Desert Sky Community School

Performance Management Plan Narrative

MATH NARRATIVE

Shelly Adrian, September 1, 2011

The mission of Desert Sky Community School is to provide and promote an education based in the child development theories of Dr. Rudolf Steiner; an education that addresses the whole child, and integrates music, movement, and art at all grade levels, to building a strong foundation for learning, and instill in students a joy of learning, a self-directed curiosity, and a profound respect for the people and places they will encounter on life's journey.

The goals of the school include student academic achievement, as well as achievement in artistic, musical and practical skills. Parent commitment to and participation in the life of the school, and professional development of teachers in both Waldorf and mainstream approaches are recognized by the school as vital foundations for academic success among students.

Progress toward these goals was supported by a Charter School Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant funding was designed to support student achievement through six (6) specific objectives: [1] send teachers to training and bring in mentors for them to promote Waldorf curriculum and instructional methods; [2] support parent workshops on how to enhance the learning environment and methods experienced by their student; [3] acquisition of the classroom furniture, equipment, & musical instruments needed for our specialized curriculum; [4]acquisition of classroom materials and curriculum resources for teachers to align a Waldorf approach with state standards; [5] provide training stipends to encourage teachers to maximize professional development opportunities; and [6] support for administration as well as teachers to attend professional conferences for learning of best practices and networking about particular topics in student achievement.

In the first three years of the school, the challenges of grounding student achievement in these foundational efforts became apparent. On the one hand, the education of parents in Waldorf pedagogy led to greater parent participation in the classroom, providing depth and differentiation that supports student growth. On the other hand, the heavy expectations of professional development overwhelmed some teachers. Investment in Waldorf training for teachers with (mainstream) certification more often awakened them to the tremendous work involved with becoming a Waldorf teacher – such as preparing one's lessons and presentation materials in an artful way, and providing individual attention to each student's needs and to each parent's concerns. Later, hiring Waldorf certified teachers and training them for teacher certification elicited the problem of anxiety with increased documentation . By the third year of Desert Sky, we had found that the most effective strategy for building a strong faculty is to attract and hire seasoned public school teachers who had already gravitated toward elements of teaching that figure prominently in Waldorf education, such as direct experience, writing before reading, and storytelling.

We also learned quickly that not all students came to our school because they were looking for this style of education. Rather many students had difficulty at previous schools, and brought with them problems we had not anticipated and were not easily addressed with our teaching methods. We have become better at describing our school and establishing a rapport with incoming families so they can determine if our school is likely to be a good fit and effective learning approach for their child.

In recent years, the Desert Sky Community School has extended our efforts and capacity to improve student achievement in the following ways:

a. **Development and implementation of a curriculum that improves student achievement by Waldorf methods for teaching math include manipulatives, movement, and storytelling.** This approach tends to be 'deeper' than state standards which they contain, building capacity for further skills. The Desert Sky administrator reviews 'Waldorf methods' curriculum guides – such as the Live Education homeschool curriculum, Dorothy Harrer's books, and information presented at mainstream and Waldorf school conferences on curriculum to improve student achievement. We do have a process for curriculum evaluation, and the administrator has started work with the faculty on curriculum mapping. On occasion, weekly faculty meetings do consider curriculum questions.

b. **Integration of math standards into instruction monitored by the administrator who reviews lesson plans at the time of drop-in observations three times a year.** The third observation is a formal evaluation, with a pre-conference, observation and post-conference. While there is no required format for lesson plans, some of the teachers use Task Stream which documents state standards. The school has had varied results with the expectation that teachers do self-evaluation of their teaching practice.

c. **Development and implementation of a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency in math by development and implementation of a quarterly progress report that incorporates both a skills checklist and a space for descriptive comments, without letter grades.** Standardized test scores and teacher input are used to identify students in need of support, which is provided through additional classroom attention, Title I or Special education services as appropriate. Verbal and kinesthetic formative assessments measure proficiency, as does review of the student main lesson book. Standardized test scores and progress reports are kept in the students cumulative file. Teachers meet individually with parents twice a year to review student progress and challenges.

d. **Implementation of professional development plan that supports effective implementation of a math curriculum through a 'train the trainers' model.** Teachers attend intensive Waldorf training for a particular grade level each summer including curriculum, instructional methods, specific activities for experiential learning, and best practices. Teachers participate in peer-mentoring as they move up through the grades. Teachers also participate in ADE workshops,

particularly curriculum and differentiated instruction topics. Teachers are asked to report out at faculty meeting about their professional development activities. Faculty meetings are also a place that teachers share best practices for individual students or particular situations.

In the last five years, analysis of pupil achievement data is an ongoing process where the lacunae of meaningful statistical data is filled with a plethora of anecdotal and detailed individual-level data.

a. Efforts to analyze pupil data – Pupil achievement data is analyzed during the school year, as well as from year to year. Data analysis pays attention to both the individual progress of students over each school year and across school years, and the aggregate data for grade level and school wide across the years.

b. Types of data collected –
    a. Second Grade standardized test scores from Terra Nova, Stanford-9 or Stanford-10 are reviewed by administration and teachers to identify trends in student achievement, as well as screen for individual student needs for academic support.
    b. Standardized test scores from the AIMS. Each summer when the AIMS scores are available, they are reviewed at the district level for trends and patterns. Administration and faculty also review AIMS results to screen student needs for tutoring support. When a new student enrolls in the school, their history of standardized scores is reviewed to identify needs for academic support.
    c. Faculty meeting discussions and quarterly progress reports result from ongoing teacher assessment of student progress. Student performance in handwork (knitting) and music may be proxy indicators for deeper difficulty in math. Difficulty in or failure to meet grade level expectations results in a teacher's Request for Collaboration which may lead to a Response to Intervention, referral to Title I tutoring program, and/or referral to Special Education coordinator.
    d. Enrollment growth is tracked. We also administer an exit survey to track the reasons given for withdrawal from our school. From parent surveys, the school's curriculum and student achievement are important factors in choosing a school and choosing to stay at a school.

c. Justification how data selected is relevant to improving student achievement – Trends in student achievement (from standardized scores and teacher assessments) may indicate the strengths or gaps in our curricular focus and instructional practice.

Findings

a. The percentage of our student population that is returning each year has increased. Using a spiraling curriculum, our program sets up each student for success by introducing skills without expecting full mastery, then revisiting them with greater proficiency expected each year. Our

approach is based on the idea that anxiety and stress are barriers to learning; the teacher provides a supportive learning environment with consistent rhythm and methods to allow students to feel comfortable and choose to stretch academically. Our program is designed to transform at a deep level not a 'quick fix,' and student achievement is anticipated gain momentum with longer exposure to the program of instruction and curriculum.

b. Charts and graphs representing the data

a. Chart 1: Change in enrollment over time

Chart 1.	Change in enrollment over time				Class size					
		100th day enrollment	grade levels	Average students per class	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
year 1	2006-2007	47	K-3	12	20	12	9	6		
year 2	2007-2008	57	K-5	10	16	9	13	9	6	4
year 3	2008-2009	53	K-5	9	10	10	12	11	7	3
year 4	2009-2010	51	K-4	10	11	9	13	9	9	
year 5	2010-2011	57	K-5	10	11	14	8	10	7	7
year 6	2011-2012	(71)	K-5	12	16	17	14	7	10	6

b. Chart 2: Change in standardized second grade math scores over time

Chart 2.	Change in standardized Second Grade Math scores				
		# students	percentile range	median national percentile	test name
year 1	2006-2007	9	3%-87%ile	not computed for less than 10 kids	Terra Nova
year 2	2007-2008	13	16%-89%ile	45	Terra Nova
year 3	2008-2009	14	2%-93%ile	16	Terra Nova
year 4	2009-2010	13	1%-74%ile	40.2	Stanford-9
year 5	2010-2011	7	1%-58%ile	34.5	Stanford-10

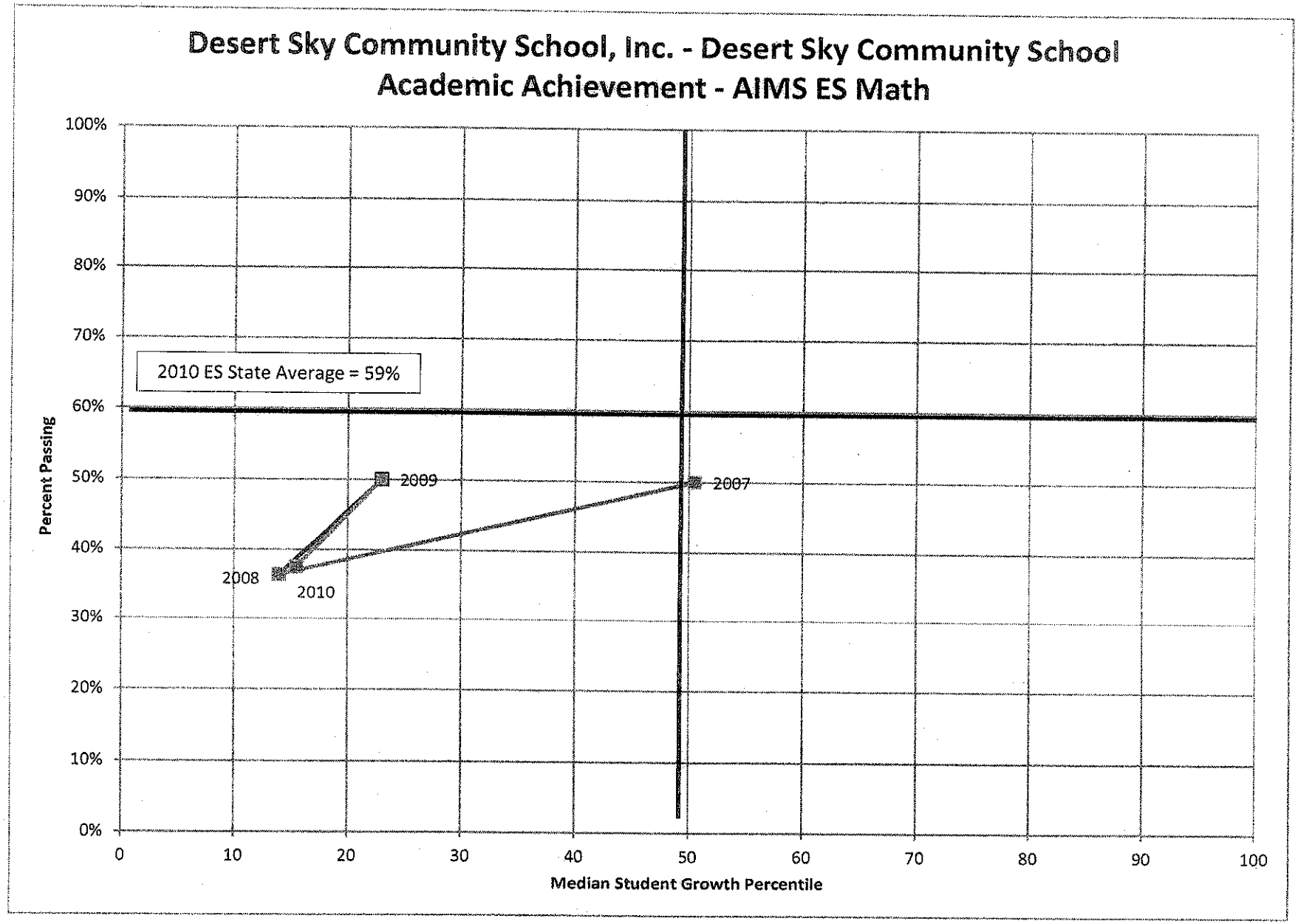
c. Charts 3 through 5. Change in math AIMS test scores over time, for each grade

Chart 3.	Change in Math AIMS scores --- 3rd grade			
		# students	AIMS range: FFB=Falls Far Below AP=Approaches M=Meets E=Exceeds	Mean Scale Score
year 1	2006-2007	6	AP to E	66
year 2	2007-2008	9	FFB to E	405.1
year 3	2008-2009	13	FFB to M	418.1
year 4	2009-2010	9	FFB to E	333.8
year 5	2010-2011	10	FFB to E	355.6

Chart 4.	Change in Math AIMS scores --- 4th grade			
		# students	AIMS range: FFB=Falls Far Below AP=Approaches M=Meets E=Exceeds	Mean Scale Score
year 1	2006-2007			
year 2	2007-2008	5	FFBto M	441.2
year 3	2008-2009	8	FFB toM	426.3
year 4	2009-2010	9	FFB to E	363
year 5	2010-2011	7	FFB to M	351.1

Chart 5.	Change in Math AIMS scores --- 5th grade			
		# students	AIMS range	AIMS ave
year 1	2006-2007			
year 2	2007-2008	4	FFB to M	456
year 3	2008-2009	3	A to E	484
year 4	2009-2010			
year 5	2010-2011	6	FFB to M	364.3

d. Chart 6. Academic Achievement AIMS ES Math (chart from ASBCS Five-Year Review of Desert Sky)


Desert Sky Community School, Inc. - Desert Sky Community School
Academic Achievement - AIMS ES Math
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Percent Passing
2010 ES State Average = 59%
2009
2007
2008
2010
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Median Student Growth Percentile

What we learned from the data – Overall, statistical data is insufficient for analysis so no trends were identified. Confidentiality precludes discussion of individual-level data.

a. **Small numbers impacted by individual variation.** As Chart 2, 3, 4 and 5 indicate, the number of students is small, and the range of achievement measured by the standardized exam is large (a range from 1 percentile to 99 percentile). Future statistical analysis will anticipate greater numbers of students, more representative 'average' score, and student achievement in upper grades tied to early exposure to this pedagogy. As the school enrollment grows, the AIMS scores will provide data more representative of the impact of our program on student achievement.

b. **Turnover of students and teachers.** The spiraling curriculum and program of instruction is designed to build a strong steady foundation and deep learning. One of the basic strengths of a Waldorf approach is that the teacher loops with the students (for several years) and learns how they learn, differentiating instruction as needed, and fine-tuning through formative assessments. The effectiveness of this approach does not reach its full potential when there is year-to-year (or more frequent) turnover of students and staff. The standardized scores as a reflection of the impact of our program is most accurate when we view the aggregate data of students who have experienced a Waldorf pedagogy from Kindergarten, and stayed with the same teachers since First Grade.

c. **Teacher-based assessments.** The varied experience and background in Waldorf and mainstream classroom assessments requires collaboration among teachers, and between teachers and administration in to more accurately get a picture of aggregate student achievement. Consistency across the teaching staff as to grade level expectations and assessment criteria requires strong communication between teachers and administration.

The accompanying template lists the strategies toward improving student achievement in the next three years. The goals, in the broadest terms, are to encourage a stable community of students, parents and well-qualified teachers, who are capable of and committed to self-review and sharing best practices.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Desert Sky Community School

INDICATOR:[1] _X__Math _ _Reading **DURATION OF THE PLAN**[2]**:** Begins September 1, 2011 to August 30, 2014

MEASURE*	METRIC*	CURRENT STATUS*	End Target For This Plan*[3]
State standardized assessment	Percent (%) of students who score proficient on the State standardized assessment and Student growth percentile (SGP)	(Board staff will enter info here)	Meet or demonstrate sufficient progress toward the level of adequate academic performance as set and modified periodically by the Board.

STRATEGY I: Provide and implement a curriculum that improves student achievement.

Action Steps[4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
1. Continue Curriculum Mapping for Grade 2 through 5	2011-2014	School Administrator with Faculty	Curriculum Map document	
2. Align curriculum to new Common Core for Reading and Math.	2011-2013	Administrative staff	Curriculum document aligned to Common Core standards	
3. Faculty meeting to document pedagogical discussions	2011-2012	Faculty	Minutes of Faculty meetings kept in Teacher Library	
4. Search for a mentor or master teacher to develop a 6th -8th grade curriculum for our school.	Summer 2012	School Administrator, and Search and Hiring Committee	Teacher or mentor hired for 2012-2013	

STRATEGY II: Develop and implement a plan for monitoring the integration of the Arizona Academic Standards into instruction.

Action Steps[4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
1. Continue Curriculum Mapping for Grade 2 through 5	2011-2014	School Administrator with Faculty	Curriculum Map document	
2. review our teacher evaluation system in light of Arizona Framework for Teacher and Principal Evaluation, and prepare (for implementation in 2012-	2012	School Administrator	Evaluation system reviewed, and revised if needed.	

2013) an instrument that meets requirements.				
3. develop a standard 'skeleton' format for lesson plans	Summer 2012	School Administrator	Lesson plan template	
4.				

STRATEGY III: Develop and implement a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency.

Action Steps [4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
1. review quarterly progress report template to align with Common Core Standards	2011-2013	School Administrator	Revised progress report template	
2. develop standard criteria for portfolio assessment of main lesson work.	2013-2014	School Administrator and Faculty	Written guidelines for portfolio evaluation	
3.				
4.				

STRATEGY IV: Develop and implement a professional development plan that supports effective implementation of the curriculum.

Action Steps [4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
1. document faculty meeting discussion and sharing of best practices and professional development	2011-2014	Faculty	Minutes of Faculty meetings kept in Teacher Library	
2. Prioritize professional development needs, and identify funding sources	2011-2014	School Administrator	Annual Professional development plan based on experience and needs of each teacher.	
3.				
4.				

Using the information entered in the "Budget" columns above, please provide a budget total that incorporates all strategies and action steps for each year of the performance management plan's implementation. For "Year 1", please specify the fiscal year (e.g., 2011). The charter holder may add years, as necessary.

Year 1: Budget Total _____ Fiscal Year _____
Year 2: Budget Total _____
Year 3: Budget Total _____

Notes:
* Provided by ASBCS staff
1 Academic area to be addressed for improvement
2 Duration of the plan must align with the timeline presented in the Action Steps
3 Refer to the Board's level of adequate academic performance
4 Repeat these action steps as necessary to include the appropriate number of steps to accomplish the strategy

Desert Sky Community School

Performance Management Plan Narrative

READING NARRATIVE

Shelly Adrian, September 1, 2011

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year 5	2010-2011	57	K-5	10	11	14	8	10	7	7
year 6	2011-2012	(71)	K-5	12	16	17	14	7	10	6

b. Chart 2: Change in standardized second grade reading scores over time

Chart 2.	Change in standardized Second Grade Math scores				
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c. Charts 3 through 5. Change in reading AIMS test scores over time, for each grade

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year 3	2008-2009	13	FFB to M	423.8
year 4	2009-2010	9	FFB to M	436.6
year 5	2010-2011	10	AP to M	456.6

Chart 4.	Change in Reading AIMS scores --- 4th grade			
		# students	AIMS range: FFB=Falls Far Below AP=Approaches M=Meets E=Exceeds	Mean Scale Score
year 1	2006-2007			
year 2	2007-2008	5	M to E	486.6
year 3	2008-2009	8	A toM	458.3
year 4	2009-2010	9	FFB to E	484.3
year 5	2010-2011	7	AP to E	471.9

Chart 5.	Change in Reading AIMS scores --- 5th grade			
		# students	AIMS range: FFB=Falls Far Below AP=Approaches M=Meets E=Exceeds	Mean Scale Score
year 1	2006-2007			
year 2	2007-2008	4	FFB to E	456.5
year 3	2008-2009	3	M to E	500.3
year 4	2009-2010			
year 5	2010-2011	6	AP to E	509.5

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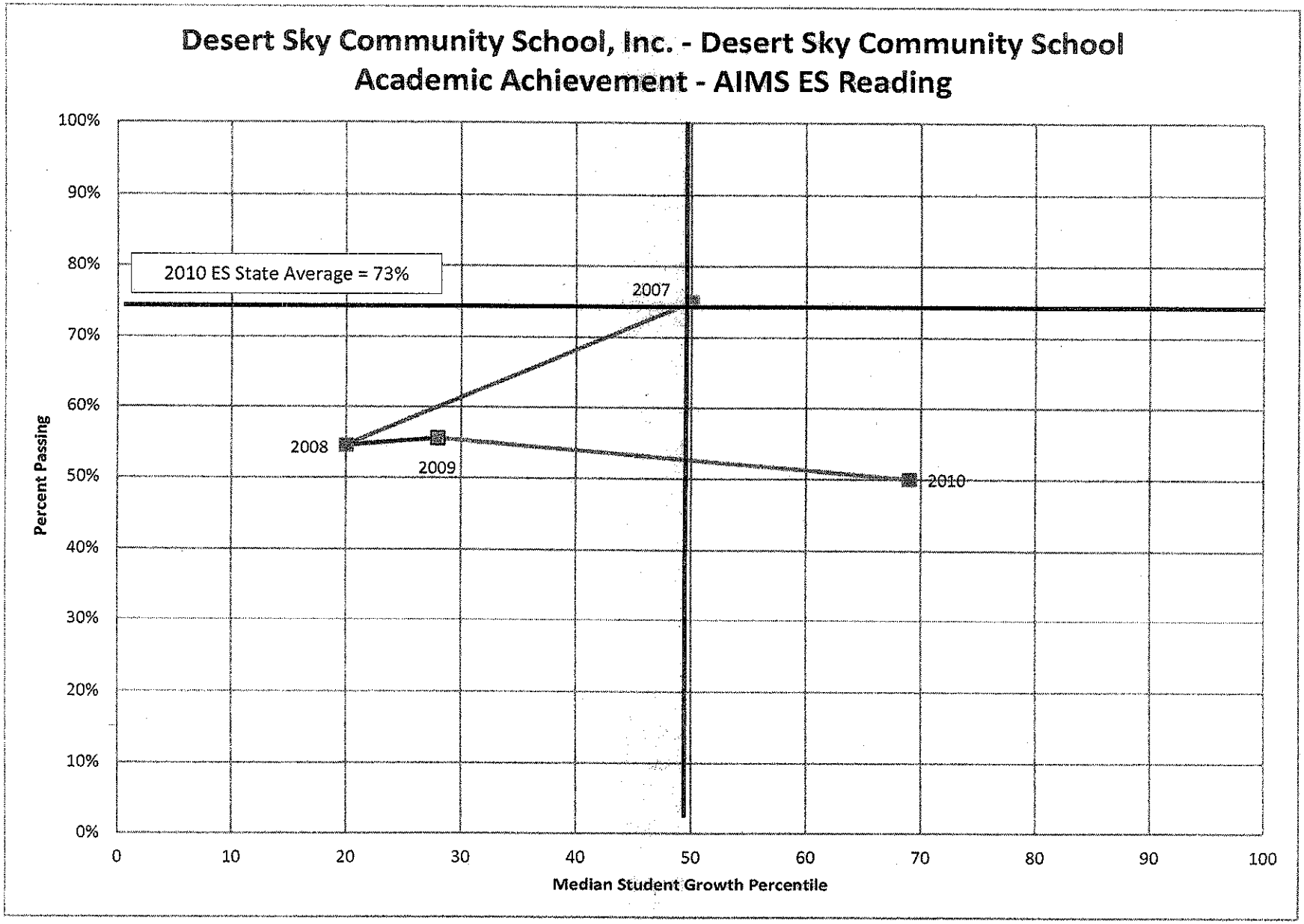
Desert Sky Community School, Inc. - Desert Sky Community School
Academic Achievement - AIMS ES Reading
2010 ES State Average = 73%
2007
2008
2009
2010
Percent Passing
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Median Student Growth Percentile

What we learned from the data – Overall, statistical data is insufficient for analysis so no trends were identified. Confidentiality precludes discussion of individual-level data.

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Desert Sky Community School

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4. Search for a mentor or master teacher to develop a 6th -8th grade curriculum for our school.	Summer 2012	School Administrator, and Search and Hiring Committee	Teacher or mentor hired for 2012-2013	

STRATEGY II: Develop and implement a plan for monitoring the integration of the Arizona Academic Standards into instruction.

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1. Continue Curriculum Mapping for Grade 2 through 5	2011-2014	School Administrator with Faculty	Curriculum Map document	
2. review our teacher evaluation system in light of Arizona Framework for Teacher and Principal Evaluation, and prepare (for implementation in 2012-	2012	School Administrator	Evaluation system reviewed, and revised if needed.	

2013) an instrument that meets requirements.				
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4.				

STRATEGY III: Develop and implement a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency.

Action Steps [4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
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3.				
4.				

STRATEGY IV: Develop and implement a professional development plan that supports effective implementation of the curriculum.

Action Steps [4]	Timeline	Responsible Party	Evidence of Meeting Action Steps	Budget
1. document faculty meeting discussion and sharing of best practices and professional development	2011-2014	Faculty	Minutes of Faculty meetings kept in Teacher Library	
2. Prioritize professional development needs, and identify funding sources	2011-2014	School Administrator	Annual Professional development plan based on experience and needs of each teacher.	
3.				
4.				

Using the information entered in the "Budget" columns above, please provide a budget total that incorporates all strategies and action steps for each year of the performance management plan's implementation. For "Year 1", please specify the fiscal year (e.g., 2011). The charter holder may add years, as necessary.

Year 1: Budget Total _____ Fiscal Year _____
Year 2: Budget Total _____
Year 3: Budget Total _____

Notes:
* Provided by ASBCS staff
1 Academic area to be addressed for improvement
2 Duration of the plan must align with the timeline presented in the Action Steps
3 Refer to the Board's level of adequate academic performance
4 Repeat these action steps as necessary to include the appropriate number of steps to accomplish the strategy