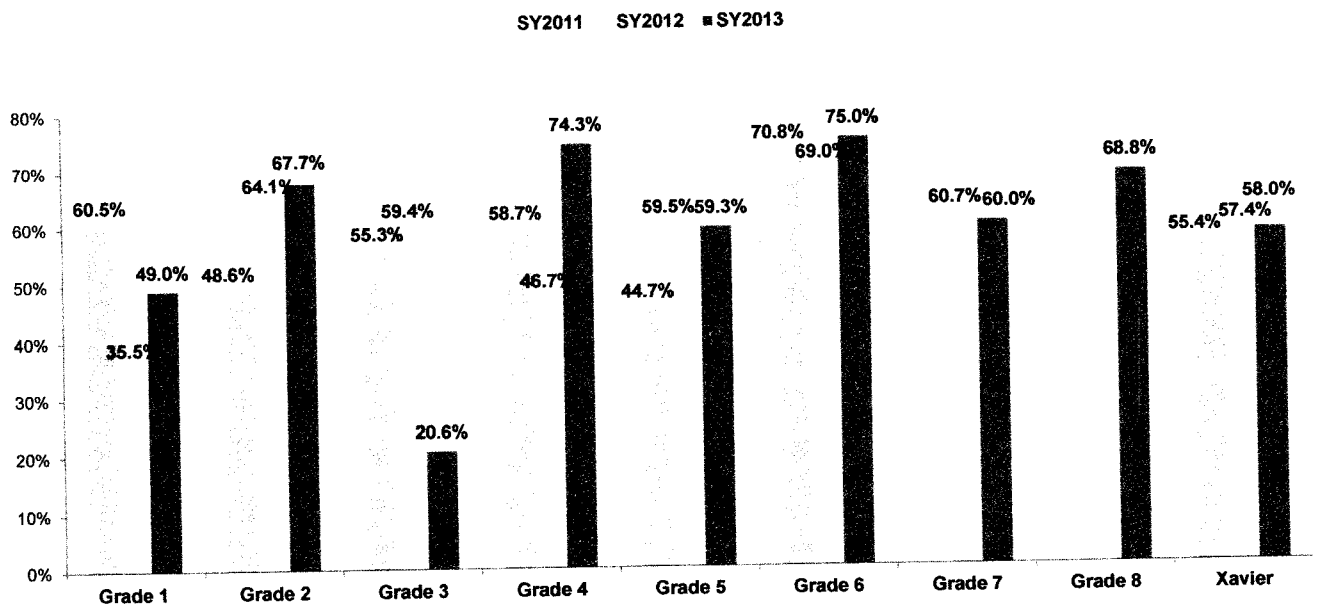
- No change from prior submission.

### B. Academic Performance Overview

- No change of ISTEP data from prior submission.

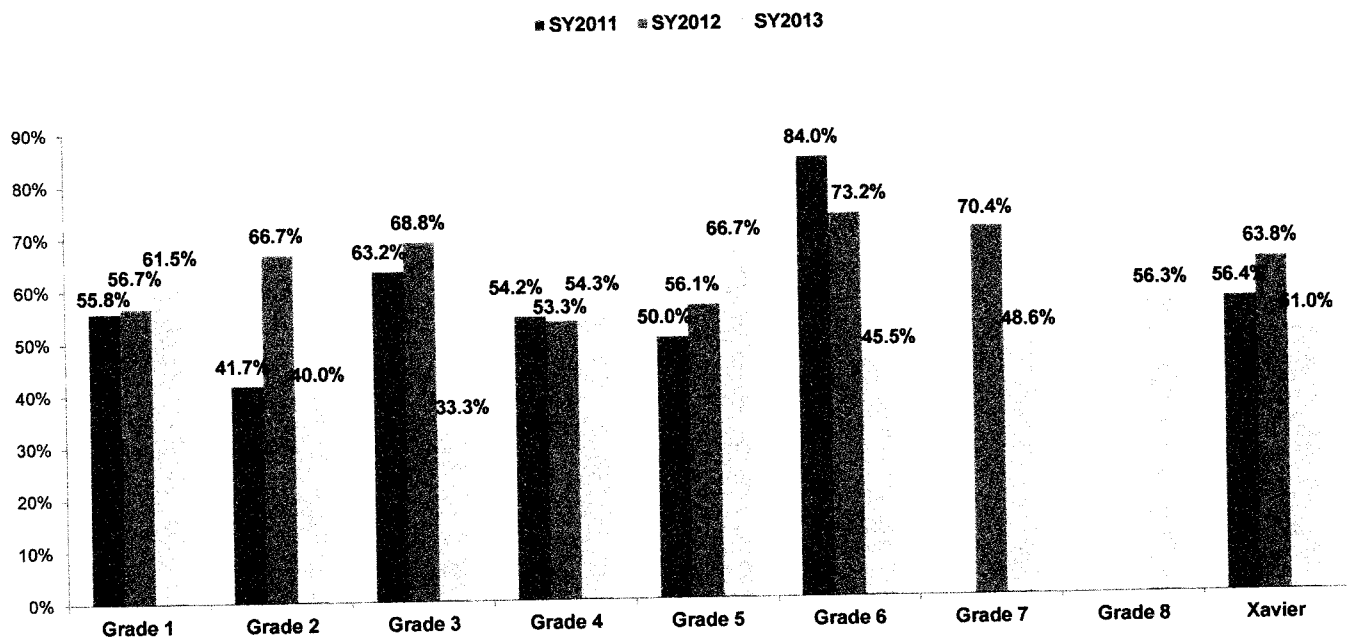
The following chart shows the percentage of students meeting targeted growth in reading performance on NWEA for the last three years. Of note, many grade levels made the greatest growth in 2013 which confirms our belief that Indiana's problems with ISTEP technology contributed to our school's lower than expected performance. NWEA data is evidence that our students' performance is increasing. The last column shows that over all, our schools' growth in meeting our reading targets has increased each year.

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress  
**Percentage of Students Meeting Individual Growth Projection (Target)**  
**READING**



More than half of our students are meeting expected growth targets in math. The following graph shows that students in grades 1 and 5 have continued to improve each year. We were especially pleased with the growth shown in nearly every grade level in 2012, and we believe that we can replicate that growth. By using individual student data to provide additional support to each student in their areas of weakness, we are confident that there will be continued increase of students meeting their targeted growth projections.

**NWEA Measures of Academic Progress  
Percentage of Students Meeting Individual Growth Projection (Target)  
MATH**



### C. Written Overview

Xavier School of Excellence has expanded from a K-5 building, when it opened in 2009, to a K-8 building. The mission of Xavier School of Excellence is to provide its students with a strong academic curriculum and broad cultural experiences in a supportive, innovative, and challenging environment that fosters academic success, good citizenship, and creates lifelong learners. That mission is at the heart of every decision that is made at the school.

The educational program has evolved over the five years since opening. Xavier has a strong language component. Additionally, we require Spanish for all students in grades kindergarten through eight and Chinese for students in grades six through eight. There is also a Character Education component which includes lessons in every classroom and school-wide character

education assemblies at the start of each day. The core curriculum is still built around the Indiana State Standards, and we follow Common Core State Standards in grades K and 1 as directed by the Indiana Department of Education.

In order to improve student achievement, the staff at Xavier always research and implement best practices which will lead to greater success. We now implement CAFÉ and Daily 5 in our language arts program in grades K – 5. This enables us to make accommodations so that we meet the needs of each child while simultaneously helping students to take ownership of their own success. We are currently phasing in “flipped classrooms” in grades 3-5. We piloted this with grade 4 last year and saw gains in both Language Arts and Math as evidenced on NWEA and ISTEP for that grade level. We are now expanding the flipped classroom strategy to include grades three and five. We are also using a team teaching approach in grades 2 and 3. Two certified teachers collaborate together for planning and instruction, and then as one teacher works with a large group of students, the other teacher is able to pull small groups for additional support.

We have two language arts teachers in grades 6-8. One instructor teaches reading and the other teaches writing, but they collaborate on planning so that they are working on the same genres and the same units simultaneously. This allows us to increase the time spent in language arts in our middle school each day which is necessary for student growth. Readers’ and Writers’ workshop approaches are utilized in each of the middle school language arts classrooms. Culminating projects for each unit are implemented together so that students demonstrate proficiency in both reading and writing as they complete one project.

We believe that collaboration within a grade level and across grade levels is essential for student growth. Common plan times for all K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8 teachers each day is used for grade level and cross grade level unit and daily lesson planning. We also have grade level chairpersons for K-2, 3-5, and 6-8, and those teams meet every other Wednesday afternoon so that they can work together to improve student achievement. Special Education and Specials teachers each participate in the Wednesday team meetings so that they can also support team initiatives for student growth.

The mission of Xavier School of Excellence is to provide its students with a strong academic curriculum and broad cultural experiences in a supportive, innovative, and challenging environment that fosters academic success, good citizenship, and creates lifelong learners. One way we achieve our mission is through community partnerships (see Appendix A). Our reciprocal involvement with community organizations benefit our community as we do things for them and benefit Xavier School of Excellence as they do things for us.

Xavier School of Excellence was managed by American Quality Schools during the first five years of operation, but will self-manage beginning July 1, 2014. The transition will be facilitated through the combined efforts of the school leader and the Board of Directors. The Indiana Schools of Excellence Board provides the governance for the school. Two of the original founders remain on the board and have been joined by newer members who are committed to seeing the school grow and improve. Board members’ experiences in business, facilities

operation and repair, and finance will be of value throughout the transition and in future years. The school leader has credentials which include being an Indiana State Teacher of the Year, more than 25 years experience in education, a master's degree with endorsements in both English as a Second Language and School Administration, and who is completing her Doctorate. Her doctoral thesis focus is on retaining effective and highly effective teachers in urban charter schools. The range of experiences and areas of expertise of school board members and the school leader will enhance the transition to self-management.

## **II. Looking Back: The Record and Analysis of Performance**

### **A. Academic Performance**

#### **1. Performance Related Evidence**

Our Administrative Leadership Team, which is comprised of the Director, Team Leader, and Dean, meets on a weekly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to consistently analyze how our curriculum is being implemented and to. The leadership team looks closely at the successes and struggles of each classroom teacher through standard based classroom assessments. Classroom observations are also conducted in order to evaluate teachers' performance (See Appendix B). From this we determine the accommodations that are necessary for the classroom instruction to continue to be both successful and viable.

Each classroom teacher is expected to write monthly unit plans that adhere to the school's scope and sequence (See Appendix C). The scope and sequence, aligned to Indiana Standards, was created by a team of teachers and administrators. Time for unit plan collaboration is built into the Wednesday PD time (See Appendix D). These monthly unit plans are checked by the Team Leader for alignment to the school's scope and sequence and to the Indiana state standards. The Team Leader provides feedback on unit plans to classroom teachers. Once any revisions of the Unit Plan are made, then teachers begin writing their weekly lesson plans using the Unit Plan as his/her foundation. Lesson plans are also checked weekly by the Team Leader to make sure that the lesson plans are reflective of the Unit plans and their objectives. If changes are made to the weekly plan, these changes must also be reflected in the unit plan as well for continuity of the lesson's content.

It is our belief that the academic achievement of all students at Xavier School of Excellence is everyone's responsibility, not just the responsibility of the student's homeroom teacher. Following that philosophy, the specials teachers also collaborate with classroom teachers on unit planning. This enables the specials teachers to design their lesson plans in a manner that supports student growth in core curriculum areas.

Classroom teachers employ whole group instruction and small group instruction in their classrooms. Whole group instruction is used to introduce new skills and to review skills that have already been taught. Small group instruction is used to pull students together who have common needs for enrichment or remediation of specific concepts and standards. Students who continue to struggle after working in small groups are then referred to the

Response to Intervention (RTI) committee(See Appendix E). Teachers complete a referral document which highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the child, and include samples of student work and strategies which have been implemented. The RTI committee then creates a plan which targets specific goals for the student, strategies and resources which will be used, and progress monitoring assessments to evaluate student progress. Parent permission is obtained before the plan is implemented. The plans are flexible so student progress determines whether a student has made sufficient growth and RTI is discontinued, the student is making progress and RTI is continued, RTI has been unsuccessful but the committee wants to employ different strategies, or RTI has been unsuccessful and the committee recommends the child should be tested for Special Education services.

In addition to RTI, other data driven small group interventions have been implemented in order to improve student achievement. We use interventions consistently and with fidelity.

- Kindergarten: Assess students monthly to track growth through progress reports every three weeks as well as DIBELS assessments (See Appendix F).
- First and Second grade: Assess students through weekly reading and writing conferences, weekly curriculum quizzes, and NWEA and DIBELS data. Progress is reported to parents on a monthly basis through the weekly communication log (See Appendix G).
- The K-2 team works together on a monthly basis to form and review intervention groups. Students who are identified as intensive and high ability work one on one each week with the K-2 assigned teachers aides. All students work in small groups with teachers during small group instruction time. Small group instruction occurs daily in K-2. Students meet with teachers one to five times per week based on their need.
- Third-Fifth Grade: Forms small group instruction in classrooms with teachers based off of NWEA and weekly classroom assessments.
- Third grade has daily small group instruction designed to intervene academics for students who perform low on specific skills on the NWEA assessment. Instruction in these groups is tailored to review skills needed for the IREAD test. Nearly half of the third grade participates in these specially designed intervention groups (See Appendix H).
- Sixth-Eighth Grade: Study hall is built into the daily schedule. The time is used for flexible groupings so students go to classrooms based on their need for extra support or enrichment in the different subject areas. For example, a student who needs extra help with a concept in math would go to that classroom during study hall.

Data assessment and analysis is embedded in all our professional development and is the number one influence when deciding a curriculum or new program before it comes to the school. Many internal assessments are used to monitor student progress (See Appendix I).

Data Analysis is on-going and ever evolving at Xavier. The Director and Team Leader analyze assessment data to monitor student progress and to identify areas where teachers need instructional support or professional development. The leadership team and instructional staff analyzes data to determine individual student needs so that additional support can be given which will lead to improved student achievement. Students also analyze their own assessment data and use the data to create their own growth goals (See Appendix J).

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## **2. Accountability and Assessment Data**

### **a. Areas of Weakness**

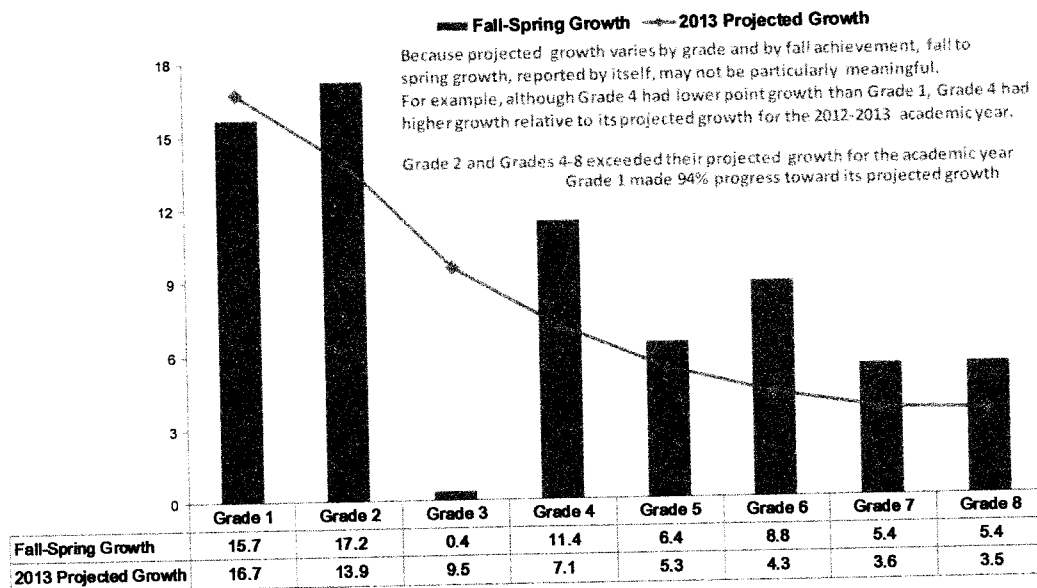
The chart below shows how each group of students has performed on ISTEP over the past 3 years. The grade levels listed show which level the students were tested in during the spring of 2013. The chart shows that student proficiency and growth was irregular. Some student groups declined in ELA scores from one year to the next, but increased in Math. However, the following year Math scores increased while ELA scores decreased. These irregularities can be attributed to a fluid student population, teacher turnover, and/or lack of fidelity in using curriculum resources and textbooks.

Math				ELA		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
3 <sup>rd</sup>	x	x	45%	x	X	53%
4 <sup>th</sup>	x	76%	66%	x	70%	69%
5 <sup>th</sup>	63%	83%	71%	73%	60%	58%
6 <sup>th</sup>	47%	46%	49%	63%	54%	51%
7 <sup>th</sup>	72%	82%	54%	56%	68%	61%
8 <sup>th</sup>	59%	69%	50%	59%	62%	44%

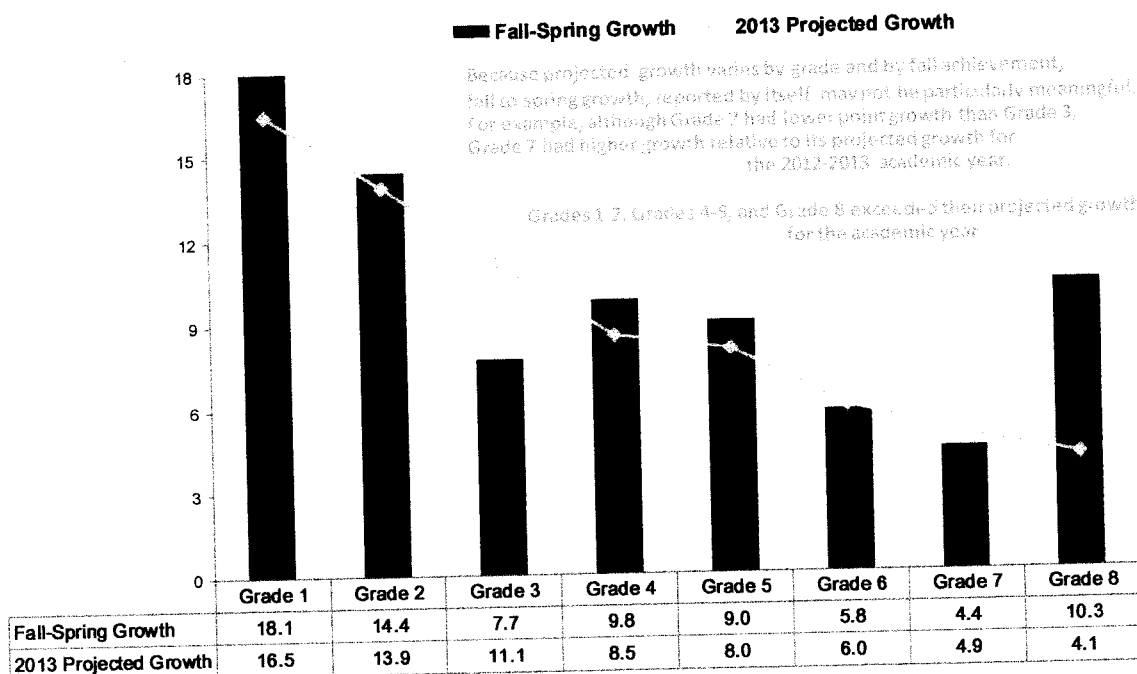
## b. Areas of Strength

NWEA data shows that most students are making steady progress and are meeting and exceeding their projected annual growth. The data shows that we are helping students to grow in Reading and Math.

### • Reading Growth



### • Math Growth



DIBELS Assessment data and IREAD-3 Assessment data also demonstrate student growth. We have had a decrease in the number of students who are far below standard in each grade level K-2 when comparing beginning of the year data to end of year data on DIBELS, and an increase in the number of students who are meeting expected benchmarks. IREAD-3 Assessment data obtained from the Indiana Department of Education also shows that Xavier School of Excellence had a higher percentage of students passing than the South Bend Community School Corporation did (See Appendix K).

### c. Contributing Factors

Xavier School of Excellence has a growing reputation in our community for enrolling students who are failing and who are often on the verge of expulsion in their traditional schools, and turning those students around. Many students come to us far below grade level, and with apathetic attitudes because they are more accustomed to failure than success. Their behaviors often impede their learning. We employ many intervention strategies with these students and their families to address social, emotional, and behavioral needs as well as academic needs. Our Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) is designed to recognize and reward the good choices that our students make. A color card system is used for students in grades K-5, and a punch card system is used in grades 6-8 which helps to track behavior. Students with a minimum number of card flips (based on student grade level) or punches are rewarded with Knight Notes and Fun Friday activities. Students who earn Knight Notes submit them for a weekly drawing for prizes. Additionally, middle school students with perfect punch cards (zero punches for the week) are



entered into a weekly drawing for prizes. Middle school students with ten or fewer punches for an entire quarter are also rewarded with a quarterly field trip.

Behavior Intervention Plans are written for students who need behavioral support, and our Social Worker meets with individual students and small groups to address social, emotional, and behavioral needs (See Appendix L).

Our students need a sense of community and belonging to our school. To help with this, we implement service learning projects that stress teamwork and community involvement. These projects, integrate writing standards through reflections and technology through Prezi, Aviaary, Microsoft Office and even smart phones for pictures and oral documentation. Collaborating with veteran students on these new projects provides an easy transition for new students to understanding our school's mission.

Each year that Xavier has been in existence, our reputation for helping students who struggle academically and/or behaviorally grows. Consequently, more and more of our new students come to us with significant needs. It is evident that we are meeting a real need in our community. A downside to this is that some of our students who were on track to pass ISTEP have withdrawn from Xavier, and parents have stated that the reason for withdrawing their children is due to having an abundance of students with behavioral concerns. This impacts are school's ISTEP passage rate.

- i. The Indiana Department of Education has identified Xavier School of Excellence as a "Focus School" and they have designated targeted performance goals for improvement based on sub-group populations (see chart below provided by IDOE). We understand that these are IDOE's expectation for growth. However, we want to narrow the gap in achievement between African American students and White students, and will research and implement strategies designed to help us do that.

***Focus-Targeted School Designation***

Test Year	Corp	School	Subject	Pass %	AMO Goal %	AMO Group	Grade
2012	9845	7571	ENGLISH	65.48%	77.00%	All Students	C
2012	9845	7571	ENGLISH	56.94%	57.00%	African American	C
2012	9845	7571	ENGLISH	80.00%	81.00%	White	C
2012	9845	7571	ENGLISH	65.49%	66.00%	Free/Reduced price meals	C

2012	9845	7571	MATH	64.29%	78.00%	All Students	C
2012	9845	7571	MATH	54.93%	56.00%	African American	C
2012	9845	7571	MATH	78.05%	83.00%	White	C
2012	9845	7571	MATH	63.12%	68.00%	Free/Reduced price meals	C

- ii. All students' performance is analyzed on a regular basis. This is done through standardized data, including NWEA and DIBELS, as well as weekly classroom benchmark assessments. Additionally, teachers are required to provide copies of classroom assessment data to the Team Leader on a weekly basis so that the leadership team can also analyze performance. This is done in order to monitor the rigor with which students are being taught and assessed, and to provide professional development and additional resources to teachers to lead to improved student achievement.

## **B. Financial Performance**

### **1. Financial Assurance**

American Quality Schools, Inc., was the management organization for the five year charter authorization period, and they provided financial accounting and reporting services to the Xavier School of Excellence. They have assured the school board that the school is current in meeting all of its liabilities including payroll taxes, debt service payments, employee benefits, and any other obligations of the school.

### **2. Other Contextual Information**

The last audit performed on the school was for the fiscal periods June 30, 2010 and 2011 by State board of Accounts. The audit opinion issued was "unqualified" or clean, and there were no material items noted in the audit that required comment by SBOA.

The Board of Directors of the school have elected to use the auditing firm of Fitzgerald/Isaac (BSU's audit firm of choice). The audit is for the two fiscal year period (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012 and July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013). The audit is currently underway and AQS indicated that all documents requested by Fitzgerald/Isaac would be submitted by January 14, 2014. It is anticipated the findings of this audit will result in an Unqualified Opinion being issued as well. Findings will be placed in CSAPPHIRE upon receipt.

### C. Organizational Performance

1. Changes in school leadership and office staff have been made in order to monitor and assure compliance with all required reporting to IDOE and Ball State.
2. (No data to report.)

## III. Looking Forward: Plans for the Next Charter Term

### A. Academic Data and Educational Strategies

EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR CONTRACT TERM				
	Goal/ Target	Metric(s)	Strategies	Supplemental Strategies and resources
1.	Students will read at or above grade level proficiency standards.	NWEA, ISTEP, Weekly Benchmarks, DIBELS	Imagine It Reading Series	Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Framework, McDougal-Littell Literacy, Guided Reading at Instructional Level, Daily 5, and CAFE
2.	Students will develop strong computational skills and the required critical thinking skills to solve mathematical problems	NWEA, ISTEP, Weekly Benchmarks, and Unit Assessments	We will begin the contract term using Saxon Math. During the first year of the contract term, a committee will research a new math curriculum.	Finish Line Math and IXL Technology
3.	Learning the Scientific Method and relate science knowledge to their world	Unit Assessments; ISTEP	The Scientific Method is explicitly taught from K-8 <sup>th</sup> ; Inquiry Based Projects	Scholastic News, Studies Weekly,
4.	Integration of Writing across curriculum	ISTEP, Benchmark Assessments, Writing Projects, Rubrics	Lucy Calkins writing programs	

<p><b>*Example*</b></p> <p>85% of students will read on grade level</p> <p>90% of students will move on to next grade level fluent in their math facts</p>	<p><b>*Example*</b></p> <p>Phontas and Pinnell</p> <p>Timed Tests</p>	<p><b>*Example*</b></p> <p>K-2 will form team wide intervention time where students will meet with any k-2 student on their reading level</p> <p>Implement Ten minutes of fact review per day</p>	<p><b>*Example*</b></p> <p>Reading Daily five for centers, Evan Moore, Lucy Calkins</p> <p>Flash cards, math fact songs...</p>
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## 1. Goals

We have four primary educational goals which we will focus on. We believe that these four skills will result in improved student achievement and mastery of grade level standards.

These are to:

- a. Increase fluency in language skills
- b. To develop strong computational skills
- c. Develop critical thinking skills needed to solve math problems
- d. To have students be able to relate science knowledge to their world, and to integrate writing across the curriculum

We have also developed specific goals for Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies for all students by the end of grades 2, 5, and 8 (See Appendix M). Teachers in all grade levels and all disciplines will focus on strategies to assist students in meeting these expectations.

## 2. Strategies

All staff members are collaborating to develop comprehensive curriculum binders for every subject area and every standard. Wednesday PD time will be devoted to creating the binders which will include resources and common assessments to be used at each grade level. The binders will include mandatory resources to insure consistency at each grade level, as well as supplementary resources which teachers may use to provide additional support to students. We will use a variety of text books, trade books and other resources, as well as technology programs to support instruction and improvement in each subject and for each standard. Creation of

these detailed curriculum binders began January 15, 2014, and will continue until all standards have been addressed. They will be reviewed annually and revised as needed when resources or state standards change.

### **3. Evaluation**

The RISE evaluation, developed by the Indiana Department of Education, will be used to evaluate all teachers. The evaluation tool assesses teachers in four domains: planning and preparation, instruction, professionalism, and student achievement. The school leader has been trained by IDOE for implementation of the RISE tool, and will follow all IDOE guidelines and expectations.

All support staff will also be evaluated annually. The school Director will develop evaluation forms which reflect the duties of each position. Support staff includes Team Leader, Dean, Nurse, Administrative Assistant, Office Clerk, Teaching Assistant, and any other positions created as a result of transitioning to self-management.

The school director will be evaluated annually by the Indiana Schools of Excellence Board of Directors. The school board may choose to use the RISE evaluation tool for administrators, or may choose to develop their own evaluation tool. It will be a Value Added Model which includes student achievement data.

## **B. Educational Plans**

### **1. Vision**

The vision for Xavier School of Excellence is founded on research that has shown that students learn through individually and socially constructed interactions. Constructivism, based on active participation and identification of prior knowledge and conceptions, is dependent upon a learner-centered environment. Reflection, positive relationships with stakeholders, and accountability are all connected to this vision. We will implement three main components into our daily practice at Xavier which will help us to become a high performing school.

- **Reflective Practitioners**

As reflective practitioners, the staff members at Xavier School of Excellence strive to continually improve our practice. An analysis of lessons or student results through collaboration with colleagues, reflective journaling, or personal reflection can lead to modification of practice (Danielson, 2007). Continually gauging student involvement both quantitatively and qualitatively helps to define future goals and lesson changes. We will analyze data with together to help all staff members gain better insight into the needs of the students. The instructional leadership team will model the expectation for all staff. The leadership team's skills at reflection will become more honed looking at student work collaboratively, journaling, and taking part in action research. We recognize that enhanced time will be needed for

collaborative reflective practices, so we will structure the day accordingly and develop a schedule that allows for common plan times among disciplines. This will allow for the sharing of insights, instructional practices, individual student strengths and weaknesses, looking at student work, and participation in targeted professional development. Reflective activities are at the heart of individual practitioner improvement, and professional development that teachers need to improve their practice will be provided.

- **Stakeholder Relationships**

Productive relationships in learning environments depend upon strong communication skills. A constructivist approach to teaching and learning is dependent upon a process of continual communication. Communication with students, staff, the school board, community members, and parents are vital to academic success. Communication must be strategic and future-focused (Marx, 2006). We recognize the need to interconnect with stakeholders in order to develop and support the school's vision for the future. By engaging people and listening to their ideas that vision will be informed and energized. Building and strengthening relationships with all stakeholders is of vital importance because those relationships are essential when seeking "buy-in" of new ideas and initiatives.

- **Future Research Activities and Social Change**

Educators are in an era of ever-increasing mandates for accountability. Placing blame for failure on environmental circumstances is no longer acceptable. All educators need to look to research based best practices in order to implement changes in instruction, learning environment, and expectations. The leadership team will have the central role in orchestrating school reform and improvement (Jossey-Bass, 2007). It will be incumbent upon the leadership team to recognize and promote quality instructional strategies, assessment strategies that guide planning, and school improvement efforts that continuously improve processes. We must lead by example as we promote standards of excellence (Northouse, 2009). These standards include six factors that are essential for all members of the staff to function effectively: skills they need to acquire, expected amount of initiative and effort, expectations of group interaction and treatment of one another, the significance of deadlines, goals that need to be achieved, and consequences for not meeting expectations. The expectations of the school board and the leadership team must be transparent so there is no misunderstanding, and we must hold the same high expectations for ourselves as we hold for all staff members.

Preparing Xavier's students to become responsible citizens capable of participating in a democracy is our duty. As educators, Xavier staff members are accountable to our students and their families, our community, our school board, our charter authorizer, and the Indiana Department of Education. Duschl, Schweingruber, and Shouse (2007) list three components critical to student learning: knowledgeable teachers who understand learners and pedagogy design, teachers who understand the process of learning for diverse learners, and teacher knowledge of subject matter suitable for instruction. An effective classroom teacher is the

critical component in student learning. Teachers at Xavier School of Excellence will demonstrate six key components which will all lead to student success:

- **Subject Matter Knowledge**

Knowledge evolves through an understanding of the big ideas and organization of contents within a content area (Gredler, 2009). This pedagogical content knowledge allows a teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by students. Teacher knowledge also consists of pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, and knowledge of context (Park & Oliver, 2008). Just as teachers constantly examine student learning to plan effective instruction, teachers must also continually examine and reflect on their own learning in these areas. Attention to professional responsibilities such as reflection on teaching practice, participation in professional communities with colleagues, enhancement through professional development opportunities, feedback from colleagues, and activities that support the profession, and maintain honesty, integrity, leadership, and confidentiality are vital (Danielson, 2007) to the continued improvement of Xavier School of Excellence.

- **How Students Learn and Develop**

Students learn and develop in multiple ways and at different rates. Depending on their prior experiences and knowledge, students construct new knowledge according to their cognitive pathways (Danielson, 2007). Differentiated instruction is important for student success in every classroom. State standards will be taught through a variety of methods, including visual, auditory, tactile, musical, and artistic means. Not all students need to focus on the same skills at the same time because each student possesses different strengths and weaknesses. By designing learning to meet students where they are in terms of prior knowledge, Xavier School of Excellence staff will use multiple intelligences theory as a starting point for instruction and assessment. Personalization through the lens of multiple intelligences will lead to a more learner-centered environment (Gardner, 1995).

- **Role of the Facilitator**

Progressive philosophers believe teachers today should be guides and facilitators of student learning. We at Xavier School of Excellence share this belief. We understand and use a variety of strategies to encourage development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. Modeling of questioning and discussion techniques develops critical thinking and problem solving skills. These skills promote reflection on understanding and new learning, engage students in learning through well-developed individual and collaborative activities that stimulate construction of knowledge, assess student learning with well-defined criteria and constructive feedback, and remain flexible and responsive to student interests and needs (Danielson, 2007). Student engagement with learning is active in our classrooms, and the use of technology is employed daily to enhance learning. Assignments, activities, and assessments challenge students to extend their thinking. Flexibility in planning, implementation, and

assessing of activities and lessons insures the engagement of learners. Teaching and assessing decisions are based on current research and best practices while we carefully consider my students' needs.

- **Creating a Learning Environment**

Learning environments structured to meet the needs of learners in schools depend upon individual relationships: teacher to student and student to student. Productive and engaging environments are built upon respectful trusting relationships that exemplify high standards and expectations for all students. We will establish routines at the beginning of each year to set the tone for a cooperative learning environment. Throughout the year, students will be given choices in their learning and presentation styles. Students feel safe participating in class and giving their best efforts when the learning is based on their needs and styles. Our classrooms will be bright and colorful and reflect a print-rich environment filled with student work, and learning areas with all student materials easily accessible. The routines, structure, and layout of the classrooms will contribute to an inviting learning environment.

- **Communication**

Productive relationships in learning environments depend upon strong communication skills. Clear expectations for learning will be evident throughout every classroom. We will use a communication stance known as a warm demander, which is a teacher who communicates "both warmth and a nonnegotiable demand for student effort and mutual respect" (Bondy & Ross, 2008). As warm demanders we will build relationships, learn about student cultures, and communicate an expectation of success for every student. Establishing a sincere caring learning environment, expecting and modeling respectfulness, and holding high standards for all students will accomplish this. We will have supports in place to insure academic success as well as clear and consistent expectations for behavior.

- **Monitor and Assess Growth**

Monitoring and assessing student growth to inform instruction is a continual process. All of our assessments must consist of clear criteria related to state standards. Assessment occurs on four levels: state, school, classroom, and individual. Mandated state and school level assessments function as benchmarks charting overall progress and serve as assessments of learning (Danielson, 2007). Classroom level summative assessments are also assessments of learning (Danielson, 2007). As an example, performance tasks, used in place of summative assessments, provide information about the application of knowledge and future remedial help for our students. Classroom level formative assessments will also be utilized to plan instruction for individual students to insure understanding.

The mission of Xavier School of Excellence will not change. The mission of Xavier School of Excellence is to provide its students with a strong academic curriculum and broad cultural



experiences in a supportive, innovative, and challenging environment that fosters academic success, good citizenship, and creates lifelong learners. We will continue to focus on both academic growth and character development of our students. Character Education will continue to be implemented in every classroom, and each school day will begin with a school-wide assembly that focuses on six pillars of character: respect, responsibility, caring, citizenship, trustworthiness, and fairness.

We will teach and assess with rigor in order to prepare our students for academic success. Lessons will be relevant. Students will know why they are learning each skill and will understand how it will be useful to them now and in the future. Student engagement will be evident through their active participation in projects and discussions.

We have a vision for Xavier School of Excellence to be a model school in our community and in our state. It will be a school that leads students to academic success and character growth. We don't want to just prepare our students to pass standardized assessments. We want to also prepare them to be productive citizens who choose to remain in our community and help to make it a better place for everyone.

### **C. Financial Plans**

The most current board approved budget, prior year board approved budget, facility lease documents, and insurance documents have all been uploaded to CSAPPHIRE.

### **Organizational Plans**

#### **1. Enrollment Plan**

Xavier School of Excellence will serve students in grades K-8. Two sections of each grade level with a maximum of 21 students enrolled in each section is the goal. The maximum enrollment projection is 378 students. If a waitlist exists, class size maximum will increase to 25 students.

To increase the student population, a committee of parents and staff members will be formed. Their goal will be to implement marketing strategies which will include fliers, radio advertisement, banners, and other methods of increasing enrollment.

#### **2. Governance and Management**

Currently, the board stands at 6 members. It is anticipated that the board will grow its membership to at least 7. In the original charter, it was anticipated that there would be a two-tiered board system: one for Indiana Schools of Excellence

Foundation (ISE) and one for Xavier School of Excellence (XSE). The original plan included ISE endeavors outside of the Charter school.

Since those outside endeavors (i.e. Preschool, adult education center) have not fully manifested yet, the ISE/XSE board has not split. It is not anticipated that the ISE/XSE board split will occur within the next five years; therefore, a single ISE board will continue to govern the school and outside affairs.

There is other evidence around the country that suggests that a two-tier board, may not be in the best interest of a charter school. As XSE strives to become a self-managed school, a common board will ensure proper communication and understanding amongst all board members.

Reestablishment of the following committees under the board will continue to support the school: Finance, Governance and Oversight, Facilities and the Parent Resource Network. With independence, a new committee will need to be formed: Fundraising. The Facilities Committee has been very successful having a board member, community members, and a member of the management team. This pattern is one the ISE board would like to continue, as it supports the school as a grassroots community school.

After the training with Dr. Carpenter in 2011, the following committees were moved to the management side: Academic and Marketing. Since the move, those committees were disbanded. In an effort to provide transparency these committees will be revitalized, with one member of the board serving on the committee, and the School Director (or their designee) chairing the committee.

There are no anticipated bylaw changes. Changes to our Executive Limitations, Governance Process, and Ends Policies will have to occur to reflect our self-managed proposal, and to ensure that the School Director retains the instructional leader (CEO) role. It is also anticipated the board of directors will have one more employee, Business Manager (CFO) to handle many of the back office functions previously held by the EMO. This information will need to be reflected in those policies as well.

### **3. Transportation**

There is no plan to provide transportation for students to attend this school. Special Education transportation will be determined by a case conference committee, and will be based on individual need.

### **4. Facility**

The Indiana Schools of Excellence Board of Directors secured a mortgage and is purchasing the school building. The school's facility is adequate for our current population and needs. There is ample classroom space for two sections of each grade level, K-8, 2 special education resource rooms, and all specials classes. Our multi-purpose room is used for daily character education assemblies, all programs,

and physical education class. It is not a gymnasium though, so the PE teacher is limited to what she can do with students during class time. It also affects our ability to offer athletic programs. We currently use the gymnasium in the church next door in order to have basketball practices so that we can have boys' and girls' basketball teams for our middle school students.

Many of our students who have withdrawn at the middle school level have cited our lack of sports teams as a reason for withdrawal. They opted to return to traditional public schools so that they can have more opportunities for participation in athletics.

We would like to address this need by adding a gymnasium onto the southwest corner of our building. The proposed gymnasium would include additional classroom space and restroom facilities.

The ISE Board of Directors is working with members of the Saint Joseph Common Council to investigate possible community grants to fund all or part of the proposed project. Our five year projected budget includes the project and the possibility that it would need to be funded through borrowing from a financial institution.

## **5. Educational Service Providers**

We have previously contracted with an educational service provider. We intend to end the relationship and not rely on a service provider going forward. A transition team has been formed led by the Board President to cover the transition from using a service provider to being self managed. It has been strongly envisioned to have the transition impact very little on the educational environment for the students and families of Xavier School of Excellence.

The transition team will be responsible for mapping out the organization, and outsourcing, and developing any new job descriptions. The School Leader, Mrs. Grimes is an integral part of this process. The goal is to preserve the School Leader as the instructional leader of the building.

Currently there are two big areas the transition team will need to tackle: benefits and financial (account payable and receivable). The team has available several resources to find equivalent benefits for its employees. All current AQS employees at Xavier will become employees of Xavier School of Excellence. The educational staff and office staff will continue to report to Mrs. Grimes.

To ensure transparency and increase communication within the organization, the board will continue to support the school through the following committees: Finance, Governance and Oversight, Facilities, and Parent Resource Network. With independence, we will need to add a Fundraising committee. All committees will be comprised of board members, community members, and the school management

team. This will ensure that XSE remains a grassroots school committed to having its students being able to compete globally.

Two additional committees will be formed as management teams lead by the School Leader (or her designee): Academic and Marketing committee.

To accommodate the increase in business functions that will now be transferred to the school, Xavier will need to hire a business Manager to maintain timely payables, grant management, and other duties outlined by the team. This person will report to Mrs. Grimes and to the board of directors.

The Board recognizes that there is a fair amount of work to perform to ensure a successful transition after the contract is completed with AQS. However, the board is fairly confident with the experience on the board, and the resources available, this transition will be smooth.