INTRODUCTION: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Arizona Call-A-Teen Center of Excellence believes that all students can learn – and learn well. We hold that all students can develop a vested interest in what they learn: each student possesses human dignity, has individual worth, and commands respect. The uniqueness of the student requires that education will purposefully advance the student's intellectual, physical and social development and will be supported by skilled, caring adults.

To this end, the mission of the Center of Excellence is to provide each student with innovative learning experiences that develop positive intellectual, social and physical outcomes of significance, to promote self-directed, lifelong learning, and to facilitate the student's ability to make responsible decisions about his or her education and future.

The Center of Excellence, chartered in 1995, was designed specifically to serve students who have been left behind: those who are in danger of dropping out or who have dropped out of school, typically targeting students who are over-age and under-credited. The school was intentionally designed as a "safety net" for high school students who have not been successful in a traditional school environment and/or whose life circumstances and personal choices have interrupted their high school education.

Today, the typical student who enrolls at the Center of Excellence is a member of a family at or below the poverty level, has attended and withdrawn from at least one other school, is one year or more behind in the number of credits earned toward graduation, and has literacy and/or numeracy levels below the 6th and 7th grade, respectively. They generally have at least two additional significant barriers to completing their high school education, such as involvement with the juvenile justice system, pregnant or parenting status, substance use, gang involvement, family history of dropping out, etc.

The Center of Excellence has been determined to be an alternative school and is designated as a schoolwide Title I school. Eight teachers provide instruction to 125 students. The school was originally accredited by the North Central Association of Schools (NCA) in 1999 and renewed in 2005.

I. Data Self-Analysis

In compiling and analyzing data to provide a thorough understanding of student achievement, school effectiveness, and factors that have influenced both, we examined AIMS Student Level Assessment Data for both annual testing cycles for all students tested from 2005-2009. Results were sorted by cohort, test cycle, subject area, strand/concept, and achievement category (exceeds, meets, approaches, falls far below) to ensure the depth of analysis would discern trends specific to various groups.

We also compared Terra Nova results from 2005-2009, which provided a snapshot of the achievement levels of 9th graders enrolled in the spring of each year. The results of internal schoolwide assessments in reading, math, and language (administered to all at enrollment) were also reviewed to obtain a sense of their basic skill levels.

Data gleaned from the school's automated student records management system (SASI) were extracted to fully illustrate the characteristics of typical students at the school. We looked at both SASI and Arizona Department of Education records to analyze attendance rates.

The majority of the school's population represent two sub groups: Hispanic and low SES, which comprise an average of 85% and 94% of school membership, respectively. Therefore, AIMS results displayed in the charts and tables and the analysis applied to the data are indicative of the achievement of these two subgroups as well as the school as a whole.

A. AIMS Math Results/Analysis

In reviewing test data for the last five years we looked at results for all test takers as well as those for the AYP cohorts. These data are presented in the tables below. For the AYP cohorts, the percentage of students scoring in the Falls Far Below category has remained relatively static for the last three years after showing decreases in 2005 and 2006. There is little consistency with the percentages of students approaching and meeting/exceeding the standards from year to year. We attribute some of this to the small number of students in the respective cohort groups where one or two students can significantly impact the percentage, as well as the mobile nature of the CoE student population. This is explained in detail in section I.C. of this narrative.

AIMS Math Results – AYP Cohort
2005 – 2009

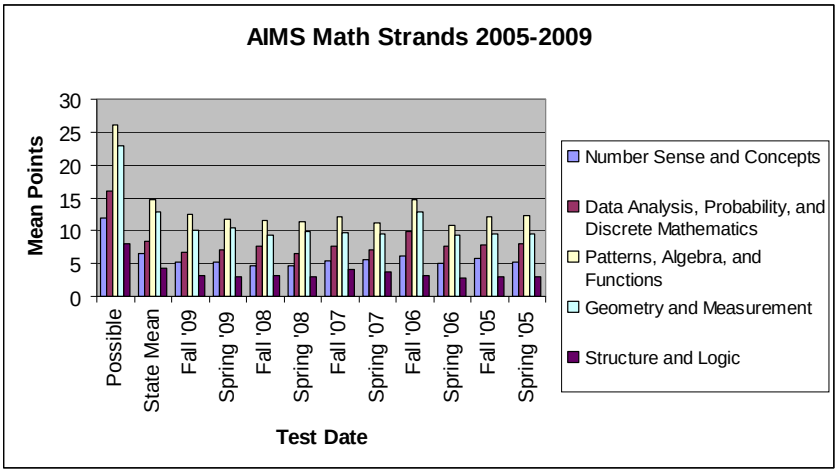
Year	N	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2009	26	0/0%	2/7.7%	6/23.1%	18/69.2%
2008	21	0/0%	4/19%	2/9.5%	15/71.5%
2007	24	1/4.2%	4/16.7%	3/12.5%	16/66.7%
2006	31	0/0%	1/3.2%	12/38.7%	18/58.1%
2005	25	0/0%	2/8%	3/12%	20/80%

Data that show improvement for all test takers is somewhat more consistent. With the exception of the last test cycle, we see a slight upward trend in the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency. We also see an overall decrease in the percentage of students in the Falls Far Below category. The students that are approaching the standards naturally vary in relationship with the number and percentage that meet or exceed.

AIMS Math Results – All Students/All Test Dates
2005 – 2009

School Year	N	Exceeds/%	Meets/%	Approaches/%	Falls Far Below/%
2008/2009	134	0/0%	17/12.7%	29/21.6%	88/65.7%
2007/2008	86	0/0%	14/16.2%	1517.4%	57/66.3%
2006/2007	106	1/.9%	14/13.2%	20/18.7%	71/66.9%
2005/2006	95	0/0%	10/10.6%	22/23.2%	63/66.3%
Spring 2005	75	0/0%	9/12%	12/16%	54/72%

In reviewing AIMS data by strand for all test takers, we find that students perform poorly across all strands, typically scoring between 40% and 45% of the possible points and below the state mean. Results for the AYP cohort in each test cycle are consistent with overall scores, differing at most by 5% with the 5 year average for all test takers. Low scores in the first two strands (Number Sense and Concepts and Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics) are of the greatest concern, as it is apparent that students do not have the foundational math skills needed for more complex functions.



To summarize, it appears that while the general trend is somewhat encouraging, it does not show significantly upward movement to meet the AMO goal of 40% for 2007-2010 and will leave the school far short of future AMO goals unless a substantial and effective effort is made to improve student achievement in math.

B. AIMS Reading Results/Analysis

Reading scores of both the AYP cohorts and all test takers are significantly higher overall than student math scores, and appear to be trending upward overall. For the AYP cohorts, the percentage of students scoring in the Meets/Exceeds and Falls Far Below categories has alternated between improvement and decline, but again, the small number of test takers can result in greater variances due to a difference of one or two students' scores in a particular category. The Approaching category has remained relatively static for all five years, with upward movement in 2009 as a result of 38.4% meeting or exceeding standards.

AIMS Reading Results – AYP Cohort
2005 – 2009

Year	N	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2009	26	1/3.8%	9/34.6%	12/46.2%	4/15.4%
2008	22	0/0%	5/22.7%	12/54.6%	5/22.7%
2007	19	0/0%	6/31.6%	10/52.6%	3/15.8%
2006	30	0/0%	7/23.3%	15/50%	8/26.7%

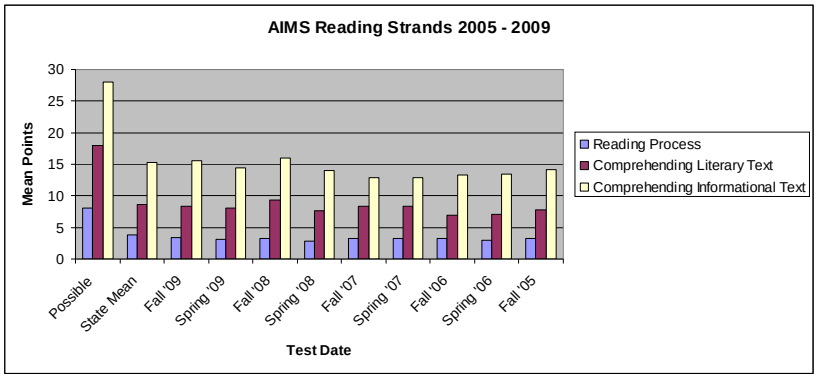
2005	30	0/0%	11/36.7%	15/50%	4/13.3%

For all test takers, we see significant improvement in the Meets/Exceeds categories in the 2009 testing cycle following declining percentages in 2007 and 2008. The percentage of students scoring "Falls Far Below" shows a consistent downward trend over the last three years.

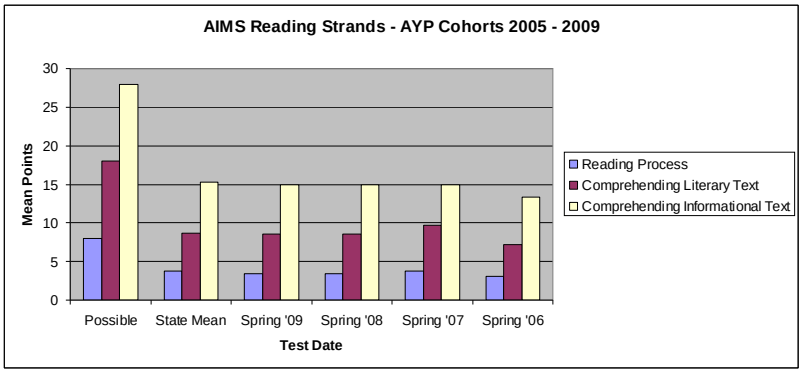
AIMS Reading Results – All Students/All Test Dates
2005 – 2009

School Year	N	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2008/2009	96	1/1%	35/36.5%	45/46.9%	15/15.6%
2007/2008	88	0/0%	19/21.6%	50/56.8%	19/21.6%
2006/2007	85	0/0%	19/22.4%	42/49.4%	24/28.2%
2005/2006	73	0/0%	20/27.5%	35/47.8%	18/24.7%
Spring 2005	83	0/0%	28/33.7%	44/53.0%	11/13.3%

In reviewing AIMS reading test data by strand for all test takers, we find that students perform much closer to the state mean in reading, as illustrated in the chart below.

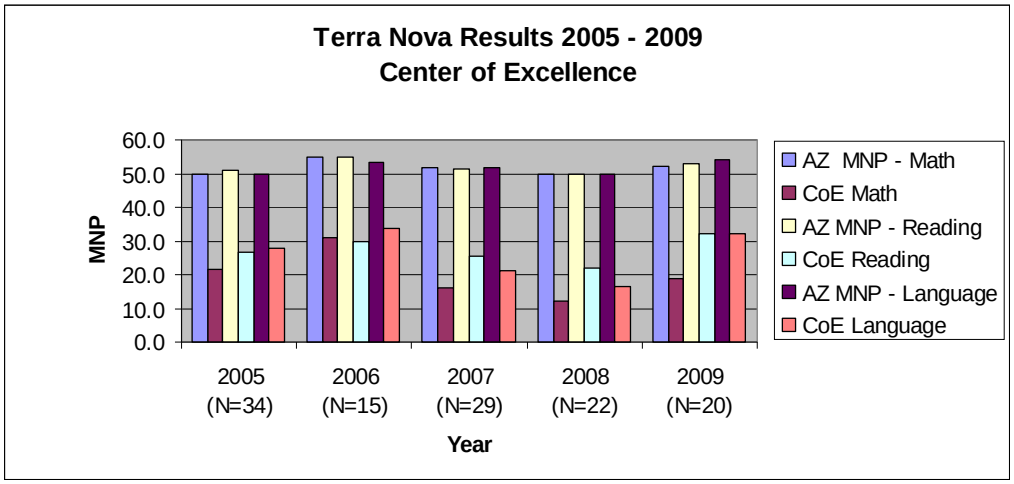


Results for the AYP cohort in each test cycle are even more consistent with state mean scores. In both data sets, however, the lowest scores are in the Reading Process strand, again indicating that students are deficient in the basic skills that are the foundation for comprehension.



C. Terra Nova Results/Analysis

Our analysis of Terra Nova data indicates that students who take the Terra Nova as 9th graders at the Center of Excellence demonstrate a consistently low pattern of achievement in all academic areas. On average over the previous five years, the median national percentile (MNP) of CoE 9th graders is 31.82 points below the Arizona MNP in math; 24.83 points below the Arizona MNP in reading; and 25.68 points below the Arizona MNP in language.



It is difficult to correlate the relationship of Terra Nova results to the school's overall AIMS performance with a high level of confidence, as CoE's student population/cohort composition often changes significantly from year to year. As detailed in section I.G., slightly less than 13% of 9th graders begin their high school career at the Center of Excellence. Another 5% to10% transfer in during the course of the year, resulting in a comparatively small percentage of 9th graders when compared to the norm. Many of the same students that transfer in during the school year return to their home school for their 10th grade year, which makes drawing specific correlations difficult at best. However, it is safe to conclude that CoE 9th graders typically lack the necessary basic, fundamental skills in all academic areas which contributes to their overall low performance on AIMS assessments during their 10th grade year.

D. Graduation Rate

The Center of Excellence has met its graduation rate accountability measure for the last three years, relying on an annual increase of at least one percentage point rather than the overall percentage. As we detail in the section I.G. of this narrative, a large number of students enroll at the Center of Excellence having previously attended other high schools and are lacking the credits to graduate with their cohort; it is not unusual for a chronological senior to enter the school with fewer than 10 credits. We will need to continue to pay special attention to this measure, both in terms of AIMS proficiency and credit recovery in order to maintain steady progress.

E. AYP/AZ LEARNS Evaluations – 2005 - 2009

The chart below illustrates CoE's history with regard to meeting AYP.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Met Percent Tested	✓	✓	✓	⊗	⊗
Met Test Objectives	⊗	⊗	✓	⊗	✓
Met Graduation Rate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Made AYP	⊗	⊗	✓	⊗	⊗

The school is consistently evaluated as "Performing" for AZ LEARNS.

F. Internal Assessment Data

Students are assessed at the beginning of the school year or upon transfer in using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Assessment results and analysis are made available to all teachers and in-house tutors so they can target specific skill development for both individual students and groups of students with similar skill deficiencies. The average TABE grade level scores for newly enrolling students at the Center of Excellence are 6.6 in Reading, 5.9 in Language, and 5.4 in Math

G. Additional Observations

Student Characteristics

In analyzing the composition of the student population at the Center of Excellence, it becomes apparent that the school has been successful in attracting its targeted population. Students at the Center of Excellence are highly mobile, enrolling at the Center of Excellence after previously attending and dropping out of other high schools, often during the same school year. They are over-age and under-credited, and have reading and math skills much below the appropriate grade level. Students overwhelmingly come from families in poverty, and they often have made poor decisions, resulting in life circumstances that have contributed to interruptions in their education progress. Data from our student records management system indicate that:

- The Center of Excellence has enrolled a total of 773 students in the last five years, an average of 155 students per year. However, the school's ADM averages 106 per year.
- 54.3% of the students (428) entered after the start of the school year.
- 674 students (87.2%) had been enrolled at a different high school before enrolling at CoE.
- Students enrolled in a different school prior to CoE transferred an average of 2.41 credits.
- The average age at initial enrollment at CoE is 16.2 years.
- Only 12.8% of students enter CoE directly from 8th grade.
- An average of 94% of the student population are Title I eligible.
- Over 34% have been involved in the juvenile justice system and are currently on probation or parole.

- Just under 32% are pregnant or parenting.
- 13% are considered homeless.
- 56% have a history of behavioral suspensions.

Anecdotally, students often have other family obligations/circumstances that negatively impact attendance and retention. Absences are frequently attributed to caring for siblings or other family members; working late hours to contribute to family income; and frequent relocation. These, combined with the characteristics described above, lay the groundwork for poor academic performance and success and must be considered in developing strategies to improve student achievement.

Attendance and Retention

Consistent attendance at the Center of Excellence tends to be uneven from year to year. Internal records show the following absence rates for the last five years:

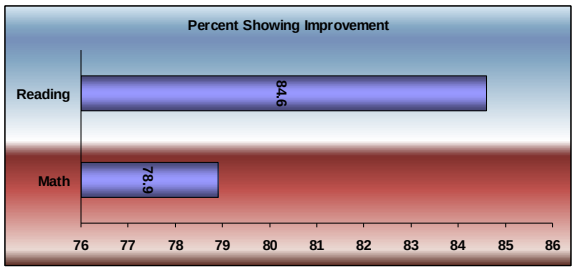
2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
18.7%	**15.3%**	**7.1%**	**17.6%**	**8.39%**

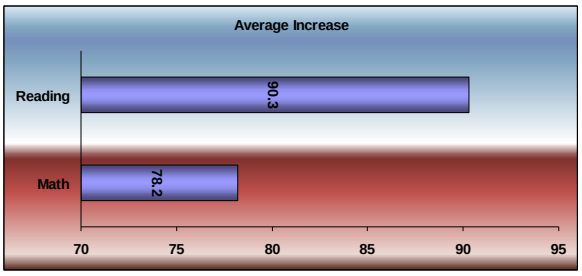
In reflecting on factors that contribute to the fluctuation, we can point to a high level of teacher turnover in 2007/2008 after steady improvement over the course of the three previous years. Teacher and staff stability likely contributed to a lowered absence rate in 2008/2009. However, if students aren't in school, they can't develop the skills needed to achieve at desired levels. Efforts to stabilize attendance at higher rates will contribute to increased instructional time and most likely result in improved academic achievement.

We lose 5-7% of our students each year because of the high mobility of their families and the additional travel time required to continue to attend CoE. Another 8% recidivate and are placed in detention; students who elect not to return after a suspension comprise another 4% of the turnover rate. Slightly less than 10% of our students –including both young men and women – do not return after the birth of their baby. Yet another small percentage decides that a diploma will take too long to achieve and opt instead for a GED.

Growth With Student Retention

Additional analysis of AIMS Reading and Math data indicates that students who stay at CoE and test multiple times at CoE overwhelmingly demonstrate growth from test cycle to test cycle. The two charts below illustrate that growth. Almost 85% of students who test in reading at least twice at CoE improve their scores. Slightly over 78% of students who retest in math show increased scores. Improvement is often significant. On average, students increase reading scores by 90.3 points; math scores improve by an average of 78.2 points.





We attribute this improvement primarily to the fact that there is a continuity of instruction when students remain at the same school. The teachers' familiarity with students' individual academic needs will lead to a greater focus on skill development. An important factor in improving performance will be increasing the number of students who continue to attend the CoE after initial enrollment.

II. Underlying Reasons for Performance

Hypotheses

In initially considering the school's past performance, we identified four factors that we believe have contributed to our lack of progress toward academic achievement goals:

- Students enter the Center of Excellence with low foundational skills in reading and math, requiring a high level of remediation before they can demonstrate proficiency in those areas.
- Students who enroll at the Center of Excellence exhibit numerous characteristics that increase their likelihood of failing to achieve academically and earn a high school diploma.
- The high degree of student mobility adversely affects school performance.
- The school's instructional practices have not been consistently or sufficiently focused on improving students' fundamental reading and math skills.

Three of the four issues are directly related to the commitment the Center of Excellence has made to target those students who demonstrate a history of poor achievement, attendance, and persistence, and have life circumstances that frequently interrupt their education. One course of action could be to modify the kind of student we target for enrollment. However, this option is counter to the commitment and the investments we have made to offer the opportunity for high school completion to students who otherwise might not have that option. Therefore, it is incumbent on the school leadership to continuously improve the strategies that are currently in place to address the barriers students face and to identify additional approaches that will result in improved student achievement.

Our assessment of the underlying reasons for performance are presented below, along with a description of efforts to date and an introduction to how we intend to address the issue in the performance management plan that follows.

1. Teacher and staff turnover has disrupted the continuity of instruction and students' attachment to the school.

Overall, CoE experiences the same issues that many schools do on a national level in attracting and retaining well qualified and committed teachers to urban school settings. Our students have low skills, are difficult to motivate to assume responsibility for their learning, often have behavioral issues that interrupt the teaching process, and require supports beyond the normal scope of the school's primary mission. CoE expects a very special skill set and commitment from its teachers: understand and incorporate youth development principles and practices within teaching methodologies; be flexible with regard to courses they will teach, requiring them to prepare for several different classes every quarter; address low skill levels of students along with content area standards; and utilize exceptionally-developed classroom management skills to address behavioral issues. Coupled with salaries and retirement benefits that until recently did not compare as favorably to established school districts as they should, recruitment and retention of teachers suffered. In 2003 the school began a concerted effort to increase teacher salaries to be competitive with traditional school districts to the extent possible. Teacher feedback has been positive. CoE is a small school (usually having an enrollment under 125 students with classes of no more than 15 students) and we encourage the development of positive youth/adult connections. When a teacher who has developed those relationships leaves the school, students are adversely affected through another disruption in their education and development process.

In May, 2006 the Assistant Principal – who was being groomed to replace the Principal upon her pending retirement – left CoE to accept an administrative position at another charter school. At the same time the lead teacher, who was pursuing her administrative certificate, resigned because of family commitments, leaving us with a leadership vacuum to replace the Principal. A new assistant principal was recruited and hired and the Principal delayed her planned retirement to work with and mentor the new assistant principal.

The new assistant principal brought a fresh perspective to school operations and was eager to implement new strategies and processes. After a full semester of orientation and mentoring by the Principal, he was given latitude to work with teachers and staff in developing an action plan and new strategies. Unfortunately, his leadership style and management approach changed while not under the tutelage of the Principal. Teachers and staff became disgruntled and unhappy. Their attempts to express their concerns to the Assistant Principal were met with resistance or were disregarded. Ultimately, when the Principal and Executive Director were drawn in to intervene and mediate, the teachers had basically shut down and would not participate in resolving the conflict. They completed the school year but decided not to return the next year. This placed us in a difficult position; their delay in resigning meant that we were behind in recruiting for new staff. As a result, the teachers hired for the new year would not have been our first choice with a wider field.

We continued to experience similar unrest the subsequent year even though the Assistant Principal received additional guidance and counseling. Finally, he was let go at mid-year. Obviously, the students were fully aware of the discord during this time period and inappropriate behaviors escalated, contributing to a less than ideal learning environment. We

were able to convince the previous Assistant Principal to re-join staff, which provided a degree of stability and focus with the students that we thought might have been damaged beyond repair. We experienced another round of teacher turnover, but were able to recruit and hire well in advance of the start of the school year. Since, we are observing a greater degree of teacher retention, a calmer atmosphere at the school, and a better learning environment for the students. Under the best circumstances, our students struggle with learning and achievement; the unsettled situation with teachers and staff and resultant turnover certainly negatively affected achievement.

2. Use of assessment results to inform instruction has been erratic and uneven.

CoE has consistently administered the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to all incoming students to assess their reading, math and language skills. This strategy was implemented early in the school's operation in order to compensate for delays in receiving student records from schools they had previously attended and the fact that assessment results were infrequently included in those records. The TABE was selected based on the information it provided with regard to discrete skill deficiencies, ease of administration, and the organization's familiarity with the instrument.

Assessment results were distributed to teachers, who were expected to analyze the information and develop strategies to address basic skills within the context of their particular subject. The Principal provided guidance in this process and the data became used as part of a general strategy to modify instruction to accommodate low reading and math levels. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind, the development of a statewide assessment to measure student achievement, and annual yearly progress measures for schools, assessment took on a new importance and dimension, requiring a change in how results were used. Our efforts as a school to embrace the change were uneven.

Results were again distributed to teachers to analyze, who were then asked to develop plans for individual students. The responsibility typically was assumed by the English and math teachers, who were then expected to communicate achievement plans to other content area teachers along with suggestions for skill building within the context of the particular subject. The Principal provided guidance in the process and assisted with developing achievement plans and associated learning activities as necessary. This worked fairly effectively for reading and writing, which we attribute to the English teacher's skill and commitment, as well as her length of employment at the school. It was not as effective for skill building in math, most likely because of turnover in that position and the qualifications of the succession of teachers.

More recently, we have modified how assessment results are distributed to teachers: along with raw results, teachers receive an analysis of discrete skills crosswalked with standards and corresponding AIMS strands. Teachers are expected devote a minimum of fifteen minutes each class period to both individual and group skill building. Math activities are developed for multiple achievement levels for use in all classrooms, and reading activities are intended to include vocabulary development and a focus on comprehension specific to the subject area. Individual student test results from Terra Nova and AIMS are made available to teachers whenever possible to provide further information to guide instruction. We should

note that Terra Nova and AIMS data are not always available when students have taken those assessments at another school.

The considerable teacher/staff turnover that occurred during the 2007/2008 school year (described above) contributed to the school's uneven implementation of assessment-driven skill building. It is receiving a more consistent focus in the current school year, but needs to be more closely supervised and monitored to ensure students' needs are met. Additionally, teachers are in need of professional development to build their capacity in assessment-driven instructional practices.

3. The school is hard-pressed to provide fundamental reading and math skills development instruction to the number of students needing this intervention and still offer a full complement of core and elective courses.

As we have established, students enroll at CoE with low basic math and reading skills as well as few credits toward graduation. However they also enroll because they want to move on with their lives by accelerating high school completion. This creates a tension as we attempt to strike a balance between the student's desire to accelerate their learning and the reality that their current skills will not allow them to succeed in high school level classes. Even though most of our students need basic skills development, others are ready to graduate. With a teaching staff of eight (one of whom is special education), it becomes a logistical dilemma to provide the range of classes needed to offer both the core courses students need and the number of remediation classes necessary.

We have not been as effective as needed in striking that balance. We must develop alternative strategies that will ensure students leave the Center of Excellence with the skills they need to succeed beyond high school and yet provide options for credit recovery for students who are ready for that level of work.

4. While voluntary tutoring and "AIMS preparation" classes have been offered, skill development in reading and math has been expected to be addressed in regular English and math classes.

The Center of Excellence partnered with Campfire, which was awarded a grant beginning the 2006/2007 school year to provide tutoring free of charge. Six tutors were assigned to the school; three in reading and three in math. The services lasted for a year and one-half. It is interesting to note that the highest overall scores in both subject areas occurred in that time period. However, these services were discontinued as a result of funding.

We have attempted to replicate this effort through school improvement funding, and activities within an AIMS Intervention and Dropout Prevention grant. There has been growth demonstrated by individual students as a result, however available resources are not able to fund enough tutors to reach the large number of students who need intervention.

To compensate, all teachers are expected to spend structured time building vocabulary and comprehension skills within the context of their particular subject area. They are also provided with math activities for students to "journal" with math problems. While these are

good supplemental activities, they cannot take the place of targeted instruction in reading or math by teachers with specific credentials in these areas.

After analyzing Terra Nova, AIMS and TABE results, the need for targeted remediation beyond what can be accomplished in regular English and math classes is obvious. Too many students lack too many foundational skills to grow and succeed academically. This specific skill remediation can only happen with continuous targeted instruction geared to each student's precise needs.

5. The absence of an in-school suspension option contributes to student turnover and withdrawals.

Many of the students enrolled at CoE have a past history of classroom disruption and suspensions for behavioral issues. When appropriate, and according to the school's code of discipline, the consequence of serious disruptions is often off-campus suspension. It is the option of last resort, as we realize that off campus suspension often has negative effects. Students lose the ability to earn or recover credits, become disconnected from the school, and once again experience an interruption in their education. This break in academic continuity and progress is in conflict with the school's mission in effectively educating disenfranchised youth.

We are aware of the value of in-school versus off-camps suspension but, as with attempting to achieve a balance between offering skill development and core content classes, we lack the personnel and space to provide a meaningful in-school suspension option. The reality is, however, that unless we commit to a creative solution, students will continue to leave school, fall further behind, and become fully disconnected with formal education.

6. The high number of students who enroll at the school after the start of their 9th grade year adversely affects AIMS performance and meeting AYP.

Our analysis of AIMS results indicates that students who have been enrolled in the school for one year or less meet or exceed standards at lower rates than students who have been enrolled for longer periods of time. Since slightly less than 13% of our students enroll at the Center of Excellence as 9th graders, this presents a significant barrier to meeting achievement goals. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that CoE admits a significant percentage (30 – 35% on average) of new students each year, the majority of which are in the 10th grade (AYP cohort). Students are also admitted at the beginning of each quarter. While AYP evaluations include only those students who begin the year at the school, overall schoolwide results are negatively affected by the scores of newer students.

School leadership and teachers have struggled to develop effective strategies to improve retention, but we have identified that many of the reasons they leave school have little to do with the school's efforts or effectiveness. We lose 5-7% of our students each year because of the high mobility of their families and the additional travel time required to continue to attend CoE. Another 8% recidivate and are placed in detention; students who elect not to return after a suspension comprise another 4% of the turnover rate. Slightly less than 10% of

our students –including both young men and women – do not return after the birth of their baby. Yet another small percentage decides that a diploma will take too long to achieve and opt instead for a GED. While approximately 15% of the students who leave mid-year eventually re-enroll, their education has again been interrupted and they fall further behind in both skill development and credits.

Our goal is to increase the number of students who start and complete the school year and return the following year. We believe that increased emphasis on skill development will contribute to student achievement and success, as will the availability of additional credit recovery strategies outlined in the Performance Management Plan. This in turn will become a positive factor in the students' sense of accomplishment and will result in greater retention despite their continuing challenges.

III. Performance Management Plan

The attached Performance Management Plan Template is presented as a detailed action plan to improve student achievement. The budget column reflects budgeted costs for the 2010/2011 academic year. The amount budgeted for specific strategies where personnel is allocated reflects the salary/employee related expense costs associated with one (1) full-time math teacher responsible for instruction in basic/foundational math skills, one (1) full-time reading specialist, and an estimated 25% of other instructors' time devoted to activities delineated in the PMP. Professional development costs include the cost for training, associated travel, and substitute teachers to cover classes in the teacher's absence.