Demonstration of Sufficient Progress

Overview

As a single site school district, Paramount Education Studies (PES) utilizes curriculum and instruction to delineate the philosophy, goals, objectives, learning experiences, instructional resources and assessments that comprise the specific educational program for each grade level serviced within our school. This narrative is a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress that will address the measures that have been identified by the Arizona state charter board Academic Performance per Fiscal Year Report as not meeting the state board's target academic performance. The Demonstration document will also describe each system and approach as it relates to categories of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development and how those approaches have and will continue to improve each measure that does not meet the standard.

In order to implement a quality instructional program, PES follows an established curriculum and instruction guideline that not only assists in the selection, planning and implementing of a curriculum but will also deliver a high quality instructional program for our students. This approach is designed to insure that decisions are made to contribute to the success of all students. The guideline is structured as follows:

1. To meet Paramount Academy's academic mission: To create a challenging, learning environment with high expectation for each individual student and to promote a safe, caring environment for all members of the Paramount Academy community.
2. To ensure curriculum course objectives align with Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards (ACCRS)
3. To allow teachers and instructors flexibility and encourage experimentation and innovation within an overall structure;
4. To establish sequences both within and between levels to assure cohesive progression from one grade level to the next;
5. To provide methods of assessing the achievement of the program's goals and objectives;
6. To provide a means for ongoing revision and improvement; and
7. To provide direction for procurement of all necessary resources to implement the program.

The Curriculum & Instruction Development Process

The PES curriculum and instruction development and selection process is comprised of four stages – Planning, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation & Revision. Processes for curriculum, instruction, and professional development are performed simultaneously and in conjunction with one other. The method as a whole is a continually developing process designed to require committee members to maintain efforts to evaluate and improve upon the revised program to best fit the changing development of the present student body. The four stages include:

1. Planning
    a. Convening a Curriculum & Instruction Development Committee

The PES Curriculum & Instruction Development Committee is elected by the PES Site Director and is comprised of 4 teachers that represent various grade levels. The committee meets prior to the start of the upcoming school year and is led by the Site Director. PES relies on all committee members not only to develop the curriculum but also to assist in any subsequent issues that may arise following the decisions; therefore, an annual commitment from members is requested upon acceptance of committee participation.

b. Identifying Key Issues and Trends in the Specific Content Area

Commencement of the PES Curriculum & Instruction Development Committee involves review of recent issues and trends both within the school and nationally. Committee members are encouraged to discuss findings from curriculum associations and to examine ACCRS course standards with regards to curriculum selection and development. Committee members are provided state and federal accountability evaluations, AIMS results, benchmark testing, and the charter holder's academic performance report provided by the Executive Director of PES. Finally, committee members assess researched evidence of results in comparable Arizona schools and economic feasibility. Review of all material will assist the committee in identifying issues such as current expectations, teacher knowledge and readiness for change, resource availability, scheduling issues, metrics of assessment, and needed professional development.

Annual preparation of professional development is aligned to committee identified annual goals. Selection of professional development is determined upon feedback received from teachers as well as from research identified above. All professional development sessions utilize SBR practices to allow administration the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the sessions provided.

c. Assessing Needs and Issues

In addition to identifying key issues and trends, the committee performs a needs assessment of PES as a whole. This needs assessment is comprised of a review of teacher input in the form of teacher surveys, PES AIM results and benchmark testing, a review of teacher lesson plans to determine teacher use of materials and teacher understanding use of materials, teacher requests and response regarding current utilization of supplemental materials and technological resources, and any available input received from students and parents.

2. Development

a. Defining the Annual K-8 Program and Course Goals

The final determination of new curriculum by the committee involves defining the annual program and course goals. These defined goals are articulated on the district level rather than by grade level. Goals are realistic and are limited in number to allow for manageability and achievement as a whole. Specific goals aligning the school to charter academic performance measures including ACCRS, SGP and SGP Bottom 25%, student proficiency, and state accountability are articulated when making these goal determinations.

b. Curriculum Considerations

Curriculum determinations by the committee, whether developed or purchased are chosen with these additional considerations, and are given to the PES executive board for approval:

- Alignment of goals with Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards
- Development of sequencing of grade level and course objectives
- Identifying resource materials to assist with program implementation
- Developing assessment items and instruments to measure student progress

c. Instruction Considerations

Likewise, instruction development determinations by the committee address considerations of defining grade appropriate instructional analysis and individual learner analysis. The committee establishes content goals for each grade level, defines and identifies skills students must currently possess to begin learning content in each grade level, and establish the requisite skills learners must achieve to reach the established instructional goals. The committee also sets objectives and standards for meeting them and develops or defines assessment items and instruments to measure students' progress.

3. Implementation

In order to effectively implement the selected or developed new curriculum and instruction, PES committee members must:

- Introduction of course goals and materials to teachers
- Allow for teachers' ability to creatively implement curriculum and supplemental materials, and
- Effectively communicate teacher accountability to educators

Implementing new curriculum and instruction requires PES committee members and administration alike to consider clear and concise curriculum and instruction delivery to teachers and educators. Time considerations with emphasis on teachers' ability to become familiar with the new system and their ability to identify how it differs from the past must be incorporated to determine the amount of time needed to train educators on any new concepts and if any contracted professional development courses are required.

It is important to note, PES has generally been able to introduce new instructional concepts and curriculum in the week prior to the commencement of the school year by providing school level sessions that focus on those specific parts of instruction development for which the teachers will be responsible. Furthermore, with recent introduction of Common Core Standards, PES has determined any new and far-reaching changes to the curriculum and instruction program created by mandates such as ACCRS require at least two years to pilot.

a. Classroom and Instructional Setting

As educators become familiar with the new instructional system, lessons are then applied by committee approved and identified methods of instructional delivery. These methods are clearly defined to determine acceptable modes through which course objectives and goals will be delivered, such as lecture or self-instruction; development of instructor and student guides and incorporation of supplemental teaching materials or resources. In all methods, PES recognizes teacher innovation and allows for flexibility for teachers' individualized method of instruction.

PES teachers' implementation of this instructional strategy is a process that includes:

- Teacher's assessment of individual student entry skills,
- The ability to develop and sustain learner motivation,
- The ability to deliver informational and behavioral requirements for each objective,
- Provide practice and feedback activities, utilize classroom testing plans that include pretests, embedded tests, post-tests, and questionnaires,
- The ability to effectively deliver annual course objectives and
- To implement remediation and enrichment strategies for all students.

Implementation is monitored and evaluated by an annual performance review, review of lesson plans, overall classroom development through district benchmark testing and state testing, as well as student and parent feedback.

4. Evaluation and Revision

The PES method of evaluation and revision of curriculum implementation is an ongoing process that is comprised of:

1. Monitoring and updating the program
2. Determining the success of the program
3. Identification of arising professional development needs

In order to effectively monitor and update the curriculum program, PES allows for teacher meetings throughout the school year to afford opportunities for the teaching staff to interact and share materials, activities, assessments that support the curriculum goals and that were unknown or unavailable when the guide was first introduced. The meetings are conducted as a whole and also by grade level to assist in the cohesiveness of the program and to encourage teacher ownership of the program, an invaluable key component to achieving the annual program and course goals.

Additionally, careful evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the program is monitored by PES administration to determine program strengths and weaknesses, needs, and preferences for supplemental or new materials. Information is gathered from data that represents overall student performance that is closely linked to daily instruction. Such information includes teacher provided samples of student work, performance tasks, lessons, and instructional practices related to the curricula along with the results of teacher assessment tests, district benchmark tests, and AIMS results. This detailed review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information forms the basis for development and improvement of all upcoming curriculums.

Lastly, ongoing review of the program as a whole will surface teacher and administration needs of professional development. Frequent, continual review allows PES administration to provide timely professional development opportunities to educators throughout the school year thereby enhancing the educational experience for all students. Professional development not only provides a more quality service but also provides educators the opportunity to enhance their skills and professional careers. Evaluation of professional development courses include teacher surveys to rate usefulness, effectiveness of techniques applied in the classroom, and use of learned methods and techniques within instructional delivery in the classroom. Other assessments of measurement include review of lesson plans, classroom observations, and walk-throughs to determine use of professional development courses provided.

SGP & SGP Bottom 25% – Reading Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

With specific regard to Student Growth Percentage and Student Growth Percentage of the Bottom 25% in reading over the 2012 and 2013 school years, the PES committee reviewed the results of state accountability A-F Letter Grade, administered AIMS and Stanford-10 test results in conjunction with district level results of benchmark tests for grades 3-8 and DIBELs assessments in grades K-6. Students identified as belonging to the bottom 25% are immediately included in the school intervention process and intervention plans are written for each student. Review results are then utilized to identify the needs of our bottom 25% and to diagnose areas of struggle of the student population as a whole.

Based on this data and in response to the recognized need to improve school alignment to ACCRS standards, PES identified the necessity for new curriculum and piloted the Common Core Coach supplemental curriculum alongside the introduction of an updated, more comprehensive district benchmark assessment program. Curriculum selection provided specific mapping of all grade appropriate course objectives to standards set forth by ACCRS. Additionally, teachers were provided curriculum worksheets that enable them to easily record when instructional delivery of ACCRS objectives occur and method of instructional delivery of each ACCRS objective to ensure convenient fulfillment of objective accountability to PES administration. Initially, prior to full implementation, the district wanted to ensure the new curriculum effectiveness, so it was initially introduced in our 4th grade classrooms in 2012. Results of the supplemental curriculum were positive, indicative of the program success and measures were enacted to implement the curriculum in all classrooms grades 3-8 in 2013. The following information is the percentile rank of each grade level for 2013 as reported by the state in Common Logon that was used to determine the success of the program.

2013	READ	3	33
2013	READ	4	58
2013	READ	5	39
2013	READ	6	30.5
2013	READ	7	37
2013	READ	8	50

An additional assessment of the new curriculum and updated district benchmark testing was measured to see if the success on benchmark tests correlated to success on the AIMS exam. Data derived from state received AIMS data in the summer of 2013 indicated a strong correlation. Students that passed AIMS scored on average 18% higher on the district benchmark than students who did not pass AIMS.

Average Benchmark Score Passing AIMS Reading	Average Benchmark Score Not Passing AIMS Reading	Difference
73%	55%	18%

Correlation Link: Students Passing AIMS Reading scored, on average, 18% points higher on the corresponding District Benchmark test in Reading.

In the 2014 school year, continued success of the Common Core Coach supplemental curriculum and district benchmark testing prompted PES to create a series of three benchmark assessments in reading. Initial data resulting from the new benchmarks show that students in the previous year bottom 25% are showing growth from the first to second benchmark. We believe this will equate to improvement in our SGP Bottom 25% measures in reading.

All Students Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 % Growth Reading	Bottom 25% Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 % Growth Reading
9.5%	6%

This table shows the average growth from Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 for all students compared to the average growth from Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 for the Bottom 25%

Development of the program has continued to evolve in the 2014 school year; PES has incorporated DIBELS a reading fluency assessment program in grades K-6 to work in conjunction with the new supplemental curriculum to provide an additional measure of the program's effectiveness. The DIBELs

assessment proved not only to be an effective assessment tool but has now been incorporated as a part of our intervention curriculum described below for our bottom 25% student population.

Efforts to provide targeted students with received reinforced instruction also prompted the committee to incorporate an afterschool intervention program and an intensive RTI program within the classroom to further assist the needs of both the bottom 25% and identified struggling learners in the area of reading. Targeted, reinforced instruction for these students is administered in both a classroom and peer tutoring setting to maximize individual student preferred learning styles. In both intervention programs, two main supplemental curriculums were selected, a phonics intervention program for grades K-2 and Common Core Coach Reading comprehension program, purchased in 2013, for grades 3-8. Initial data from this program demonstrates that these interventions are working. Students identified as being in the bottom 25% are receiving weekly interventions using DIBELs progress monitoring tools. Students receiving interventions this year are making gains that show a year's growth on DIBELs. At this time, we have no state testing data to confirm the positive affect that these interventions using DIBELs are having, but PES will continue to monitor the program's effectiveness.

SGP & SGP 25% – Math Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Similar measures and steps made within the reading program were also made in the math program. The PES committee reviewed the results of state accountability A-F Letter Grade, administered AIMS and Stanford-10 test results in conjunction with district level results of benchmark tests for grades 3-8. Students identified as belonging to the bottom 25% are immediately included in the school intervention process and intervention plans are written for each student. Review results are then utilized to identify the needs of our bottom 25% and to diagnose areas of struggle of the student population as a whole.

Based on this data and in response to the recognized need to improve school alignment to ACCRS standards, PES identified the necessity for new curriculum and piloted the Common Core Coach Math curriculum for grades 3-8 alongside the introduction of an updated, more comprehensive district benchmark assessment program. Rather than replace the curriculum currently being utilized, this supplemental curriculum are designed to increase the rigor of our curriculum and increase student growth. As in the reading program, curriculum selection provided specific mapping of all grade appropriate course objectives to standards set forth by ACCRS. Additionally, teachers were provided curriculum worksheets that enable them to easily record when instructional delivery ACCRS objectives occur and method of instructional delivery of each ACCRS objective to ensure convenient fulfillment of objective accountability to PES administration. Again prior to full implementation, the district wanted to ensure the new curriculum effectiveness, so it was initially introduced in our 4th grade classrooms in 2012. Results of the supplemental curriculum were positive, indicative of the program success and measures were enacted to implement the curriculum in all classrooms grades 3-8 in 2013. The following information is the percentile rank of each grade level for 2013 as reported by the state in Common Logon that was used to determine the success of the program.

Paramount	2013	MATH	3	36
Paramount	2013	MATH	4	70.5
Paramount	2013	MATH	5	35
Paramount	2013	MATH	6	40.5
Paramount	2013	MATH	7	51
Paramount	2013	MATH	8	45

As with the reading targets, an additional assessment of the new curriculum and updated district benchmark testing was measured to see if the success on benchmark tests correlated to success on the AIMS exam. Data derived from state received AIMS data in the summer of 2013 indicated a strong correlation. Students that passed AIMS scored on average 18% higher on the district benchmark than students who did not pass AIMS.

Average Benchmark Score Passing AIMS Reading	Average Benchmark Score Not Passing AIMS Reading	Difference
66%	48%	18%

Correlation Link: Students Passing AIMS Math scored, on average, 18% points higher on the corresponding District Benchmark test in Math.

In the 2014 school year, continued success of the Common Core Coach Math supplemental curriculum and district benchmark testing prompted PES to also create a series of three benchmark assessments in math. Initial data resulting from the new benchmarks show that students in the previous year bottom 25% are showing growth higher growth than their peers from the first to second benchmark. (Figure 13) We believe this will equate to improvement in our SGP Bottom 25% measures in math.

All Students Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 % Growth Math	Bottom 25% Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 % Growth Math
18%	22%

This table shows the average growth from Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 for all students compared to the average growth from Benchmark 1 to Benchmark 2 for the Bottom 25%

Efforts to provide targeted students with received reinforced instruction also prompted the PES committee to incorporate an afterschool intervention program and an intensive RTI program within the classroom to further assist the needs of both the bottom 25% and identified struggling learners in the area of math. Targeted, reinforced instruction for these students is administered in both a classroom and peer tutoring setting to maximize individual student preferred learning styles. In both intervention programs, the Common Core Coach Math supplemental curriculums was selected and purchased in 2013, for grades 3-8. To ensure accountability and to provide a source of measurement and assessment teachers have are required to incorporate performance tasks on a regular basis to measure individual student's growth. Evidence of these performance tasks are monitored on weekly lesson plans. Student growth is measured by the student's ability to complete the performance tasks throughout the school year. AIMS scores to measure the success of the program are not yet available, but PES will continue to monitor the program's effectiveness.

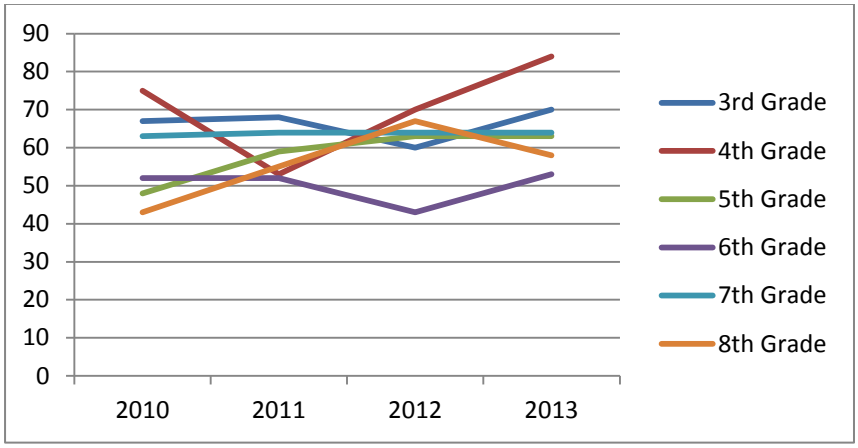
Proficiency Measures
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Response to Percent Passing in Math

Within the 2011 school year, the PES committee reviewed annual data obtained from district benchmark testing and state administered AIMS test and discovered a declining performance of the students in Math on the AIMS testing. The curriculum committee later met to determine why we were seeing such poor results. At the time we were using a Saxon Math curriculum. Surveys obtained among the teachers found that teachers felt Saxon was a very useful tool in teaching the math concepts; however, district benchmark results clearly indicated a learning deficiency among students with regards to practice questions

and testing style. The committee assessed that the current curriculum did not give the students the ability to apply the concepts to real world situations. Word problems, in particular, were difficult concepts for our students although they knew how to do the actual subtraction or multiplication.

Review efforts made by the PES committee determined that rather than replacing the current textbook, it would be more cost effective to increase the strength of the math instruction and curriculum program by adding a supplemental curriculum book. Implementing the supplemental curriculum would serve two purposes. First, the addition of the material would meet the learning deficiency need, and secondly, the curriculum would strengthen the program's need to improve school alignment to ACCRS standards.

Members of the PES committee elected to pilot the Common Core Coach Math curriculum for grades 3-8 alongside the introduction of an updated, more comprehensive district benchmark assessment program. The supplemental curriculum selection provided specific mapping of all grade appropriate course objectives to standards set forth by ACCRS. Additionally, teachers were provided curriculum worksheets that enable them to easily record when instructional delivery ACCRS objectives occur and method of instructional delivery of each ACCRS objective to ensure convenient fulfillment of objective accountability to PES administration. Additionally, examples and quizzes in this curriculum are similar to ones on AIMS allowing students more familiar with the structure of the questions they are held accountable for. Initially this program was introduced in our 4th grade to pilot the program and results were astounding. As seen on the graph, 4th grade did markedly better on the AIMS.



2010-2013 AIMS Data from the Federal Accountability Applications Common Log On

The pilot program in 4th grade also resulted in a 14% increase of passing 4th grade students from 2012 to 2013. Based on the 4th grade's significant improvement, we conservatively expect to see the percent of students passing AIMS in all grade levels in 2014 increase by 5% compared to 2013.

Grade:	2012	2013	Increase
4th	70%	84%	14%

AIMS Data from the Federal Accountability Applications Common Log On

Finally, conclusive results recorded by the State's Charter Board Academic Performance Per Fiscal Year identified conclusive results of percent passing in proficiency in 2013 with results moving from the Does Not Meet Standards category to the Meets Standards category. Continued efforts to improve and develop the existing program remain in effect throughout the 2014 school year. PES continues to monitor the results of the district benchmark testing results against AIMS results to ensure standards are continued to be met.

Composite School Comparison and ELL Subgroup – Math Measurement 2012

In the summer of 2013, PES committee members reviewed the state charter board provided score of composite school comparison indicates a measurement of Does Not Meet Standard and Not Rated for the ELL Subgroup. Since the Composite School Comparison is measured by the performance of the three defined subgroups of ELL, FRL, and SPED, the PES committee reviewed the score results of each of the subgroups. The Not Rated score was defined only within the ELL Subgroup with the other subgroups of FRL and SPED reflecting a Meets Standards Rating. Further review also indicated, that PES has always maintained less than 10 students under the ELL Subgroup. Therefore, in order to specifically address these areas the PES committee and administration chose to focus their efforts on overall student proficiency in math. Efforts to increase proficiency are documented above and their successful results correlated to an increased Composite School Comparison of Meets Standard in 2013.

Growth & Proficiency – Reading and Math Professional Development & Assessment

Implementation of professional development that contributed to increased student growth and proficiency

In order to supplement the PES curriculum and instructional program throughout the course of the 2012 and 2013 school years, the PES committee elected to provide a professional development plan that contained at minimum 30 scheduled clock hours for professional development. Based on the data received from 2012-2013 as well as teacher surveys from the end of the 2012 -2013 school year, PES identified professional weaknesses in the instructional delivery of math and reading objective with direct emphasis on implementation of ACCRS standards. The results prompted the PES committee to elect to devote 30 hours of professional development to improve our math and reading SGP and SGP Bottom 25%, with each subject allotted 15 hours. In addition to in-house training provided, Paramount hired an outside professional development company Training4Teachers for 15 total clock hours, in math and reading each receiving 7.5 total clock hours. The following is the vendor summary of the courses provided prior to the 2014 school year:

> CCSS: Understanding Close Reading, Text-Dependent Questions, and Response to Literature (7.5 Clock Hours) - With so many new terms and concepts to learn, this workshop on understanding and doing close reading, writing text-dependent questions, and responding to literature in the Common Core is as eye-opening as it is timely. Participants will leave with scaffolds, rubrics, and great ideas for ways to immerse and engage students in text.
>
> CCSS Math: Using Enhanced Problem-Solving Techniques with Students 4-8 (7.5 Clock Hours) – Participants in this workshop will be engaged in several highly effective problem-solving techniques, including the bar mathematical model for better understanding of fractions and word problems, and age appropriate manipulatives to better understand integers and solving equations. Additionally, a focus on performance tasks based on those found on the PARCC will be included.

The other 30 hours of professional development clock hours in both reading and math, were utilized in house throughout the school year. PES has defined every other Wednesday as student early release and utilizes that time to allow for teacher meetings to afford opportunities for the teaching staff to interact and share materials, activities, assessments that support the curriculum goals and that were unknown or unavailable when the guide was first introduced. The meetings are conducted as a whole and also by grade level to assist in the cohesiveness of the program and to encourage teacher ownership of the program, an invaluable key component to achieving the annual program and course goals.

PES also devoted 3 hours of targeted professional development in the areas of Special Education through our third party contracted vendor STEPs, 4 hours of CPR and First Aid reinforcement and 8 hours prior to the commencement of the school year to the annual Curriculum and Instructional goals with focused instruction on targeted interventions (RTI) and ACCRS objective alignment. Focused intervention strategies for struggling learners, aka our bottom 25% and student proficiency were discussed to align educators' goals with district objectives. Successful efforts in the area of proficiency have been achieved as evidenced in the State Charter Board Academic Performance per Fiscal Year Report for 2013.

Continued efforts of improvement for the 2014 school year involved committee review process of teacher surveys and lesson plans to determine teacher need of professional development and use of learned techniques and methods within the classroom. Committee members discovered that new techniques taught during the courses offered including bar math and close reading are techniques teachers continue to use. Review of teacher feedback revealed a greater teacher desire to provide additional professional development that would demonstrate more techniques and methods to transition from past AIMS oriented goals to ACCRS. Committee members agreed that efforts in professional development continue to focus on Student Growth in Math and ACCRS transition methods, and that the selected professional development courses selected continue to be monitored throughout the 2014 school year.

State Accountability

In the 2012 school year the State of Arizona adopted an A-F Accountability Model, as outlined throughout this demonstration, Paramount Academy has taken several steps to improve the quality of the school. These improvements have been taking place since a new administrative team took over in the fall of 2012. These improvements have focused on improving the curriculum and, more importantly, the instruction to improve the quality of education for all students with an added focus on showing academic growth. This has been a complete change in culture Paramount Academy. The data provided by the ASBCS has helped reinforce the need for this shift on our school culture. The data also shows that the steps we are taking are having a positive effect as evidenced by the growth in our State Accountability A-F letter grade and the ASBCS overall rating of our school.

In conclusion, we believe the continued focus on student achievement and growth will allow Paramount Academy to be an example of how charter schools can improve the quality of education in the state of Arizona.