



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**Office of Charter Schools**

**Options Charter Schools**

**2020-21 Charter Renewal Application**

December 16, 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Indiana law, a charter school is established to provide innovative and autonomous programs that: 1) serve the different learning styles and needs of public school students; 2) offer public school students appropriate and innovative choices; 3) provide varied opportunities for professional educators; 4) allow public schools freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of accountability; and 5) provide parents, students, community members, and local entities with an expanded opportunity for involvement in the public school system (IC 20-24-2-1). As an authorizer of charter schools, Ball State University is responsible for ensuring that its charter schools demonstrate that they are achieving academic, financial, and organizational outcomes.

Merit-based renewal decisions will be based on an analysis of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the Performance Frameworks and gauged under standards developed under national principles and standards for quality authorizing. Renewals will be granted to each charter school that can demonstrate that it has achieved ongoing and continuous performance standards as stipulated in the Performance Frameworks (developed by OCS), and has been faithful to the terms of the contract and applicable laws.

The renewal process serves three purposes. First, it forms OCS' decision on whether to renew a school's contract by providing evidence of school performance in relation to the academic, financial, and organizational performance standards set out in the school's charter and in the Performance Frameworks. Second, the process through the renewal application provides the school a meaningful opportunity to present additional evidence regarding its performance. Third, it provides the school with an opportunity to outline – based on its past performance – a deliberate plan for sustaining success, addressing areas requiring improvement, and ensuring ongoing viability of the school.

## **RENEWAL TIMELINE**

Release of Renewal Application	July 1, 2020
Renewal Orientation: Meetings with School Leaders and Board Members	May – August 2020
Letter of Intent to Renew due to OCS on or before	October 1, 2020
Renewal Application Due to OCS	October 1, 2020
Onsite School Visits	June – December 2020
Renewal Decisions	On or before March 1, 2021

## **RENEWAL DECISION OVERVIEW**

The OCS intends to conduct a rigorous, transparent renewal decision process that leads to merit-based decisions consistent with national principles and standards for quality authorizing. In the OCS's process to make changes to its accountability framework and to align its processes with national principles and standards for quality authorizing, the Performance Frameworks and the OCS's Policy for School Assessment and Intervention will both be used to determine a school's eligibility for a charter renewal. The OCS will base its renewal decisions on the existing record of school performance including, but not limited to, the school's written response to the Renewal Narrative of the Charter Renewal Application and any additional performance data provided by the school.

The first stage of the process involves the OCS sharing with each school that is up for renewal the schools' data as evaluated through the Performance Frameworks. Additional data is gathered through site visits, desk audits, and the CSAPPHIRE database.

The second stage requires the school to prepare and submit the Charter Renewal Application. The Renewal Application provides schools an opportunity to present the school's existing record of performance and to outline plans for the school's next charter term. Within the Charter Renewal Application, schools will have an opportunity to comment on the data and provide factual corrections and/or supplement the record with information and data to explain academic results and demonstrate other academic measures that may provide evidence of the school's academic success and/or improvement (*e.g.*, individual student growth data, legacy/cohort group data, summer remediation and/or additional IREAD scores, etc.). The school's plans for the next charter term may affect the length of the renewal term/extension and may shape the development of a new charter contract.

The third stage is an evaluation of the data collected in the first stage and the second stage by the staff and contractors of OCS; and the determination by the Executive Director of OCS as to whether to extend or renew the school's charter and the duration of the renewal or extension.

## 2020-21 CHARTER RENEWAL APPLICATION – INSTRUCTIONS AND CSAPPHIRE SUBMISSIONS

### INSTRUCTIONS:

The OCS will provide a Charter Renewal Application template to each school up for renewal. However, the Ball State Continuous Improvement Report completed through AdvancED's eProve diagnostics serves as the narrative portion of the renewal application. Once completed, the Charter Renewal Applications must be submitted to OCS **electronically through CSAPPHIRE no later than October 1, 2020.**

### **FORMAT FOR SUBMISSIONS:**

- The Renewal Narrative should not exceed 25 pages, excluding attachments.
- Attachments to the Renewal Narrative (excluding the required CSAPPHIRE submissions and updates listed below) should not exceed 25 pages and should be **clearly** referenced in the Renewal Narrative.
- Any attachment should provide information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence that OCS has already collected on the school's performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies for the next charter term that would be material to the charter contract for the renewal term (e.g., revised student handbook provisions, updated professional development plan, etc.).

### **CSAPPHIRE SUBMISSIONS AND UPDATES:**

The following documents will be reviewed and verified by the OCS remotely through CSAPPHIRE during the renewal process. In order to make the process more efficient, please review and/or upload the school's *most current* version of each of the following documents. If any of these documents was submitted previously, please just be certain that the version in CSAPPHIRE is the most current version.

#### **School Documents**

Please review and verify the following in CSAPPHIRE are the most current version. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document. These documents can be found under the "Plans and Policies" folder unless otherwise indicated.

- Curriculum and Instructional Methods
- General Descriptions of Responsibilities of Teachers and Staff
- Methods of Promoting Parent and Community Involvement Practices
- Methods of Pupil Assessments
- Organizational Chart (updated administrative organizational chart)
- School Calendar (current school year) (**annual folder titled "School Calendar"**)
- Staffing Matrix
- Supplemental Programs (Information on Current Student Clubs, Organizations, and Other Extracurricular Activities Offered (including athletic teams))

### **Current School Plans and Policies**

Please review and verify the following “Plans and Policies” in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Criminal Background Check Policy
- Deposit of Funds Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Elementary School Reading Plan
- Fundraising Policy and Guidelines
- Graduation Requirements, including diploma types offered (if applicable)
- Medication Policy
- Performance Evaluation Plan for Administrators and Teachers
- Personnel Plan, including Methods of Selection, Retention and Compensation of Employees
- Policy and Procedures for ELL Students
- Policy and Procedures for Special Education
- Professional Development Methods
- Promotion/Retention Policy
- School Admission Policy
- School Safety and Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Student Health Screening Policy
- Student Records Policy
- Teacher and Staff Compensation and Benefits Plans
- Transportation Policy (if applicable)

### **Corporate Documents**

Please review and verify the following documents in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- Articles of Incorporation (and any Amendments thereto)
- Any Fictitious Name Registrations filed with the Indiana Secretary of State
- Board By-Laws



- Board Member List (including Current Contact Information)
- Calendar of Board Meetings
- ESP Agreement (together with all Amendments thereto, if applicable)

**Financials and Budgets**

Please review and verify the following documents in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- School's Budgets for 2019-20 and 2020-21
- School's Audit (if not conducted by Donovan CPAs) for the school years ended 6/30/2019 and 6/30/2020 (if not conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen)

**Board – Agenda and Minutes**

Please review and verify the following documents in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- Board Minutes approving School's Budgets for 2019-20 and 2020-21

**Insurance**

Please review and verify the following documents in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- Certificate of Liability Insurance
- Evidence of Property Insurance

**Facility Documents**

Please review and verify the following documents in CSAPPHIRE are the most current versions. If such document listed below is not in CSAPPHIRE, please upload the required document.

- Lease Agreement(s) or Deed(s) for All Occupied Facilities
- Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Indiana Department of Health

## RENEWAL NARRATIVE

### I. Enrollment Diagnostic

Provide the enrollment and demographic information for the current school year.

<b>2020-21 ENROLLMENT &amp; DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION</b>		
	#	%
Total Enrollment	644	
# of Students on Waiting List	open enrollment	
Gender		
Male	338	52%
Female	306	48%
Ethnicity/Race		
White	463	72%
Black	75	12%
Hispanic	49	8%
Asian	9	1%
Native American	1	<1%
Other	47	7%
Special Populations		
Students with IEPs	230	36%
English Language Learners	29	5%
Homeless Students	7	1%
Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch	38	6%

Provide enrollment information for length of current charter contract (ADM count). **This can be copied and pasted from the IDOE COMPASS website (<https://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx>)**

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	380	470	509	564	644

Provide the student enrollment information for the length of the charter contract. **This can be copied and pasted from the IDOE COMPASS website (<https://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx>)**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 4	Year 5
Grade	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
<b>K</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	5	5	4	7	15
<b>7</b>	1	11	9	6	24
<b>8</b>	3	13	25	8	32
<b>9</b>	8	24	40	38	48
<b>10</b>	30	39	63	65	87

<b>11</b>	43	100	86	103	124
<b>12</b>	290	278	282	337	314
<b>All Grades</b>	380	470	509	564	644

Provide the number and percentage of students eligible for special education by eligibility category for the length of the current charter contract based on each school year's December 1 count.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	<b>2016-17</b>		<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2018-19</b>		<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	41	36%	47	31%	68	38%	21	14%	45	20%
Blind or Low Vision	0	0%	1	<1%	2	1%	3	2%	2	<1%
Cognitive Disability	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	<1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	<1%	0	0%
Deaf-Blind	0	0%	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Development Delay (early childhood)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Emotional Disability	29	25%	33	22%	16	9%	19	13%	50	22%
Language or Speech Impairment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	<1%
Multiple Disabilities	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	<1%
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0%	1	<1%	1	<1%	1	<1%	0	0%
Specific Learning Disability	33	29%	41	27%	58	32%	60	39%	73	32%
Traumatic Brain Injury	1	<1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	<1%	1	<1%
Other Health Impairment	10	9%	26	17%	36	20%	46	30%	55	24%
<b>Total SPED</b>	<b>114</b>		<b>152</b>		<b>181</b>		<b>152</b>		<b>230</b>	

Provide the number and percentage of ELL students for length of the current charter contract. **This can be copied and pasted from the IDOE COMPASS website (<https://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx>)**

<b>ELL STUDENT POPULATION CHART</b>									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
<b>2016-17</b>		<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2018-19</b>		<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
14	4%	19	4%	18	4%	32	6%	29	5%

Provide the number and percentage of homeless students for length of current charter contract.

<b>HOMELESS STUDENT POPULATION</b>									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
<b>2016-17</b>		<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2018-19</b>		<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
12	3%	1	<1%	0	0%	1	<1%	7	1%

Provide the number and percentage of High Ability students for length of current charter contract.

HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

You may enter an optional narrative about your Enrollment Diagnostic below. If you do not have an optional narrative, enter N/A.

Attachments.

**II. Executive Summary**

**A. School and Community Overview**

- 1. Describe the school’s size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Options Charter Schools employs approximately 70 teaching and support professionals to educate nearly 700 students from one-hundred and twenty-nine (129) school corporations throughout the State of Indiana. According to the IDOE’s 2020-2021 Public Corporation Transfer Report, the largest concentration of students that attend Options have a corporation of legal settlement in Hamilton, Marion, and Allen counties. OCS operates using one charter, three school numbers, and several school programs from multiple locations throughout the state. Here are the schools, programs, and primary locations:

- A. Central Office (9325)
  - a. address: 18077 River Road Noblesville, IN 46062
- B. Noblesville (2551):
  - a. OCS Noblesville: 9945 Cumberland Pointe Boulevard Ste 106 Noblesville, IN 46060
  - b. OCS with Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)- Pilot Program
    - i. Behavioral Analysis Center for Autism (BACA): 9929 E 126th St. Fishers, IN 46038
    - ii. Indiana Behavioral Analysis Academy (IBAA): 125 W Taylor St. Kokomo, IN 46901
- C. Carmel (2524):
  - a. OCS Carmel: 530 West Carmel Drive Carmel, IN 46032  
Note: OCS Carmel will relocate to 17721 Gunther Blvd Westfield, IN 46074 in the fall of 2021 when the new school building is finished.
  - b. OCS Hoosier Youth Challenge Academy: 10892 N, IN-140, Knightstown, IN 46148 (Pilot Program)
- D. Indiana- Virtual (9329)
  - a. OCS Indiana: 9945 Cumberland Pointe Boulevard Noblesville, IN 46060  
Note: OCS Indiana is a virtual program with leadership only housed at this location.
  - b. Virtual Hybrid Site: 709 W Business 30 Columbia City, IN 46725

Most students attending the OCS brick-and-mortar sites opt into the traditional school day program (a full day of classes, 8:00 – 3:00, 6 periods per day). Students attending hybrid and virtual sites

attend using a combination of brick-and-mortar and virtual or 100% virtual attendance. Many of our students are facing social, emotional, academic, and financial challenges making scheduling flexibility a necessity for consistent attendance.

Students come to Options for a variety of reasons. These reasons are reported on the Alternative Learning Report (DOE-AL). The 2016-2019 reports demonstrate typical reasons for alternative eligibility enrollment for Options.

Reason for Attendance	2016-17 Number	2017-18 Number	2018-19 Number	2019-20 Number
Student has withdrawn or intends to withdraw before graduation	108	70	27	20
Student has failed to comply academically and would benefit from instruction offered in a manner different from instruction available in a traditional school.	417	534	590	739
Student is a parent or an expectant parent and is unable to regularly attend the traditional school program.	18	18	12	10
Student is employed and employment is necessary for the support of the student or student's immediate family and/or interferes with a part of the student's instructional day.	8	17	6	57
The student is a disruptive student (as defined in <a href="#">IC 20-30-8-2</a> )	54	97	58	67

In addition to the DOE-AL report, Options began monitoring the most significant at-risk categories students have at the time of enrollment in 2018-19. This data is used to help inform programming and support services as well as communicate the unique needs of our student population to the State Board of Education and other stakeholders. The large increase in total number of students tracked from 2018-19 to 2019-20 is due to only monitoring new students in 2018-19. In 2019-20 we collected data for returning and new students. The large number of students in this data set, in comparison to our total ME enrollment number for the year highlights the significant mobility of our population.

	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total Number of Student Newly Enrolled During the Year	319	871

Cognitive Disability	21	7%	42	5%
Emotional Disability	22	7%	58	7%
Mental Health Challenge	78	24%	118	14%
Behavioral - Includes documented substance abuse, prior expulsion, chronic absenteeism, juvenile justice issues, or runaway	106	33%	345	40%
Prior Dropout	62	19%	113	13%
Out of Cohort	21	7%	91	10%
No Significant Developmental, Cognitive, or Intellectual Challenges	9	3%	104	12%
Severe Credit Deficiency	189	59%	433	50%
Medium Credit Deficiency	45	14%	169	19%
No Credit Deficiency	85	27%	269	31%

**2. State the charter school’s mission and describe the educational needs the school’s founders were seeking to address in your community. Describe why this initiative is important to the community the school serves.**

Options Charter Schools Mission: The Options Charter Schools provide a caring community, quality education, and guidance to those students seeking an alternative to traditional schooling. Recognized by the Indiana Department of Education as a full alternative middle and high school (grades 6-12), Options Charter Schools (OCS) adds unique educational opportunities for students who need an alternative to the students' demographically appropriate traditional high school. In a highly personalized educational program driven by Individualized Service Plans (ISP), Options maintains high expectations for all, but recognizes that success is defined differently for each student.

The various Options educational programs employ innovative strategies to meet the OCS mission. First, the small, personalized learning environment enhances our ability to raise the student’s own expectations for their future. Individualized learning plans, an advisor/advisee program, mentoring, service learning and career-field experiences are all methods of providing this personalized learning experience. Also, multiple methods of credit recovery, flexible-paced credit attainment, and a mastery learning model allow students to have multiple entry and exit points for credit attainment. Another innovative strategy, the Senior Institute Project, is the culminating activity required of all Options graduates. Combining service learning with public speaking, community collaboration, and time management practices each student completes their own senior project guided by a panel of community volunteers.

The children who are typically behind (in the classroom) are the most likely candidates to be left behind in life. Their social and emotional dysfunction(s) and deficient academic skill(s) demand various degrees of two important measures: time and effort. Further, even those gifted few whose intellectual skills and talents are extraordinary, demand a measured investment of time and effort for success. Increasingly, modern schools are faced with attempting to enact these measures for students whose needs require a delicate balance of support and caring, skills and training, and the opportunity for growth. In short, they require additional time and effort not always afforded or advanced by institutions or educators. As a result, many students are indeed being left behind.

We, at Options, make it our business to take the time and effort needed to reach our students. We have researched what has worked for others, and have incorporated into our program what works best for us, given our collective experiences. We describe our educational setting as a personalized, small school, community-assisted environment. In this setting, and with the following instructional strategies, we offer a choice that is not available in the surrounding traditional public school programs.

The goals and objectives outlined in our curriculum should be considered a learning hierarchy, whereby students demonstrate their competency in one level before passing to the next. This is predicated on the belief that one cannot and should not advance if one is not prepared with the requisite skills/knowledge needed for advancement. Students are given additional support and/or instruction if they have difficulty progressing through the curriculum.

The academic curriculum, developed by the teachers, with input from students, parents and the business community, is based primarily on the A-F Grading System passed originally by the Indiana General Assembly in 2012 and adopted by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Additional standards, based on research, and beliefs derived from experience with this type of learning community, are integrated to produce the whole learning experience.

## **B. School Design**

- 1. Provide a brief summary of the school's key design elements and specific examples of how the school implements the key design elements. Key design elements support the implementation of the school's mission and make the school unique and distinct from any other school. Key design elements should all relate to the mission statement or the intentions set out in the school's original (or amended) charter.**

Schedule 8: Curriculum and Instructional Methods give a detailed description of the schools' design in relation to the curriculum and instructional methods used to support the overall mission. The following offers a brief synopsis of each program that currently operates under our Options Charter Schools (9325) charter:

- A. Options Charter Schools- Carmel (2524)- this school has operated under the Options Charter Schools charter since its inception in 2002. The Options- Carmel school operates on two separate campuses- Carmel and Knightstown, Indiana.

This campus educates students in grades 6-12 and resembles a more traditional alternative education program. Students are able to attend a full 6-hour day, 8:30-3:15, on site at one of our two campuses. These programs are 1:1 student to chrome books and use a blend of direct instruction from highly qualified teachers in each content area and Google Classroom

for curricula delivery. While the high school students are focused on credit attainment towards graduation our middle schools students have a focus on math, language arts, and character development. The Noblesville campus also operates an evening program from 3:30-6:30 Monday through Thursday with Fridays as e-learning days. Students participate in direct instruction from highly qualified teachers in each content area for any new course content. Credit recovery is also available and may be delivered either through direct instruction or the online platform, depending on student preference. Students have access to face-to-face teacher support each evening as well as online support as needed.

Options Charter Schools- Carmel (HYCA)- based in Knightstown, Indiana since 2010 (founded in 2007), the Indiana National Guard Hoosier Youth ChalleNGe Academy (HYCA) is part of the National Youth ChalleNGe Program which was established in 1993 by the National Guard and has graduated over 90,000 Cadets. The Youth ChalleNGe Program was developed to change the life path of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of high school or are severely deficient in credits by bringing structure and discipline with an emphasis on the eight Core Components. HYCA empowers youths to embrace responsibility, achievement and positive behavior, while also instilling confidence, fostering ambition and increasing employment opportunities. HYCA is a 17 ½ month, two phase, quasi-military training academy, with the first 5 ½ months of the program referred to as the Residential Phase in which Cadets live at the HYCA campus in Knightstown, Indiana.

Options Charter Schools partnered with HYCA in 2019 to provide students attending HYCA a pathway to graduation from high school. Prior to our partnership, the only educational option for students attending HYCA was to pursue a high school equivalency through the Adult Education Programs in New Castle, Indiana. Students attend classes three-hours per day with the balance of the day focused on the HYCA curriculum. While in the classroom, the HYCA student is educated in a manner very similar to our two brick-and-mortar locations (Noblesville and Carmel).

- B. Options Charter Schools – Noblesville (2551)- this school was originally operated under its own charter that was approved by Ball State University Office of Charter Schools (BSU OCS) in 2006. In 2020, the Options Charter Schools- Noblesville charter was voluntarily surrendered back to BSU OCS and the Options- Noblesville school (2551) continued to operate as part of the Options Charter Schools (9325) charter. The Options- Noblesville school operates on three campuses- Noblesville, Fishers, and Kokomo, Indiana.

The Noblesville campus educates students in grades 6-12 that resembles a more traditional alternative education program. Students are able to attend a full 6-hour day, 8:30-3:15, on site at one of our two campuses. These programs are 1:1 student to chrome books and use a blend of direct instruction from highly qualified teachers in each content area and Google Classroom for curricula delivery. While the high school students are focused on credit attainment towards graduation our middle schools students have a focus on math, language arts, and character development. The Noblesville campus also operates an evening program from 3:30-6:30 Monday through Thursday with Fridays as e-learning days. Students participate in direct instruction from highly qualified teachers in each content area for any new course content. Credit recovery is also available and may be delivered either through



direct instruction or the online platform, depending on student preference. Students have access to face-to-face teacher support each evening as well as online support as needed.

Located in Fisher and Kokomo, Options Charter Schools operates school campuses targeting students that are on the autism spectrum. Options with ABA launched in September of 2019 with ‘Options @ BACA’ in Fishers, Indiana. After an extremely successful pilot year for Options with ABA in 2019-20, Options Schools found another opportunity to serve students on the autism spectrum with the creation of ‘Options @ IBAA.’ Located in Kokomo, Indiana. ‘Options @ IBAA’ launched on November 18, 2020. Both Options with ABA programs are accredited by the Indiana Department of Education & provide blended education models for students in grades 6-12.

Students attending ‘Options @ BACA’ or ‘Options @ IBAA’ will participate in the educational program for three hours each day, either during the Morning or Afternoon session. Students do not need to be receiving BACA services in order to enroll in the ‘Options @ BACA’ educational program. The programs offer diploma, certificate and functional academic tracks based on the individual needs of each student. Options’ highly-qualified team is co-located within BACA Prep in Fishers & IBAA in Kokomo. Students attending Options with ABA receive an accredited education in a supportive environment.

- C. Options Charter Schools- Indiana (9329)- this school received its own school number in 2020 as part of the Options Charter Schools reorganization plan and now operates under the Options Charter Schools charter (9325). Originally, this virtual school was a program designed to support alternative education students enrolled at Options who were experiencing significant life challenges and could not attend school.

With a 15-person Distance Education team, Options-Indiana is able to cover the entire state and provide one-on-one instruction to every student in the program. The Options motto, “Belong. Believe. Achieve.,” is the order in which a student must grow to be successful. Each student is paired with a certified teacher to help set and monitor weekly progress goals. In order to put students in the best position to reach their academic goals, they are able to choose how many courses they work on at a time.

Through a personalized approach, each teacher on the Options-Indiana team is able to develop relationships with their students in order to maximize their potential. While teachers do not see the students on a daily basis like in a traditional classroom, our team takes pride in investing in each individual student. Options-Indiana offers a different approach to learning that is not available at other brick and mortar schools or online virtual schools. We offer rolling enrollment and semesters, which means that every student can start and finish their courses at any time during the year. This provides them with the ability to earn credits at a faster rate. The curriculum is web-based and can be accessed any time of day, any day of the week. While there is no set time on how quickly a student can complete a course, one course requires between 20 and 40 hours of work, on average.

- 2. Does the school engage in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate the school’s mission and design? Please describe this process, and when it last occurred, or is planned.**

Yes. The Options Charter Schools Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team work together with other central office team members, principals, program leaders, teachers, staff, parents and students in an ongoing effort to gather information that informs the executive team's adjustments to the school design and the boards' annual board retreat where the mission and operational policies are considered. Evidence to support stakeholder input taken from various reports developed for our authorizer or the state. The board retreat is where policy-level decisions, such as adjustments to the mission statement or substantive key design elements, are made. This same information is used, however, to also make small corrections by the executive team between the annual board retreat.

The following is a list of primary sources that inform the Option Board and leadership regarding stakeholder input as well as data points used as evidence to support decision making:

- a. Cognia Review- Ball State University Office of Charter Schools has contracted with Cognia to perform reviews of charter schools in their portfolio. Cognia completes a review when a charter school is in the process of charter renewal and they complete a review during the charter mid-cycle. The comprehensive review is designed to review the effectiveness of all facets of a charter operation including: operational functions, leadership, teacher effectiveness, finance, etc. As part of the data collection Cognia has school leaders complete a climate and culture survey of staff, students, and parents.
- b. School Improvement Plans (SIP)- Options Charter Schools board and leadership completes an annual review of the Options SIP. In this past year, this plan also included the DOE Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis to make Options eligible for School Improvement Grant dollars. In addition to this work, Options leadership completes an annual student performance data review.
- c. Annually, all Options Charter Schools employees are subjected to our personnel evaluation plan review. According to Policy Governance, the board completes the annual evaluation of the President/CEO and supervisors complete evaluations on all staff members who are part of their downline.
- d. Other data collections include: data from state testing, NWEA, graduation rates, credit attainment rates, and performance of students on the AL Report. Many of the data points are used to compare performance against prior years of performance at Options, against other alternative schools in Indiana, or by partnering with Momentum Strategy and Research, making comparisons nationwide.

The intentional and ongoing collection of stakeholder input and the assessment of school data points, along with program and financial data offered to the board at monthly meetings, informs our board and leadership team when planning for any changes to the mission and school design. It is, however, critical to not only understand the process Options uses to collect information and data but also how Options communicates substantive changes to the school's mission or key design elements.

In 2019, Options Charter Schools employed a full-time professional marketing director. The decision to hire a full-time marketing director was informed from the 2019-20 Comprehensive Needs Assessment and was partially funded through the School Improvement Grant dollars. This

employee has developed a marketing plan for information dissemination using various methods such as: Bright Arrow, professionally developed marketing materials, extensive use of social media, and our Options website. This employee also assists our central office team, principals, and program directors with communications to key stakeholders. This transformative hire not only improved our communication with key stakeholders but also has improved our community and state awareness, student recruitment and enrollment, and organizational advocacy. The highly successful methods developed by our marketing director inspired the Options board in October of 2020 to increase the marketing budget for Options Charter Schools from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

The collection of stakeholder input and data and communication of the Options brand, mission and key design is clearly a priority of the Options Board of Directors.

**3. Describe any changes to the school's mission or substantial revisions to the educational program as described in the current charter that the school proposes to make for the next charter term. Discuss any associated challenges or risks.**

Options Charter Schools core mission has not changed. We continue to target those students who qualify for alternative education using the five categories outlined in Indiana Code:

- Intend to withdraw or have withdrawn from school before graduation;
- Have failed to comply academically and would benefit from instruction offered in a manner different from the manner of instruction available in a traditional school;
- Are parents or an expectant parents and are unable to regularly attend the traditional school program;
- Are employed and the employment is necessary for support and interferes with a part of student's instructional day; or
- Are disruptive (as defined in IC 20-10.1-4.6-1.6).

In this Executive Summary (B)(1) you can review the synopsis of all school and program level changes that have occurred to-date. You can review in this Executive Summary (C)(1) for future considerations of school or program level changes.

The most notable challenge for future growth of Options Charter Schools are:

- a. Accessing Charter School Program (CSP) dollars- Options Charter Schools is currently barred from receiving CSP money because of our designation under the A-F Grading System as a school not receiving an "A" or "B." Options leadership team has been appealing our state grade on an annual basis for the past eight years based on the premise that the A-F Grading System is not appropriate considering Options highly specialized mission. We have engaged state elected officials, appointed members of the State Board of Education, and their respective full-time staff to assist. If Options can receive the requested "Null Grade" from the state and the Options Board continues to consider more aggressive marketing line items, it will support future Options growth.
- b. Marketing to new geographic regions- Options Charter Schools has continually grown over the past nine-years. This growth was accelerated by the development and launch of Options-Indiana as a program in 2016 and a school in 2020. Successfully marketing Options Charter Schools as an education provider to students who qualify as alternative students across Indiana is challenging. We have

hired a full-marketing director and our board has increased our marketing line item in our budget to combat this challenge.

- c. Budgetary challenges- Options Charter Schools funding limits its ability to compete with traditional public schools in some key areas. Transportation for students to and from school, to internships, and to successfully complete graduation pathways is financially challenging. Also, competing with traditional schools, who get more state dollars per student and can access local referendum dollars, in attracting and retaining high quality staff is almost impossible.

### **C. Goals and Plans (6000 character limit)**

- 1. State and provide an overview of the charter school's future goals. Summarize the plans for accomplishing these goals (e.g. academic benchmarks, organizational changes, facility improvements, financial stability).**

Westfield School Building- The Options Charter Schools Board developed a facility committee in 2018 to begin reviewing real estate sites for possible locations of a future Options Charter Schools building. It was the intent of the board to move the Options- Carmel school operations into the new building. The timing of this project coincided with the organization's financial wherewithal to accomplish the build and the completion of our twelve-year lease at our Options- Carmel location in July of 2020. The final site that was chosen was just off SR32 and Gunther Boulevard in Westfield, Indiana. After eighteen months of working with Westfield city officials, local traditional school leaders, Axis Architecture, and SA Berg Co. the construction of the new Options Charter Schools building began. The anticipated completion date is May of 2021. Additional information can be accessed by referring to section (V)(A)(3).

OCS Marketing Plan- Identified earlier in this charter application as a challenge to our mission or key design, Options Charter Schools board and leadership team have employed a full-time marketing director and have, among other goals, developed a marketing plan targeting the recruitment of staff and students. As part of this marketing plan, we are also meeting with community leaders across Indiana to partner with them to provide potential new Options students with a high-quality education. In just the past few years, we have run pilot programs in Fishers, Ft. Wayne, Knightstown, Indianapolis, and Kokomo. Currently, we are discussing possible partnerships in Columbia City and Kendallville. The purpose of our pilot programs are to see the level of interest locally in Options Charter Schools and to see if our partnership is positive and long standing. Those pilots that the OCS board and leadership team deem worthy, we send them into full program mode. Ultimately, it is our goal to develop schools from one or more sites with similar educational and/or geographic qualities.

- 2. Summarize plans for addressing any past academic, organizational, or financial deficits.**

Annual Appeal of the OCS State Grade- In 2012, the Indiana General Assembly passed the A-F Grading System for all public k-12 schools in the state. The legislation and subsequent rulemaking changed the accountability for Options Charter Schools from typically average state grades to perennial "D" or "F" grades. In that same year, the OCS leadership began engaging in the annual appeal process. It is the intent of the OCS board and leadership team to get state officials at the Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) offices or the Indiana State Board of Education (ISBOE) to recognize that due to Options highly specialized mission, it is deserving of a "Null" grade. During the past decade, the Options board and leadership have updated our appeals many times, recruited

consultants to assist, partnered with state elected and appointed officials, and tried to work with the full time staff of many state agencies. We are hopeful that the education and expertise that we have received will translate into positive feedback on our current state appeal. Options board and leadership are waiting on a ruling from the ALJ in our first round of appeals regarding our 2019-20 school year. If this first round appeal is not successful, Options leadership will prepare the second round appeal in January of 2021 to the Indiana State Board of Education.

Move to One Options Charter Schools Charter- On April 21, 2020 the Options Board of Directors voted unanimously to consolidate Options Charter Carmel (9325) and Options Charter Schools Noblesville (9640) into a single charter. Historically, Options Carmel was started in 2002 under the newly formed state chartering laws and Options Noblesville was started in 2006 as a second school site due to overwhelming parent and student demand. At the time, under Indiana code, each charter school was required to operate as a separate entity.

That Indiana code was, however, amended to allow a charter organization to operate multiple schools under one corporation number. Indiana Code 20-24-3-17 reads as follows:

IC 20-24-3-17 Assignment of school corporation and school identification numbers

Sec. 17.

(a) The department shall assign a school corporation identification number for each organizer granted a charter.

(b) If an organizer assigned a school corporation identification number under subsection (a) consists of more than one (1) charter school, the department shall assign each charter school a separate school identification number.

(c) If an organizer assigned a school corporation identification number under subsection (b) consists of more than one (1) campus, the department shall assign each campus a separate school identification number.

As added by P.L.280-2013, SEC.35. Amended by P.L.35-2014, SEC.1.

Pursuant to this amended code, Options Charter Schools leadership met with Dr. Bob Marra and received his conditional verbal approval to move forward with the idea of consolidating all Options Charter Schools operations under a single charter (one corporation). The Options leadership team then met with Indiana Department officials in the fall of 2019 to discuss this idea. In April of 2020 Maggie Paino, Indiana Department of Education Director of Accountability, sent an email to the Options leadership team stating that the IDOE is prepared to grant the transition request for Options Charter Schools to operate under a single charter with multiple school numbers. Ultimately, this project was completed and went operational on July 1, 2020.

The benefit to Options Charter Schools of operating under a single charter is that it reduces by half the number of accounting books that need to be maintained. It also allow the Options Charter Schools board to use organizational funds for the betterment of our students across schools and programs without limit. Finally, Options is better able to take advantage of the economy of scale that the larger organization provides.

**3. (OPTIONAL) Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

N/A

Attachments.

**III. Student Performance Diagnostic**

**A. Continuous Improvement Practices**

**1. Describe the school’s assessment system and how it is used to improve instructional decision-making, support student learning and implement professional development.**

Options Charter Schools utilizes a variety of data sets to help inform continuous practices. Monthly data is collected and reflected upon by school principals and submitted for additional review to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Chief Operations Officer. Each month we’re reviewing attendance, mobility, credit attainment, on-track status for graduation, rate of progress on ISP goals, and parent engagement. State assessment data is not relevant data to help inform continuous improvement practices for Options due to the high mobility of our population and the significant risk factors or credit deficiency at enrollment. We have found NWEA to support continuous improvement because of its stability of a RIT score over time and the ability to measure against Alternative Education Normed data. NWEA allows us to understand each students’ specific areas of need and talent and set appropriate, individualized goals. The advancement of NWEA over time allows our teachers to learn what they are ready to learn now and can be prepared to learn in the not so far future. NWEA measures in equal intervals, regardless of a student’s grade or performance—and it remains stable over time. This gives us an accurate measure of student performance, regardless of whether they’re performing on, above, or below grade level (Ernst, Jody L., 2015; NWEA, 2015; NWEA, 2020a; NWEA, 2020b).

Options Charter Schools is transitioning to Standards Based Grading (SBG) (Marzano, 2010). This teaching methodology utilizes regular formative assessments to evaluate mastery and drive instruction in an individualized manner. The teachers select and prioritize standards to set to a pacing guide. Through this exercise, teachers build a strong understanding of what is needed to master the current subject and also be prepared for matriculation to the next subject in a course sequence. The goal in SBG is for students to master a standard while also learning new material. If a student does not obtain mastery, the material can be scaffolded into new material with the opportunity for the student to prove mastery at a later date. The teacher has the opportunity to create several different learning opportunities within a lesson. This allows scaffolding for students who need greater challenges as well as the students who need remediation. Students do not earn better grades by extra credit. Instead, students have additional opportunities for mastery. By demonstrating obtained knowledge, it is with confidence that the student learned and mastered the standards that the teachers felt were most important. This builds a foundation for learning and prepares students for the next level. Through the SBG process, students understand their learning styles. Teachers also learn what works best for their individual students. These are skill sets that prepare the student not only for the next class but for lifelong learning.

**2. Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.**

Options Charter Schools has a strong system of data collection and review in place to ensure all students are serviced in appropriate and challenging academic plans. In alignment with the mission of Options and the unique population of students served, Options creates a unique educational plan for each individual student enrolled. These plans are called Individualized Service Plans (ISP) and are used to map the performance goals for students in the areas of academics, behavior, and social-emotional wellness aligned to the mission of ensuring all students Belong, Believe, and Achieve. Options believes in allowing for a fluid development of the master schedule each semester so building leaders and teachers have the ability to create a schedule and unique courses that best fits the current student population need while also meeting the Indiana requirements for graduation. Although differentiation is also found within each classroom, a bigger form of differentiation is in place at Options by placing students in courses they are academically prepared to take, not necessarily by grade order or traditional course sequences.

Through experimentation and continued research, Options continues to develop alternative education best practices. As a team, we continue to push ourselves to grow in this area each year. In 2017, the Options' leadership team identified the need to do a better job of ensuring new methods, backed by data, were being documented in policy manuals and training developed to ensure all team members new and old had what they needed to implement the policies effectively. In recent years, a new staff member induction program was created with a training portal, an HR specialist was hired, and the executive team reviews the needs for policy updates as a regular agenda item in the weekly meetings.

Options teachers and leadership team also identified the need to continue to develop better ways to identify standards students have mastered as well as those in which they need to continue to develop during our 2017 review. Students often enroll at Options with courses having been partially completed or low to average grades in their previous schools that are not necessarily a true reflection of what they have actually learned and mastered. Options has a foundational belief that credits earned and course grades should be a reflection of what the student knows and is able to apply, not the number of assignments completed. We have made progress in accomplishing the goal of improvement in this area by having concluded a complete study of the entire curriculum, developed research-based curriculum maps and provided training and support on a regular basis. In the coming years we will continue to develop in this area by moving to a standards-based grading approach. The plan has been thoroughly researched, initial training provided to all teachers, and 100% buy-in to move forward has been achieved. We will begin the transition and training process in the summer of 2020. The standards based grading will begin with our middle school grades fall of 2020 and matriculate into our high school in the fall of 2021.

The Northwest Evaluation Assessment MAP (NWEA) test is given to all students enrolled at Options in the fall and the spring of each academic year. This test measures student growth in the areas of language arts, reading, mathematics and science. It allows our teachers to have a true understanding of the students' abilities based on RIT scores. Options has also utilized the partnership of NWEA and Edmentum's Study Island to create individualized support curriculum for students based on NWEA goals. Goals are based on RIT scores and Study Island has the ability to import NWEA scores and create instruction for each student based on current scores and expected growth. The teacher has the ability to watch weekly growth, lessons that require reteaching, strengths, weaknesses, and success made by the next NWEA test date. This blend of testing and individualized curriculum supports our students' ISPs.

Through the Individualized Service Plans (ISP), Options maintains strong and consistent data portfolios for every student. Every student is challenged to grow in the areas of academics, behavior, and social-emotional wellness. School personnel use this data to design, implement and

evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs and organizational conditions. Designated time is set aside regularly through each school year to ensure all personnel have both the time and training to review this data in real-time and take advantage of our professional community to collaborate on improvement processes and goals. Professional development opportunities are determined as a result of data analysis and continuous improvement plans.

The Options' leadership team has developed strong data collection and accountability practices that help inform internal growth measures such as the school improvement plan, charter renewal and the 5-year strategic plan that each include both quantitative and qualitative data sets. However, we understand that we need to continue to do a better job of telling our school's story through data that other stakeholders understand and buy-in to. Traditional measures of accountability look as though our schools are failing, yet once the lense of the Options' mission and unique population is considered, it becomes more clear that Options students are successful. We would like to identify better metrics to help us tell this story to all different types of stakeholders.

**3. Describe how the school leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving student learning.**

Options Charter Schools' governing board has established very strong policies and support practices that ensure effective administration, responsible decision making, and ethical practice. Through Policy Governance, Options' leadership is given the autonomy and support needed to meet goals for achievement and instruction according to our overall growth plan. Regular and purposeful reporting of school performance in each of the four pillars of the organization: Governance, Finance, Operations, and Academics are reviewed and discussed at each level of leadership in the organization to ensure mission alignment and a focus on performance.

Options Charter Schools has a strong process for review, revision and communication of the school's purpose. Both major and minor decision making is centered on the backdrop of the core mission for our students, *Belong. Believe. Achieve.* Critical questions such as: *Is this mission aligned? How would this decision affect our current and future students? What if we are wrong about this?* are considered at all levels of decision making throughout the organization to ensure we stay mission-aligned and student-centered. Every level of employee, the overall school performance, and even each individual student is held accountable to a systematic continuous improvement process that is documented and reviewed regularly to ensure we are all held to high expectations of professional growth. Options continues to strive to break the molds of traditional alternative education models by experimenting with new ideas and strong educational practices that may become best-practices for working with at-risk students. This process of experimentation can, at times, become a source of confusion for various stakeholders. In order to combat this possible source of confusion Options' leadership team has worked to better align the organizational chart, provide more consistent and meaningful feedback and coaching to all employees through evaluation plans that allow for risk-taking and monthly feedback, and provide better communication and needs assessments to all stakeholders through clear and understandable data.

**4. Describe how leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes have resulted in improved professional practice and student success.**



Options has implemented best practices in the evaluation process for standard school roles such as building leaders and classroom teachers ensuring a focus on improved professional practice and student success. In the last three years, the executive team made up of the President/CEO, COO, and CFO, developed a stronger evaluation and feedback plan for all non-teaching employees. This process began with developing a clear organizational chart and chain of command, improving job descriptions and performance goals, and creating an evaluation template that would encourage risk taking, innovation, and regular feedback (Ehrich et al., 2015; Smith & Besharov, 2019; Templeton & Tremont, 2014). The new evaluation plans were piloted in the spring of 2019 and became fully operational for all employees not evaluated on the teacher evaluation plan in the fall of 2019. We are already seeing the benefits of strengthened communication across our teams, improved overall organization, and an increase in productivity, risk-taking, innovation, and professionalism.

## **B. Needs of Learners**

### **1. Describe the systems in place to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists, classroom teachers and parents regarding the needs of individual students.**

Accountability is essential for a school to be successful. Options cannot do it alone with just the teachers wanting success for their students. Success requires a triangulation of accountability between the teachers, parents and students. This is done through the ISP process, grade accountability and advising system.

- a. The ISP process is in place for all students enrolled at Options. This is where goals are set for academics, behavior and social/emotional goals are set. These are reviewed, as a team, every six weeks and interventions or goals adjusted accordingly.
- b. Teachers report grades to their administrator on a weekly basis. If a student is below “C” level in a course the advisor and/or administrator works with the student and communicates with the parent to assist the student. This could be offering tutoring services available after school, reviewing an assignment or support at home making school a priority. The teacher, parent and student together to create a plan.
- c. Each student has an advising teacher. This teacher is responsible for communicating with the family two times a month. This is to share how the student is in all aspects of school academically, behaviorally and social/emotionally. It is also to continue to strengthen relationships with our family and demonstrate that Options does value family as part of the learning process.

### **2. Explain how the school supports diverse learners.**

The school has multiple strategies in place for diverse learners. A more thorough outline of strategies used for specific subgroups of students can be found in schedule 14: Plans and Programs for Special Populations and At-Risk Students.

- a. All students at Options Charter Schools have ISPs - Individual Service Plans. Within these plans we address academic, behavioral and social

emotional goals. Each student's ISPs are unique to the individual to allow him or her to grow in the school setting as best meet their needs.

- b. Students with IEPs - Options Charter Schools has a strong special education services department. Along with our Director of Special Education Services, our schools also have staff in place to create and support the needs of our students along with a partnership with Hamilton Boone Madison Special Services Cooperative to assist us with testing and finding other services if necessary that we do not offer in house.
- c. Students with 504 plans are different from our students with IEPs. As 504 plans are short term, up to one year before needing to be revisited, it is essential that the educators working with the student understand the immediate need that is being interrupted whether it is due to an injury, a health concern or whatever the reason the 504 or is in place. Accommodations need to be addressed as they are for an IEP but reviewed to see if the 504 plan is still necessary at the annual review.
- d. Our ELL students fall into two categories. If a student has an IEP, there is a specialized document within the IEP system to address our ELL students. If the student does not have an IEP, based on WIDA scores the appropriate learning goals and accommodations can be built into a student's ISP.
- e. Our staff is also trained as trauma informed educators. We recognize that working with at-risk students brings challenges, but it also provides opportunity. By our staff learning how to address adversity and meet students where they are not just academically but also emotionally, we can assist our students in reaching their highest potential.

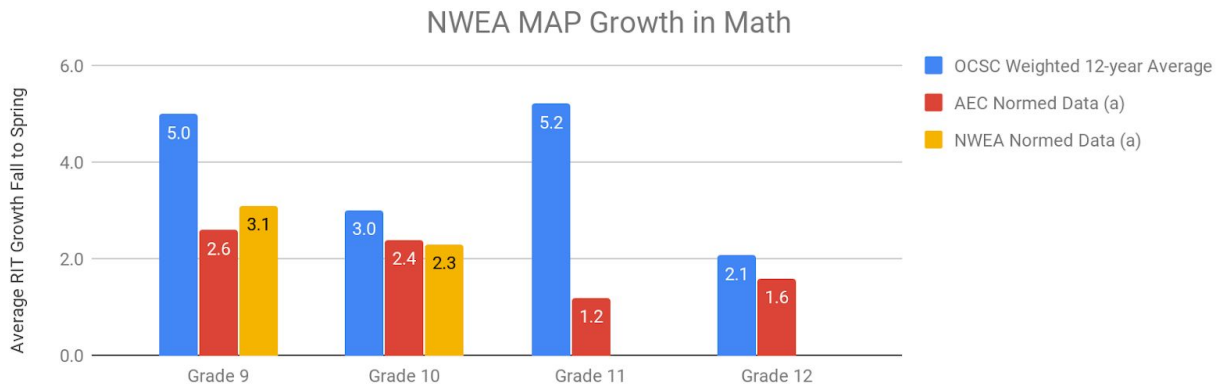
### **C. Areas of Notable Achievement and Areas for Improvement**

#### **1. Which area(s) are above and below the expected levels of performance?**

##### **Areas of Excellence:**

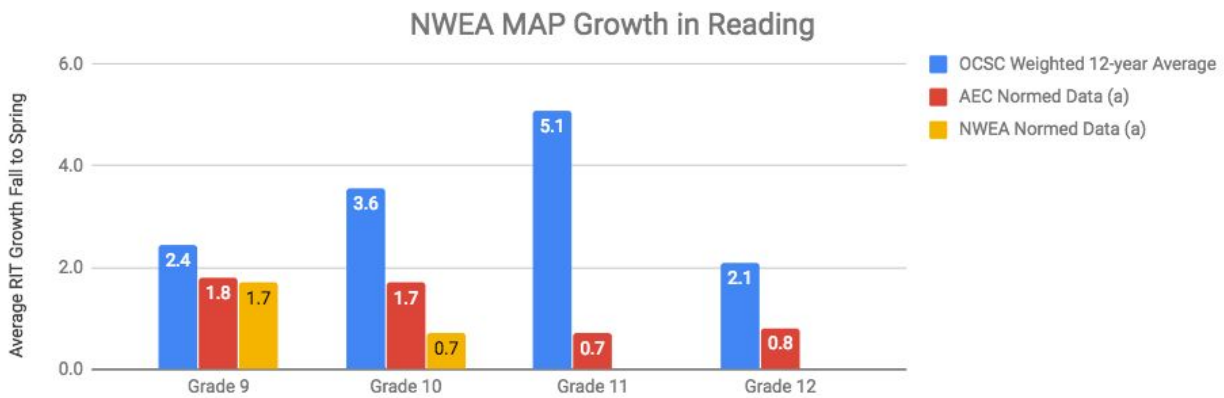
Options uses the Northwest Education Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments to measure academic growth in math, reading, and language usage. Options is competitive in all grades and subjects and consistently outperforms the norms in most areas. This is a comparison of all student types. Momentum Strategy & Research recently completed a norming study for Alternative Norms using NWEA MAP (Ernst, 2015). Options also outperforms the Alternative Education Consortium (AEC) from this study. As an example, Options Carmel's data is shared below.

NWEA MAP Growth Comparison in Math



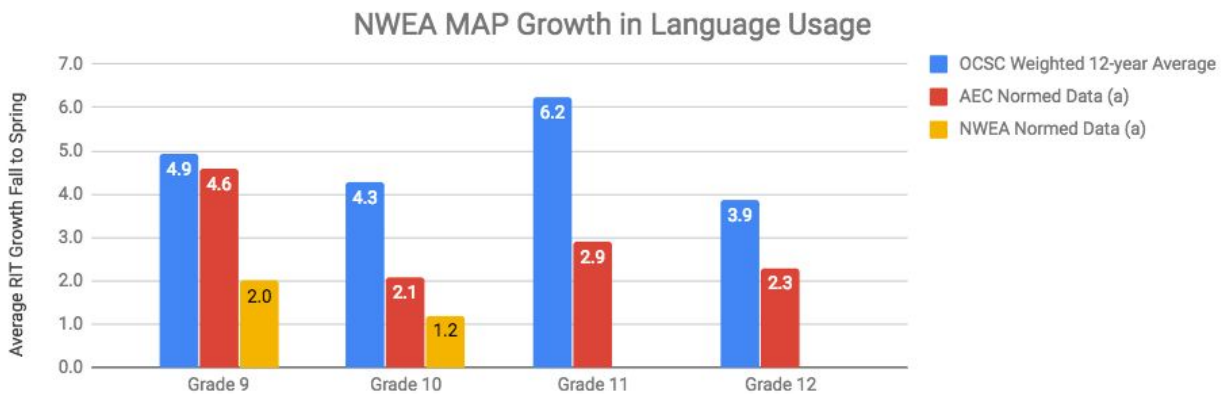
(a) AEC Normed Data and NWEA Normed Data provided by Momentum Strategy and Research: 2015 Alternative Norms Using NWEA MAP

### NWEA MAP Growth Comparison in Reading



(a) AEC Normed Data and NWEA Normed Data provided by Momentum Strategy and Research: 2015 Alternative Norms Using NWEA MAP

### NWEA MAP Growth Comparison in Language Usage



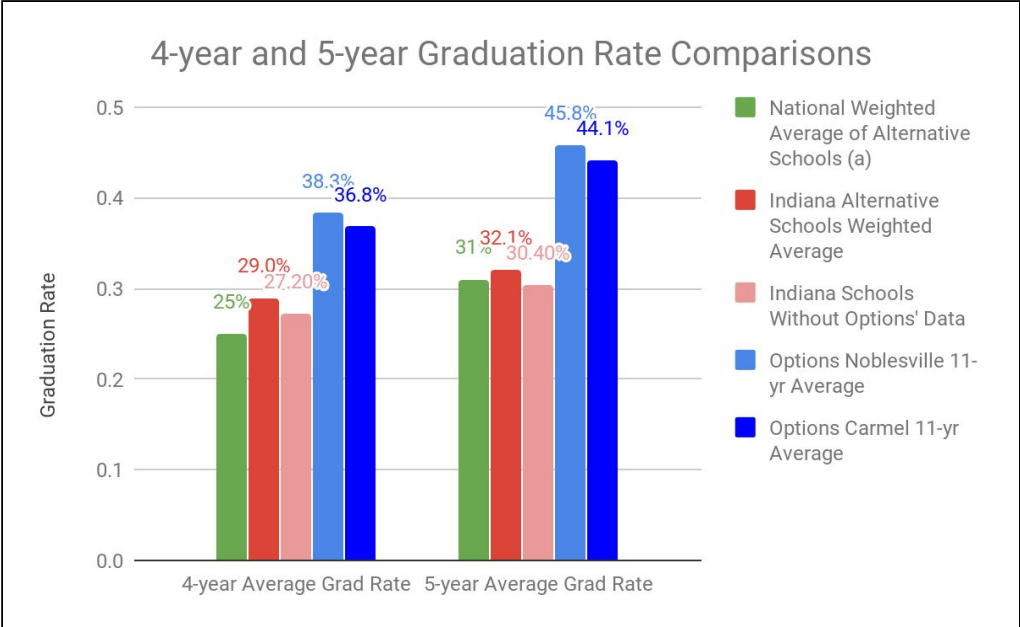
(a) AEC Normed Data and NWEA Normed Data provided by Momentum Strategy and Research: 2015 Alternative Norms Using NWEA MAP

As an alternative school, OCSC is designed to meet the needs of at-risk students who have not succeeded in the traditional setting. Students are provided a variety of options within our program to support the final goal of earning a high school diploma. Of the 211 alternative schools and programs operating in Indiana, we were able to identify nine with graduation data in the IDOE COMPASS database. In addition, Momentum Strategy & Research has compiled graduation rate data for 874 alternative schools in Colorado, New York City, Ohio, and Utah. Figure 7 shows how the nine Indiana alternative schools and the alternative schools nationwide perform, on average, similarly while the Options’ schools perform well above the averages (Ernst, Jody, 2018).

Indiana Alternative Schools (as of 2018-2019)

	Average Number of Students in Graduation Cohort	Number of years included 4-year Graduation	Number of years included 5-year Graduation
Options Charter School Carmel (9325)	51.4	11	10
Options Charter School Noblesville (9640)	54.6	11	10
McLean Education Center (8612)	52.5	11	10
Booker T. Washington (8611)	28	11	10
Hope Academy (5292)	19.9	9	8
Neighbors’ New Vista High School (6864)	76.6	5	4
The Crossing Educational Center (B009)	84.3	11	10
Academy for Innovative Studies (8270)	174.9	7	6
Rise Up Academy at Eggleston (7534)	125.5	11	10

4-year and 5-year Graduation Rate Comparisons



(a) Includes data for the following states (and number of years) Colorado (7 yrs), NYC (4 yrs), Ohio (2 yrs), & Utah (4 yrs) (Momentum Strategy & Research (2018), report forthcoming ).

Areas for Improvement:

Two areas Options is focused on improving is the strength of diplomas and performance on state assessments. With the opening of the middle school programs in 2017, Options has begun to see a shift in enrollment trends to younger students and a reduction in mobility of those students. This longevity of enrollment will allow Options to have the instructional time necessary to impact larger growth in students, increasing the quality of diplomas and proficiency on standardized tests. Targeted changes are already underway to put more emphasis on accelerated learning models to provide opportunities for all students to participate in dual credit enrollment, advanced courses, internships, and industry credentialing pathways.

**2. Describe the area(s) that show a positive and negative trend in performance.**

Positive Trend Data:

Over the last five years, Options’ 5-year graduation rate and the BSU cohort graduation rate have shown a positive trend in performance. The BSU cohort graduation rate is a unique measurement for Options due to our specific mission and population. Because so many of our students enroll mildly or severely credit deficient, the state’s 4-year graduation expectation is not necessarily obtainable for all students. Ball State’s Office of Charter Schools has allowed Options to designate a specific cohort of students each year that begin the year within the range of being able to graduate within the year. Even with this group, Options stretches to push students that would not be able to graduate in traditional programs, placing students that need 10-15 credits to graduate in the cohort, depending on specifics of coursework needed. Additionally, the graduation rate increase from 4-year to 5-year has also shown a positive trend in performance. Both of these measures are significantly impacted by the improved credit attainment rate across all programs.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
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BSU Cohort Graduation Rate	72/124 (58%)	82/128 (64%)	154/188 (82%)
4-yr to 5-yr increase	6.2%	16.7%	9.5%

Negative Trend Data:

Poor attendance is very common with at-risk youth (London et al., 2016). As educators, we know the most significant impact we can make is when the students are attending school each and every day. Unfortunately, many of the obstacles our unique student population faces that prevent attendance is beyond our control. That being said, Options has partnered with several wrap around service agencies to help offer additional supports. Additionally, Options in Education Foundation supports families’ unique needs as requested by the building principal and financially available to do so. As the IDOE has made changes to attendance reporting and continues to do so with the shift to the Ed-Fi data exchange, we are spending a significant amount of time and resources to ensure our report of attendance is an accurate reflection of the students’ participation and true attendance to school. Many students have unique schedules, identified by their ISP, that have to be accounted for appropriately in PowerSchool. This is a unique challenge for a school like ours; to get the differentiation afforded to our students to report correctly in the SIS and state’s system. Notice, 2018-19 showed a significant dip in average attendance. This was the pilot year of the full virtual program. We have corrected necessary attendance policies, communication to ensure students and parents are aware of the expectations and are trending back towards a more positive rating.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Average Attendance	97%	77%*	83%

**3. Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing and between which is the gap widening? Please support with data.**

Subgroup data is difficult to track in schools with high mobility, like Options. State data sites, like InView, do not show trend data for subgroups due to the very small sizes of the groups or the lack of year over year enrollment of the students.

**4. Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance, and which toward decreasing performance? Please support with data.**

Subgroup data is difficult to track in schools with high mobility, like Options. State data sites, like InView, do not show trend data for subgroups due to the very small sizes of the groups or the lack of year over year enrollment of the students.

**5. Discuss areas of academic concern, and changes made to address any deficiencies.**

Our most significant academic concern is the deficiency we observe upon enrollment and ensuring we put together appropriate plans to accelerate the student to overall success, being cognizant of his/her specific traumas, risks, needs, gifts, talents, and interests. During our last review, we noted a need for improvement in helping our staff understand and use student-level data to help inform instruction better as well as integrate technology better. In response, we launched a professional development series that rotates topics in the following categories: Instructional Team Building, Instructional Practices, Be the Student, Instructional Technology, and Student Outcomes. We were also awarded the Charter School Program Innovation Grant, \$100,000, to implement innovative

practices in these areas. A Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) was added to the leadership team to help support the continued focus on strong instructional practices and training for our teams. Our DCI has been instrumental in training the instructional teams in use of technology through COVID-19, understanding and using NWEA data appropriately, encouraging creative and innovative practices to help provide differentiated needs to students, and completing a thorough review and update of our curriculum, converting to a Standards Based Grading (SBG) approach to pedagogy. The training and professional development offered on SBG has helped our teaching teams understand priority standards and the importance of measuring mastery to assist with the students’ readiness to progress to the next level (Marzano, 2010). SBG will support our efforts to allow students the opportunity to relearn or continue to work on specific standards and be recognized for the growth that builds to proficiency, promoting the “I can” mindset of learning that must be rebuilt for at-risk learners.

**6. If academic performance has resulted in a rating of ‘Falls Far Below’ on any Quality indicator in the Ball State Academic Framework during the charter term, please provide the school’s assessment of those results and describe what has been done, and is planned to improve academic performance.**

Many of the standard performance indicators used by both the state and BSU place Options in the “Falls Far Below” category. As demonstrated above, when compared to like-schools using available data for other alternative schools, Options’ students are achieving excellent performance standards. One area that is trending upward but continues to not meet the BSU quality standard is the percentage of students making adequate progress on their Individualized Service Plans (ISP). Options is continuing to address this by providing training for teachers and administrators on how to help students write effective and appropriate SMART goals, how to communicate those better to support systems like parents or mentors, and unique interventions we can supply or help get put in place to support the students’ overall success. Additionally, high mobility can influence this rate as well. If students drop out or leave without achieving set goals, they contribute negatively to the overall total. This is an appropriate practice but is helpful to understand the data better.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Percentage of Students Making Adequate Growth on ISPs Goals	59%	62%	75%

Attachments.

**IV. Stakeholder Diagnostic**

Recommended surveys to complete this diagnostic: Climate and Culture Surveys for Students and Parents, with option of customized questions

**1. Which area(s) indicate the overall highest and lowest levels of satisfaction?**

Students and parents indicate a great deal of satisfaction in their overall experience with Options. Most categories demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction with their school choice. Nearly 100% of students agreed that Options’ teachers make an effort to build a relationship to better understand the student and what he/she needs to be successful in school. The lowest level of satisfaction, informed by students, is the distractions from learning caused by other students’

inappropriate behaviors or disrespect to teachers, with approximately 30% of students reporting this as either a big or moderate problem for them.

**2. Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other sources (e.g. surveys, observations, anecdotal, third party reviews), please explain.**

Word of mouth referrals, online reviews, and anecdotal sources all support the overall satisfaction of our students and parents with the unique, relationship-based approach our teachers and administrators offer. Families are happy with the individualization offered and unique learning plans and supports they receive.

**3. What are the implications and/or challenges related to any negative stakeholder perceptions?**

One of the largest challenges we face is communicating our mission and success to stakeholders that may not understand how applying typical, standardized performance measures to our programs is not appropriate. The partnership with Momentum Strategy and Research's Alternative Consortium has helped us have access to more apples-to-apples data to help tell our story better. This continues to be a challenge with federal and state level educational agencies, preventing us access to things like CSP grant funds for growth.

**4. How will survey findings inform school improvement plans? What actionable steps will be taken based on survey results?**

Survey data helps us identify areas of need and areas of success. When paired with student performance data, we can determine if changes need to be made to help support additional student performance. In response to an overall increase, although still very low, in students and parents expressing some level of safety concern following the Noblesville West Middle School shooting in 2018, Options decided to hire and employ a Director of School Safety and safety specialists located at the brick and mortar campuses. Additional safety measures in both hardware and policy driven procedures were also put in place. The director and safety specialist work with the building principals and instructional teams to provide mentoring and social emotional support while also maintaining a protective presence in the buildings. Parents and students have communicated their satisfaction with the safety measures put in place and appreciate the additional support.

Attachments.

**V. Organizational and Financial Diagnostic**

**A. Organizational**

The OCS will review and verify the organizational documents submitted through CSAPPHIRE during the renewal process (see above for the specific list of required CSAPPHIRE submissions and updates). It is important for each school to upload the school's most recent version of each of the required documents in order for the OCS to make appropriate decisions related to Organizational Performance.

Along with the required CSAPPHIRE submissions, provide any organizational related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information. Submissions may include evidence of current compliance in areas for which the school was found previously to be non-compliant or other updates relevant to previous school findings.

**1. Provide a reflection of the school's governance and organizational performance over the past charter term. Describe any anticipated changes to the governance and management of the school, including but not limited to board composition, board member roles, member recruitment, committee structure, and/or amendments to by-laws.**



OCS school board has continued to operate under policy governance with yearly review of current policies. The board has lost 2 and added 1 new board member. The additional board member will be recruited over the next 6 months. The board roles changed in the standard cycle of role changes with Vice Chair becoming Chair and Vice Chair and Treasurer/Secretary being nominated and voted on by the board. There is currently a committee assembled to review all policy governance. There is an anticipated completion of this policy governance work of January 2021.

- 2. Please specify whether the board intends to contract or terminate a contract with an education service provider (ESP), educational management organization (EMO), or charter management organization (CMO).**

Yes

No

- a. (OPTIONAL) If Yes, please describe evidence illustrating an effective working relationship with an ESP, and describe the ESP's roles and responsibilities in relation to the school's management and governing board; describe how the governing board holds the operator accountable for specific academic, operational or financial outcomes from the agreed upon contract.
- b. (OPTIONAL) If Yes, please describe any anticipated changes to service contract or provider over the next charter term, including, but not limited to, intentions to terminate your contractual relationship with your management organization. If terminating, describe in detail the plans for carrying out the primary operational and educational activities for which the service provider had been responsible.
- 3. Describe the current condition of the school's facility, and its capacity to serve students. Discuss any anticipated changes in facilities needs and/or location, which includes any changes to lease terms and/or building plan. If the facility is leased, how does the board oversee the terms of the lease agreement?**

We are currently in the process of constructing a new school in Westfield, IN that will take the place of our current Carmel location when that lease runs out in July of 2021. The Westfield building is owned by the OCS-Westfield LLC and upon completion and operation, OCS will make lease payments to the LLC for use of the facility. This lease will be reviewed and approved by the OCS School Board. The current Noblesville building will be transferred to OCS-Noblesville, LLC in the next year and OCS will make lease payments to that LLC for use of the facility. Currently, our Noblesville school building, Carmel school building, and Central office are functional and adequate for the capacity and safety needs of our organization.

- 4. If any organizational deficiencies or findings were noted in any of the annual independent audits, prior notices of deficiencies, onsite reviews, or prior renewal letter, please note such deficiencies and how they were remedied.**

Options Charter Schools did not have any major findings in its 2019 audit and has not had any major findings over the last 5 years. We have steadily built processes to handle the ever growing amount of expenses and revenues that come in each year. We are currently wrapping up our 2020 audit with CLA.

- 5. (OPTIONAL) Describe the plan for providing transportation to students to attend the school, including transportation to extra-curricular activities, if applicable.**

N/A

**B. Financial**

- 1. In what ways does the board assure that financial resources provide adequate support for the school’s overall program and to improve student achievement? Please reflect on the allocation, challenges, trends and any shifts in resources directed toward Student Academic Achievement, Student Instructional Support, Overhead and Operational, and Nonoperational (See Form 9).**

The OCS School Board reviews monthly vouchers and financial statements. The board approves a yearly budget in May but will provide approval or denial of additional purchases or changes to line items during the year. Any new programs that are started must be approved by the board which includes a budget feasibility discussion and analysis. The board will make changes to the budget if needed for improved student enrollment, safety, or achievement. As an example, this year the board approved a new \$100,000 line item to improve statewide online enrollment to our Options-Indiana program and for additional Hamilton county marketing and recruitment for our brick and mortar programs. Options prides itself on a strong system of checks and balances which includes the OCS board treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, and a bonded school treasurer that works with a certified public accountant from Charles Madden.

- 2. If any financial deficiencies or findings were noted in any of the annual independent audits, prior notices of deficiencies, onsite reviews, or prior renewal letter, please note such deficiencies and how they were remedied.**

Options Charter Schools did not have any major findings in its 2019 audit and has not had any major findings over the last 5 years. We have steadily built processes to handle the ever growing amount of expenses and revenues that come in over the year. We are currently wrapping up our 2020 audit with CLA.

**Attachment Organizational and Financial Diagnostic**

Please list any comments for this section below with attachments, if applicable.

**VI. Financial Dashboard**

**Ball State University  
Financial Performance Framework Dashboard**

Meets
Does Not Meet
Falls Far Below

1. NEAR TERM INDICATORS			
1.a	Current Ratio (Working Capital Ratio)	Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities	2.63
1.b	Cash to Current Liabilities	Cash divided by Current Liabilities	.99
1.c	Unrestricted Days Cash	Unrestricted Cash divided by ((Total Expenses-Depreciation Expenses)/365)	86.8

1.d	Enrollment Variance	Actual Enrollment divided by Enrollment Projection in Charter School Board-Approved Budget	104%
1.e	Default		no
2. SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS			
2.a	Total Margin	Net Income divided by Total Revenue	.025
		Aggregated Total Margin: Total 3 Year Net Income divided by Total 3 Year Revenues	.081
2.b	Debt to Asset Ratio	Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets	.556
2.c	Cash Flow	Multi-Year Cash Flow = (Year 3 Total Cash)-(Year 1 Total Cash); One-Year Cash Flow = (Year 2 Total Cash)-(Year 1 Total Cash)	-173,623 262,648
2.d	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	(Net Income + Depreciation + Interest Expense)/(Annual Principal, Interest, and Lease Payments)	3.09

Comments:

The financial performance framework above shows that Options Charter Schools continues to be in a great financial position even as we are in a growth pattern with increasing enrollment and programs. The cash flow metric which tracks year to year cash on hand is only our only red category and that is because we have spent money on the growth of our programs and facilities and we had to use cash on hand because we do not receive facility money from the State.

Financial Performance Framework – Data Points	
Current Assets	\$3,766,562.38
Current Liabilities	\$1,445,087.64
Cash	\$1,424,724.54
Unrestricted Cash	\$1,424,724.54
Total Expenses	\$5,572,801
Depreciation	\$1,516,938.66
Enrollment Projection in Charter School Board-Approved Budget	522
Actual Enrollment	544
Default	No
Net Income	\$146,559
Total Revenue	\$5,719,261.55
Total 3 Year Net Income	\$1,195,229.14
Total 3 Year Revenues	\$15,362,477.55
Total Liabilities	\$1,445,087.64
Total Assets	\$3,766,562.38
Year 1 Total Cash	\$1,756,131.23
Year 2 Total Cash	\$2,018,779.05
Year 3 Total Cash	\$1,582,508.00
Interest	\$7,338.51
Annual Principal, Interest, and Lease Payments	\$539,823

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## **Attachment 1: Options Charter Schools Performance Standards Self Assessment and Evidence Leadership Capacity**

Options Charter Schools' governing board has established very strong policies and support practices that ensure effective administration, responsible decision making, and ethical practice. Through Policy Governance, Options' leadership is given the autonomy and support needed to meet goals for achievement and instruction according to our overall growth plan. Regular and purposeful reporting of school performance in each of the four pillars of the organization: Governance, Finance, Operations, and Academics are reviewed and discussed at each level of leadership in the organization to ensure mission alignment and a focus on performance.

Options has implemented best practices in the evaluation process for standard school roles such as building leaders and classroom teachers ensuring a focus on improved professional practice and student success. In the last three years, the executive team made up of the President/CEO, COO, and CFO, developed a stronger evaluation and feedback plan for all nonteaching employees. This process began with developing a clear organizational chart and chain of command, improving job descriptions and performance goals, and creating an evaluation template that would encourage risk taking, innovation, and regular feedback (Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, & Ainscow, 2015; Smith & Besharov, 2019; Templeton & Tremont, 2014). The new evaluation plans were piloted in the spring of 2019 and became fully operational for all employees not evaluated on the teacher evaluation plan in the fall of 2019. We are already seeing the benefits of strengthened communication across our teams, improved overall organization, and an increase in productivity, risk-taking, innovation, and professionalism.

Options Charter Schools has a strong process for review, revision and communication of the school's purpose. Both major and minor decision making is centered on the backdrop of the core mission for our students, *Belong. Believe. Achieve.* Critical questions such as: Is this mission aligned? How would this decision affect our current and future students? What if we are wrong about this? are considered at all levels of decision making throughout the organization to ensure we stay mission-aligned and student-centered. Every level of employee, the overall school performance, and even each individual student is held accountable to a systematic continuous improvement process that is documented and reviewed regularly to ensure we are all held to high expectations of professional growth. Options continues to strive to break the molds of traditional alternative education models by experimenting with new ideas and strong educational practices that may become best-practices for working with at-risk students. This process of experimentation can, at times, become a source of confusion for various stakeholders. In order to combat this possible source of confusion Options' leadership team has worked to better align the organizational chart, provide more consistent and meaningful feedback and coaching to all employees through evaluation plans that allow

for risk-taking and monthly feedback, and provide better communication and needs assessments to all stakeholders through clear and understandable data.

Evidence:

[Organizational Chart](#) (all employees)

[Mission and Core Values](#)

Board Policies: [Policy Governance](#),  
[Addendums to Policy Governance](#)

Bylaws: [Carmel](#) [Noblesville](#)

[Board Minutes](#)

[Staff Handbook](#)

[Student/Parent Handbook](#)

President Evaluation ([blank](#)) ([exemplar](#))

Nonteachers Employee Evaluation Form  
([blank](#)) ([exemplar](#))

Teacher Evaluation ([blank](#)) ([exemplar](#))

[2018-2019 Comprehensive Needs  
Assessment](#)

[5-Whys Strategic Planning for Focus  
Priorities](#)

2019-2020 Continuous Improvement  
Plans - [Noblesville](#) [Carmel](#)

[Longitudinal Data Tracker](#)

[Employee Climate and Culture Survey](#)

[Student Climate and Culture Survey](#)

[Individualized Service Plan \(ISP\) Manual](#)

[Marketing Strategies](#)

[Technology Plan](#)

[Parent/Student Testimonials](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

Targeted Improvement:

Options Charter Schools' mission to serve at-risk youth in a relationship-based platform is embedded throughout the entire organization and drives all decision-making, data collection, and vision casting. The main target for improvement in the leadership domain is to continue to build overall leadership capacity through leadership pipeline programs, continuing to study the overall needs of each department and ensure appropriate support is provided, and to continue to drive the need for alternative accountability for schools like ours.

## **Learning Capacity**

Options Charter Schools has a strong system of data collection and review in place to ensure all students are serviced in appropriate and challenging academic plans. In alignment with the mission of Options and the unique population of students served, Options creates a unique educational plan for each individual student enrolled. These plans are called Individualized Service Plans (ISP) and are used to map the performance goals for students in the areas of academics, behavior, and social-emotional wellness aligned to the mission of ensuring all students Belong, Believe, and Achieve. Options believes in allowing for a fluid development of the master schedule each semester so building leaders and teachers have the ability to create a schedule and unique courses that best fits the current student population need while also meeting the Indiana requirements for graduation. Although differentiation is also found within each classroom, a bigger form of differentiation is in place at Options by placing students in courses they are academically prepared to take, not necessarily by grade order or traditional course sequences.

Through experimentation and continued research, Options continues to develop alternative education best practices. As a team, we continue to push ourselves to grow in this area each year. In 2017, the Options' leadership team identified the need to do a better job of ensuring new methods, backed by data, were being documented in policy manuals and training developed to ensure all team members new and old had what they needed to implement the policies effectively. In recent years, a new staff member induction program was created with a training portal, an HR specialist was hired, and the executive team reviews the needs for policy updates as a regular agenda item in the weekly meetings.

Options teachers and leadership team also identified the need to continue to develop better ways to identify standards students have mastered as well as those in which they need to continue to develop during our 2017 review. Students often enroll at Options with courses having been partially completed or low to average grades in their previous schools that are not necessarily a true reflection of what they have actually learned and mastered. Options has a foundational belief that credits earned and course grades should be a reflection of what the student knows and is able to apply, not the number of assignments completed. We have made progress in accomplishing the goal of improvement in this area by having concluded a complete study of the entire curriculum, developed research-based curriculum maps and provided training and support on a regular basis. In the coming years we will continue to develop in this area by moving to a standards-based grading approach. The plan has been thoroughly researched, initial training provided to all teachers, and 100% buy-in to move forward has been achieved. We will begin the transition and training process in the summer of 2020. The standards based grading will begin with our middle school grades fall of 2020 and matriculate into our high school in the fall of 2021.



The Northwest Evaluation Assessment MAP (NWEA) test is given to all students enrolled at Options in the fall and the spring of each academic year. This test measures student growth in the areas of language arts, reading, mathematics and science. It allows our teachers to have a true understanding of the students' abilities based on RIT scores. Options has also utilized the partnership of NWEA and Edmentum's Study Island to create individualized support curriculum for students based on NWEA goals. Goals are based on RIT scores and Study Island has the ability to import NWEA scores and create instruction for each student based on current scores and expected growth. The teacher has the ability to watch weekly growth, lessons that require reteaching, strengths, weaknesses, and success made by next NWEA test date. This blend of testing and individualized curriculum supports our students' ISPs.

Through the Individualized Service Plans (ISP), Options maintains strong and consistent data portfolios for every student. Every student is challenged to grow in the areas of academics, behavior, and social-emotional wellness. School personnel use this data to design, implement and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs and organizational conditions. Designated time is set aside regularly through each school year to ensure all personnel have both the time and training to review this data in real-time and take advantage of our professional community to collaborate improvement processes and goals. Professional development opportunities are determined as a result of data analysis and continuous improvement plans.

The Options' leadership team has developed strong data collection and accountability practices that help inform internal growth measures such as the school improvement plan, charter renewal and the 5-year strategic plan. However, we understand that we need to continue to do a better job of telling our school's story through data that other stakeholders understand and buy-in to. Traditional measures of accountability look as though our schools are failing, yet once the lense of the Options' mission and unique population is considered, it becomes more clear that Options students are successful. We would like to identify better metrics to help us tell this story to all different types of stakeholders.

Evidence:

[Strong Educational Program Explanation](#)  
[2018-2019 Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#)  
[5-Whys Strategic Planning for Focus Priorities](#)  
2020 A-F Appeal Statement: [Carmel Noblesville](#)  
2019-2020 Continuous Improvement Plans - [Noblesville](#) [Carmel](#)  
[Longitudinal Data Tracker](#)

[Employee Climate and Culture Survey](#)  
[Student Climate and Culture Survey](#)  
[Monthly Principal Report Exemplars](#)  
[Individualized Service Plan \(ISP\) Manual](#)  
ISP Tracker: [Carmel](#) [Noblesville](#)  
[Course Catalog](#)  
[Curriculum Maps](#)  
[Lesson Plan Exemplars](#)  
[Examples of Student Work](#)  
[Enrollment Process](#)

[Professional Development Calendar](#)  
[Professional Development Feedback Exemplars](#)  
[IDOE Required Trainings Plan](#)  
[CTE Development Committee Notes](#)  
[4-year CTE Rollout Plan](#)

Innovation Grant: [Noblesville Grant](#) and [Budget](#) [Carmel Grant](#) and [Budget](#)  
[Parent/Student Testimonials](#)  
[Photo Gallery](#)  
[Study Island Data Tracking](#)

Targeted Improvement:

We continue to work to improve our ability to track the needs and progress of each student in a meaningful way that is appropriate for the unique population of students enrolled at Options Charter Schools. In the fall of 2019, we created the full-time position for a Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) to build capacity in this area. We experienced turnover in this position in November. The new DCI comes with a great deal of experience in leading and serving at-risk youth and has been working to learn the overall culture at Options while also almost immediately providing improved instructional coaching to the instructional teams.

Every Wednesday at Options is a half-day E-Learning Day. The students go home early and continue their instruction at home either through Study Island, Credit Recovery, E-Learning/E-Life (a course about the working of the brain and how it helps us learn) or possibly additional coursework. While the students are learning virtually, their teachers are also actively involved in learning. Options strongly believe that our educators must be on a continuous learning path that incorporates technology, trauma informed schools, data, Google certifications, ISP updating, and team building. These six topics are on a constant rotation to build capacity within our staff in order for the students to have teachers who remain current and are excited to teach.

We are two years in on a five-year plan to move to standards-based grading. All core curricula has been reviewed, aligned to Indiana Standards, and mapped out. In addition, all teaching teams and building-level administrators have completed training on standards-based grading and we have 100% buy-in from the staff to move forward. The middle school teaching teams will begin to develop the master standards the summer of 2020 with each grade level following in the years to come.

## Resource Capacity

Options Charter Schools has created policies and procedures to ensure time and resources are applied in ways to continue to support the advancement of innovative practices that ultimately result in improved student performance. The 5-year strategic plan ensures the school building is continuously maintained and improved as needed, instructional media and supplies are supplied and renewed, technology infrastructures are kept up to date, and classrooms receive appropriate and at times even advanced instructional tools to aid in the engagement of at-risk students. Instructional time is fiercely protected while still being able to offer powerful professional development for team members, climate and culture building activities to help students improve behavior and social emotional wellness, small group testing environments and more. Options takes pride in being good stewards of the monetary resources entrusted to us through public funding, awarded grants, and local business partnerships. Our policies, procedures, and strategic plan support our belief that every child should have equal access to high quality learning environments and that every program should be an option for every student. A recent example of this is how Options is supplying free and reduced lunch choices for students even without the federal lunch program to support the costs of such a program. We are proud to be able to say that 100% of our employees believe in the mission of Options so much so that they each give a portion of their paycheck back to the school to be used for students programs like the lunch program.

The Options' leadership team has identified the need to better identify and develop strong bridges to beyond high school education and workforce opportunities for students. We continue to strengthen our College and Careers Pathways Plan through stronger partnerships with Ivy Tech Community College, J. Everette Light Career Center, Indiana Department of Workforce, Department of Defense, Hamilton Boone Madison County Special Education Cooperative and more. We have found many challenges in the development of college and career opportunities for our students due to our size and fiscal capacity as well as due to our students often needing additional supports to be successful in such programs. We continue to be encouraged, however, that through strong community partnerships we'll be able to accomplish this goal for our students. In addition, Options would like to continue to develop additional partnerships with local health support systems in order to offer students and families better healthcare access.

### Evidence:

[2018 Financial Audit](#)

[2019-20 Approved Budget w/Summary](#)

[Staff Profile](#)

[Community Partnerships](#)

[Job Descriptions](#)

[Board Approved Calendar](#)

Master Schedule - [Carmel Noblesville](#)

[Parent/Student Testimonials](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

[Testing Calendar](#)

[Master Calendar for Reporting](#)

[Breakfast and Lunch Program](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Plan](#)

[Safety Compliance Checklist](#)

[Special Education Policies and](#)

[Procedures](#)

[Hamilton Boone Madison County  
Cooperative Services  
Professional Development Calendar  
Professional Development Feedback  
Exemplars](#)

[IDOE Required Trainings Plan  
CTE Development Committee Notes  
Innovation Grant: \[Noblesville Grant\]\(#\) and  
\[Budget\]\(#\) \[Carmel Grant\]\(#\) and \[Budget\]\(#\)](#)

Targeted Improvement:

As we continue to grow, we have realized the importance of developing improved employee training, induction, and mentoring/coaching programs. The improved evaluation plan for non teaching staff members has begun to improve this process by requiring monthly check-ins with reflection from both the employee and supervisor on progress towards shared goals. Beginning in the fall of 2020, we plan to also have a new teacher orientation before the first all-staff work day and follow-up coaching and support included in the regular PD rotation plan.

**Attachment 2: Appeal Request for Options Charter Schools (Carmel as an example for both schools)**



**Dr. Jennifer McCormick**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

FILE DATED: OCT 13 20

**TO:** Office of Administrative Law Proceedings  
**FROM:** Indiana Department of Education, Office of School  
Accountability **IN RE:** Appeal Request for Options Charter School -  
Carmel (Sch # 1701) **DATE:** September 21, 2020

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#### Background Information

Options Charter School - Carmel is a public charter school, as defined by Ind. Code § 20-24-1-4, operating in Carmel, Indiana. The school educates students in grades 9 through 12.

Pursuant to Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4(a), the Indiana State Board of Education (Board) shall annually place each school in a category or designation of school performance based on the metrics outlined in the Board's administrative rules under 511 IAC 6.2-10.<sup>1</sup> The Indiana Department of Education (Department) calculates annual state accountability categories on behalf of the Board. The preliminary state accountability categories for the 2019-2020 school year were released to schools on September 8, 2020.

Options Charter School - Carmel submitted a request for appeal to the Department's accountability portal on September 18, 2020. The grounds indicated for the review request were "accurate application/interpretation of A-F regulation" and "other". The following was submitted upon appeal by Options Charter School - Carmel:

Reason for Appeal: OCSC received a rating based on 511 IAC 6.2-10.3 (*sic*) in error. Options Charter Schools "focuses primarily on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges" that have prevented them from being successful in the traditional school environment (IC 20-31-8-34.5 language updated with HEA 1629). These categories of students are addressed in our approved charter and specific language is offered throughout this document. Requested Outcome of Appeal: OCSC is requesting the State Board of Education (SBOE) assign an accountability grade based on IC 20-31-8-4.5.<sup>2</sup>

#### Question

In its appeal, Options Charter School – Carmel raises the question of whether Options Charter School – Carmel falls under Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4.5, the alternative assessment methodology for schools focused on students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.

#### Procedural History

Options Charter School – Carmel submitted an appeal for its 2017-2018 A-F grade, which was reviewed by an appointed Hearing Officer. Options Charter School – Carmel appealed

its 2017-2018 category placement of a “D” (67.3 points) asserting that it is an alternative school and 100% of the student population is eligible for alternative education as defined in IC 20-30-

8. Options Charter School – Carmel requested a “null” grade on the basis of its alternative school status. Upon review, the Hearing Officer found that Options Charter School – Carmel did not fall under the alternative accountability standards under Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4. because the school did not “exclusively” provide academic programming for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.<sup>3</sup>

During the 2019 legislative session, Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4.5 was amended to read as follows:

In addition to other benchmarks, performance indicators, and accountability standards developed under this article, the state board shall develop alternative benchmarks, performance indicators, and accountability standards to be used in the assessment of schools that focus *primarily* (emphasis added) on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.

Options Charter School – Carmel submitted an appeal for its 2018-2019 A-F grade, which was reviewed by an appointed Hearing Officer. In its appeal, Options Charter School – Carmel argued that it *primarily* focused on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges, and was thereby eligible to be assessed under the alternative accountability system provided for under Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4.5. Upon review, the Hearing Officer found that Options Charter School – Carmel did not fall under the alternative accountability standards under Ind. Code § 20-31-8-4.5. This conclusion was based on the finding that Options Charter School – Carmel failed to show that it focused primarily on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.<sup>4</sup>

Upon appeal of its 2019-2020 accountability category, Options Charter School – Carmel submitted a spreadsheet of enrolled students and the associated “risk factors” at enrollment to show that the school focuses primarily on providing academic programming for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.<sup>5</sup>

To date, the Board has not developed alternative benchmarks, performance indicators, or accountability standards to assess schools that focus primarily on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.

#### Current Accountability

Pursuant to Ind. Code § 20-31-2-1 and Ind. Code § 20-31-8, all public schools must be annually assessed on the statewide accountability system. 511 IAC 6.2-10-3(d) provides that the accountability category for a school serving grades 9 through 12 shall be based on the performance, growth, and multiple measures domains.

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A school must have at least thirty (30) eligible students to calculate a score for the

performance domain; forty (40) eligible students to calculate a score for the growth domain; and ten (10) students in the most recently finalized cohort to calculate a score for the multiple measures domain. Each individual domain calculation also provides for a data aggregation practice if a school does not have enough students to calculate a particular domain. Specifically, if a school does not have enough students in the school year being assessed to calculate a domain then student data from previous years is aggregated until the minimum number of students required to calculate a domain is met. If, after aggregating, a school does not meet the minimum number of students required to calculate a domain then that domain is excluded from the overall calculation. The performance domain for Options Charter School – Carmel required aggregation to meet the minimum number of students to calculate. Options Charter School – Carmel did not have enough data to calculate the growth domain, but did have enough data to calculate the performance and multiple measures domains.

The following outlines the 2019-2020 state accountability calculation for Options Charter School – Carmel:

- Performance Domain Score = 10.2 points
  - o English/language arts score: 17.8 points
    - Pass rate: 20.6%
    - Participation rate: 86.3%
  - o Mathematics score: 2.6 points
    - Pass rate: 3.0%
    - Participation rate: 87.5%
- Multiple Measures Score = 58.3 points
  - o CCR achievement rate score: 62.4 points
  - o Graduation rate score: 54.1 points
    - 4 year grad rate: 45.7 points
    - 5 year improvement: 8.4 points
- Overall Score = 39.1 points (F)<sup>6</sup>

**Hold Harmless Analysis for 2019-2020**

Public Law 2-2020 required an additional analysis to be conducted to determine the final category of school performance for the 2019-2020 school year.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, a school’s official letter grade for the 2019-2020 school year is the higher of the school’s category of performance for the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. For example, if a school received an “A” for the 2017-2018 school year, a “C” for the 2018-2019 school year, and a “D” for the 2019-2020 school year, the final grade for the 2019-2020 school year would be an “A”, since an “A” is better than a “C” or a “D”.

The table below summarizes the final, pre-“hold harmless” letter grades for Options Charter School – Carmel for each relevant school year. These categories are used by the Department to determine the “hold harmless” category” that will serve as the official grade/category for Options Charter School – Carmel for the 2019-2020 school year.

SCHOOL YEAR	LETTER GRADE	HOLD HARMLESS GRADE
2017-2018	D	N/A
2018-2019	F	D

Since “No Grade” or “Null” is not part of the “A-F” scale, a policy decision was made to identify where a “No Grade” or “Null” ranks in relation to the actual letter grade categories. The policy established that the “hold harmless” analysis would consider a “No Grade” or “Null” to be “higher” than a “B”, “C”, “D”, or “F” letter grade and lower than an “A” letter grade. Should a determination be made that Options Charter School – Carmel falls under Ind. Code § 20-31-8- 4.5, the alternative assessment methodology for schools focused on students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges, its letter grade for 2019-2020 would be a “No Grade” or “Null”, and its official “hold harmless” letter grade for 2019-2020 would be a “No Grade” or “Null”.

September 18,  
2020

Student-Centered Accountability Report Card 2019-2020 Appeal Options Charter  
Schools Carmel (OCSC)

**Corporation # 9325, School # 2524**

**Reason for Appeal:** OCSC received a rating based on 511 IAC 6.2-10.3 in error. Options Charter Schools “focuses primarily on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges” that have prevented them from being successful in the traditional school environment (IC 20-31-8-4.5 language updated with HEA 1629). These categories of students are addressed in our approved charter and specific language is offered throughout this document.

**Requested Outcome of Appeal:** OCSC is requesting the State Board of Education (SBOE) assign an accountability grade based on IC 20-31-8-4.5.

Rationale:

Success is measured in many different ways at Options Charter Schools (OCS). We believe in encouraging innovation and creativity to be used to create a learning environment that is appropriate and rigorous for every single student enrolled. As an organization, we have become masters at the art of being flexible, meeting students where they are, adapting learning plans to individual situations, and building strong relationships with students and families. Working with students in this way is an art and so can be difficult to measure on a scale that compares all schools and all student outcomes to other schools across the state. We believe in strong accountability and are held to specific goals of achievement and/or improvement in governance, operations, academics, and finances as determined by our charter agreement with Ball State University.

We have developed some of the strongest charter-traditional district relationships in the state that have resulted in the development and enrollment to capacity of an alternative middle school, supports for students to be put in place with their home schools prior to terminal discipline decisions like suspension and expulsions, and being invited to join the Hamilton Boone Madison Counties Special Education Cooperative as a full, voting member alongside the local superintendents. We have also partnered with Momentum Strategy & Research to provide like-school comparisons of performance data from across the nation. When making these



comparisons OCSC consistently outperforms other alternative schools and programs. Momentum Strategy & Research is a Colorado-based non-profit organization committed to helping schools and state departments of education get accountability right. They specialize in working with schools that are not validly and/or reliably measured by traditional academic measures of accountability and have recently launched a national alternative education classroom data

OSC has a strong desire to continue to grow our impact across the state in order to help more at-risk students. Continuous failing grades on the state's accountability metric are harming our ability to grow and offer these same services to more students. Competitive grants like the Charter School Program's Quality Counts Grant only allow applicants with an accountability grade of an A or B. Indiana's at-risk population of students will continue to be underserved as long as high quality alternative schools, like Options Charter Schools, are not measured with appropriate accountability metrics. The following evidence supports the claim that Options Charter School Carmel is deserving of a more appropriate accountability metric.

#### Supporting Evidence

##### IC 20-31-8-4.5 Eligibility

“...the state board shall develop alternative benchmarks, performance indicators, and accountability standards to be used in the assessment of schools **that focuses primarily on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges.**”

In the Attorney General's response to our 17-18 appeal (dated December 10, 2018), it was stated that Options Charter Schools did not qualify under IC 20-31-8-4.5 as a school that focuses exclusively on providing an academic program for students with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges. After that AG ruling, we contacted Representative Behning, from Indiana's 91st District, to gain more insight. According to Representative Behning, IC 20-31-8-4.5 was edited to replace the term “Exclusively” with “Primarily” to ensure schools like Options Charter Schools were included in the definition.

#### Evidence of Developmental, Intellectual, or Behavioral Challenges IC 20-31-8-4(c)

Options Charter School Carmel primarily serves students who demonstrate significant developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges. This includes students who have fallen out of cohort while attending their previous public school and are now enrolling at Options Charter School as a significantly under-credited high school student.

During the 2019-2020 school year, Options Charter School Carmel educated 384 students. The following charts reflect the specific challenges for all students enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year. While most students have more than one significant risk factor, these data are representative of the primary risk only. No student is represented with more than one data point.

Chart 1

**Percent of Students with Developmental, Intellectual, or Behavioral Challenges 19-20**

- Students with Significant Developmental, Cognitive, Intellectual Challenges, or Behavioral Challenges
- No Significant Developmental, Cognitive, Intellectual, or Behavioral Challenge

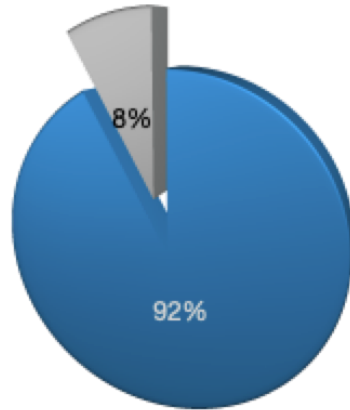
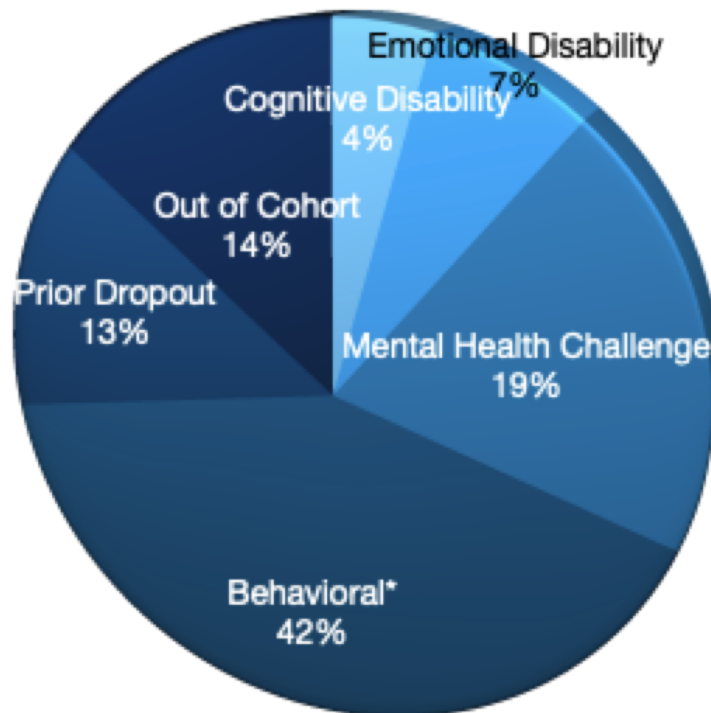


Chart 2

**Breakdown of Primary Developmental, Intellectual, or Behavioral Challenges**

- Cognitive Disability
- Emotional Disability
- Mental Health Challenge
- Behavioral\*
- Prior Dropout
- Out of Cohort



\*Behavioral challenges include: Documented Substance Abuse, Prior Expulsion, Chronic Absenteeism, Juvenile Justice Issues Including Incarceration, or Runaway

## Definitions of Categories

The students' significant risk factors were identified using the following definitions for each category and then ranked as primary as listed below.

1. Prior Dropout: The student has previously dropped out of high school as recorded in the STN site.
2. Cognitive Disability: The student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) lists a cognitive disability as the student's disability.
3. Emotional Disability: The student's IEP lists an emotional disability as the student's disability.
4. Mental Health Challenge: The student has a medical, mental health diagnosis and is receiving treatment. Common diagnoses in this category include Anxiety Disorder, Mood Disorder, Stress Disorder, and Oppositional Defiance Disorder. Many of these students have demonstrated self-harm at some point or are at risk of self-harm.
5. Behavioral Challenge: The student has a medical diagnosis and is being treated for substance abuse, has been expelled from school, received a chronic absenteeism designation from the previous school as documented in the STN site, is involved with or being monitored by the Juvenile Justice Department, has been incarcerated, or is a Runaway child.
6. Out of Cohort: The student is enrolling significantly behind in credits with no other listed significant risk factor.

## Evidence of Bonus Point Eligibility IC 20-31-8-3(d)

Pursuant to IC 20-31-8-3(d), Options Charter School Carmel also believes it is entitled to 'bonus points' for intentionally enrolling credit deficient students as part of the school's mission and enrollment referral program with traditional local public schools.

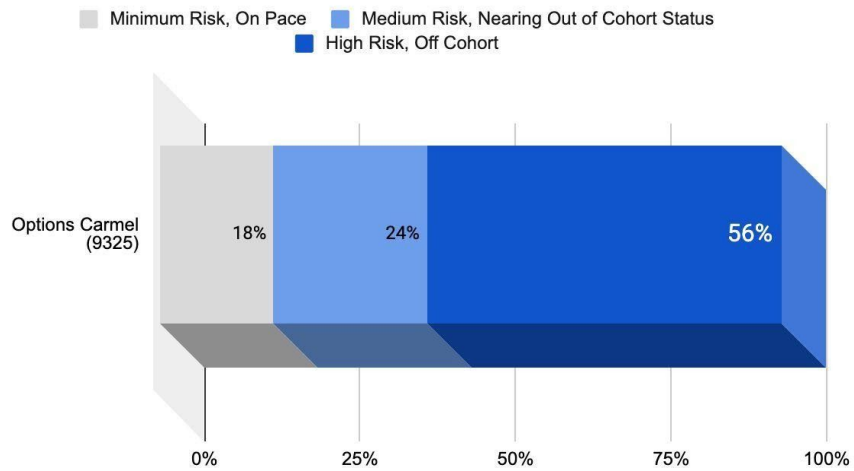
Indiana State Code 20-31-8-3(d) states: Establishment of categories of performance

*(d) In developing metrics for the categories established under subsection (a), the state board shall consider the mobility of high school students who are credit deficient and whether any high school should be rewarded for enrolling credit deficient students or penalized for transferring out credit deficient students.*

Chart 3

### Percentage of Students Deficient in Credits at Time of Enrollment 19/20

#### Credit Deficiency at the Time of Enrollment



**\*Note:** This chart represents the credit status of all enrolled students during the 2019-2020 academic year, at the time of enrollment, regardless of their status in other developmental, intellectual, or behavioral categories.

#### Desired Outcome

Options Charter School Carmel believes in holding schools, of all types, accountable to a high standard of performance. However, the current accountability system was not designed for a school serving an irregular student population as described in the previous sections.

As a temporary measure, until the State has developed an appropriate alternative accountability program as called for under IC 20-31-8-4.5, Options Charter School-Carmel respectfully requests the State Board administratively assign the school a 'null grade' designation.

We also ask the Board to allow members of the school's leadership team to be a part of a committee to help create an appropriate accountability measure for schools primarily serving developmentally, intellectually, or behaviorally challenged students.