ESPIRITU Community Development Corporation

INTRODUCTION:

Fifteen years ago, we were the third group to receive a charter from the Arizona State Charter Board. We have experienced the process of starting a charter school, the positives and negatives of school expansion, the highs of receiving successful AZ Learns labels, the lows of being assigned a coach from the Arizona Department of Education, and the highs again of then attaining Performing Plus Labels for our schools.

The improvements we have made are the result of a lot of hard work by faculty, staff, parents and students. In addition our strategic alliance with the National Football League, the Arizona Cardinals, and La Raza Development Fund, has helped us to build the campus we have today.

MISSION: Forming Renaissance Leaders for the Next Millennium

Educating the whole person: Body - Mind - Spirit

Physical:	Beauty, State of the Art, and Stewardship
Intellect:	Rigorous and Vigorous, College Ready and Global Standards
Spiritual:	Ethical, Virtuous and Loving Servant Leadership; Respecting the Dignity of the Person

HISTORY:

In 1990 violent crime hit a record high in our South Phoenix community. Within a quarter mile of us, 13 teenagers had been murdered and many more were the victims of stabbings, shootings, and other forms of violence.

A group was formed to look for long-term solutions. They began to explore different strategies, and through trial and error the group finally settled on a unique Community Development Model. They came to realize that the best way to ensure lasting and permanent improvements in a community was through the development of its people: forged from overcoming adversity, and willing to offer their skills to benefit the greater good.

The group looked to one of its own and saw the profile and example of the type of leader they wanted to form. From the exemplary life of Reyes Maria Ruiz, “Papa Reyes”, they adopted a “Servant Leader” model; *leadership through service*. When Reyes was a young boy of seven, his father was run over by a truck while walking to work. Eleven days later his youngest sister died from illness and together, these traumas prevented him from finishing his formal education. During this difficult time he sought solace in his faith and took on the middle name, Maria (Mary), which would serve as an inspiration for the name of the future Community Development model, “MaryTown”.

In January of 1995 the group created ESPIRITU Community Development Corporation, a non-profit organization, with the expectation that future leaders could change communities using a non-authoritative leadership style. Within a year, a charter school was built to provide this unique educational experience, and a partnership with the National Football League was forged to launch the Youth Education Town (NFL-YET) on the same campus. Next, the group was invited to expand its model on an international level. New leaders from other parts of the world came to form part of the ESPIRITU team.

ESPIRITU began to implement its "Servant Leadership" development model, which focuses on bringing together the various talents of individuals, forming them, then sending them in teams to assist other communities change their circumstances and teach them to become self-sustaining. A servant leader's primary function is to facilitate the coordination of various projects based on service to others, with strong moral and values-based foundations.

ORGANIZED INTO SIX SCHOOLS:

In order to better organize the quality of instruction, Espiritu Charter Operator petitioned the State Charter Board in 2009/10 to change the organization of our schools from three to six small schools, each with its own theme and identity. Each will be located on a 15-acre campus in South Phoenix and adhere to the Arizona State Standards.

1. Esperanza Montessori Academy – K - 3rd grade

The Montessori educational philosophy is that children are born with a natural love of learning. The teacher guides the instruction of the child by introducing concepts at appropriate times. It has four major areas of concentration: practical life, sensorial (hands on), mathematics, and language.

2. Los Milagros Academy – K - 3rd grade

The curriculum has as its foundation the Traditional Classical philosophy of education. This level (Grammar) would focus on memorization of basic facts, acquisition of language, and history.

3. Reyes Maria Ruiz (RMR) Academy - Grades 4-6

The primary educational goal for this school is to expand a child's knowledge in all areas with critical thinking and problem solving development.

4. NFL YET Academy – Grades 7-8

Through an operating agreement with the National Football League, the "***Youth Education Town***" (NFL-YET) provides a unique environment which develops students into high performing, critical thinkers, who will be proficient in leadership, language, reading, writing, and math. We cultivate charity, service, and respect for the personal beliefs of others and promote a sense of civic responsibility through our Servant Leadership courses.

5. ESPIRITU International College Prep Academy – Grades 9-12

This program is for select students who demonstrate the desire, ability, and heart to change the world. The students must demonstrate mastery in Leadership Formation, Community Development Methodology, and Project Management. They would also be expected to demonstrate competency in a Foreign Language, Mass Media, and Computer skills. In order to graduate, the students should be able to manage and complete a minor (local) project, and advanced students (grades 11-12) should be able to manage and complete a major (international) project.

6. Aim Higher Honors School – Grades 7-12

The Aim Higher Honors School is similar in purpose to the ESPIRITU International College Prep Academy, however the environment is more academically challenging with a highly structured environment designed to prepare them for success in four-year Colleges and Universities. Students would be eligible for foreign exchange and summer institute programs.

DATA SELF-ANALYSIS:

The Process of Analysis:

The Data Self-Analysis was conducted on data covering the last five years of the district's operations. We compiled the Reading and Math AIMS test scores of every current student tested over the last five years. The data analyzed was when the district was organized into three schools. Students were placed in the four main categories:

1. Students who have exceeded the standards.
2. Students who have met the standards.
3. Students who have approached the standards.
4. Students who have fallen far below (FFB) the standards.

We generally viewed the passing rates of the overall grade level (Pass Rate Analysis) and how much each of those grades has improved over the five years analyzed (Growth).

We also conducted another growth analysis this time comparing those students who have attended Espiritu's schools for more than three years to the overall population tested. We also looked at the growth in passing rates for this population as well to verify if passing rates increase the longer students attend with us. For the purposes of the growth analysis, all grades were combined rather than an analysis of individual schools. We divided them into the two groups and compared their scores and hypothesized that the longer a student attends our schools the more their test scores will increase. We did verify that the longer students stay with us, the more progress they show.

It should be noted that during this time we had a high rate of student mobility in the upper grades. In the last five years, 675 students have passed through our schools in grades 7th – 12th and only 196 of these students are still with us.

When we conducted a Pass Rate and a Growth Rate analysis, the objective was to identify key historic trends for the last five years of scores. In the first three years, we saw three successive years of declining or stagnant passing rates followed by vastly improved passing rates; this is especially evident in the lower grades. The upper grades, especially the Junior High had volatile passing rates. We attempted to identify what factors led the same schools to score so poorly in some years to then dramatically turn around for other years. Our goal was to identify and discontinue the causes for academic underperformance and similarly identify the practices that lead to our improvement so we could replicate and improve upon them.

We also analyzed and focused on two key grades and subject areas; third grade Reading and eighth grade Math. In the Morrison Institute Report on *Beat the Odds* schools, they describe these test scores as best reflecting critical junctures of learning. We paid special attention to the reading scores for all third grade students over the last five years, and the math scores for all eighth grade students during the same time period. Despite not having AIMS data for children in grades K – 2 we could at least draw inferences about the instructional capacity for Reading in grades K – 2.

Finally, for the upper grades (9th – 12th) we analyzed the percentage of students who passed AIMS by 10th grade. This would give us an indication of how we measure against other Arizona schools, since all students are expected to pass AIMS by 10th grade.

In this academic year, 2009/10, 100% of all students who have been with us for more than three years passed the AIMS reading test by 12th grade, and in Math, 79% passed.

Grades K – 6 Reading & Math General Overview:

The past five years of academic performance for grades K – 6 can be divided into two time periods: the first three years ending in 2006/07 and the two years following. In 2006/07 an ASSIST coach was assigned to the school by the Arizona Department of Education. The school administration was required to develop an Arizona School Improvement Plan for the Elementary school, in which they created one for the Primary and Upper grade schools as well.

As can be seen from the tables below, the first three years for grades K-6 can be best described as having declining and/or stagnant AIMS student passing rates. During this period grades K-6 experienced their **lowest level of passing in both reading and math.**

Table 1 – 3 Year AIMS Passing Rates for Grade 3

Esperanza Montessori Academy			
GRADE 3			
Years	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Reading	**29%**	**19%**	**27%**
Math	**41%**	**21%**	**24%**

Table 2 – 3 Year AIMS Passing Rates for Grades 4-6

RMR Academy			
GRADE 4			
Years	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Reading	**20%**	**49%**	**20%**
Math	**27%**	**36%**	**26%**
GRADE 5			
Reading	**48%**	**37%**	**27%**
Math	**55%**	**36%**	**35%**
GRADE 6			
Reading	**40%**	**39%**	**40%**
Math	**45%**	**36%**	**44%**

The two following years, 2007/08 and 2008/09, saw vastly improved passing rates for both reading and math. From 2006/07 to 2008/09 reading increased by the following: third graders 21%, fourth graders 31%, fifth graders 15%, and sixth graders 4%. The two-year increases in math were: third grade 28%, fourth grade 27%, fifth grade 11%, and sixth grade 19%.

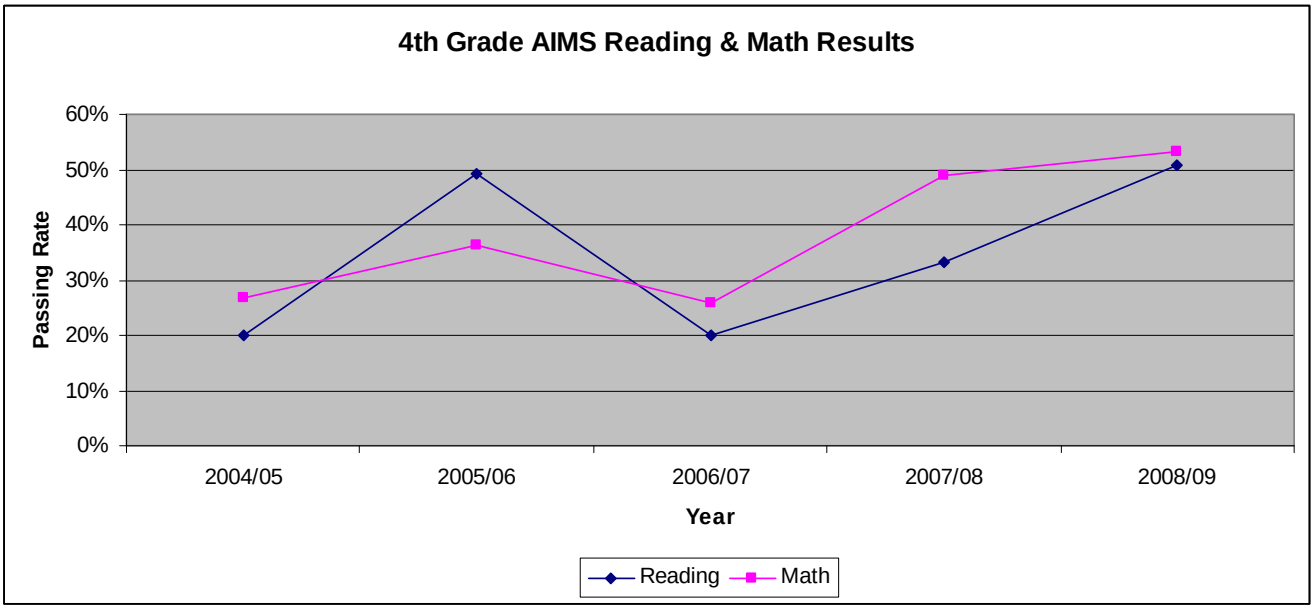
Table 3 – AIMS Passing Rates for Grades K-3

Esperanza Montessori Academy		
GRADE 3		
Years	2007/08	2008/09
Reading	**49%**	**48%**
Math	**53%**	**52%**

Table 4 – AIMS Passing Rates for Grades 4-6

RMR Academy		
GRADE 4		
Years	2007/08	2008/09
Reading	**33%**	**51%**
Math	**49%**	**53%**
GRADE 5		
Reading	**44%**	**42%**
Math	**38%**	**46%**
GRADE 6		
Reading	**41%**	**44%**
Math	**76%**	**63%**

As can be seen below, the trend shows decreasing/stagnant passing rates during the first three years analyzed, and vastly improved, upward trending passing rates beginning school year 2007/08.



3rd Grade AIMS Results Analysis – Reading & Math

Reading:
The overall trend for reading for third grade students were stagnant passing rates for the first three years and increases in the last two. The percentage of students who exceeded AIMS increased from 0 to 7% over the course of the five years. The percentage of students falling in the "FFB" category decreased from 33% to 21%, with an average of nearly one quarter of students falling in this category each year throughout the past five years. At the two extremes, the overall percentage of students who exceeded increased and students who are FFB decreased.

As can be seen below, the analysis of the past five years for reading demonstrated increased pass rates from 29% to 48%. Despite these dramatic improvements, however; **half of all 3rd grade students are still not proficient in Reading and 1/5 are classified as "FFB" upon completing the third grade.**

Table 5 – Last 5 Years AIMS Results – READING

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
THIRD GRADE						
2004/05	51	0	15	19	17	29
2005/06	80	0	15	53	12	19
2006/07	63	2	15	32	14	27
2007/08	76	2	35	20	19	49
2008/09	58	4	24	18	12	48

Math:
The overall trend for math was decreased passing rates for the first three years and increases in the last two. The percentage of students who exceeded AIMS increased from 4% to 7% over the course of the five years. Students falling in the "FFB" category slightly decreased from 31% to 29%, averaging nearly one third of students each year throughout the past five years. At the two extremes, the overall percentage of students who exceeded increased and students who are FFB stagnate decreased.

As can be seen below, the analysis of the past five years for math demonstrated increased pass rates from 41% to 53%. Despite these increases in the pass rates, **half of all 3rd grade students are still not proficient in Math and 1/3 are classified as "FFB" upon completing the third grade.**

Table 6 - Last 5 Years AIMS Results – MATH

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
THIRD GRADE						
2004/05	51	2	19	14	16	41
2005/06	80	0	17	29	34	21
2006/07	63	1	14	21	27	24
2007/08	76	5	35	22	13	53
2008/09	58	4	26	11	17	52

4-6 Grade AIMS Results Analysis – Reading & Math

Reading:

Generally the same pattern occurs in these grades, with 6th grade being the exception. In 2005/06 a sudden influx of new students occurred; a net gain of 50 new students – the equivalent of two new classrooms for a school which had a previous population of 150 students. Overall population increased by 33 percent. The following year all grades experience a drop in pass rates; although 6th grade only decreased one percent

The overall trend for reading for grades 4-5 were very low passing rates for the first three years, with year 2006/07 being the low point, and increases during the following two years. 6th grade reading passing rates were stable, however still below average. The percentage of students falling in the "FFB" category decreased 16% in both 4th and 6th grade. The percentage of 5th graders categorized as "FFB" increased by 5 percent, but maintained the lowest overall average – 17 percent.

Despite these improvements, however; **half of all 4-6 graders are still not proficient in Reading.**

Table 7 – Last 5 Years AIMS Results - READING

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
FOURTH GRADE						
2004/05	30	0	6	13	11	20
2005/06	**55**	0	27	23	5	49
2006/07	70	0	14	32	24	20
2007/08	51	1	16	18	16	**33**
2008/09	81	1	40	24	16	**51**
FIFTH GRADE						
2004/05	33	0	16	12	5	48
2005/06	**67**	1	24	33	9	37
2006/07	48	0	13	24	11	27
2007/08	50	2	20	20	8	**44**
2008/09	59	2	23	22	12	**42**
SIXTH GRADE						
2004/05	86	3	31	30	22	**40**
2005/06	77	0	30	33	14	**39**
2006/07	55	0	22	22	11	**40**
2007/08	46	0	19	22	5	**41**
2008/09	62	0	27	29	6	**44**

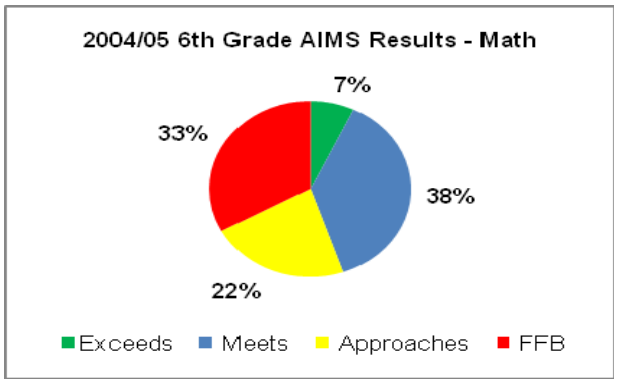
Math:

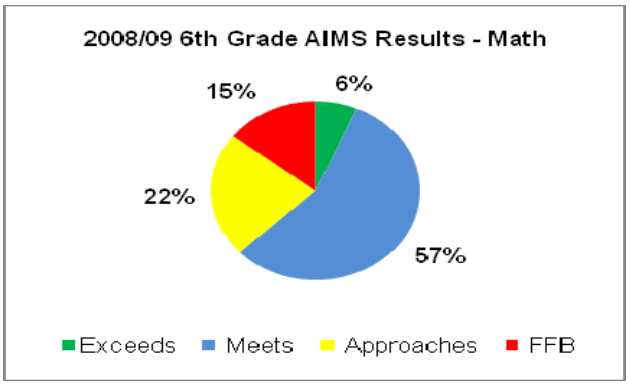
As previously stated, 2005/06 shows a sudden influx of new students: a net gain of 50 new students – the equivalent of two new classrooms for a school which had a previous population of 150 students. Overall population increased by 33 percent. The following year all grades experience a drop in pass rates, although 6th grade increased in its passing rate

Table 8 –Last 5 Years AIMS Results - MATH

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
FOURTH GRADE						
2004/05	30	0	8	13	9	27
2005/06	**55**	4	16	19	16	36
2006/07	70	1	17	24	28	26
2007/08	51	9	16	10	16	**49**
2008/09	81	8	36	14	23	**54**
FIFTH GRADE						
2004/05	33	1	17	9	6	55
2005/06	**67**	3	21	25	18	36
2006/07	48	1	16	15	16	35
2007/08	50	0	19	18	13	**38**
2008/09	59	2	25	17	15	**46**
SIXTH GRADE						
2004/05	86	6	32	19	28	45
2005/06	77	0	27	22	27	36
2006/07	55	2	22	11	19	44
2007/08	46	9	26	7	4	**76**
2008/09	62	4	35	14	9	**63**

The overall trend for math for grades 4-6 were low passing rates for the first three years, with year 2006/07 being the low point, and increases during the following two years. 6th grade experienced the largest increase in passing rates. The percentage of students falling in the "FFB" category decreased 2% and 18% in both 4th and 6th grade, respectively. The percentage of 5th graders categorized as "FFB" increased by 7% in, but maintained the lowest overall average - 17%.





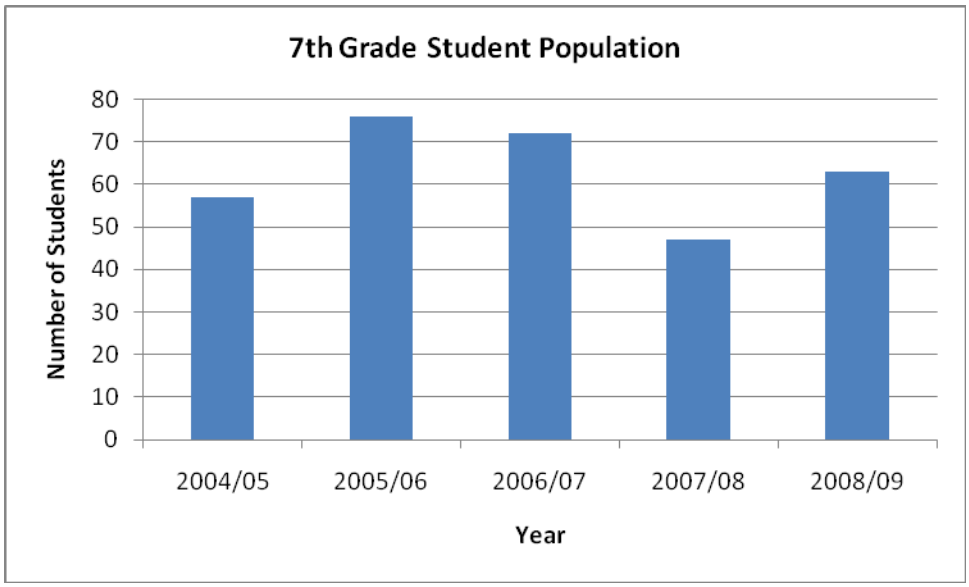
Although half of all 4-5 graders were still not proficient in Math, **63% of 6th graders were proficient.**

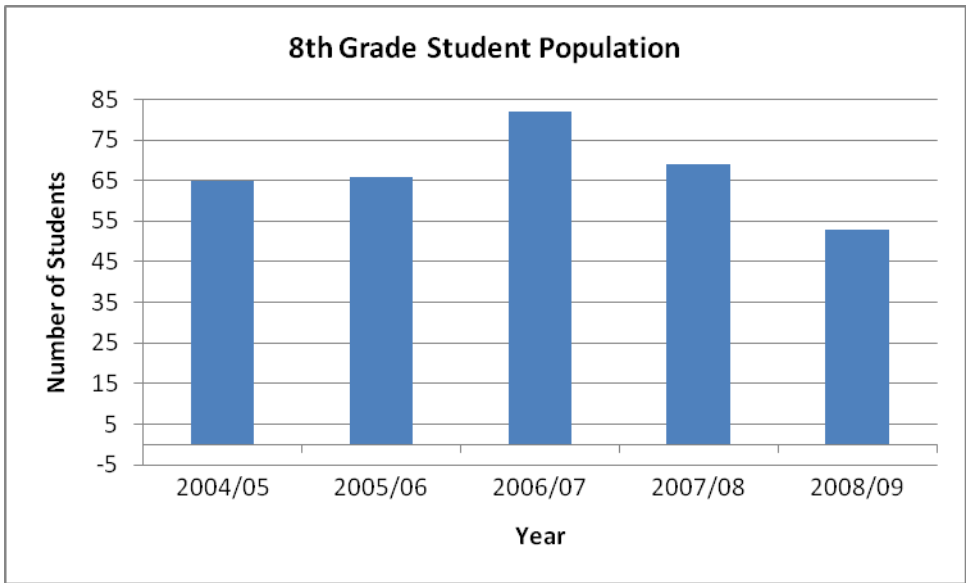
Grades 7-8 Reading and Math General Overview:

Although in the lower grades we saw a general pattern in scores (decreasing the first three years, with increasing scores the last two years), the Junior High passing rates were much more volatile. Being that the schools are on the same site it was expected that they would follow an identical pattern in both reading and math, however, there were some noticeable differences.

In these grades, student population is unstable – as can be seen from the charts below – and scores are equally as volatile. Seventh and eighth grade math and reading passing rates generally follow the same pattern, although there are a few points where they differ. What continues to be alarming is that proficiency rates have not yet exceeded beyond 57% in either grades for both reading and math.

Overall we see a healthy increase in student population during the first three years and a steady decrease during the following years for 7th and 8th grade. Also what we see are very volatile passing rates from year to year, especially in the 8th grade.





7 – 8 Grade AIMS Results Analysis – Reading and Math

Reading:

In these grades, the pattern that occurs is an unstable student population. We see a healthy increase in student population during the first three years and a steady decrease during the following years for 7th and 8th grade. Also what we see are very volatile passing rates from year to year, especially in the 8th grade. 8th grade reading appears to follow the same trend as the lower grades wherein the passing rate bottoms out during the 2006/07 year and we see a rapid incline in the subsequent years. Again we see scores decreased in the last year, hence the volatility.

The overall trend for reading for grades 7-8 were low passing rates for the first three years, increases during the following year and slight stagnation and drop-off during the following year. The percentage of students falling in the "FFB" category remained low for both grades decreasing from 11% to 7% for 8th grade although slightly increasing from 5% to 13% for 7th grade, over the five year period.

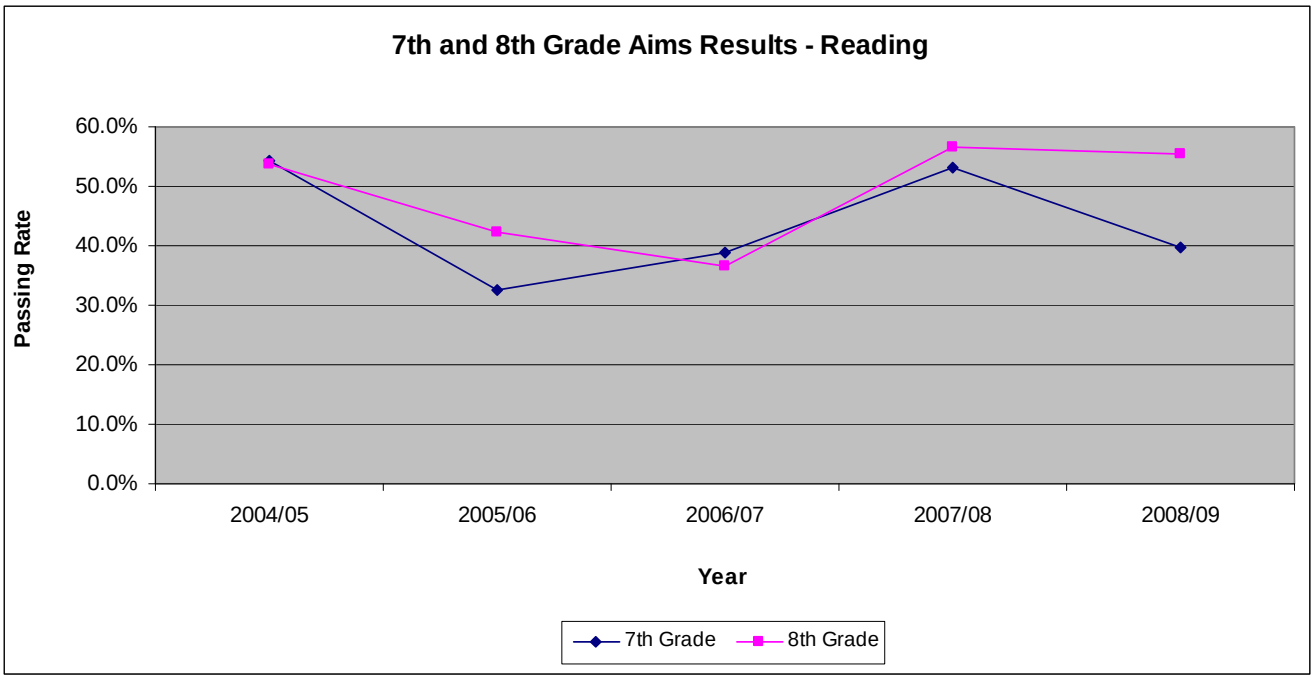
Although passing rates have increased over the past three years; **more than half of all 7th graders and half of 8th graders are still not proficient in Reading.**

Table 9 –Last 5 Years AIMS Results– READING

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
SEVENTH GRADE						
2004/05	57	1	30	23	3	54
2005/06	**77**	0	25	27	25	**32**
2006/07	72	2	26	25	19	39
2007/08	**47**	1	24	21	1	**53**
2008/09	**63**	2	23	30	8	**40**
EIGHTH GRADE						
2004/05	65	3	32	23	7	54
2005/06	66	0	28	28	10	42
2006/07	**82**	1	29	42	10	**37**
2007/08	**69**	0	39	21	9	**57**
2008/09	**54**	2	28	20	4	**56**

(7-8 Reading Continued On next page)

As can be seen in the graph below, reading scores for Junior High decrease to low passing rates over the course of the first three years. They begin to ratchet up the two subsequent years, although 7th grade passing rates decline back to previous levels.



Math:

In these grades, the pattern that occurs is an unstable student population. The math passing rates reveal a different pattern. During the 2005/06 year, both grades experienced their lowest passing rates over the course of the past five years. Both grades followed up with increased passing rates the following year, during which the seventh grade class had the highest scores in a year when all other grades in all three schools had the lowest scores in math. During the final two years of the analysis, the passing rates appear to be stagnated and settle at a relatively lower level.

The percentage of students who exceeded the standards increased by 10% and maintained at 5% for 7th and 8th grade, respectively. The percentage of students falling in the "FFB" category remained high for both grades. 7th grade "FFB" rates remained unchanged at 25% and they slightly decreased from 26% to 21% for 8th grade over the five year period. Math being a key indicator for Junior High, this trend is rather alarming.

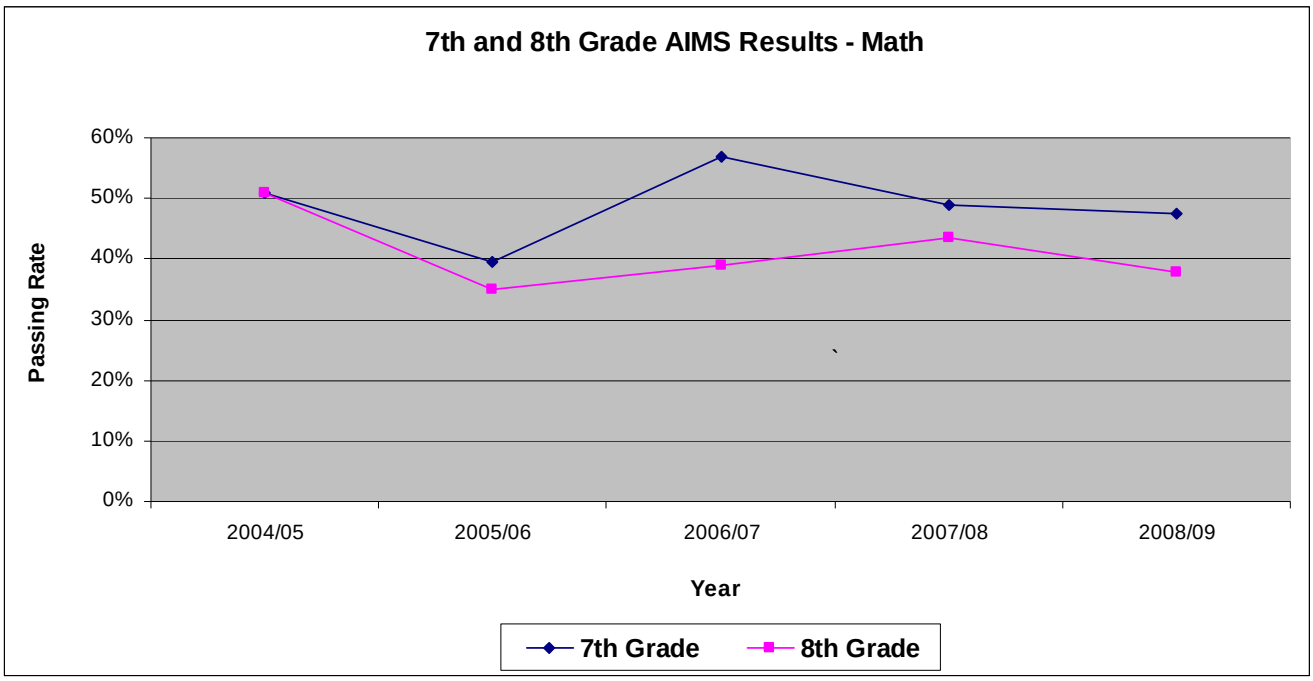
More than half of all 7th graders and 62% of 8th graders are still not proficient in Math.

Table 10 - Last 5 Years AIMS Results – MATH

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
SEVENTH GRADE						
2004/05	57	3	26	13	15	51
2005/06	**76**	2	28	16	30	**40**
2006/07	72	1	40	17	14	57
2007/08	**47**	2	21	15	9	**49**
2008/09	**63**	9	21	17	16	**48**

EIGHTH GRADE						
2004/05	65	3	30	15	17	51
2005/06	66	1	22	18	25	35
2006/07	**82**	5	27	23	27	**39**
2007/08	**69**	1	29	17	22	**44**
2008/09	**53**	1	19	22	11	**38**

As can be seen below, the trend shows decreasing passing rates during the first year, followed by increased and decreased passing rates succeeding years.



Grades 10 Reading and Math General Overview:

The 10th grade reading passing rates had been traditionally strong for all five years of the analysis, starting the first year with a passing rate of 78% and finishing five years later at decreased rate of 64%. The reading passing rates have followed an up and down pattern, but maintaining well above 60%.

10th grade math passing rates followed a similar up and down pattern, however; during the last year analyzed passing rates dropped to its lowest point of 53%.

Reading:

Reading passing rates have generally followed an up and down pattern over the course of the past five years, but passing rates followed a downward trend during the first three years. Although passing rates have followed this trend, they have remained relatively high with the lowest point being in the mid sixties, as seen below in Table 12.

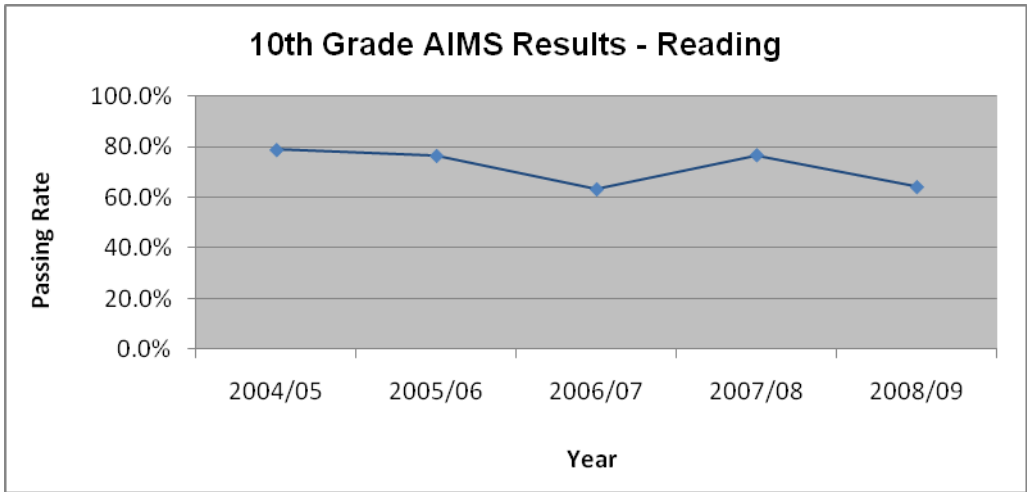
The percentage of students who exceeded the standards has generally stayed around 5% of the 10th grade population. Those who fell below the standards generally stayed at approximately 8% of the 10th grade population.

Although reading passing rates have remained relatively high, **nearly 30% of remaining students each year would still need to pass reading during 11th and 12th grade in order to graduate.**

Table 11 –Last 5 Years AIMS Results – READING

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
TENTH GRADE						
2004/05	33	3	23	4	3	78
2005/06	**51**	1	38	11	1	76
2006/07	49	2	29	12	6	63
2007/08	42	4	28	8	2	**76**
2008/09	**53**	2	32	13	6	**64**

The graph below outlines the up and down trend in 10th grade reading passing rates.



Math:

The 10th grade passing rates in Math have been steadily declining over the past five years. While at first they follow an up and down trend, they have decreased the past two years to its lowest point of 53% proficiency. Scores had remained relatively high until the past year.

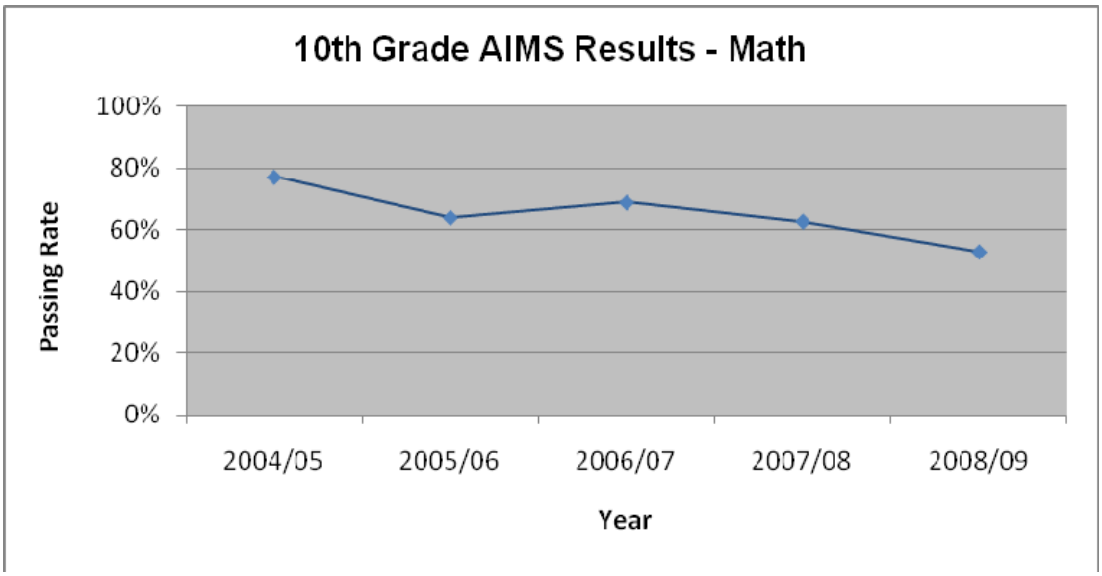
Student proficiency rates have declined by 24% during the course of this analysis. This is compounded further by the proportion of "FFB" students doubling from 11% to 22% over this same time frame. Student exceed rates have been cut in half from 11% to 6% in this same timeframe.

Although math passing rates relatively high during the initial years of the analysis, **nearly half of students last year would still need to pass math during 11th and 12th grade in order to graduate.**

Table 12 - Last 5 Years AIMS Results – MATH

Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
TENTH GRADE						
2004/05	35	4	23	4	4	77
2005/06	**50**	7	25	5	13	64
2006/07	45	4	27	4	10	69
2007/08	43	4	23	6	10	**63**
2008/09	**51**	3	24	13	11	**53**

As can be seen below, 10th grade math passing rates have seen a downward trend over the course of this analysis.



All Grade Growth Analysis

Reading

For the purposes of the growth analysis, all grades were combined rather than an analysis of individual schools.

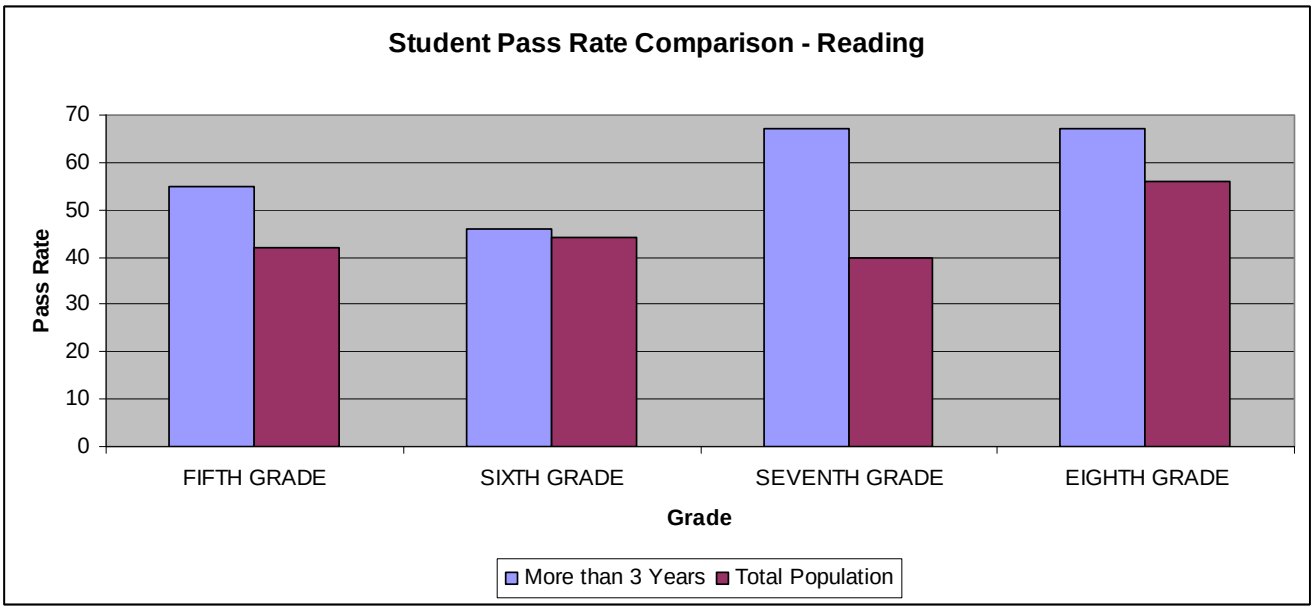
An additional important factor is the length of time a student spends with us. In general, the longer a student stays with us the higher the pass rate. We looked at students who are still attending with us and have attended Espiritu 3 years or more. We analyzed their overall passing rates in reading. As can be seen below, the growth rate of students who have been with us *for more than three years* is 34% for 5th grade, 28% for 6th grade, 28% for 7th grade, and 12% for 8th grade.

Overall, those students who have attended show tremendous growth in their passing rates. None of the grades have exemplified a decline in the pass rate for reading. This shows that the longer a student attends their passing rates will continue to improve. These students also have a higher pass rate in comparison to the general population.

Table 13 – Pass Rate for Students Attending More Than 3 Years – READING

Grade	Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
FIFTH GRADE							
3	2006/07	33	0	7	15	11	**21**
4	2007/08	33	5	11	6	11	49
5	2008/09	33	2	16	7	8	**55**
SIXTH GRADE							
4	2006/07	27	0	5	16	6	**19**
5	2007/08	28	0	15	12	1	54
6	2008/09	28	0	13	14	1	**46**
SEVENTH GRADE							
5	2006/07	23	0	9	10	4	**39**
6	2007/08	25	0	9	16	0	36
7	2008/09	24	0	16	6	2	**67**
EIGHTH GRADE							
6	2006/07	27	0	15	9	3	**55**
7	2007/08	26	0	13	13	0	50
8	2008/09	27	1	17	9	0	**67**

As can be seen from the chart below, those students who have attended Espiritu's schools for more than 3 years have better overall passing rates for reading.



Math:

We looked at students who are still attending with us and have attended Espiritu 3 years or more. We analyzed their overall passing rates in math. As can be seen below, the growth rate of students who have been with us *for more than three years* is 21% for 6th grade, 48% for 7th grade, 37% for 8th grade, and -6% for 9th grade.

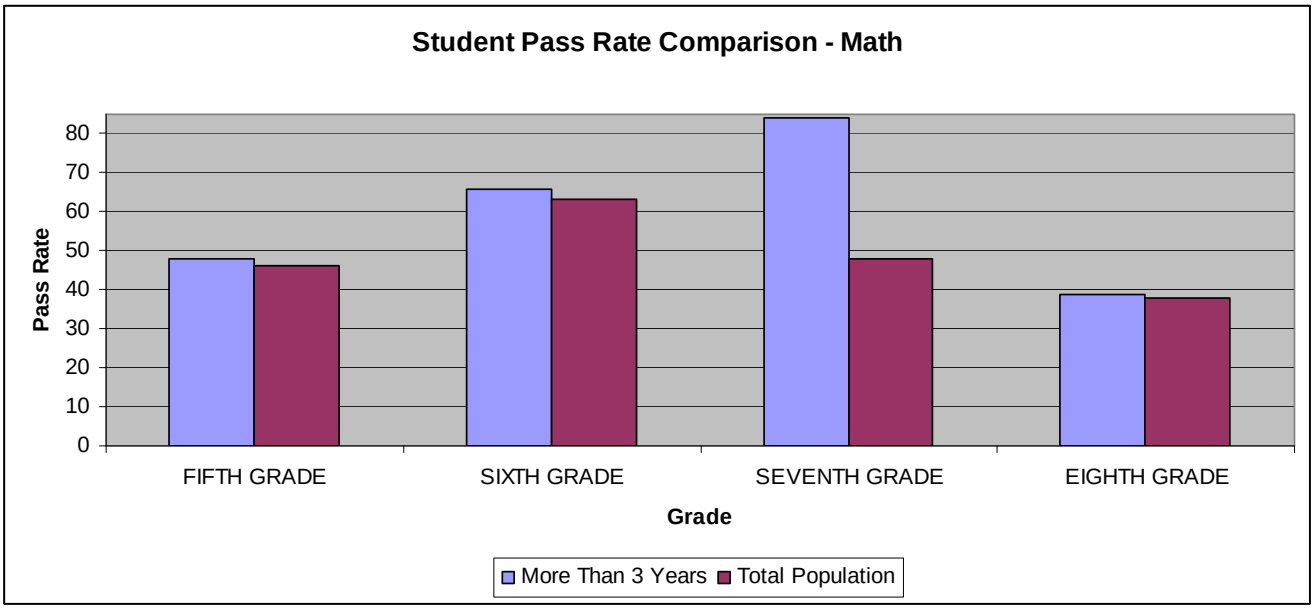
Overall, those students who have attended show tremendous growth in their passing rates. None of the grades have exemplified a decline in the pass rate for math except for eighth grade. This shows that in general the longer a student attends their passing rates will continue to improve. These students also generally have a higher pass rate in comparison to the general population.

Table 14 – Pass Rate for Students Attending More Than 3 Years – MATH

Grade	Year	# Students	Exceeds	Meets	Approach	FFB	% Passed
FIFTH GRADE							
3	2006/07	32	1	7	17	8	**24**
4	2007/08	33	1	9	15	8	30
5	2008/09	33	2	14	14	3	**48**
SIXTH GRADE							
4	2006/07	28	0	4	16	8	**14**
5	2007/08	29	0	10	14	5	34
6	2008/09	29	0	19	8	2	**66**

SEVENTH GRADE							
5	2006/07	23	1	10	10	2	**47**
6	2007/08	24	6	15	3	0	87
7	2008/09	25	6	15	4	0	**84**
EIGHTH GRADE							
6	2006/07	24	2	9	6	7	**45**
7	2007/08	25	2	10	8	5	48
8	2008/09	26	1	9	14	2	**39**

The chart below indicates that students passing rates are relatively similar for those who have attended Espiritu's schools for more than 3 years. There is a rather large difference for those in seventh grade. Overall, students attending more than 3 years have a slightly better overall passing rate for math.



ESPIRITU Community Development Corporation

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR PERFORMANCE

ESPIRITU Community Development Corporation as the Charter Holder and operator of the charter contract with the State of Arizona Charter Board, has identified the following reasons for the lack of Academic Performance. A brief history of each issue, including the school's response and current status, is included below.

1. An incomplete research based, standards aligned curriculum for Reading and Math.

Issue: *Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.*

From 2004-2007 the district had attempted to create its own in house curriculum, but after several years of low achievement, the district purchased a complete researched-based, standards-aligned curriculum for grades K – 8 in 2007-08. Textbooks were purchased for grades 9 – 12 in a district attempt to begin a rigorous and vigorous college ready curriculum. While teachers in these upper grades had new textbooks, they still had to shoulder the responsibility of creating pacing calendars that aligned to state standards. The new textbooks, Merrill Pre-Algebra, acquired by the district for the high school were outdated; therefore, they did not align with the current Arizona Academic standards. The purchased textbook contained a copyright date of 1995 and as a result did not fully reflect the performance objectives stated in the standards.

School Response:
I*dentify a list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.*

At the end of 2007-08, $300,000 was invested in new curriculum, text books and internal assessment software. The curriculum of "Investigations" Math and "Harcourt" reading was a researched-based, standards aligned curriculum. In addition, the "Buckle Down" and "Skill Bridge" AIMS Preparation materials were purchased to help instructors properly prepare the students for AIMS.

At the beginning of the Academic Year 2009-10, an Academic Plan was adopted by the Governing Board. Specific Academic goals were established in Reading and Math for each school, teacher, and student.

Administration established regular meetings with the Mentor (Master) Teacher Council to establish a history of what curriculum components had been purchased for Reading and Math for each of the different school grades. In addition, an inventory of the curriculum was conducted, and an analysis made of whether the different grade levels were conducting vertical planning sessions and whether those planning sessions were data driven and effective.

Current Status:

For grades K- 6, our overall instruction still lacks a focus in providing remedial Reading for FFB students. A seamless transition is absent in Reading and Math, from grades K to 3, to grades 4-5-6, grades 7 & 8, and High School.

In addition the curriculum and daily classroom instruction has yet to incorporate the elements of Character-Based Servant Leadership Formation, and the Trivium Classical Education Model.

2. *Our internal assessments and data analysis were inadequate for assessing student performance in a timely way so that Teachers could adjust their instruction.*

Issue: Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.

Before 2006/07 the district had attempted to create its own data management system (SMART) but the effort stalled after two to three years.

There is generally a lack of rigorous data analysis of student achievement; it is still a hard copy system which is not a web accessible for immediate feedback for faculty or students. Data analysis was not used to determine adjustments to academic instruction for many "FFB, ELL, and SPED" students.

School Response: Identified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.

In 2007/08 the district purchased a proven student data base management system, "School Master".

At the beginning of the Academic Year 2009-10 an Academic Plan was adopted by the Governing Board. Specific Academic goals were established in Reading and Math for each school, teacher, and student. Next, an analysis of the previous year's data was conducted and a baseline measure was established for AIMS pass rates and growth, AMO, ELL, and SPED.

Academic Goals for 2009/10:

- Create a culture of developing Math and Reading strategies based on student achievement data.

- The overall percentage increase of students passing AIMS:
    - Year 1-5 % Year 2-9 % Year 3-13%
- In each classroom increase of the number of students in "Excelling" 5%
- In each classroom decrease the number of students in "Falls Far Below" 8%
- The increase of the number of students who will improve their AIMS scores even if they do not pass the exam. – 100% (AYP)
- The ELL goal is to increase Language scores in AZELLA by 12% each year.
- The SPED goal is timely and correct placement of students within this learning path.

Each teacher was required to conduct an analysis of the students in their classroom and present to an administrative planning committee their AMO goals. Each faculty member presented a folder with the number and names of each child which would fall into the category of excelling, meets, and approaches. Students who were Falls Far Below had to be identified and specific strategies for academic improvement had to be presented.

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) had to be presented for each student and communicated to all parents. The ILP components had to include the following information.

- What level should the student be, according to the Arizona standards?
- What is the student's present level?
- What is the strategy to continue to challenge the student to perform above level, or bring him or her to the desired performance level?

Current Status:

There is no vertical or horizontal teacher planning time, nor does that culture exist in the three schools. Kinder teachers do not plan with first grade teachers, who do not plan with second grade teachers, etc., and schools do not plan among themselves.

A culture of rigorous analysis of student data achievement is only emerging, and more professional development is vital to continue the initial steps.

The process for academic accountability has to be developed for the upper grades (7-12) because they are not self-contained. Several sessions have been conducted with the teachers in the upper grades.

This past year the Student Registrar left and has been temporarily been replaced. This summer multiple staff and faculty members will become certified in the Student Master data based system, and the data will be merged with the updated website so data are more easily accessible and strategies more easily communicated.

3. The number of students who need ELL services in the primary grades has increased and an effective academic plan must be developed.

In addition ELL students were not properly categorized until the end of last year, they were not placed in pull out programs in 2008/09 and AIMS pass rates still increased. This year there are only 11 students in the 7th and 8th grade ELL classroom, all other k – 6th grade students are in self-contained classrooms. Arguably growth rates would have been higher if students had been timely identified and placed in the ELL program. This area will need further analysis.

Issue: *Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.*

The district still lacks an adequate ELL curriculum and Language Department. ELL Classroom structure and curriculum has not be differentiated in the past from the general curriculum.

How we tried to fix the problem

School Response: I*dentified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.*

Beginning 2009-2010, the district implemented that all ELL teachers must be highly qualified and receive a full SEI Endorsement, not a provisional. As a result, the district made a conscious effort to begin the ground work to establish a rigorous and vigorous Language Department curriculum.

As part of the ELL curriculum, the district adopted an ELL Lesson Plan format that sheltered the SEI model and accompanied the DSI component. The district began to correctly identify and monitor ELL students and track their progress in correlation to teacher accountability.

Here is where we are now

Current Status:

There is over 150 ELL students currently identified in the district. Our ELL Lesson Plan is Arizona Department of Education and OELAS approved. Our mandated five our time allocations contain rigorous and vigorous language development.

4. High teacher turnover and lack of Montessori certified and teachers have impacted Reading instruction.

Issue: Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.

The constant turnover of teachers, sometimes two to three teachers during the year, has drastically impacted student's learning. The inconsistency in teaching style together with the trauma of adjusting to new teacher has been detrimental to student's learning ability. This is reflected in their poor reading scores.

Due to lack of qualified teacher and/or teachers leaving mid year has forced the school to accommodate students from different grades in one classroom with the teacher splitting time between grades. Such an environment has added to discipline challenges not to mention student's inability to concentrate and learn. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence.

Additionally, the program has lacked consistent administrative oversight and accountability, this has in many cases resulted in hiring of sub-standard or uncertified teachers. At the same time there are no processes or procedures to hold teachers accountable for not attaining their degrees or Montessori certifications.

Importantly, the program in past three years added the 2nd and 3rd grades without appropriate academic preparations either for curriculum or qualified teachers.

School Response: Identified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.

1. Three years ago Esperanza Montessori Academy sent three teachers to Albanesi Educational Center, a Montessori training center in Texas, for professional development and certification.

2. In 2009/10 the District reviewed the personnel files of Teachers in the district for Highly Qualified Status. After the evaluation the school was advised to develop a plan to place all of their present teachers who were Highly Qualified into a Montessori certification process. And for those teachers who were Montessori certified to enroll in a university immediately to receive their four year degree by a determined date.

3. As of 2009/10 the district has required the school to hire only Highly Qualified Teachers in the future, and to maintain consistency in the classroom by minimizing teacher turnover.

4. In 2009/10 the District applied to the Arizona Charter School Board to create two separate K-3 schools, thereby separating the Montessori and Non-Montessori curriculum, environments and culture to match the actual current operations.

Current Status:

Last year the Montessori was expanded to increase in the number of 2nd grade students, and to add 3rd grade students to the campus under the condition that teachers become Montessori certified and that AIMS Reading Pass Rates be sufficient to maintain the Performing Plus Label, and meet AYP.

Because the Montessori certification process has lagged and two of the current teachers did not become Highly Qualified, the district has asked the school to submit a plan and strategies to ensure that all teachers become Montessori certified and Highly Qualified within the next three years.

3. This is the first year (2009/2010) 3rd graders are taking AIMS tests.
4. The reading scores are measurably below the required minimum.
5. There lacks a seamless transition for students who promote from the Montessori campus to the Non-Montessori school, impacting Reading instruction for these children.

5. *The high loss and entry of 7th and 8th grade students has disrupted school culture, caused an increase in discipline issues, and adversely affected academic performance.*

Issue: *Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.*

In the upper grade school a couple of factors interrupted academic performance, first, high student mobility, this disrupted school culture and increased discipline issues.

Second, each year there was a reallocation of teachers and instructional capacity on emergent needs of new students. Inconsistent teacher assignments (i.e., not having the same teachers teach the same subject matter year after year) have resulted in inconsistent Academic Performance. Caused instability in the academic cohorts, and changed long-term instructional planning.

School Response: I*dentified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.*

In 2009/10 the district has implemented a new process for recruiting and admitting students that will ensure every students needs are adequately met and stabilize the mobility of students so that instructional capacity is not interrupted. In addition a Parent Advisory Board has been formed to focus on developing the identity and culture of the High School, and its infrastructure needs.

A "Spirit Centers" was opened for teachers/staff, parents and students, to provide more focused resources, training and information to each group to better understand the academic expectations.

Each "Spirit Center" provided:

1. Orientation classes to familiarize client groups with the direction and unique mission of ESPIRITU CDC.

2. Training to teach groups the organizational goals and traditions, to help them clarify and align their own personal goals.

3. Provide formation and information and the resources necessary to ensure that all parents are communicated the following information every quarter:
    a. At what level should the student be, according to our standards?
    b. At what level is the student according to our standards?
    c. What is the strategy to continue to challenge the student to perform above level, or bring him or her to the desired performance level?

Current Status:

The loss every year

6. Our inability to academically prepare for new students to pass AIMS has shifted our focus from college readiness to remediation.

Issue: Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.

Factors That Interrupt Academic Progress:
In the past five years, large number of new students in grades nine through twelfth has entered with low academic skills and disruptive behavior. Students who did not meet the ethos of our culture have withdrawn opening up enrollment to new students entered. The massive movement of students in and out of these upper grades has disrupted school academics and climate. A small percentage of the students in the original cohort are still attending the High School. Our current status is that only 142 students remain of the Original Cohort of 424 students in grade 9th – 12th (33%). The last two years of High School has shifted our attention from college readiness to remediation.

The High School did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2008/09 because the graduation rate was incorrect and not appealed.

Factors That Interrupt Academic Progress:
In the High School, the large number of new high students has disrupted school culture and increased discipline issues. A large number of students withdrew and entered in each of the 7th – 12th grade cohorts. The massive movement of students in and out of these upper grades has disrupted school culture.

The High School did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2008/09 because the graduation rates were not met.

Third The last two years of High School shifted from college readiness to remediation.

The High School did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2008/09 because the graduation rates were not met. The reason is that such a small percentage of the students in the original cohort are still attending the High School.

Our current status is that only 142 students remain of the Original Cohort of 424 students in grade 9th – 12th (33%).

The district was unable to adequately respond to the one year (2005/06) massive influx of 88 new students from the Roosevelt School District in grades 3, 4, and 5, and to the annual high student mobility in the upper grades. A large number of students withdrew and entered in each of the 7th – 12th grade cohorts. In the last five years, 675 students have been counted as attending, 196 remain, 360 have withdrawn, and 119 are new. Almost half of all 8th graders leave upon graduating. The massive movement of students in and out of these upper grades has disrupted school culture and the school instructional plans because most of the new students were weak in their fundamentals.

A. Student Enrollment and Withdrawals in Upper Grades – A Major Factor

The major factor impacting academic performance was the large number of students who withdrew and entered in each of the grade cohorts. The massive movement of students in and out of these upper grades disrupted school culture and the school instructional plans, because most of the new students were weak in their fundamentals. For example, of the 19 new high school students in the 11th grade cohort, 0% had passed reading AIMS in the previous two years. When students come into the High

School with such low scores, it requires massive reassignment of instructional capacity to provide remediation in order for them to pass high school and pass AIMS by the 12th grade.

In the last five years, 62% of all 8th graders who graduated moved to other high schools. The recruiting of new students in the High School to offset the loss of 8th graders has adversely affected the school ethos in the High School, creating more student behavior issues, and challenging the instructional capacity of new teachers. While the students who have been with us more than five years are passing at high rates, 11th grade cohort 74%, and 12th grade cohort 83%, the subgroup of new students performed at very low levels, thus it is not a school-wide curricular or instructional problem, the problem is more a reallocation of instructional capacity on emergent needs of new students. This has resulted in inconsistent teacher assignments (i.e., not having the same teachers teach the same subject matter each year).

The greatest destabilization occurred in the Math area, where passing and growth rates declined respectively by 6% and 15%, for grades 7 -12, from 2006-07 to 2008-09, while Reading increased by 9% and 10% respectively for the same grade cohort.

Table J - Student Withdrawals and Entries in Last 5 Years

Grade Cohort	# of Students In Original Cohort	Remaining Students	% Of Remaining Students	Withdrawals	New Students
7th	131	28	21%	**78**	25
8th	120	26	22%	**74**	20
9th	58	23	40%	**15**	20
10th	121	36	30%	**68**	17
11th	145	53	37%	**73**	19
12th	100	30	30%	**52**	18
TOTALS	**675**	**196**	**29%**	**360**	**119**

The Junior High and the High School did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2008/09 because the graduation rates were not met. The reason is that such a small percentage of the students in the original cohort are still attending the High School. From the chart above, our current status is that only 142 students remain of the Original Cohort of 424 students in grade 9th – 12th (33%). Since the beginning of this school year, the district has implemented a new process for recruiting and admitting students that will ensure every students needs are adequately met.

<u>School Response:</u> I*dentified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.*

1. AIMS preparation classes have been offered in the regular curriculum. Students attended their regular high school classes with the addition block of AIMS preparation classes. We purchased AIMS preparation material (*Buckle Down* in areas of math, science, and reading).

2. ELL classes have been offered in block according to the students' proficiency. *Azella* testing is done yearly to provide a baseline for placement. Students are then placed in classes appropriate to their language needs for instruction.

3. Tutoring was offered before school; changing the schedule to a late start and to be able to continue with the after-school athletic and activities program.

4. Purchased a new English and Geometry standards based curriculum based upon research and recommendation of departments in these areas.

5. Promoted "ACE" college program at South Mountain Community College in order for students to get a head start on their college education.

6. We have offered high-level math and science courses to encourage students to continue in our high school. These classes help prepare our students for university admissions and testing such as SAT and ACT.

7. Open three "Spirit Centers" one each, for teachers, parents and students that will provide: information, formation and resources to retain and ensure high school graduation.

8. Developed highly competitive Sports Program to promote student involvement, retain student in our school, and provide opportunities for scholarships at the college and university level.

9. Since the beginning of this school year, the district has implemented a new process for recruiting and admitting students that will ensure every students needs are adequately met. This will place students in the appropriate level classes to ensure differentiated education for all students.

Our current status

1. Inconsistent teacher assignments (i.e., not having the same instructor teach the same subject matter year after year) have resulted in inconsistent Academic Performance. Although our high school has received a Performing Plus label for the last five years, not enough of our new students pass the AIMS by the 10th grade.
2. This year, we have written a curriculum plan which has been adopted for implementation. Professional development will be provided in the summer-time in order to complete this process.

3. Discipline issues in classrooms and the lack of a formal program for parental involvement has negatively impacted instruction and adversely affected the rigor and vigor academic culture we want to achieve.

4. In 2009/10 the district has implemented a new process for recruiting and admitting students that will ensure every students needs are adequately met and stabilize the mobility of students so that instructional capacity is not interrupted.

5. A Parent Advisory Board has been formed to focus on developing the identity and culture of the High School and its infrastructure needs.

7. New Teachers to the profession and to the school lack instructional capacity, more professional development is needed.

Issue: Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance are identified.

In 2006/07 an ASSIST coach was on our campus for one year, since then there have been five curriculum directors, three Business Managers, five Operations Managers (Principals), and fifteen different Governing Board Members. The administrative turnover and the resulting lack of administrative oversight, has lead to the discontinuance of some of the "Best Practices" and traditions in the district. Despite the discordance, scores have still increased in the last two years, across the board in all grades, which we attribute to the purchasing of the new research based, standards aligned curriculum, and our highly motivated highly qualified teachers.

These schools were not working as one but separate units, and student academic gains were lost in transitioning from one school to the next.

Administrative oversight has lacked in assuring ongoing professional development and a culture of instructional best practices. Ongoing formal and informal classroom observations have not been conducted with the same frequency to ensure the integrity of implementation of the curriculum and classroom strategies.

School Response: Identified list of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.

In 2007/08 there was the initial establishment of "best academic practices" which was supplemented with an increase in professional development for the entire district. Training sessions were held for teachers on the proper use of the newly acquired curriculum, analysis and interpretation of internal student assessment data and the implementation of Robert Marzano's classroom strategies.

Regular formal and informal classroom observations were conducted to ensure the proper implementation of the curriculum and classroom strategies. Feedback from the observations was swift, well detailed and recorded for human resource purposes. All of these factors helped the primary and elementary schools meet AYP and all schools in the district achieved a Performing and Performing Plus school labels, respectively.

Current Status:

Created a "Summer Institute" that consisted of 40 professional development hours that aligned with our Robert Marzano classroom strategies and data driven instruction.

Quarterly formal classroom observations were conducted to ensure effective data driven instruction was adhered to.

Schools have began collaborative planning sessions, in which has been utilized to begin the dialogue of connecting data with instruction.

8. The number of changes in administration has resulted in inconsistent communication of the mission and goals of the institution, and oversight.

Issue: Barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.

In the last several years, the Board of Directors and Administration has struggled about the future direction of the organization. The issues include the form of governance, curriculum, future school site development plans, finance, the size of the organization, and the role of faculty and parents. The indecisiveness had impeded the communication of a consistent mission and vision of the schools.

The result was confusion, a perceived changing of the goals, and inconsistent oversight of district wide operations, **creating an undisciplined culture and environment**.

The budgeting process has been dictated by advocacy for specific department needs as opposed to the greater good, and not targeting funding to address academic problems. The last two years have resulted in budget deficits, with no reserves on hand to handle emergencies. Entering this fiscal year, there was a projected shortfall of $1,300,000 dollars.

There were four major reasons for the shortfall, first a $350,000 deficit from the last fiscal year, second, the lack of administrative discipline resulted in over hiring the amount of teachers needed which added an additional $350,000 in costs.

Third, the organization was also distracted by a three year dispute with the City of Phoenix over citations for building without permits, and no Certificates of Occupancy for several buildings, which required updating building plans and installing building sprinklers. This resulted in an avoidable emergency construction project during the summer that added an unanticipated cost of $285,000.

And finally the problem of only having one person trained on the student data based system (School Master) surfaced when staff member left in the middle of the school year. Since then temporary staff members have not been able to correct the student count reports, which have resulted in an additional shortfall of an estimated $300,000 dollars.

School Response: List of solutions for addressing elimination of barriers, policies, and past practices that inhibited adequate performance.

During the summer and at the beginning of the school year, the Board of Directors reorganized itself and reduced the size of the Board from fifteen members to the current six (they will add an additional member soon).

Next the administration was reorganized by the Board by bringing back the founding Board Chair of ESPIRITU Community Development Corporation, as the Temporary Managing Board Director. After the annual meeting in March he was permanently hired on as the CEO Servant Leader. Almost immediately a senior management team was assembled and worked with the Governing Board to tackle the administrative and financial problems by developing a Stewardship Plan with Four major initiatives:

1. Social Responsibility - Caring for Our People,
2. Fiscal Responsibility - Caring for Our Business with Cost Saving Strategies
3. Partnerships - Caring for Our Partners,
4. Strategic Plans - Caring for Our Future.

Social Responsibility: Caring for Our People

1. No employees were laid off due to the economic crisis.

2. Three "Spirit Centers" were opened for teachers, parents and students. The goal of each "Spirit Center" was to provide information, formation and more resources to these key constituents. We focused on removing any obstacles that prevented success.

Fiscal Responsibility: Caring for Our Business – Discipline in spending

1. The Finance committee was reinstituted to install oversight over spending.

2. All senior administrative staff was placed on part-time furlough for six months, although they continued to voluntarily work full time. And all non-instructional staff was placed on a part-time two month furlough.

3. Certain services were contracted out to save costs.

4. Short-term, high-interest debt was targeted for restructuring and refinance options have been initiated, and outstanding collectables or grants were identified and pursued.

5. A team was assigned to identify stimulus funds and other available grants, and to apply for them.

Partnerships: Caring for Our Partners

1. An initiative was launched to reestablish relationships with our long time key strategic alliances and stakeholders who impact our mission (NFL Charities, La Raza Development Fund, AZ Charter School Board, Parents, and Local Businesses) and to recognize their importance to our success. The goal was to keep them more informed about our progress.

2. The Board of Directors and administration were reorganized so that decision-making and governance could be handled at the local school level, where Advisory Committees, teachers, administration, parents and students could understand our goals and participate in developing new strategies for academic success.

Strategic Plans: Caring for Our Future

1. Teams would be formed to develop the school identities of the Jr. High, High School, and Honors program (Aim Higher).

2. A team was formed to:
    a. Develop more partnerships with local, national and international Universities
    b. Increase the number of higher level educational opportunities for our students,
    c. Increase our high school graduation rate and,
    d. Increase university graduation rate among our former students.

3. An advisory committee would be formed to develop a short and long-term expansion and building improvement plan, especially in the following areas:
    a. Cafeteria and outside eating area
    b. College Prep and Pre-University Foreign Exchange and study abroad opportunities.
    c. Field house and Gymnasium
    d. Jr. High and High School Campus
    e. Quiet study area and Technology Library

4. A Technology committee would be formed to advise us in developing:
    a. Long-distance learning classes.
    b. E- Channel, a closed circuit TV broadcast on the campus.
    c. A plan to use more computers in the classrooms for Math and Reading.

Current Status:

The administration is instituting discipline into thought, culture and operations of the district. Administrative oversight is being reinforced through collaborative planning with stakeholders in the implementation of the "four initiatives".

The Board of Directors has revamped and reduced its size, and is reemphasizing the original mission of forming International Servant Leaders. An initial organization chart has been adopted to develop clearer lines of communication between District and School Administration, and between School Administration and Master Teachers, faculty and staff. Currently final decisions in hiring, curricula, and professional development remain with District Administration. This structure will be further evaluated before the summer of 2010/11.

New financial policies and the Finance Committee are in place to ensure disciplined and targeted spending, the budget deficit is projected to be reduced to $150,000 at the end of this fiscal year, and a Facility Planning Committee is yet to be instituted.