Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
1616 W. Adams Street, Suite 170
Phoenix, AZ 85007

June 13, 2014

RE: Enrollment Cap Notification Request

To Whom It May Concern:

Imagine Desert West Middle, Inc. is requesting an enrolment increase from 280 to 320 students. The following narrative addresses the notification requirements.

1. *Provide the timeline for implementing the request, including the projected number of students served per grade per year until full capacity is reached, and including whether the* Enrollment Cap Notification Request *will be submitted in conjunction with any other amendment or notification requests which would warrant concurrent consideration.*

Imagine Desert West Middle School, Inc. timeline for increasing the number of students would be for the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, we have 302 students who have re-enrolled for the upcoming school year and would like to continue to serve those students coming up from our elementary school. Below are the current number of students re-enrolled and students on our waiting list.

- We have 103 students who are re-enrolled from 5th grade going into 6th grade. We have an additional 19 students on a wait list.
- We have 109 students who are re-enrolled from 6th grade going into 7th grade. We have an additional 7 students on a wait list.
- We have 96 students who are re-enrolled from 7th grade going into 8th grade. We have an additional 4 students on a wait list.

The current capacity of the building is 360. We have enclosed the school drawings and classroom capacity for the rooms utilized by Imagine Desert West Middle, Inc.

The enrollment cap notification for Imagine Desert West Middle School, Inc. is the only notification requested at this time.

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2. *Summarize the organization's capacity to support the quality and long-term academic and operational success and financial viability of the proposed growth of the charter until capacity is reached.*

Imagine Desert West Middle School, Inc. organizational capacity to support the quality and long-term academic operational success has been addressed in the attached Demonstration of Sufficient Progress Document. For the 2013 Academic Dashboard the school did meet the board's minimum requirements by scoring 70 points. In the Demonstration of Sufficient Progress document, Imagine Desert West Middle School, Inc. has addressed the pink areas for the 2013 school year and the capacity to sustain the growth demonstrated from 2012 to 2013 school year and the systems that are currently in place to continue the growth.

In addition to the DSP document, we have attached the site map with the square footage calculation on the document. The classroom used for Imagine Desert West Middle, Inc. are 171, 172,173,174,175,178 and Portable Room 690A, 690B, and 690C. See attached document entitled Imagine Desert West Site Map.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email me at jason.archuleta@imagineschools.com or by phone at (602)692-5314.

Sincerely,

Jason Archuleta

Jason Archuleta
Regional Director
Imagine Schools

Developing Character,
Enriching Minds.

Imagine Charter Middle School at Desert West

DSP

June 13, 2014

Narrative Overview

Imagine Charter Middle School at Desert West, Inc. is a public charter school located in the city of Phoenix on 67th Avenue and McDowell Road. The school opened its doors in August of 2007 to greet more than 150 students in grades Sixth-Eight. Imagine Schools is a national organization, comprised of teachers and administrators, committed to helping parents and guardians educate their children in high quality public charter schools. Imagine Schools currently serves nearly 42,000 K-12 students in public charter schools located in twelve states and the District of Columbia. Imagine Schools maintains corporate headquarters in Arlington. Schools that are part of the Imagine Schools family share a common culture based on Shared Values and Measures of Excellence. These elements are central to Imagines' approach in educating the whole child. The Desert

West campus includes Kinder-5th grades (operating under a separate charter) and currently serves a total of over 900 Kindergarten-8th grade students and their families. Imagine Charter Middle at Desert West serves over 276 students in grades sixth through 8th grade with 100% qualifying for free and reduced lunch, 18% classified as English Language Learners(ELL), and 12% classified as needing special education services(SPED). The middle school population demographic breakdown is as follows: 92% Hispanic, 0.4% Caucasian, 7%, African American and 0.7% American Indian.

Imagine Desert West Middle School is located in the west valley, a high-risk area of Phoenix, Arizona. We provide demographic data of our local community below. Community was defined to include all the local middle schools catchment areas. Since our charter school does not have defined residence boundaries we provide data for the entire local area from which our students come from. Demographic and community data provided were garnered from the American Community Survey (ACS). ACS produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates and is the Census Bureau's Population Estimation Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns. We are using the 2012 estimates which incorporate data gathered during the last 5 years.

Table 1. Community Data for Imagine Desert West Middle School

Median Age of Adults	23.1 yrs
Median Income for all Families (77.8% of all persons)	$31,204
Median Income for families with children under 18 (48.3% of all families)	$20,256
Unemployment Rate for Families with Children	14.2%
Rental Rate in the Area	23.1%
Graduation Rate for	
All adults	30%
Adults with kids under 6	37.7%
Adults with kids 6-11	35.5%

Kids enrolled in public school	96.5%
Families w/ kids under 18 Past 12 months on public assistance	47.1%
Families w/ kids under 18 Past 12 months below poverty level	45.3%
Families with kids under 18 at or below poverty level	54.7%

The mission of Imagine Desert West Middle School is to partner with parents and guardians in the education of their children by providing a high quality school that prepares students for lives of leadership, accomplishment, and exemplary character. The vision of Imagine Desert West Middle School is Developing Character, Enriching Minds – enabling every student to reach his or her full potential and discover the pathways for life-long success. The charter was accredited by the North Central Association in 2007 and reaccredited in 2013.

Imagine Desert West Middle School has strived to ensure continuous improvement in academic performance since its inception. This demonstration of progress will focus primarily on Academic Year (AY) 2011-2012, AY2012-2013, and AY2013-2014. During this three year period Imagine Desert West Middle School has undertaken comprehensive and systematic changes (based on an evaluation of performance data) to bolster academic performance. Performance data from the 2011-2012AY indicated Imagine Desert West Middle school did not meet academic standards in 14 areas (including overall performance). While indeed such data was viewed with concern, we also saw that we had an opportunity to make transformative change to better the academic lives of our students. To this end we embarked on a series of endeavors listed below to improve our ability to meet state standards and provide a high quality academic environment.

Strategies undertaken in response to AY2011-2012 dashboard results
1. School-wide Curriculum Updates 2. School-wide Creation of Pacing Guides 3. Alignment of grade level common formatives to pacing guides 4. School-wide and Regional Level Professional Development opportunities for collaboration in WIG meetings and grade level meetings 5. Implementation of ongoing systematic review, reflection and use of data

The results of our labor were indeed promising. During this one academic year we were able to move from having 14 areas that did not meet academic standards (including one that fell far below) to only having *two* areas in which we did not meet academic standards. We take great pride in this turnaround and believe strongly that this provides evidence of the capabilities of our staff, administration, and students.

While we garnered a sense of satisfaction viewing the drastic change in performance data from AY2011-2012 to AY2012-2013, we also recognized that we still had areas that necessitated improvement. For the 2012-2013 school year, the school did not meet the academic performance criteria established by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools Academic Performance Framework in two areas Proficiency and subgroup SPED. In response, this is the demonstration of sufficient progress for Imagine Charter Middle School at Desert West. Per the dashboard, the following areas did not meet the standards:

- Proficiency
    - Percent Passing in Reading and Math
    - Subgroup SPED in Reading and Math

This demonstration of sufficient progress will address curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development for the school overall and indicate the targeted response for the subgroup (SPED) that did not meet the standard.

Proficiency *(Percent Passing in Reading and Math)*

Curriculum Overview for Proficiency

All curriculum used at Imagine Desert West Middle School is selected based on its ability to address the Arizona College and Career Readiness standards. Teachers, alongside the leadership team used guiding documents to support curricular activities. At the end of the 2011-2012 academic year teachers created pacing guides in *reading/language arts* in grade level teams led by Dr. Mike Schmoker and the academic coach. Dr. Schmoker is a national recognized author and expert in literacy strategies. The pacing guides represent the core of curricular and instructional practices at Imagine Desert West Middle School and are aligned to Arizona College and Career Readiness standards. Pacing guides included standards to be taught, assessments to be used, and the assessment schedule. For example pacing guides in reading/language arts include methods for incorporating fiction, non-fiction and other reading resources including articles, poetry and speeches for core reading curriculum. Pacing guides also provide suggested time allotments for each unit. This grants teachers the autonomy to focus solely on lesson delivery and differentiation while also providing a school wide standard structure for when units are delivered. In addition, pacing guides are aligned to the school academic calendar. During the summer prior to the 2012-2013 academic year, the Dean of Academics and the academic coach evaluated the pacing guides based on the

schools' published state performance data (i.e. AIMS scores) and Imagine schools SAT10 data to ensure that pacing guides addressed all areas of weakness. For example, vocabulary was an area of weakness school wide. We added a vocabulary section to the lesson plans and the pacing guides to ensure that vocabulary was a focus for our campus. In grade level meetings, we discussed which vocabulary was being highlighted for each week. We asked that the teacher focus on a few cross-curricular or Tier two words that would be used across the classes as well as content specific Tier three words.

Throughout the year, teachers were asked to review and revise the pacing guides with assistance from the academic coach and data coach Dr. Schmoker returned to evaluate and provide feedback during this process. Feedback was provided both orally and in written form and focused on the use of evidence based instructional strategies (e.g. Socratic method) as part of the implementation of standards and practices outlined in the pacing guides. To ensure that pacing guides were guiding teaching, lessons plans were checked every week for fidelity to pacing guides. If lessons plans did not align for a given week to pacing guides, the Dean of Academics met with the teacher and/or grade level team to discuss reasons behind misalignment and strategies to re-align and remain on track.

Additionally, the reading specialist based on end of year SAT10 and Galileo #1 baseline data identified 20-25 students to participate in the in-school reading intervention program, SRA Corrective Reading The small-group intervention occurred three days a week 30 minutes and was designed to helps struggling readers with comprehension strategies and to become more fluent readers. Moving forward to the upcoming 2014-2015 AY and in addition to the curricular activities described herein, the Data and

Instructional coach together will a) ensure that the high yield standards are systematically placed throughout the pacing guides in a cyclical manner and b) pre-create benchmarks that map onto the pacing guides to track student proficiency and identify intervention needs.

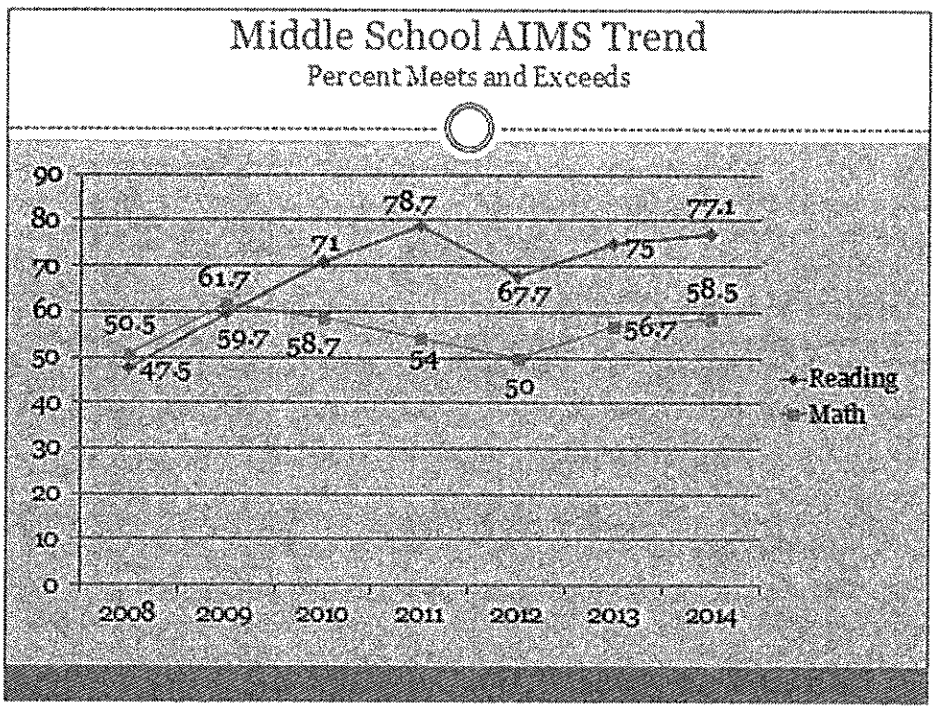


Figure 1. Imagine Desert West Middle School Proficiency Graph

The above graph shows the AIMS trends in growth for Imagine Desert West Middle School. It is important to note that although we did not meet proficiency standards for the 2012-2013 school year we have demonstrated some forward progress during the 2013-2014 school year (see Figure 1). Our reading proficiency scores moved from 75% passing to 77.1% passing. Thus we feel that curricular, instructional and assessment changes that have been made represent important first steps that we intend to build from during the next academic year.

Imagine Desert West curriculum task force researched and sought advice about the purchase and implementation of new math curriculum for the 2013-2014 school year. After researching, talking to teachers, school leaders, the regional team, and professional development math speaker, Steve Leinwand, the team chose to follow pacing guides from the Common Core toolbox and align the guides to our school calendar. The pacing guides represent the core of curricular and instructional practices at Imagine Desert West. Pacing guides included standards to be taught, assessments to be used, and the assessment schedule. For example, pacing guides in math include cyclical units of study which repeat and progressively get more challenging. The task force also purchased *Every Day Counts®: Calendar Math,* for Imagine Desert West Elementary and the 6th grade. *Every Day Counts®: Calendar Math* provides lessons and activities to preview, review, practice and discuss critical math concepts and skills, build math understanding, and raise test scores in a few minutes each day.

Throughout the year teachers were asked to review and revise the pacing guides with assistance from the academic coach and data coach. Feedback was provided orally during grade level meetings and focused differentiating instruction based on the formative and post test data. For example, when students scored above or below academic goals in particular unit teachers would be required to make adjustments to pacing. That is, when assessments indicated students were struggling to master a concept pacing was slowed allowing teachers to provide more in depth explanations and represent concepts in novel ways. Similarly, when assessments indicated that students were easily exceeding academic goals the pace was also modified to progress more quickly and to add more challenging activities. Additionally, the math teachers had targeted 60 students,

based on SAT10 end of year and Galileo #1 baseline data to participate in the in-school math intervention program. The lowest quartile of students met with the math specialist in small groups. During these meetings units were covered in greater depth and pre-requisite skills that were missing were presented again.

Moving forward to the upcoming 2014-2015 academic year, and in addition to all the curricular activities described herein, the data and instructional coach together will a) pre-create benchmarks that map onto the pacing guides to track student proficiency and identify intervention needs and b) Dean of Academics and Academic Coach will lead grade level team meetings focused on gathering supplemental materials and manipulatives that will enable teachers to teach any given unit for the suggested allotted times found in the pacing guides.

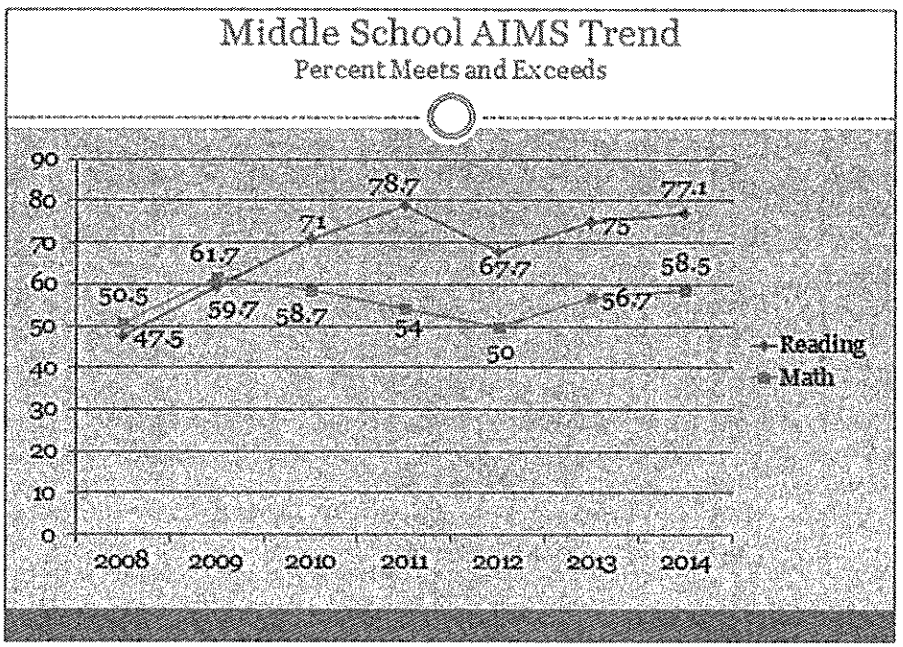


Figure 2. Imagine Desert West Middle School Proficiency Graph

The above graph shows the AIMS trends in growth for Imagine Desert West Middle School. It is important to note that although we did not meet proficiency

standards for the 2012--2013 school year we have demonstrated some forward progress during the 2013-2014 school year (see Figure 2). Our mathematics proficiency scores moved from 56.7% passing to 58.5% passing. Thus we feel that curricular, instructional and assessment changes that have been made represent important first steps that we intend to build from during the next academic year.

Instruction for Proficiency

Imagine Desert West Middle Schools' primary instructional intervention is observations and classroom walkthroughs to support the implementation of and ensure fidelity to the above described curricular changes. The protocol Imagine Desert West Middle School follows includes formal observations twice a year and monthly schoolwide classroom walkthroughs. Both observations and walkthroughs utilize the Charlotte Danielson Framework. The Charlotte Danielson Framework was adopted as formal observation model in the 2012-2013 school year by the Imagine Sonoran Region. This model identifies aspects of teacher responsibilities that have been shown in empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting student learning. Essentially the framework defines what teachers should know and be able to do in their profession. In this framework, teaching is divided into 22 components clustered in to four domains. Along with the observation data, classroom and school assessment data completes the formal teacher evaluations. These observations are conducted by the Dean of Academics and feedback both written and verbal is provided to teachers; it is also a normative part of this process for the Dean of Academics to model lessons for teachers.

In addition to these observations and walkthroughs the Data Coach conducts separate classroom observations to ensure that teachers are adequately utilizing data into their everyday practices (data utilization practices/assessment practices are specified in more detail in the assessment section below). During the 2013-2014 AY Imagine Desert West Middle School implemented a peer mentor program in which peers observe mentor teachers in order to facilitate teacher growth. This program also enables discussions and collaborations around current best practices in instruction and effective classroom management strategies.

Finally, grade level data meetings are weekly meetings held during common planning time with the Data Coach, Academic coach and each grade level team. Data meetings are agenda driven with items including pacing guides, classroom resources, data and common formative assessments, instructional strategies to meet the needs of the students at all levels. The purpose of the data meetings is to review data from both summative, benchmark and common formative assessments, monitoring how students are moving within proficiency levels, collaborate around academic calendars and support teachers through professional development opportunities that support those specific areas. Meetings are led by the Data and Academic Coaches each week and can include professional development in the form of handouts that provide opportunity for discussion and video clips of teachers throughout the school showing best practices.

Assessment for Proficiency

Imagine Desert West Middle School uses a series of assessments to help guide instruction and judge student growth and proficiency each year. The Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT10) is administered at the beginning and end of

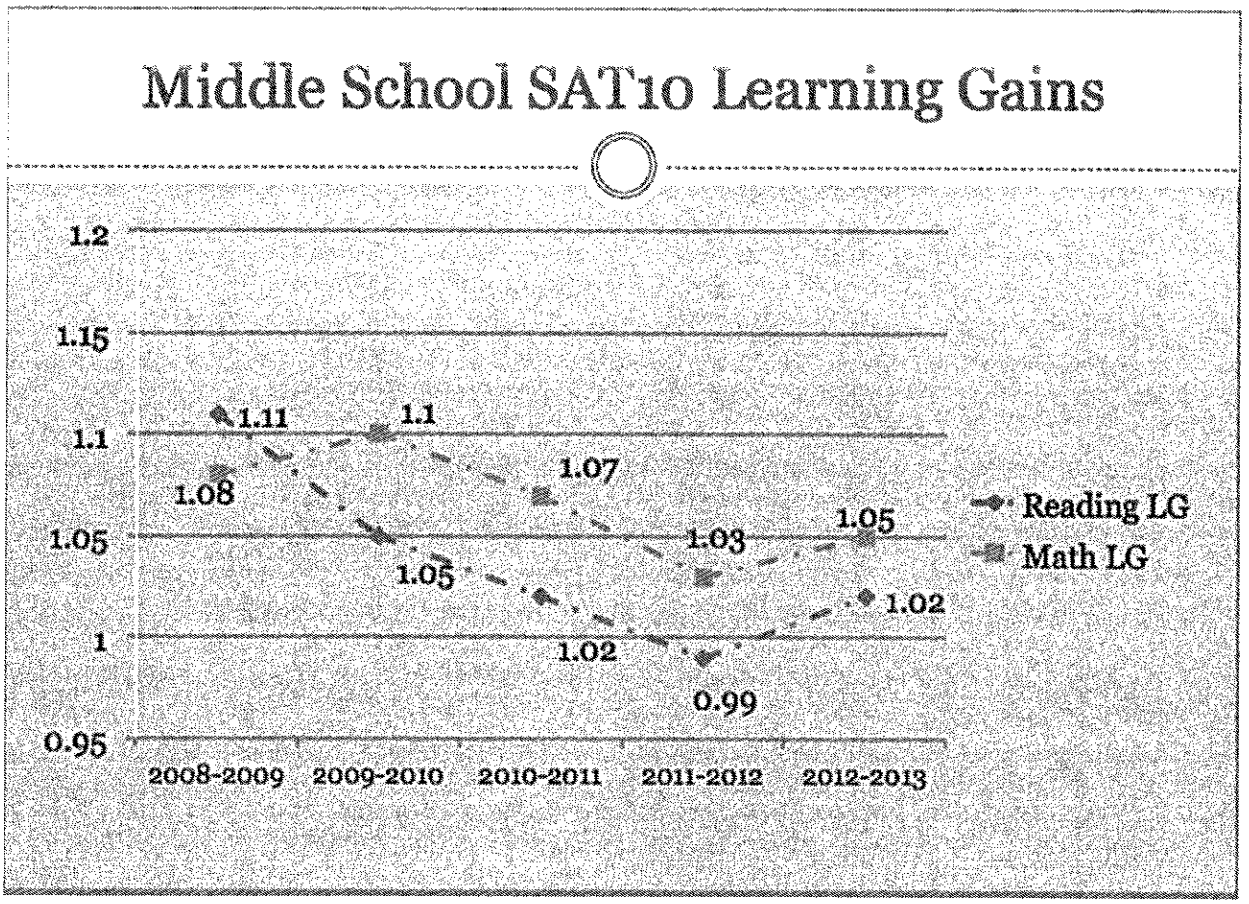
each school year in all grade levels. We also take two state tests the Arizona's Instrument to Measure the Standards (AIMS) and AIMS is administered in grades 3-8 once at the end of the school year. Benchmark tests are administered three times per year in the fall, winter, and spring using Galileo. We also use grade level common formative assessments that are made using the TestWiz NWEA item bank. Students are also monitored in class through teacher created tests, exit tickets, and anecdotal evidence.

The first and last test we take each year, the SAT10, is required by Imagine Schools and is used to measure student growth and proficiency. Using the normal curve equivalent (NCE), the beginning and end of year test results are compared to calculate student learning gains. The learning gain has an expected value of 1.0 and varies from .02 to 1.98. A student, class, or school that has a learning gain of 1.0 is said to have made one year of growth by staying in the same position relative to the students in the national norming pool. Our campus goal for the 2013-2014 school year was to have every student reach a minimum learning gain of 1.0 or higher with a class average learning gain of 1.10. All students are tested in math problem solving and procedures, reading comprehension, and reading vocabulary.

Teachers review the previous year's gains at the start of each school year to reflect on their practice and to determine if school and personal goals were met. These meetings also serve to set the current year SAT10 goals. After the initial administration of the SAT10, teachers meet to analyze student percentile ranking and NCE scores. This analysis is used to help build the teacher's understanding of their student's academic strengths and areas of growth. It also helps teachers embed their SAT10 goal in data.

Table 2 shows the middle school learning gains in math and reading from the 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 school years.

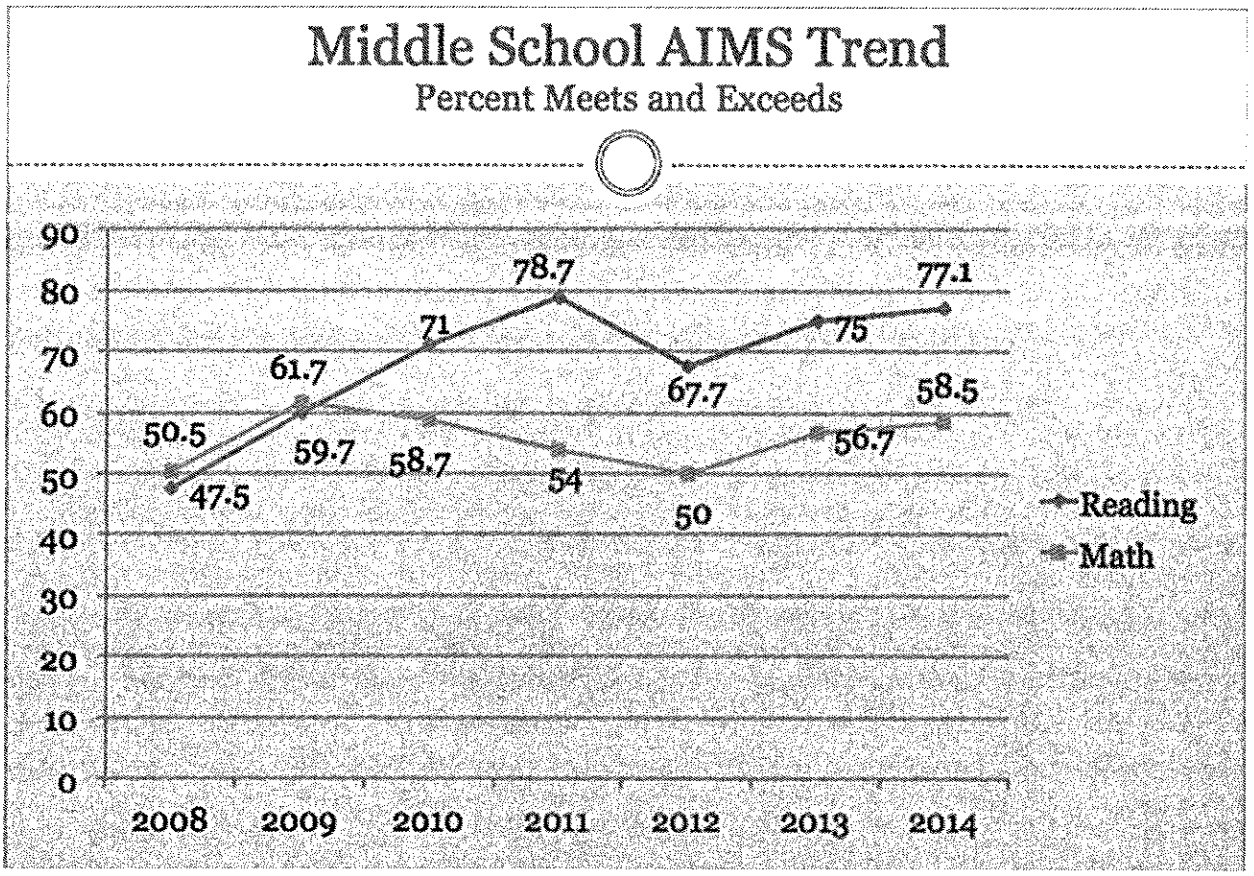
Table 2



A second big assessment our students take is the AIMS. This test is used to determine the level of student proficiency on grade level standards. One of the Imagine Southwest Group goals is that 90% of students will be at or above grade level on AIMS. The AIMS assessment results are analyzed at the beginning of each year by staff to determine if we met our goal and reflect on our academic practices.

Table 3 shows the middle school AIMS percentage meets and exceeds in math and reading from 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 school years.

Table 3



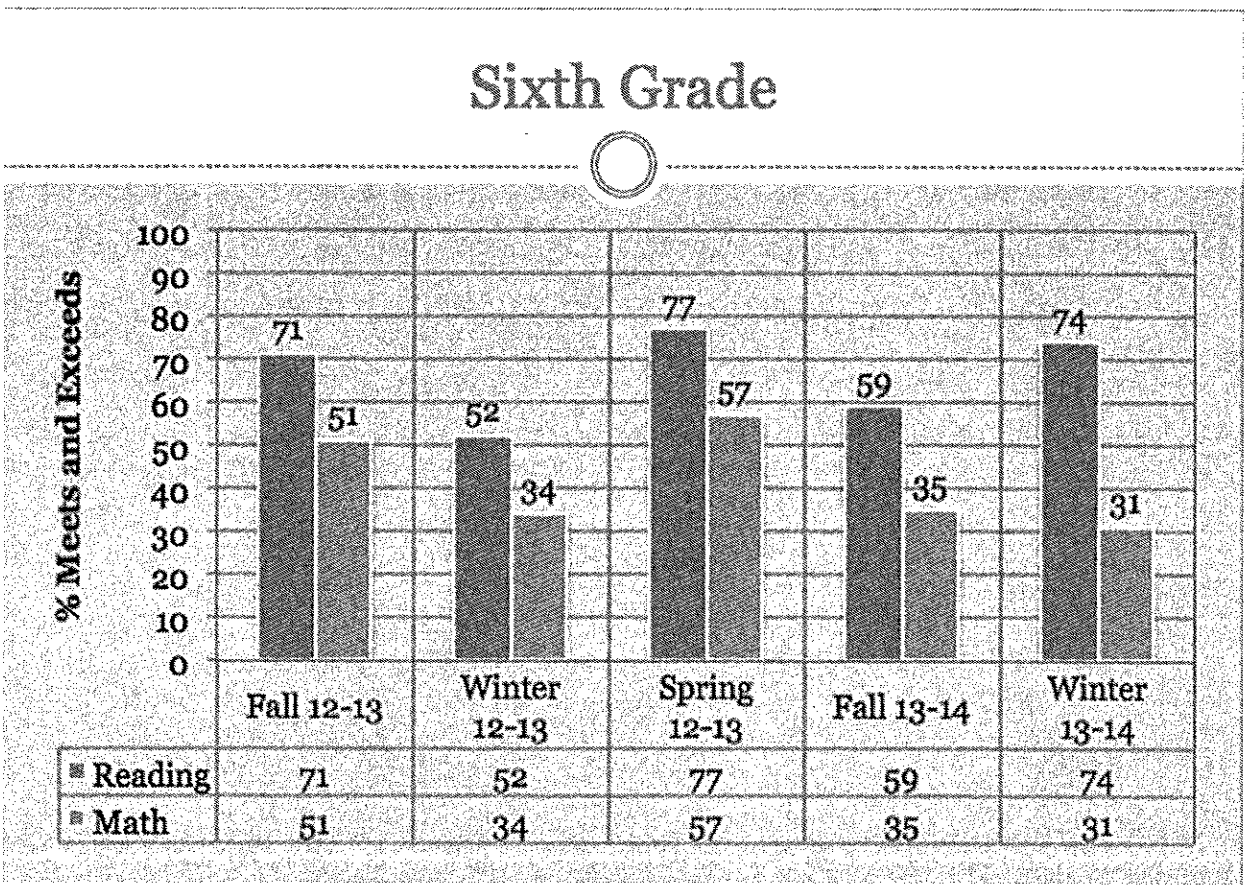
Galileo benchmark assessments facilitate data chats and drive instruction. Students are tested in reading and math for all grade levels. Science is administered in grades 4-8. Galileo results are used to track student performance levels and support instructional trajectory as well as help adjust intervention groups in classrooms and in the math lab. Students are originally tested within the first month of school. Initial assessments give teachers a baseline data point to gain insight into overall class strengths and weaknesses and to triangulate alongside SAT 10, and common formative assessments. After testing in the winter, Galileo analyzes both the fall and winter benchmarks to assess students' risk levels. With this additional data, students can be

identified for high risk of failing AIMS. The final benchmark helps teachers identify gaps in student learning prior to the end of year high-stakes tests.

After every benchmark, teachers are expected to analyze the percentage of students that meet and exceed (percent passing) in both math and reading for their class. Instructional adjustments are made based off this analysis. Teachers are expected to create intervention groups based on this data. These groups are adjusted after every benchmark. The data is also analyzed by standard. Standards are identified as mastered, reteach to the whole class, reteach to a targeted group, and not taught.

Table 4 shows a sample Galileo graph from the 2013-2014 school year that was used to help present data to teachers.

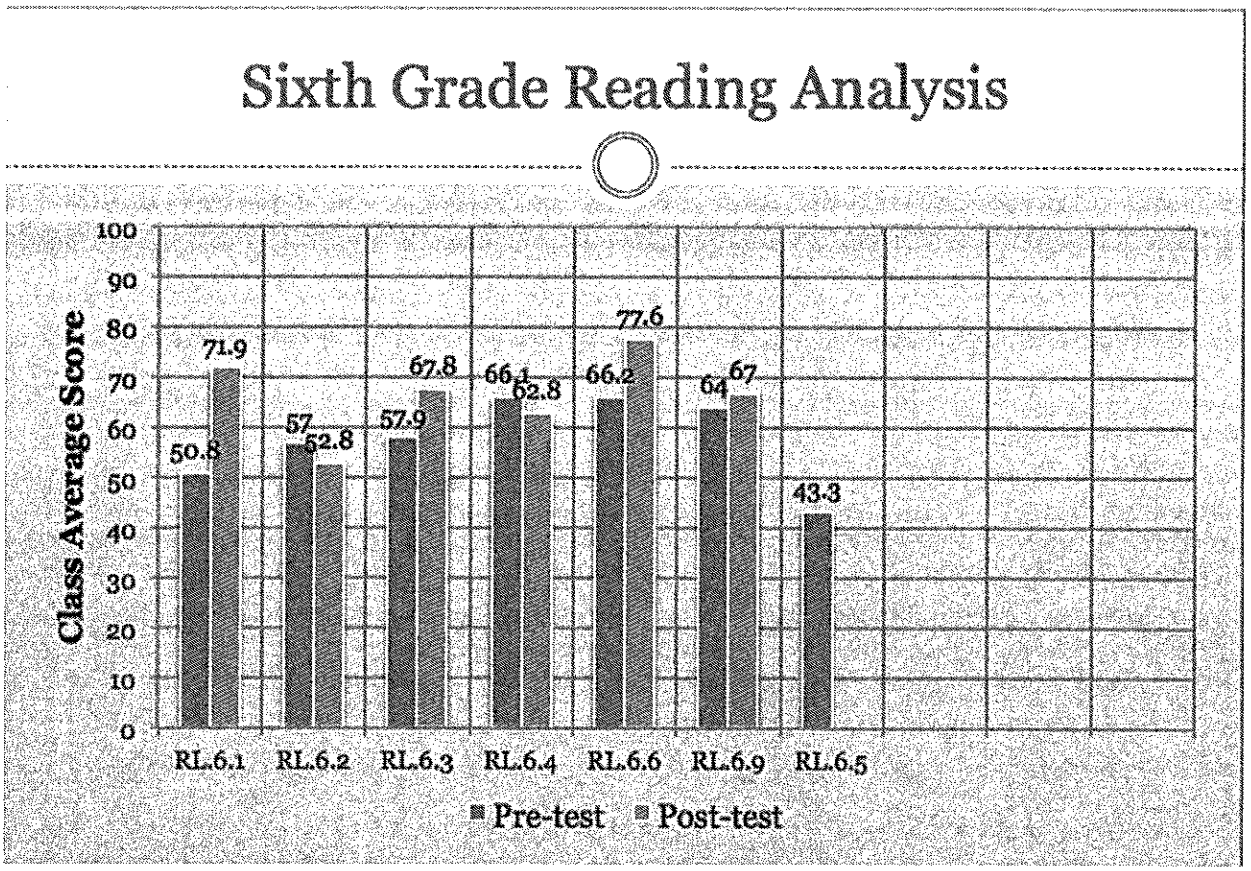
Table 4



Common formative assessments are the final formal testing piece. Formatives are created prior to instruction to identify which standards will be addressed and to what extent. These determinations are made based on grade level curriculum maps. The tests were given in six cycles consisting of both a pre and post-test. Individual student goals are set based on the quartile they fall into (see Figure 4). After the pre-test is administered students and teachers analyze performance by standard. Students invest in their individual goal and the teacher differentiates their instruction based on the data. When the unit of instruction is complete, students and teachers analyze the data by standard to assess if the goals were met. Students who met their goals or grew get to move their student-tracking piece on the classroom data wall (see Figure 3). If the goal is not met by over 50% of the class the standard should be retaught and assessed again. If the goal is not met by less than 50% of the class the standard should be targeted in small groups with particular students identified in the data analysis process.

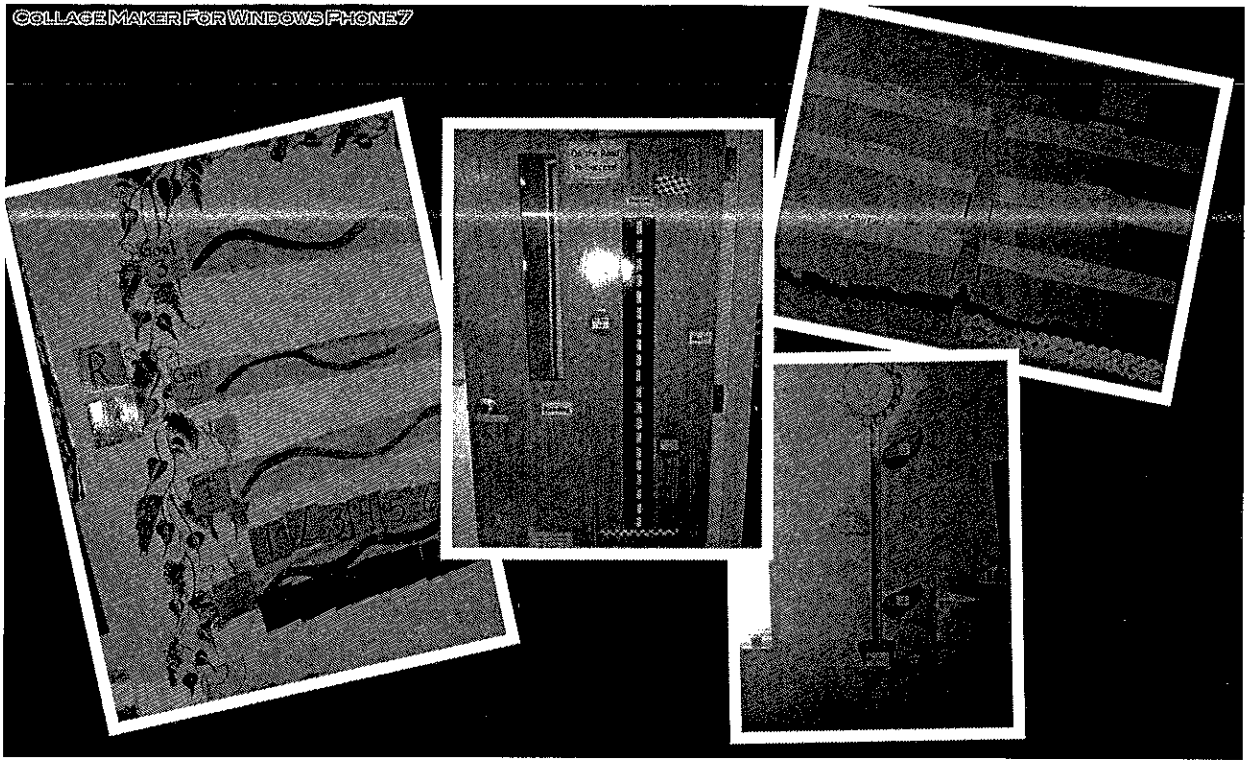
Table 5 shows a sample standard based analysis for a sample grade level during the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 5



Sample data walls based on our common grade level formative assessments, 2013-2014 school year.

Figure 3



Sample common grade level formative goal key.

Figure 4

Pre-test Score	Post-test Goal
Quartile 1 0 - 24%	Quartile 3 50% - 74%
Quartile 2 25% - 49%	Quartile 4 75% - 100%
Quartile 3 50% - 74%	Quartile 4 75% - 100%
Quartile 4 75% - 100%	Quartile 4 90% - 100%

Professional Development for Proficiency

The Imagine Schools region picked 3 areas of focus for their region-wide professional development days, which occur 3 times throughout the school year. Two of those areas are in math: the Mathematical Practices and Mathematical Tasks (real-life scenarios to teach mathematical concepts). Teachers are learning ways to incorporate the math practices and math tasks into their instruction, and it is an expectation that they use some of the things they learn in their classrooms. They are able to share out their experiences with other teachers from the region and learn from each other. The teachers meet during the regional professional development days as a grade level. The area of focus for the 2013-2014 school year was text complexity and choosing appropriate text for students. Within these workshops, they network with other teachers to discuss effective teaching strategies and resources.

Each month teachers are provided with a half day of professional developed. Topics covered included, but were not limited, to Socratic Method (reading), Engagement Strategies (Reading and Math), and backward planning (Reading and Math). Grade level and WIG meetings always included instructional strategies that could be taken back to the classroom for immediate implementation. The strategies were presented by teachers (peer format) building on strategies that were currently effective in the classroom. After each benchmark, grade levels presented their data including areas of strength, areas of weakness, and their plans for sustaining positive outcomes and improving upon areas of need to the entire staff allowing for collaboration and facilitating discussion of best practices.

Subgroup SPED

Instruction for special education students is led by a highly qualified special education teacher. The Regional Special Education Director for the Imagine Southwest Group oversees the SPED teacher to ensure paperwork is completed accurately and timely. The Dean of Academics also meets with SPED teacher on an adhoc basis to discuss individual student concerns and support. Additionally, an administrator attends all IEP meetings to be a member of the team and ensure parent communication is effective and clear. The SPED teacher, along with an aide, utilizes a variety of instructional strategies and methods including supplemental curriculum, graphic organizers, note taking, as well as project based learning, supporting fluency and comprehension by rereading. The intervention support ranges from one on one to small group. Within the intervention students are taught using supplemental curriculum including SRA Reading and Math along with teacher created materials.

The SPED teacher also assesses special education students using class formative assessments, observations, Galileo and SAT 10. Individual student data is tracked for each student. The data is reviewed with the regional team along with individual strategies. If progress is not being made toward meeting goals other strategies are discussed and implemented.

During the past two academic years we focused on overall proficiency of our students (including SPED) and differentiation based on quartiles assuming that these strategies would meet the needs of our SPED students. However our data indicated that were not adequately servicing these students (see Figure 5).

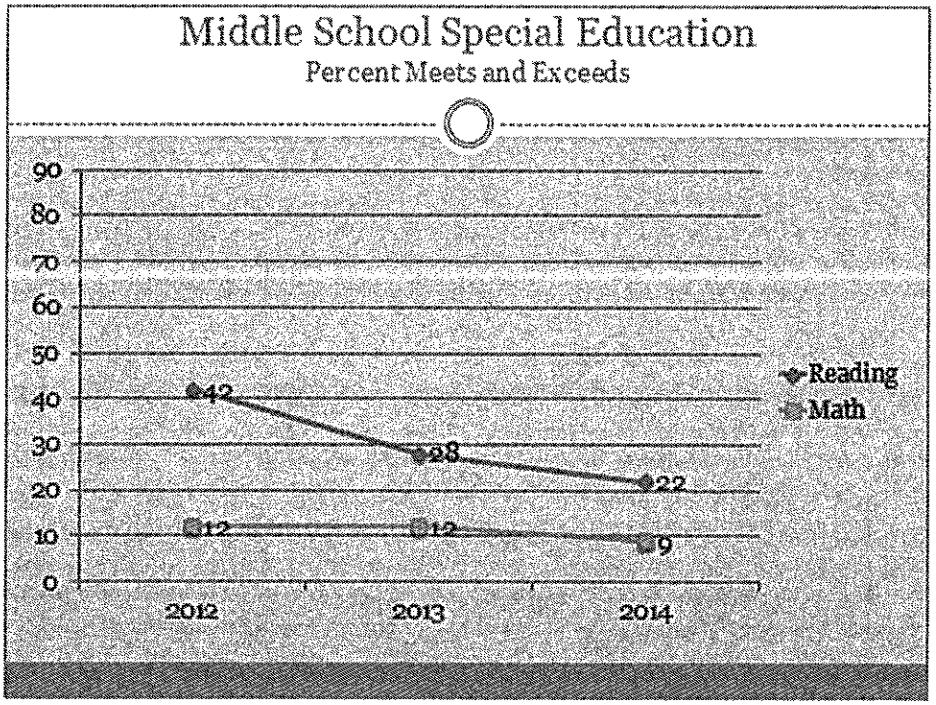


Figure 5. Middle School SPED Percent Meets and Exceeds

SPED remains the sole area that has not shown substantial improvement over the course of the past 3 years and as a result we are making systemic alterations to the delivery, planning and monitoring of SPED students. Moving forward to the 2014-2015 AY we plan to hire a second full time SPED teacher. We will now have one full time SPED teacher for grades 4-7 and one full time SPED teacher for grade 8. This will drastically reduce caseloads for SPED teachers so that they may more effectively support the students and homeroom teachers to meet IEP and growth goals. Next, homeroom teachers will be required to include in class SPED accommodations in their weekly lesson plans. This will provide an opportunity for the administration to monitor homeroom teachers during walkthroughs to assess whether accommodations are occurring in the middle school classrooms.

Over the past year during data discussions it was noted that homeroom teachers were discounting their SPED students' data commenting that SPED students were not likely to make growth similar to their grade level counterparts. To combat this we will be providing specific professional development to homeroom teachers focused on inclusion and strategies to service SPED students in the classroom including small group intervention, differentiation of instruction, and the literary foci 1-5. Finally, SPED teachers will participate in data chats during grade level meetings with students' homeroom teachers to ensure that data on SPED students is reviewed regularly so teachers may draw from the expertise SPED teachers for classroom practices.