CPLC Community Schools

Application for Charter Renewal

Background

CPLC Community Schools, a private, nonprofit, (501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation, was created by Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC), a community development corporation in Arizona to advance the educational goals to increase educational achievement and graduation rates, develop leadership, promote civic participation, and increase college entrance and graduation among Latino youth. CPLC Community Schools' target population consists of students who want to attend a smaller high school that provides individualized attention and can provide increased opportunities for success. CPLC Community Schools aims to provide students with academic rigor, a greater self worth, and connection to the surrounding community. We have an academic program focused on academic excellence, cultural enrichment, and community engagement through the infusion of community focused education, transformative learning, literacy and service-learning into the core curriculum.

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The charter being considered for renewal includes CPLC Community Schools dba Hiaki High School (HHS).

Description

HHS is named for the traditional spelling of "Yaqui" and represents a partnership between CPLC Community Schools and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (PYT). In 2005, PYT approached CPLC Community Schools to provide a site on the reservation because the previous alternative high school program was not successful at maintaining enrollment or graduating students. Haiki opened its doors with 50 students, increased enrollment to 75 by 2006, and graduated 13 students in its first two years. HHS is centrally located on the reservation near the cultural grounds, tribal administration offices, Victor Flores Gym, and public transportation. It serves the Pascua Yaqui Tribal community and partners with many of the local tribal agencies and services, including the Centered Spirit Programs through which counseling, mental health and other social services are offered to students.

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe Education Division provides four classrooms and office space within the Education and Community Resource Center (ECRC). The space is shared with Intel Computer Clubhouse that provides after-school activities for youth ages 3 to 7, Monday through Thursday. The school location is well known by the community, within walking distance for most students, and easily accessed by automobile.

In addition to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, HHS also serves the surrounding area. The service area population is 12% Native American; however, the majority of students attending are Tribal members living on the reservation. They experience a number of socio-economic issues such as high unemployment, poverty, and low high school graduation rates. Forty-seven percent of tribal members residing on the reservation are under the age of 24 and 44% of residents are at or below federal poverty levels. Thirty-seven percent of residents have graduated from high school and unemployment is at 25%, which is significantly higher than the state unemployment rate. HHS addresses the need for educational opportunities to increase graduation rates and support the efforts of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe to strengthen tribal self-sufficiency.

Despite the depressed economic conditions of the areas the school serves, HHS is not classified as an alternative program by the Arizona Department of Education.

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Mission and Vision

Our mission for the organization is to graduate leaders responsible for their community who are academically prepared, empowered to make informed decisions, and confident in their ability to succeed. Our beliefs and values center around our tagline, "Experience Success" and our vision is to grow the future leaders of our community.

We are implementing a curriculum centered on the idea of **Community Focused Education** (CFE), integrating the knowledge base of the local community to create a contextual perspective for new learning to occur. The elements of a community focused education are:

1) Recognition and use of predominant language of the community to provide a linguistic context for instruction.

2) Pedagogy in which teaching strategies contextualize the learning experiences from the perspective of those served.

3) Curriculum which stresses the importance of the cultural context of the community served and values and celebrates the visual arts, legends, oral histories, and fundamental beliefs of the community.

4) Strong community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and evident in the curriculum, planning, and operation of school/community activities.

5) Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community.

6) A strong desire of all stakeholders to improve the outcomes of the community through problem solving and action research

To carry out this philosophy, teachers must agree to do the following:

1) Create opportunities for young children to *build their cognitive skills* (intelligences) with a concentration on language development;

2) Develop a *positive sense of identity* through community influences and continued community development as a way of building a sense of security and motivating children;

3) Build *partnerships* between schools, parents, community leaders, and other community members as a way of providing positive role models and challenging society expectations;

4) Provide the *resources* necessary to develop and implement comprehensive, well planned, and well organized learning environments, with competent teachers

5) Develop a sense of *civic responsibility and service* to "community."

A community focused curriculum is integrated across all content areas to provide relevance, develop critical thinking, and recognize collective community knowledge.

Student Achievement Goals

In 2009, HHS was in Year 1 of School Improvement. HHS did not meet the graduation rate nor the test objectives**.** The CPLC Community Schools leadership team developed a set of goals and strategies to help rectify this poor performance. In that same year, CPLC Community Schools began to work with the Arizona Charter Schools Association, and learned about performance management planning. The Association has been providing monthly guidance in developing and implementing our performance management plan around our mission and goals.

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The District Leadership team developed the following goals for academic success.

Goal 1: By 2014, 77% of all students will meet or exceed in reading and 58% in math as measured by the Arizona Instrument for Measuring Standards (AIMS)

Over the next year, the CPLC Community Schools leadership team developed and implemented strategies to meet these goals.

Strategies

For Goal 1, CPLC Community Schools has implemented an intensive plan to increase student academic achievement. The underlying focus of the plan addresses the need to increase the quality of instruction within its classrooms. Strategies to increase instructional quality include: informed decision making and collaboration through the use data; intensive, ongoing and targeted professional development activities; consistent progress monitoring; systematic feedback; and, precise performance accountability. The following is a brief list of targeted strategies:

- Further develop the school assessment plan to inform instruction by selecting NWEA and Acuity as diagnostic, benchmark, and interim assessment tools
- Conduct teacher training around the use of assessment data for instructional planning
- Formalize and institutionalize the use of data among teachers
- Implement ongoing professional development on the six traits of writing
- Implement professional development on increasing student academic time on task through classroom management and enriched instructional strategies
- Implement professional development and mentoring of leaders for instructional leadership
- Develop a “state of the student” letter for parents of low performing students
- Formalize the academic probation process

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Each of these strategies were implemented in the 2010 school year.

1) To increase the use of data driven decision making for instructional planning, CPLC Community Schools entered into a working partnership with The Arizona Charter School

Association. This partnership resulted in intensive professional development in acquiring, sorting, synthesizing, strategizing, and utilizing academic data for instructional planning and intervention.

2) The Principal's Office, LLC implemented professional development systems for school-wide continuous improvement. This system incorporates frequent classroom fidelity checks, progress monitoring, and systematic feedback that provides teachers and teams with instructional performance data. This data is then analyzed through teacher/leader one-on-one interviews to determine individualized, PLC team, as well as school-wide professional development needs. Professional development activities have been implemented targeting classroom management, enriched instructional strategies, tier 1 level intervention to include math-fact practice and sustained silent reading.

3) Provide differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs. This resulted in a partnership with The Principals Office, LLC (TPO) using Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies and screenings.

The Principals Office, LLC screened all students in the winter of the 2010 school year in reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math computation. From the screening, students were targeted for intensive academic intervention using the RTI tiered approach.

Tier 1 strategies were applied to all students on a school-wide effort to increase math and reading fluency. This strategy incorporated the use of daily 10-minute math-fact practice and 30-minute sustained silent reading.

Tier 2 and 3 level students received intensive intervention in their targeted area of need whether that was math computation, reading fluency and comprehension, or both. Students were given intensive intervention in small groups of 2 – 4 students, 3 times a week for 30 minutes each session. All students receiving tier 2 and 3 level intervention were administered progress monitoring assessments every other week. This data was analyzed by TPO interventionists and classroom teachers to determine student responsiveness to the intervention and possible modifications to the intervention.

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Within four months of implementing the RTI strategy students demonstrated marked improvements in most areas of basic academic wellness. 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders showed marked progress in all three areas of basic academic wellness. However, data shows that while there is improvement in math computation the scores are well below expected levels. Additional resources and strategies such as tier 1 math-fact practice and sustained silent reading were implemented for all students.

Table 1: Students Made Gains After Initiating Interventions In Certain Grades and Subjects

School	9th R.F.	9th R.C.	9th M.C.	10th R.F	10th R.C.	10th M.C.	11th R.F.	11th R.C.	11th M.C.	12th R.F.	12th R.C.	12th M.C.
Haiki	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**

Figures 1 – 3 demonstrates basic academic skill increase over a 4-month period of tiers 1 through 3 intensive intervention

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Figure 1: HHS 9th 10th 11th and 12th Grade Students Showed Dramatic Increase in Reading Fluency

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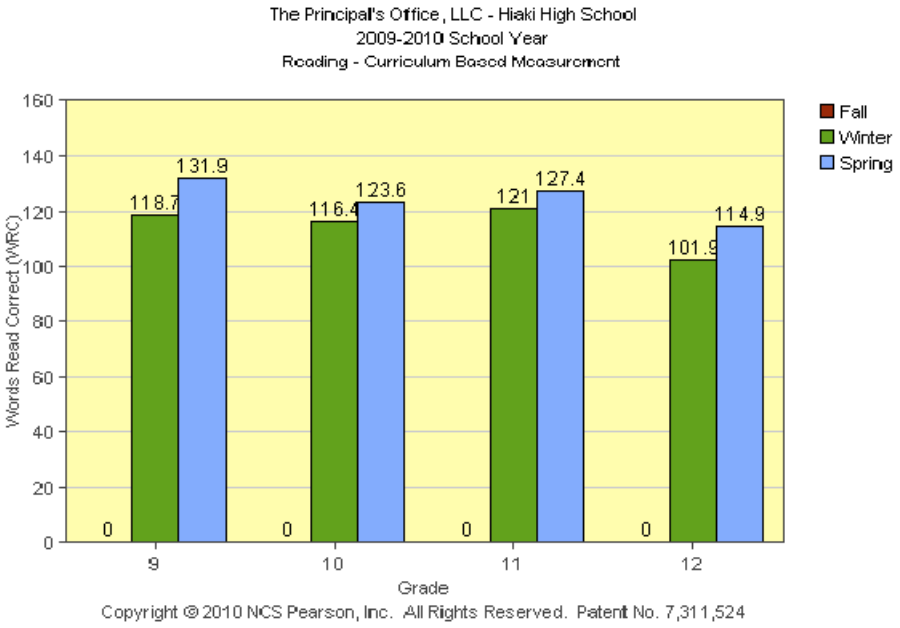

Figure 2: HHS 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Students Showed Dramatic Increase in Reading Comprehension

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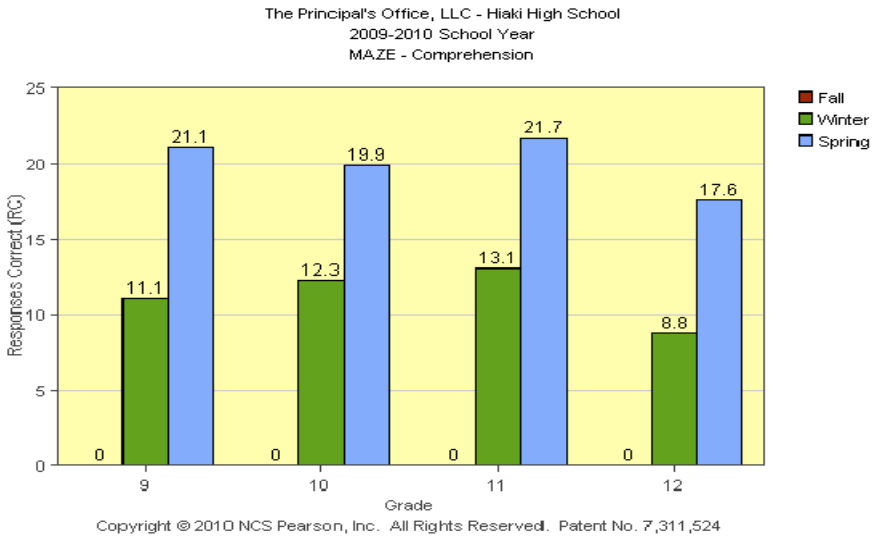

Figure 6: Although below expected levels, Haiki High School Students Showed Increase in Math Computation

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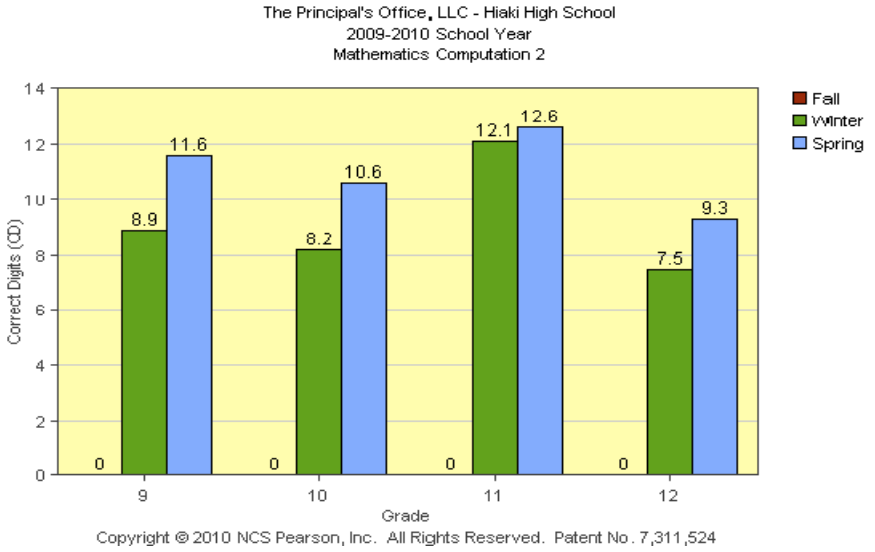

Moving forward, CPLC Community Schools will continue to work with The Principals Office,

LLC (TPO) on leadership mentoring, professional development, and response to intervention (RTI).

Data Analysis

CPLC data on percent meeting or exceeding on AIMS shows some improvement over time. However, real academic gains were difficult to make for reasons discussed in the next section, until CPLC was able to contract with The Principals Office. (See data in the Background section.)

Table 2 shows the percent of students meeting or exceeding in math and reading AIMS for the last five years. While Math has experienced a decline in the percent of students meeting or exceeding the 10th grade AIMS exam, Reading has climbed back up after a three year decline. With continued interventions discussed above, the schools will monitor student progress every two weeks and address individual student needs through remediation. These techniques will increase our student's skills and AIMS pass rates.

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Table 2: HHS Does Better in Reading than in Math

	Math					Reading				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Haiki	7	14	14	9	3*	33	25	25	33	28*

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*Fall AIMS only

Figures 7, 8, 9, and 10 show that over time, HHS has experienced ups and downs. In light of the data below, the focus of CPLC's Performance Management Plan is primarily math and reading.

Figure 7: Haiki Math Scores Rise and Drop

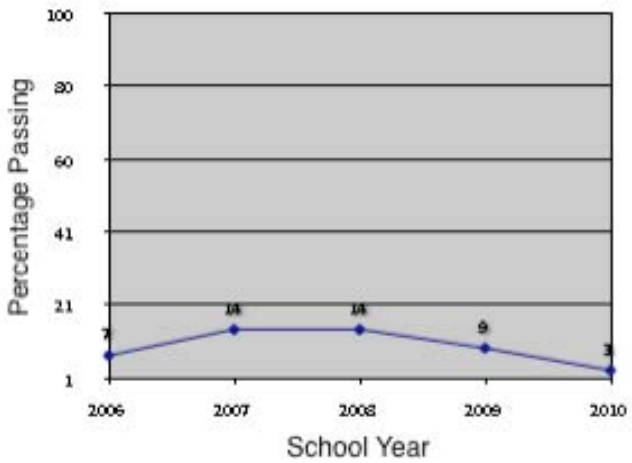
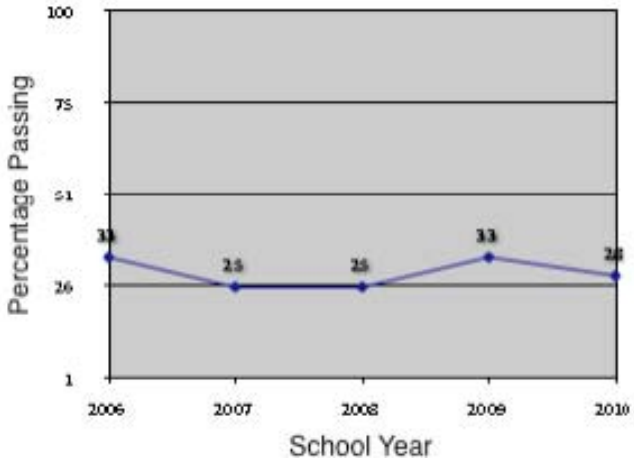


Figure 8: HHS Reading Scores are relatively unchanged


100
75
51
26
1
Percentage Passing
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
School Year

Although the percent of students meeting or exceeding on AIMS has been erratic, this data masks one important trend: more and more students are moving from the Approaches category of AIMS to the Meets category, signifying an improvement that is not captured by raw pass rates. Preliminary data for 2010 AIMS reading in the “falls far below” category is dropping at HHS.

Figure 13: Math Strand Percent Correct Averages Per Strand (HHS)

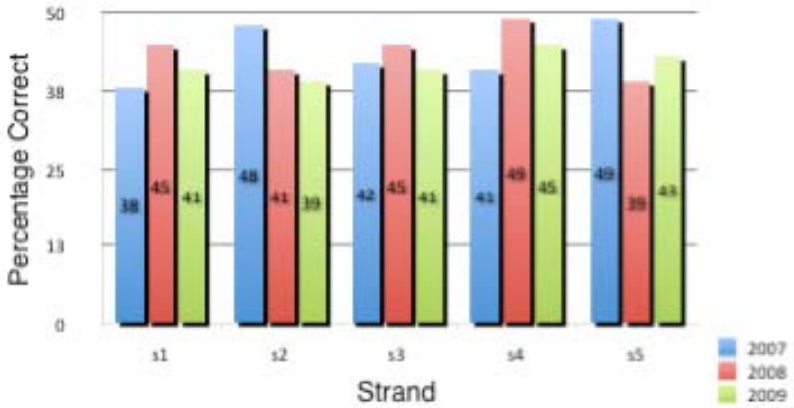
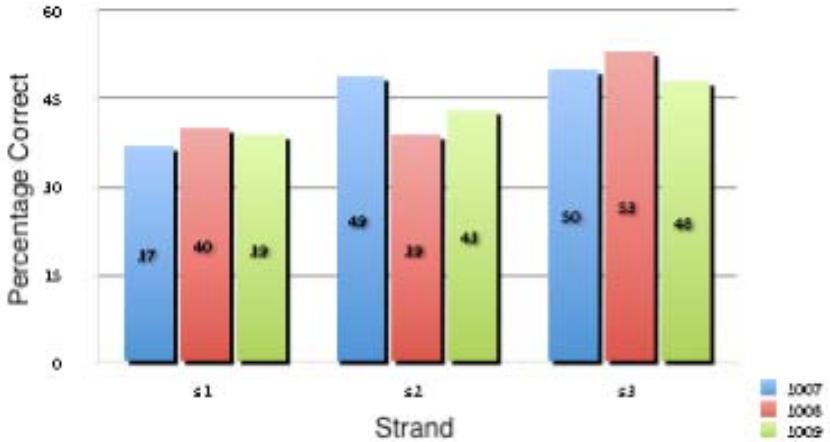


Figure 14: Reading Strand Percent Correct Per Strand (HHS)



At HHS, we have seen significant drops in math percent correct in every math strand except 5(Structure and Logic) and reading strands except for strand 2(reading literary text).

Underlying Reasons for Performance

Issue 1: Students arrive behind in credits needed to graduate

Students enter CPLC Community Schools because they want an experience that honors their Arizona heritage, and prepares them for leadership positions in the community. They are missing the emotional connection to school and sense of community that their cultural heritage inspires. Because they have been disconnected from the purpose and value of academic achievement, they arrive not having engaged in their classes at previous schools, and have not earned the credits indicative of the grade levels at which they are entering. At HHS the junior class cohort consisting of 21 students, is incoming with an average of 8.96 credits. Eleven of these students are on track to graduate either in the fall or in the spring semester. Ten of these students are in need of credit recovery.

School Response: Implement Scope and Sequence curriculum change to allow placement based on diagnostic assessments for incoming students.

Students who are behind in credits will be assessed to determine the root cause of the problem. New courses will teach students how to be successful through study skills and understanding how they learn. Teachers will start the first month of school discussing the results of diagnostic assessment, especially with newly entering students, in their monthly data meeting. Screening will be mandatory at the 45th day of school, and RTI screening will take place in the fall, winter, and spring.

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Classroom strategies are being monitored for math drills, sustained silent reading, and other Tier 2 interventions for the classroom. For the students that need it, we are offering before and after school tutoring.

School Response: Student Engagement

Both schools participate in “check and connect” – a research based program that promotes students engagement in school, has shown promise in reducing dropouts, and increasing school completion.

The schools also increases student engagement through an ambassadors program aimed at developing the leadership skills of students and charging them with ambassadorship for the schools.

CPLC Community Schools received a parent involvement grant that increases student engagement by helping parents and communities to better understand the school system and its critical importance in their student’s educational success. The expectations of implementing the PIQE (Parent Institute and Quality Education) model will help promote students to improve academic performance by receiving that additional home support.

In addition, HHS will be implementing a service-learning curriculum which has shown great potential for success at Toltecalli High School, another CPLC Community School. The program centers around developing sustainable communities. In addition, it prepares students for the workplace and academic rigor of college by developing analytical skills through action research methods and identifying needs of the community through the lens of sustainability.

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Current Status:

CPLC Community Schools started implementing these changes in the 2009-2010 school year. The NWEA diagnostic was first administered mid-year in the 2010 school year, and the school will continue to use the NWEA test three times a year. The school principals monitor the classroom fidelity to the interventions required, including daily math fact drills and sustained silent reading.

Issue 2: Students Enroll Lacking Basic Skills

2010 NWEA mid-year testing data shows that students at both schools are in the lowest quartile for performance compared to students nationwide. (Please see Tables 7 and 8.) Moving forward, HHS will be able to measure progress throughout the year through NWEA fall, winter and spring testing.

Table 8: HHS Students Score in the Lowest Quartile

Grade Level	Math Percentile Rank	Reading Percentile Rank
9	10	15
10	4	21
11	9	18
12	4	15

The data shows no clear pattern in a particular grade that is weaker or subject that is consistently low. Thus, we have determined that the problem lies in the teacher's overall ability to identify and address student academic deficiencies in math and reading.

One explanation for the student's lack of basic skills is that they often have had a gap in education before they enter a CPLC Community School. HHS have a significant percent of students classified as McKinney-Vento students – 15%. This means they receive services related to homelessness or preventing homelessness. Students without stable living accommodations often experience gaps in education.

A high percent of students enrolling mid-year also exacerbates the fact that these students lack basic skills. Not only have they not been in school for some period of time, they are enrolling too late in the year to catch up. At HHS a 15% of students enroll during the year.

School Response: Identifying Student Needs Early and Providing Appropriate RTI Remediation and Intervention

As discussed above, HHS has implemented intensive skills screening and interventions to address the lack of basic skills indicated by the low NWEA scores. The school is continuing to use NWEA to diagnose individual student needs for all students, and RTI screenings for the students that are in the lowest levels of performance.

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Current Status:

Moving forward, principals and staff will go deeper with performance management plans that focus on professional development for differentiated instruction and classroom management; Response to Intervention strategies implemented by The Principals Office; and a curriculum map that reflects an appropriate scope and sequence to address the lack of basic skills when students enroll, and have them performing at grade level by the time they graduate.

To address issues often associated with gaps in education; academic advisor will have access to additional resources for students.

The Principal's Office, LLC will continue to provide basic academic intervention in screening, intervening, and progress monitoring students to ensure that each student is being monitored for basic academic wellness in reading fluency and comprehension, and math computation, and that any deficiencies are corrected during regular interventions.

The RTI data will continue to be analyzed in collaborative professional learning community (PLC) meetings to determine student responsiveness to the applied intervention. TPO interventionists will continue to be an integral part of the PLC team to share data with content teachers to coordinate intervention efforts. Fidelity checks will continue to be conducted to monitor the quality of all tiers of RTI intervention.

Once a quarter all data will be compared to determine alignment of RTI data, Interim Assessment, and Benchmark Assessment data with The Common Core Standards in Language

Arts and Mathematics. Any needed adjustments to all levels of intervention will determined through this comparison.

Once a year all data will be compared to current AIMS results to determine effectiveness of the intervention to increasing student academic achievement.

Further, the school has implemented a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with monthly scheduled meetings, data-driven goals, and targeted outcomes. New curriculum tools, web-based assessments, accountability, and fidelity checks continue to strengthen and focus the school teaching team on gathering effective data to use to drive instruction and achievement.

The leadership team, with the help of The Principals Office, LLC has created a formal teacher review form, a “30-minute Coaching” form, and the "Five-Minute Observation" form that allows leadership to assess and rate specific teacher practices as part of fidelity checks in the continuous improvement model.

The school leaders have begun the implementation of accountability measures through progress monitoring systems established by the leadership team and The Principal’s Office, LLC. The system includes: (a) quarterly formal observations to determine levels of classroom management, student engagement, quality of instruction, and quality of lesson planning; (b) monthly 30-minute coaching observations to determine specific intervention needs for teachers in classroom management, instructional delivery, and student engagement; (c) Tri-weekly informal classroom “Five-Minute Observations” to determine trends and immediate and ongoing teacher intervention needs. Frequent One-On-Ones interviews are held with each teacher to review all observation data and check the detailed lesson plans for enriched instructional strategies.

The teachers and school leaders continue to apply the new processes of professional development and accountability. The curriculum and teaching strategies show continuity throughout the classrooms. Observation of the classrooms shows marked improvement in teacher practices, the quality of instruction and use of curriculum. The development of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is improving the quality of communication and collaboration around student learning and achievement. Ongoing data-based targeted staff development is improving the understanding and application of the new curriculum, web-based assessments, and use of data to drive instruction.

Conclusion

CPLC Community Schools takes our commitment to the communities we serve very seriously. Our leadership team has spent over a year re-thinking our programs, processes and structures to increase academic rigor while still addressing the social needs of the students.

Our Performance Management Plan will be reviewed by the CPLC Board each year, and we will present our metric to them. We also have built “fidelity checks” into our systems to ensure that the new scope and sequence, RTI initiatives, assessments and diagnostics are implemented properly, to maximize student achievement. If data shows that these processes are not having the desired increase in student skills, our monthly Professional Learning Community meetings will address problems head on, and implement solutions.

We started this process in 2009, and are pleased with the progress made in data-driven instructional planning, Professional Learning Community collaboration, leadership mentoring, professional development, and basic academic intervention through RTI. We look forward to building on the changes we have made in the last 10 months, and providing our students with the quality education they deserve.