EduPreneurship Student Center

Historical Background

The EduPreneurship Student Center (ESC) provides a small learning environment in a multiage setting with an economic entrepreneurship point of view. This charter school has remained true to its guiding principles offering a choice for the community where their children are taught real world economics and entrepreneurship while learning through the AZ state standard concepts and objectives. ESC chooses to remain a very small school of less than one hundred students in an economically disadvantaged community to provide a needed option for families that have few choices in life.

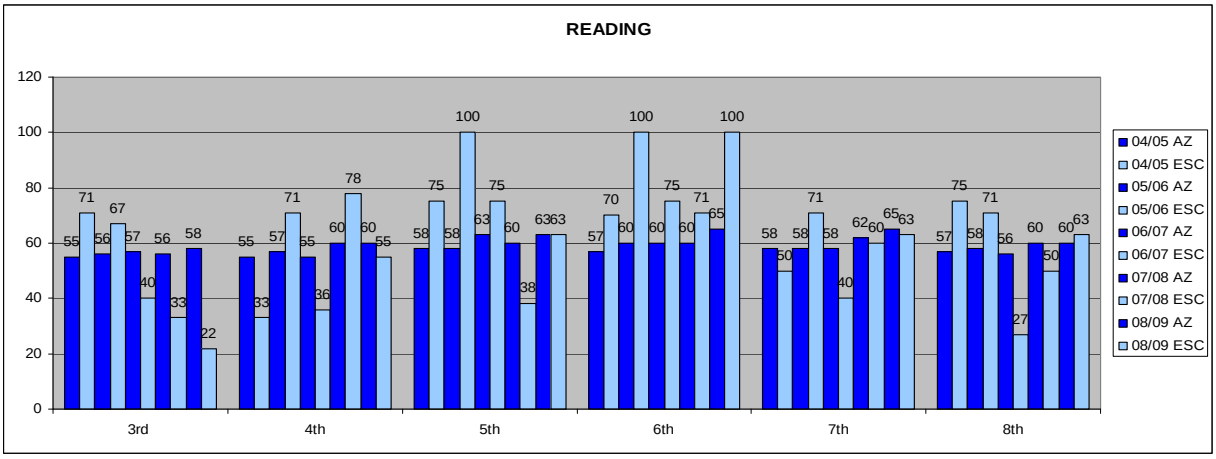
EduPreneurship began in a transitional neighborhood in south Scottsdale and remained there for thirteen years until the condition of the rental building needed attention and demographics' of the neighborhood no longer provided enough local children. The second EduPreneurship opened in Phoenix in 1998. For the past fifteen years ESC has provided a unique small school opportunity that is a very successful school organization with a close knit school community, one of kind real world opportunities, and a friendly family oriented learning environment. A guiding principle of ESC has always been the mentorship of children from transitional economic and disadvantaged neighborhoods to develop successful life strategies so they may become positive citizens with options for success.

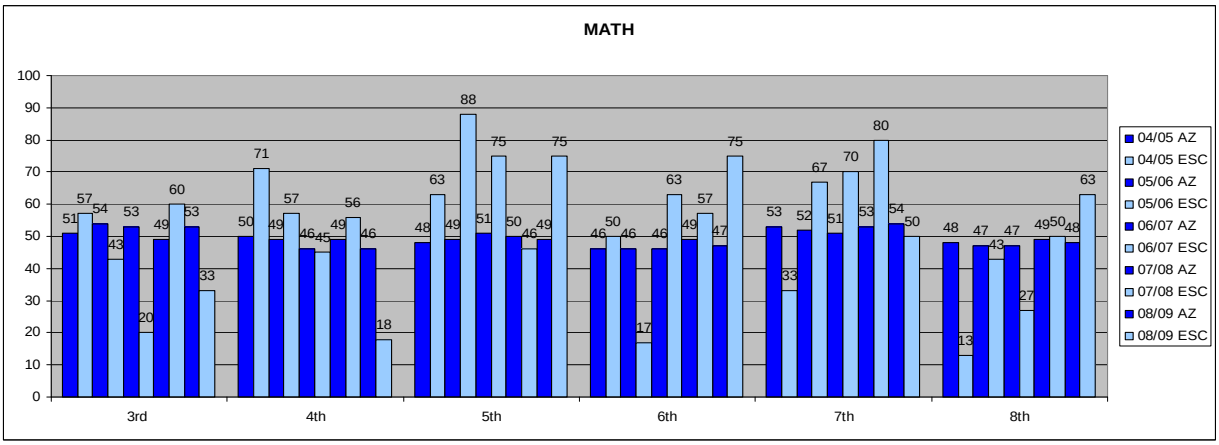
Self-analysis

In FY2008 the EduPreneurship Governing Board, administrator, and teachers began addressing the problem of losing our 'Highly Performing" label and the zigzag nature of our scores. We had a wake-up call, about what was happening or had happened that had impacted the learning environment and achievement. ESC began a self-improvement process that lead the school into self-analysis, needs assessment, and the development of strategies to make successful long term improvement in academic achievement. After analyzing the data from five years of AIMS scores the team decided to seek more varied information about the school. The team used a series of informal interviews, surveys, and discussions to gather needed information about curriculum practices, curriculum needs, staff development, teacher practices, communication and collaboration, job satisfaction, and parent school satisfaction surveys. The team used several white board charts where the gathered data was put into a variety of lists to create a total view of the school. The team referred between the five years AIMS chart and the other information collected to identify school strengths and areas that showed weak points that ultimately adversely effect achievement.

When we viewed the AIMS scores that compared ESC to the state averages over the last five years we looked for patterns or trends in achievement. After studying the charted scores the school noted that over a five year period the team believed that one significant pattern stood out and that was the zigzag pattern of achievement. Looking at the last five years of grade level achievement it moved in an up and down pattern.

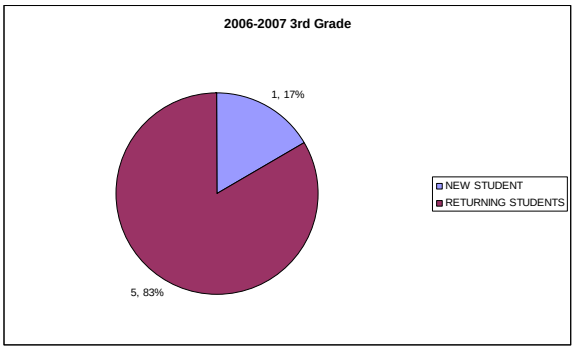
This chart compares the passing percentage of ESC to the state. Chart #1

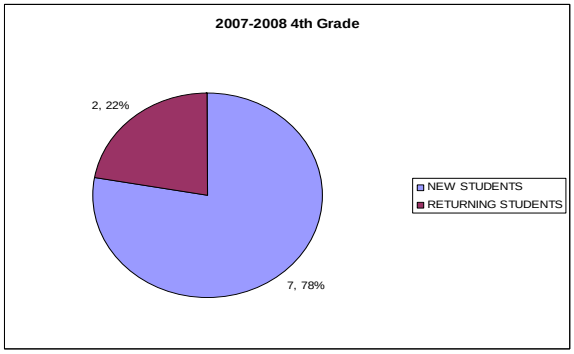


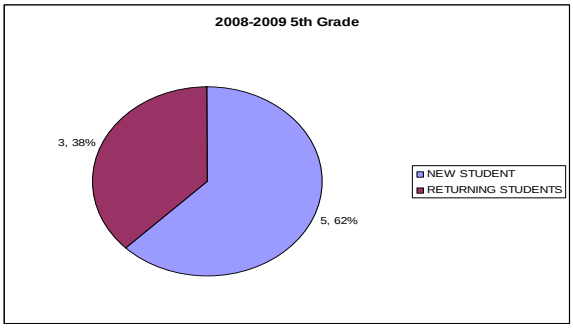


We felt that the zigzag pattern was the direct result of extremely small grade level cohorts that happen in a very small multiage school. The impact that 2 or 3 new students to a grade level each year affects the reliability of the sample to compare grade level achievement over years, since the grade level cohorts changed dramatically and still remain extremely small over time.

This chart gives an example of the entrance of new students into that cohort over a three year time period.
Chart #2

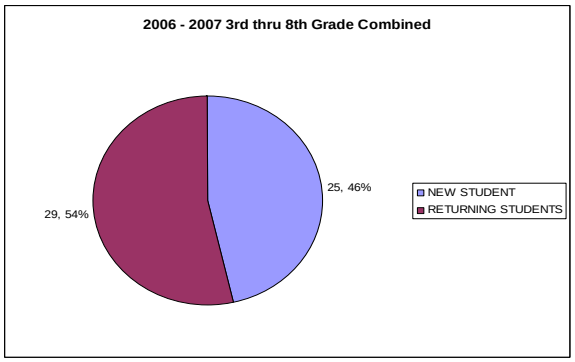


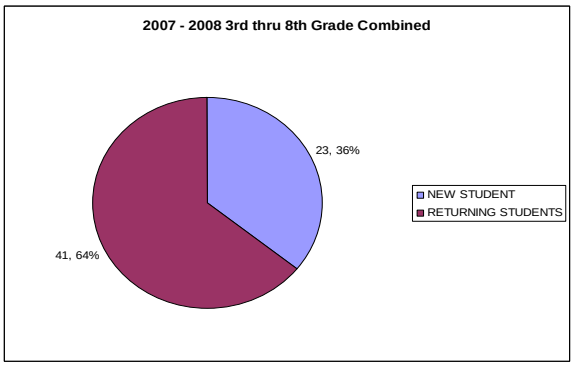


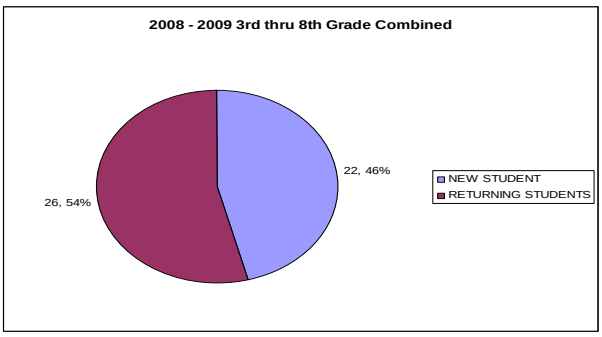


This chart shows the high percentage of new students in this charter over a three year period.

Chart #3







A cohort with significant internal level of change each year makes AIMS grade level passing rate an unreliable way to determine what caused the down turn in scores. However, it provided us with a guide to do more exploring on what are the barriers to achievement.

We noticed another significant pattern evolve from the AIMS five year chart. When the team looked at the lower achievement years by grade levels it was noted that several of those grades were taught by new or inexperienced teachers in the school.

Also, the team noted that our 5th /6th teacher, who has been with the school nine years, has the most consistently high achievement scores even with the same attrition as other grade levels. Also, this teacher had been teaching the 7th/8th grade math, however, in the year 06-07 a new teacher taught math and the scores significantly dropped. The old teacher took back the 7th/8th grade math the following year and the scores dramatically improved as evidenced in chart number one. The team observed this teacher's practices and noted well established routines and procedures that had a high rate of student engagement. The inexperienced teachers were observed and it was determined that they were still struggling with classroom management and student on task engagement.

Chart indicates new and inexperienced teachers and lower AIMS scores. Chart #4

	Drop in AIMS scores		Drop in AIMS scores
Reading (06-07)		**Reading (06-07)**	
3rd Grade 05-06	67%	7th Grade 05-06	71%
3rd Grade **06-07** New teacher	40%	7th Grade **06-07** New teacher	40%
	↓34 pts		**↓31 pts**
4th Grade 05-06	71%	8th Grade 05-06	71%
4th Grade **06-07** New Teacher	36%	8th Grade **06-07** New teacher	27%
	↓35 pts		**↓44 pts**
Math (06-07)		**Math (06-07)**	
3rd Grade 05-06	43%	7th Grade 05-06	67%
3rd Grade **06-07** New teacher	20%	7th Grade **06-07** New teacher	70%
	↓23 pts	**(½ year with experienced teacher ½ year with new teacher)**	**↑3 pts**
4th Grade 05-06	57%	8th Grade 05-06	43%
4th Grade **06-07** New Teacher	45%	8th Grade **06-07** New teacher	27%
	↓12 pts		**↓16 pts**
Reading (07-08)		**Reading (07-08)**	
3rd Grade 06-07	40%	5th Grade 06-07	75%
3rd Grade 07-08 New Teacher	33%	5th Grade 07-08 New Teacher	38%
	↓7 pts		**↓37 pts**
Reading (07-08)			
6th Grade 06-07	75%		
6th Grade 07-08 New Teacher	71%		
	↓4 pts		

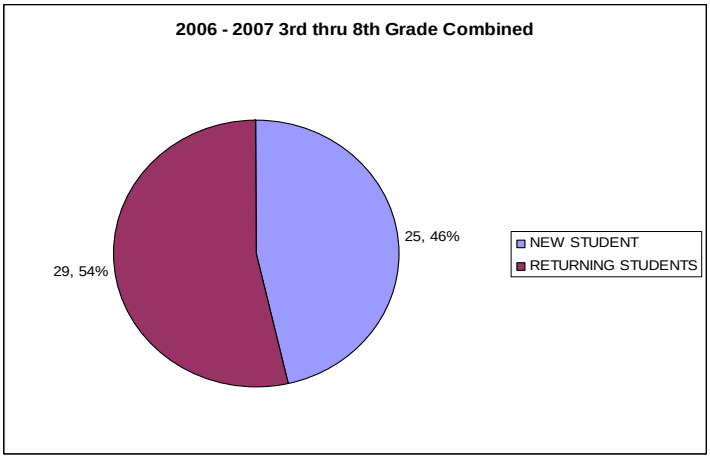
Underlying events that affected academic performance

1. As the result of the retirement of charter founding partners, moving the Phoenix school site, and the closing of the Scottsdale school there was a disruption in the school organization that affected achievement.

Issue: During the 2005 school year the administration experienced a significant change in the over all school management with the retiring of the last original founding partner that had been the head administrator since the charter began. The founder began mentoring the new administrator in all areas of the charter operation. This intense mentorship left less time for consistent academic oversight while the new administrator was learning all aspects of the organization.

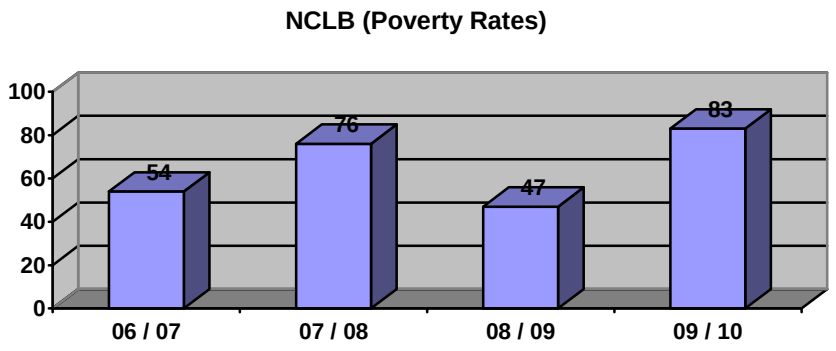
The need to change the location of the Phoenix school in 2006 to a better maintained site and more secure campus again pulled the administrator's attention from consistent academic oversight. The following year the Scottsdale school was closed due to the decline of the rental property and change in neighborhood demographics that didn't provide the school with local children. The closing of the Scottsdale location was emotional and physically draining on the Phoenix school because of our close knit school culture. Also, this created extra work for remaining staff, and a sense of loss for everyone. This was the third major event in three years that created upheavals in the organization. The relocation of the Phoenix school, though only a few blocks down the street, still created several new events: a large number of new students that affected the old grade level cohorts, a significant increase in the poverty rate, and the hiring of two new inexperienced teachers. These conditions had a dramatic effect on the school and its services.

This chart indicates almost 50% of new students to the school in 2006/2007 which we felt had a negative impact on our AIMS scores. This was the year we lost our “Highly Performing” label. Chart #5



The economic down turn in AZ over the past three years contributes to the attrition in our school. It seems directly related to lowering economic levels in our neighborhood, creating movement in and out of this low economic area when jobs are lost. The following chart shows the dramatic increase in the poverty level at the school. There is high mobility of student population entering and leaving during the year. This creates students that are educationally disadvantaged.

This chart indicates our poverty rates for the last 4 years. Chart #6



School Response: The team felt that the administrator needed a tool and a procedure in place that could provide academic oversight, gather needed data, and be done in an efficient manner. A process that would be more time effective for the administrator and provide evidence to indicate growth or the need for more teacher development through-out the school year. In this way the school would always have information on teacher practices and achievement even in years when the school in under stress from unique events that can occur.

The school underestimated the effect of how an increased population of poverty would require higher level of services from the school. The team investigated the improvement of services that would allow us to retain our new population and attract more families to join our school family.

The staff was encouraged to review and establish new practices of school culture of courtesy, caring, and courage at the new campus to engage the large number of new students.

Current Status:

After analyzing the oversight issue it was determined that the charter would benefit from an institutionalized organized procedure to rate teacher performance as an important part of overall academic oversight. The administrator needs an effective tool to surf teachers daily practices, provide constructive feedback, and ultimately rate each teacher's practices overtime.

The administrator with the help of The Principals Office created a "Data Walk Form" that allows her to assess and rate specific teacher practices as part of fidelity check in the continuous improvement model. The company provides training for the administrator on frequent progress monitoring. She will conduct several informal classroom observations and hold weekly One-On-Ones with each teacher to check the detailed lesson plans and teacher practices. The administrator will have the ability to rate teacher practices and graph evidence of growth and areas that need improvement for each teacher.

The school has increased its free and reduced lunch rate so that it now qualifies and will begin a school-wide Title I program that will make more services available to all students since there will be no restrictions on Title I services.

The staff has made a commitment of personal time to walk the neighborhood, share about our school and the new services we will be offering next year that are so desperately needed in this community, such as the National School Lunch Program, free breakfast, and after school program. As the school begins to

stabilize our student services and meet the students' personal needs better we believe that this will result in students more able to concentrate and better student growth, which will increase our AIMS scores too. We will monitor this to track our success.

The school has set enrollment targets to stabilize our population and nurture retention of our families. The administrator has developed an organized targeted enrollment membership drive. The membership drive is a multi-level commitment from the governing board, staff, families and students.

Finally, the school has revitalized Site Advisory Council (SAC) holding regular interactive meetings with goals and outcomes. The team is composed of parents, teachers, and students to work on the school community needs. We think that this group will encourage more parent involvement in the learning process and provide a positive link between the school and its families focusing on academic success.

2. High level of new inexperienced teacher hires led to low level collaboration and communication of student progress and achievement.

Issue: The loss of expertise through teacher new hires began to break down the well established processes, creating a less experienced staff in the charter structure. The quality collaboration and communication between staff was concentrated on operational issues and not academic areas. Also, the teachers lacked the training that supports the models used at the school. The school staff lacks teacher experts.

School Response: How to improve the quality of teacher practices. The teachers needed to improve their level of communication to professional dialogue on instruction and learning. There is a need for frequent and targeted in-services on the models and strategies that are required as part of teacher practices. The inexperienced teachers need progress monitoring and systematic feedback activities to improve their teaching capacities. The administrator began to provide opportunities for teacher coaching and mentorship to improve job satisfaction and lessen teacher isolation for the all teachers especially the inexperienced ones.

Current Status:

The development of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is improving the quality of communication and collaboration around student learning and achievement**.** The school has begun implementation of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with regular targeted staff development on PLC skills, goals and outcomes.

The administrator has begun implementation through progress monitoring systems of several strategies to revitalize professional collaboration and communication skills to improve instructional practices. Provide frequent targeted staff developments, based on the information gathered from the school-wide continuous improvement model that requires fidelity checks and progress monitoring and provides teachers with personal performance data.

The total staff of the school is participating in the school wide continuous improvement model that requires diligent thoughtful collaboration about curriculum, teaching strategies, classroom management, and data gathering and analysis. The Principals Office is currently beginning the process of guidance on on-going targeted staff development and teacher coaching.

The Head of Schools states that this increasing focus on best practices and accountability is tremendously improving her effectiveness and her own accountability to become a better school leader. She has begun

a second masters program in Educational Leadership and stands as a role model for self improvement to other staff members.

3. The zigzag nature of the state scores reflects a need for data driven targeted instruction.

Issue: The teachers administered assessments and collected data, but the effective use of data to make instructional determinations was weak. The teachers demonstrated a lack of data driven instructional decision making and accountability.

School Response: The team believes that the best way to improve and reduce the zigzag achievement pattern is to develop a prescriptive data driven approach to instruction. The school leadership after several visits to classrooms and observations determined that the school needed to provide more tools for teachers that would strengthen the effective use of assessment data, provide internal assessments that could tract monthly individual student growth, and make data driven decisions for instruction. The school identified the need to receive more instruction on data driven decision making.

By using this format we will be able to modify and adjust instruction based on data to increase individual growth rate. The team determined that the school needs to use internal assessments that allow for more testing opportunities during the school year so that teachers can analyze data and modify and adjust instruction through-out the school year to tract growth to make the necessary achievement to reach year end targets.

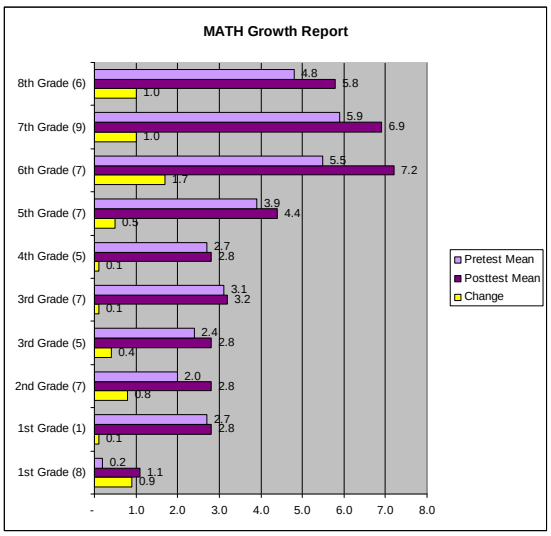
Current Status:

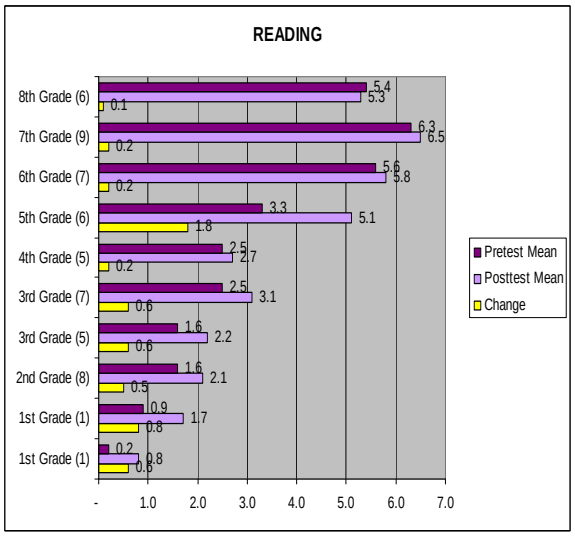
The decision to look for outside help led the school to the Charter School Association's Rebecca Gau. She provided materials and staff development that demonstrated for the administrator and teachers that their current practices, communication, and use of data was ineffective and inefficient. The staff received training on understanding and using AIMS data to drive instruction.

A second outside company, The Principal's Office, provides mentorship for the administrator, teacher coaching, and Response to Intervention (RTI) tutoring that demonstrates to teachers the effective use of internal assessments to drive instruction. RTI interventionists coach teachers on better data collection and charting of results to use when making instructional plans. Also, the AIMSweb assessments will be given each year to set school-wide benchmarks for the beginning, middle, and end of year to track growth rate to make targeted growth.

To upgrade our internal assessments and make them more reliable for teacher use the school made a purchase from Renaissance Learning a web-based format to change our internal assessments and provide teachers with accurate reporting on monthly growth using STAR Reading and Math 1st through 8th grade normed yearly growth assessments and the AR detailed reading comprehension assessment. This will improve the collection and consistent information of data for teachers to use to track individual student's personal growth during the year. Also, teachers will use these scores to set monthly benchmarks for the growth rate toward meeting yearly target.

Example of internal assessment data to show monthly growth. Chart #7





Also, yearly review of achievement and growth toward targeted goals will be analyzed to determine if the growth rate is sufficient to make the performance plan's ultimate target. The PLC at this time will discuss data results and compare to the Performance Plan's actions and strategies for effectiveness and plan for the coming upcoming year

4. The increased level of inexperienced teachers led to disconnected practices in school-wide curriculum, teaching strategies and classroom management skills which had a negative effect on achievement.

Issue: At the end of the FY 2008 the school began researching the problem of losing our "Highly Performing" label and the zigzag nature of our scores. It became evident that to regain our "Highly Performing" label and return to the road to excelling that we needed to address the inconsistent approach to instruction, teaching strategies and classroom management skills that were observed by the leadership. Since, each year the school had new teachers and paraprofessional staff this lack of continuity began to break down the old established curriculum and teaching strategies. The administrator found that curriculum materials had become scattered and incomplete and mentorship between teachers was weak. The administrator noticed a decline in the completeness and detailed information in lesson planning. The teachers' responses to interventions were slow and inconsistent.

School Response: The school decided to take aggressive actions to turn these conditions around. First, the school determined to make curriculum changes that would bring continuity to teacher practices for all grade levels and provide teachers with new tools that fit into our existing curriculum. The team felt that the two main core programs of language arts and math had the highest priority.

The team looked for a program that supported the basic curriculum but could provide consistency to the instruction of language arts, teaching strategies, and effective and detailed lesson planning for teachers at all grades.

The team felt that the math program for the 3rd through 8th grade needed to be improved. The math program needed revitalization. The old text edition had not been replaced in many years. The teachers felt that the students would respond better to a more updated format. Also, the teachers wanted extra

components that would allow web based materials and assessments. They felt that these professional materials would improve their assessment and growth monitoring.

The team looked at the quality of instruction of time on task in the core areas. The team felt that the core areas needed to increase time in reading and math. The team felt that the 3rd-8th grade teachers need to revisit their program and to develop more expertise.

Current Status: This year began a new approach of data based targeted staff development to improve the understanding and application of the new curriculum, web based assessments, and use of data to drive instruction. When we begin the monthly assessment findings and the teacher rating information our staff development will be targeted to the needs that are produced in our analysis of the data generated.

The implementation of the Four Block Language Program was started midyear in 2009 with the lesson planning format. The staff had training on how to use the new format. Then, teachers met with the administrator to create real in depth plans for their students. Teachers are improving collaboration on the new lesson plan requirements which has the effect of improving teacher meetings by focusing on detailed high level planning.

The implementation of the other components of the program was completed before the next school year, as part of staff development goals. Kathy Shelton, Ed.D provided an in-service on effective reading and writing strategies, with subsequent coaching for teachers and administrator.

A math program was selected that provided multiple ways to instruct math. New math adoption for third through eighth grade, Harcourt and Holt, with web based materials, that support teaching strategies and improved testing and evaluations. An in-service was held by the company to introduce the new math system and the teachers began the implementation in late spring of 2009. The teacher will continue training on how to use the web based assessments and strategies through out the next year.

It was determined that all the parts of the K-2 primary Saxon math were still complete and appropriate. The primary teachers need to receive staff development on implementation of the Saxon Manipulative approach.

The schedule was reviewed and additional minutes were found for language arts and math school-wide. The 3rd through 8th grade teachers decided to establish block time and departmentalization in the core content they will be monitoring the changes and its effect on achievement. They felt that this approach would be the best fit for the new prescriptive approach with monthly assessment of growth, monitoring and adjusting instruction and remediation.

Finally, a climate for a continuous improvement model, progress monitoring, effective use of data and validity checks is ready to begin the performance plan. This is the important step that needed to be included since we want to sustain the schools focus on student achievement and closely monitor the data that validates growth.

Solution Actions:

Charter School Association's Rebecca Gau provides data analysis trainings and leadership communication workshop for staff.

New math adoption for third through eighth grade, Harcourt and Holt, with web based materials, that support teaching strategies and improved testing and evaluations.

Adoption of Four Block Language Arts program bringing consistency and continuitiy to the K-8 program

Kathy Shelton, EdD (consultant) continues to provide in-services and consulting for teachers on effective reading and writing processes.

Continued targeted In-services on the power of data to make classroom level instructional decisions

Continues math in-service on new math system

Continue relationship with The Principals Office to provide data driven (RTI) tutoring sessions and consulting for the administrator on teacher improvement

Stronger accountability for teacher lesson planning with lesson turned in and evaluated weekly.

Implementing web based testing for Renaissance Learning's STAR, AR Programs to provide more reliable internal assessments

Weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings as part of the continuous improvement model

All staff are highly qualified and state certified (except one in progress)

Beginning professional improvement plan of continuing education

Implementation of block scheduling

Increase of instructional time in math and language arts

Performance Plan

The development of the EduPreneuship Performance Plan was a result of the close inspection of the school's overall achievement history, curriculum and instruction, classroom management practices, school culture, and student demographics. The process for change described above and the following four year performance management plan will provide stability of direction and sustainability of school-wide improvement. This small school has remained fiscally healthy and true to its vision. It has provided reliable faithful service to the community for fifteen years and stands ready with new leadership in both the governing board and administration to meet its targeted goals.

The Head of School with the PLC will meet during the last week of school to review assessment data and determine the progress toward achieving the yearly performance management plan target and project if the school in on target to achieve the final program target. The PLC will develop a complete report that show the data and progress with fidelity to the performance plan. The yearly status review will be presented to the governing board and sent the Arizona State Board for Charter School's before August 1 of each year for the duration of the plan.