Academic Section

Data Self-Analysis

Introduction

Mission: AZVA is a partnership of families and teachers that empowers students in a flexible learning environment with a challenging curriculum, regardless of geographic, financial, or demographic circumstance. We are a community of pioneering educators providing an innovative use of technology to develop well-rounded, well-educated students.

Arizona Virtual Academy was approved as part of the Arizona distance learning expansion legislation in June 2003 and opened its doors in August of that year as a program of PPEP and Affiliates Inc. AZVA does not fall under PPEP Tec oversight and should not be under PPEP Tec's district plan. AZVA is its own separate school and holds its own charter under PPEP and Affiliates, Inc. AZVA is going through the renewal process because we have a transfer charter under PPEP and Affiliates, Inc., which requires AZVA to conform to the term of the original charter granted to PPEP and Affiliates.

The core philosophy of Arizona Virtual Academy is that all students can achieve academic excellence when provided rigorous instruction, high standards, informed guidance, and individual attention. Although we use the computer and technology as a learning tool, we believe that education is primarily a personal endeavor that relies on caring individuals, involved parents, and committed teachers.

Using the K12© curriculum, AZVA offered kindergarten through seventh grade and served about 433 students in 2003-2004. Over the past seven years, AZVA has increased in both student population and grade levels served. AZVA added eighth grade in 2004-2005, ninth and tenth grades in 2005-2006, eleventh grade in 2006-2007, and twelfth grade in 2008-2009. The class of 2009 was the first class to graduate from AZVA. Currently, AZVA serves 4300 students in kindergarten through twelfth grades. AZVA serves students from metropolitan and rural areas across all counties and representing over 200 communities within Arizona. See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Data shows the overall growth of school. Data includes the percentage of growth each year and the percentage of new and returning students.

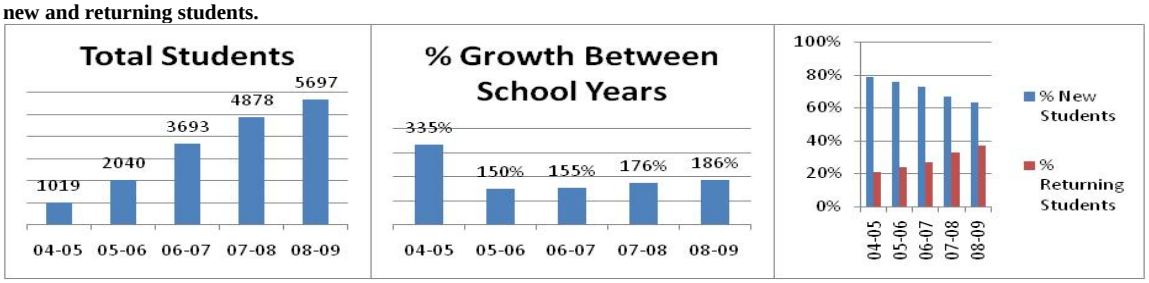

Figure 1

AIMS Results Analysis – Math

Figure 2: Data shows the overall math results from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09 for eligible grade levels. Data highlights the percentage of passing rates for the total population.

Math						
SY	#	FFB	A	M	E	M/E
04-05	547	21.6%	21.9%	46.3%	10.2%	56.5%
05-06	1086	21.7%	22.1%	46.5%	9.7%	56.2%
06-07	1967	22.0%	21.8%	46.1%	10.2%	56.3%
07-08	2566	23.3%	21.7%	45.2%	9.8%	55.0%
08-09	2725	22.1%	22.7%	45.0%	10.2%	55.2%

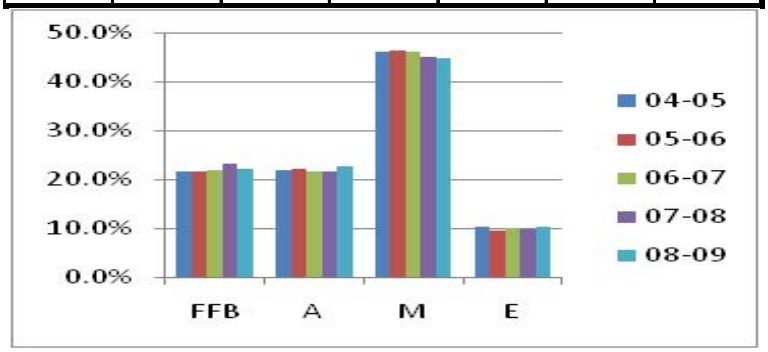

Figure 2

Analysis of data of the overall population, highlighted in Figure 2, shows that on the 2005 AIMS Math assessment, 56.5% of the total student population reached proficiency. The 2006 AIMS Math assessment, 56.2% of the total student population reached proficiency. The 2007 AIMS Math assessment, 56.3% of the total student population reached proficiency. The 2008 AIMS Math assessment, 55% of the total student population reached proficiency. The 2009 AIMS Math assessment, 55.2% of the total student population reached proficiency.

Our passing rates are consistent, showing little variation. We attribute any measured success relating to the levels of achievement throughout the years to the following factors: 1) our school provides rich, challenging, and engaging content, delivered in state-of-the-art online lessons along with traditional materials, including textbooks, CDs, videos, and hands-on manipulatives that complement interactive online learning which fosters individualized learning; and 2) many students find success with the home based learning environment offered at AZVA 3) the curriculum is mastery based.

As our school evolved, some common issues have surfaced. Our achievement levels were negatively affected by several factors that proved unsuccessful: 1) originally, some students were placed off grade level with the expectation that they would make greater gains and achieve grade level status within the same academic year; 2) academic goals were written each year but were somewhat vague and, in many cases, immeasurable resulting in poor measurement of student growth; 3) effective instruction was limited due to teachers' high caseloads and the fact they supported six core academic curricula for each grade level (K-8); 4) teacher interactions were primarily parent-focused when they should have been more student-focused; 5) the continuous deluge of incoming students throughout the academic years, as shown in Figure 1, has created challenges for teachers to appropriately focus on academic achievement; 6) curriculum completion levels fluctuated from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09; 7) mastery levels were set at 70% for math and Language Arts compared to 80% in previous school years and 90% in SY08-09; and 8) due to

population growth, our school continuously has had to hire new staff who are unfamiliar with the school's curriculum and online platform, and 9) teacher supervision was limited to one administrator per ninety-one (91) full-time teachers. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Data shows staff growth in number and percentage from SY04-05 to SY08-09

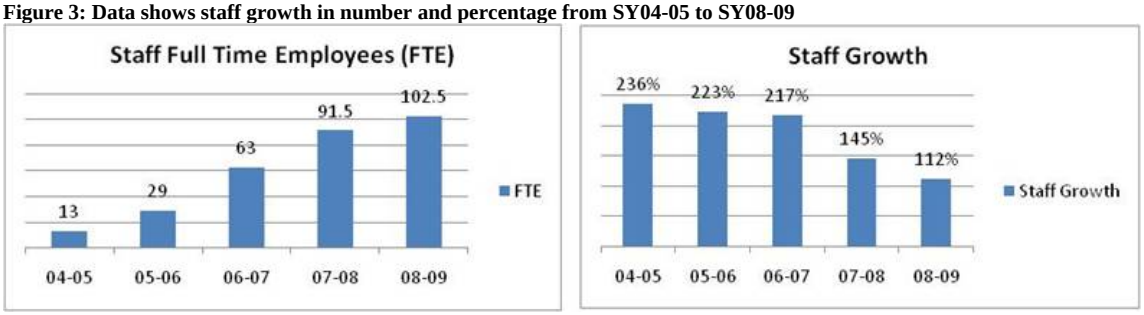

Figure 3

AIMS Results Analysis – READING

Figure 4: Data shows the overall reading results from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09 for eligible grade levels. Data highlights the percentage of passing rates for the total population.

Reading						
SY	#	FFB	A	M	E	M/E
04-05	545	8.4%	18.9%	61.5%	11.2%	72.7%
05-06	1087	9.4%	20.0%	61.8%	8.8%	70.7%
06-07	1964	7.6%	21.3%	63.0%	8.1%	71.1%
07-08	2548	8.2%	20.2%	62.5%	9.1%	71.6%
08-09	2734	9.1%	19.2%	62.6%	9.0%	71.7%

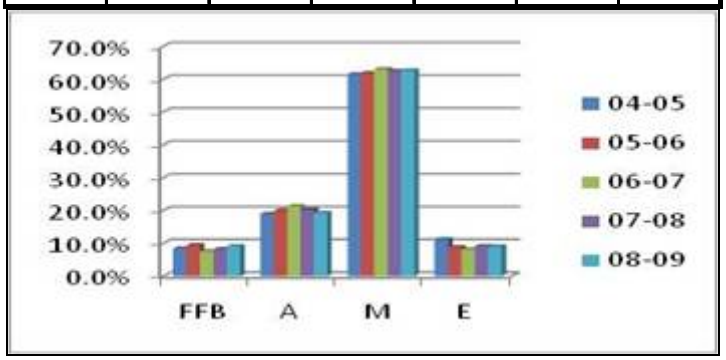

Figure 4

Analysis of data of the overall population, highlighted in Figure 4, shows AIMS Reading results as:

- 72.7% of the total student population reached proficiency (2005)
- 70.7% of the total student population reached proficiency (2006)
- 71.1% of the total student population reached proficiency (2007)
- 71.6% of the total student population reached proficiency (2008)
- 71.7% of the total student population reached proficiency (2009)

Our passing rates appear steady, showing modest variation. It is worth pointing out that AZVA has increased in both student population and grade levels served while maintaining passing rates. Specifically, from 2005 to 2009, AZVA gained 2189 students yet lost a mere 1% point in overall reading proficiency.

Although the difference between these passing rates is minimal, the population increase is drastic. See Figure 4.

We have identified several components of our program that served as barriers for greater gains in student growth in reading proficiency across the specified years. The identified components include: 1) as with math, some students were placed off grade level with the expectation that they would make greater gains and achieve grade level status within the same academic year; 2) teachers were unable to provide instruction as much as needed due to high caseloads and the demands of supporting six core academic curricula spanning kindergarten through eighth grade; 3) teacher interactions were primarily parent-focused when they should have been more student-focused; 4) a constant influx of new students, as shown in Figure 1, created challenges for teachers to appropriately focus on reading achievement and other intervention resources available; 5) course completion rates have fluctuated from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09; 6) mastery levels were set at 70% for math and Language Arts compared to 80% in previous school years and 90% in SY08-09; and 7) due to population growth, our school has continuously had to hire new staff who are unfamiliar with online learning; 8) as mentioned in the math analysis portion of this report, teacher supervision was limited to one administrator per ninety-one (91) full-time teachers.

Importantly, strategies to identify students who are struggling academically in the area of reading were developed and implemented within this five-year window. However, school structure thwarted opportunities and efforts to fully access and utilize tools for identifying, remediating, and assessing growth within this population.

AIMS Results Analysis – Math (Subgroups)

Figure 5: Data shows the subgroup math results from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09 for eligible grade levels. Data highlights the percentage of passing rates for the total population.

MATH 04-05 through 08-09 AIMS Summary (3rd-8th and 10th Grades) *Using 2008-10 AMO Passing Requirement For Comparison							
Total Math	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Math % Passing 08-09	59.9%	63.9%	57.5%	55.0%	60.6%	42.1%	59.2%
Math % Passing 07-08	58.1%	58.7%	63.4%	57.8%	57.3%	42.7%	55.6%
Math % Passing 06-07	63.5%	65.0%	64.7%	60.3%	53.8%	42.5%	55.9%
Math % Passing 05-06	67.8%	65.5%	63.9%	53.1%	52.4%	44.7%	NA
Math % Passing 04-05	69.6%	61.8%	59.5%	53.4%	58.2%	42.9%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	54.6%	63.2%	46.6%	54.4%	58.4%	38.0%	40.0%
SPED Math	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Math % Passing 08-09	23.8%	34.2%	33.3%	28.8%	23.2%	20.9%	36.4%
Math % Passing 07-08	0.0%	50.0%	29.4%	28.6%	41.7%	37.8%	0.0%
Math % Passing 06-07	15.4%	16.1%	37.5%	31.9%	23.5%	19.6%	33.3%
Math % Passing 05-06	50.0%	35.7%	46.2%	33.3%	9.5%	17.9%	NA
Math % Passing 04-05	20.0%	23.1%	15.4%	15.4%	25.0%	10.5%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	54.6%	63.2%	46.6%	54.4%	58.4%	38.0%	40.0%
His. Math	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Math % Passing 08-09	52.9%	69.2%	58.1%	51.0%	56.7%	40.0%	35.7%
Math % Passing 07-08	51.7%	63.0%	61.5%	48.9%	55.6%	32.4%	35.0%
Math % Passing 06-07	65.2%	73.9%	63.0%	50.0%	47.3%	34.4%	45.0%
Math % Passing 05-06	65.0%	54.5%	77.8%	40.0%	53.3%	34.4%	NA
Math % Passing 04-05	60.0%	50.0%	50.0%	40.0%	45.5%	22.2%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	54.6%	63.2%	46.6%	54.4%	58.4%	38.0%	40.0%
F/R Math	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Math % Passing 08-09	46.6%	58.5%	48.5%	42.0%	50.4%	33.8%	46.5%
Math % Passing 07-08	51.7%	63.0%	61.5%	48.9%	55.6%	32.4%	49.2%
Math % Passing 06-07	57.4%	58.5%	51.0%	47.7%	49.1%	36.3%	57.5%
Math % Passing 05-06	58.2%	42.2%	60.0%	52.3%	45.5%	34.3%	NA
Math % Passing 04-05	57.9%	42.9%	51.6%	43.2%	54.8%	30.4%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	54.6%	63.2%	46.6%	54.4%	58.4%	38.0%	40.0%
Group is under 40 Students							
Group is above AMO Requirement							
Group is below AMO Requirement							

Figure 5

Our group data shows similar patterns as seen with the overall math scores. Little change has occurred from year to year, and math remains an area of concern for all grades. Concerning trends are developing with students in all Special Education grades and middle school grades within the Hispanic and Free/Reduced groups. The Free/Reduced middle school group mirrors concerns seen in the overall middle school

population. These students have demonstrated a lower passing rate when compared to AMO requirements. See Figure 5.

We attribute these achievement levels to the following factors: 1) many students in the special education population function and are placed below the grade-level at which they are tested; 2) given our relatively small Special Education population, slight fluctuations in scores can greatly affect passing rates; 3) all special education teachers serve students from kindergarten through eighth grade in all academic areas, resulting in less time to address deficits in mathematical concepts; 4) in previous school years, (SY 2004-2005 through 2006-2007), interventions and consultation were limited to phone conferences and email, as regular use of Elluminate classrooms, for online synchronous instruction, had not yet become a norm for the school; 5) as a portion of the general education population, Free/Reduced and Hispanic groups were also affected by a heavy reliance on asynchronous instruction, limited access to certified and highly qualified teachers, limited diagnostic assessments, and placements below grade level with insufficient opportunities to work with grade level curricula. Further explanations are provided in the underlying reasons for performance section of this report.

During SY 2009-2010, Special Education teachers increased the amount of synchronous instructional time provided in Elluminate (online classroom) to at least weekly. They address areas of concern and IEP goals/objectives with the intent of increasing student achievement and overall passing rates. Furthermore, all students qualifying for Title I services in the area of reading and mathematics are also required to meet with their teachers for weekly instructional sessions to address academic weaknesses affecting overall passing rates.

AIMS Results Analysis – Reading (Subgroups)

Figure 6: Data shows the overall reading results from SY 04-05 through SY 08-09 for eligible grade levels. Data highlights the percentage of passing rates for the total population.

READING

04-05 through 08-09 AIMS Summary (3rd-8th and 10th Grades)

***Using 2008-10 AMO Passing Requirement For Comparison**

Total Reading	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Read % Passing 08-09	67.0%	73.2%	76.2%	72.9%	73.6%	64.2%	85.0%
Read % Passing 07-08	66.8%	71.7%	73.6%	72.9%	75.3%	66.4%	78.4%
Read % Passing 06-07	71.1%	71.4%	75.3%	73.1%	70.1%	63.7%	89.5%
Read % Passing 05-06	73.2%	76.4%	70.7%	75.9%	70.1%	63.0%	NA
Read % Passing 04-05	72.1%	69.7%	76.2%	75.7%	77.1%	64.8%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	62.6%	56.0%	54.6%	56.0%	59.2%	54.0%	48.6%
SPED Reading	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Read % Passing 08-09	38.1%	36.8%	42.2%	38.3%	35.4%	31.4%	63.6%
Read % Passing 07-08	50.0%	51.9%	25.8%	34.8%	41.3%	40.0%	0.0%
Read % Passing 06-07	33.3%	31.0%	34.4%	36.2%	39.2%	32.6%	75.0%
Read % Passing 05-06	41.7%	42.9%	38.5%	46.7%	47.6%	30.8%	NA
Read % Passing 04-05	0.0%	30.8%	30.8%	53.8%	33.3%	21.1%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	62.6%	56.0%	54.6%	56.0%	59.2%	54.0%	48.6%
His. Reading	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Read % Passing 08-09	61.8%	76.9%	83.7%	75.5%	68.3%	61.1%	75.0%
Read % Passing 07-08	62.1%	81.5%	79.5%	63.6%	72.6%	55.4%	63.6%
Read % Passing 06-07	69.6%	78.3%	66.7%	76.3%	72.7%	56.3%	89.5%
Read % Passing 05-06	65.0%	54.5%	64.7%	56.0%	66.7%	43.8%	NA
Read % Passing 04-05	50.0%	75.0%	83.3%	90.0%	54.5%	61.1%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	62.6%	56.0%	54.6%	56.0%	59.2%	54.0%	48.6%
F/R Reading	03	04	05	06	07	08	10
Read % Passing 08-09	61.9%	75.2%	74.7%	69.7%	73.7%	64.1%	82.5%
Read % Passing 07-08	60.9%	65.7%	62.5%	61.7%	64.9%	56.6%	72.9%
Read % Passing 06-07	64.4%	66.7%	65.7%	65.8%	65.9%	55.8%	87.8%
Read % Passing 05-06	61.8%	55.6%	70.0%	67.7%	67.7%	54.9%	NA
Read % Passing 04-05	57.9%	60.7%	77.4%	67.6%	69.0%	58.7%	NA
AMO Passing Requirement	62.6%	56.0%	54.6%	56.0%	59.2%	54.0%	48.6%

Group is under 40 Students

Group is above AMO Requirement

Group is below AMO Requirement

Figure 6

As with the overall the AIMS Reading summary discussed previously, subgroup data confirms similar patterns. There are slight fluctuations occurring from year to year. Even though the overall school population has consistently scored above the AMO requirements, there are pockets of concern in the following groups:

- Special Education (Grades 3rd through 8th)
- Hispanic (Grade 3)
- Free and Reduced (Grade 3)

These students have demonstrated lower passing rates when compared to AMO requirements. See Figure 6.

We attribute these achievement levels to the following factors: 1) high percentage of students with IEPs are functioning and are placed below the grade level at which they are tested; (See Figure 7) 2) as seen in math, given our relatively small Special Education population, minor fluctuations in scores can significantly affect overall passing rates; 3) due to the school's structure, all special education teachers serve students ranging from kindergarten through eighth grade in all academic areas, resulting in less time to address reading deficits; and 4) from SY 2004-2005 through 2006-2007, interventions and consultation were limited to phone conferences and email, as regular use of Elluminate classrooms, for online synchronous instruction, had not yet become a norm for the school; 5) as a portion of the general education population, Free/Reduced and Hispanic groups were also influenced by a dependence on asynchronous instruction, restricted access to certified and highly qualified teachers, inadequate diagnostic assessments, and placement below grade level with insufficient opportunities to work with grade level curricula. Further explanations are provided in the underlying reasons for performance section of this report.

Figure 7: Data illustrates percentage of students with IEPs are working off grade level

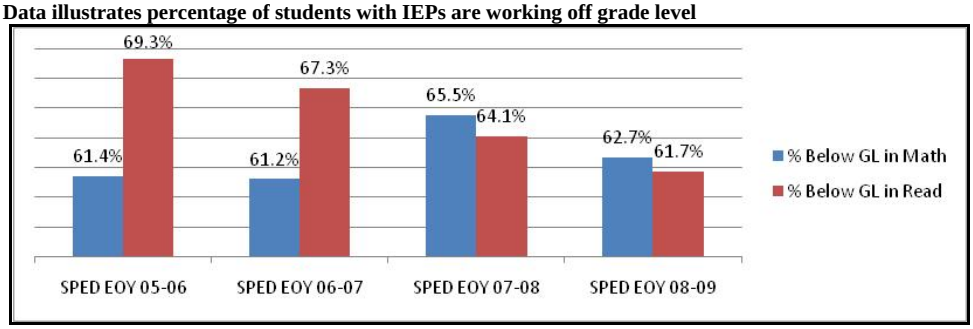

Figure 7

In SY 2009-2010, Special Education teachers increased the amount of synchronous instruction for math and reading to at least weekly. Previously, sessions were held monthly, or as needed. At this time, they address areas of concern and IEP goals/objectives for reading fluency, decoding, and comprehension with the intent of increasing student achievement and overall passing rates. Furthermore, all students qualifying for Title I services in the area of reading and mathematics are also required to meet with teachers for weekly instructional sessions to address academic weaknesses affecting overall passing rates. To address concerns identified in Special Education, AZVA is piloting the Barton Reading Program, a one-on-one tutoring system for children who struggle due to dyslexia or a learning disability. Currently, twenty-one (21) students are enrolled in the reading program; data is being collected for analysis.

AZVA has decided the proposed modifications and structural changes discussed in the following section of this report will benefit all students, especially those who are struggling academically or in the identified subgroups. With this, during the SY 2009-2010, AZVA decided to transition from a targeted assistance Title I program to a schoolwide program. Consequently, the overall revamping of the school's structure will proactively address the academic areas of concern of all students.

Underlying Reasons for Performance

AZVA has identified numerous causes for the school's level of academic performance to date. Some of these issues have been address while some are in progress. A brief summary of each issue, including the school's response and current status, is included below.

1. **Limited synchronous instruction**

***The Issue*:** At the advent of our charter period, instruction and teacher/student interactions were limited to emails and phone conferences, and this negatively affected our ability to assess student progress and academic performance. Students worked mostly asynchronously and had access to curriculum through the

online platform, print materials, supplies, and manipulatives. At home, a student worked under the supervision of a learning coach, most often his/her parent, and the direction of a certified and highly qualified teacher. Teachers depended highly on learning coaches' involvement as they were guiding the students through the curriculum regularly. It was difficult for teachers to analyze and measure student performance beyond the limited information supplied through online monitoring systems and infrequent submitted work samples. A need became apparent to strengthen the teacher/student relationship to ensure better academic progress.

School Response: In 2005-2006, AZVA piloted the use of Elluminate, an online classroom, which allowed teachers to provide interactive, synchronous instruction. Unfortunately, as a pilot program, few teachers used this tool, and families were reluctant to participate in these virtual sessions due to technological challenges and fear of change. However, over the next two school years, AZVA continued to encourage the use of this program. Gradually, parent opinions shifted as they recognized the numerous benefits of the online classroom and direct connections to their children's teacher. By SY2008-09, teachers were required to offer live synchronous instruction on a weekly basis. Further, it was required that sessions be recorded and sent to students to provide the opportunity to review the material repeatedly. Despite inconsistencies with respect to frequency of use, teacher ability level, student attendance, and lesson structure, Elluminate provided a platform more akin to the traditional classroom setting where students could interact directly with teachers, peers, and the curriculum.

Current Status: As of SY2008-2009, to increase the amount of synchronous instructional time with students, all teachers are responsible for planning, scheduling, and hosting instructional sessions on a continuous basis. Students and their learning coaches are informed of these sessions in several ways: newsletters, online school networking sites, conference calls, weekly updates, auto-dialers, and internal email.

As we have increased the amount of synchronous instruction with a Highly Qualified teacher, there has been a positive effect on student achievement. Specifically, programs at the high school level that previously required regular attendance in Elluminate demonstrated some academic gains.

Figure 8: Data illustrates HS passing percentages above AMO are higher in 10th than 3rd-8th grades on average.

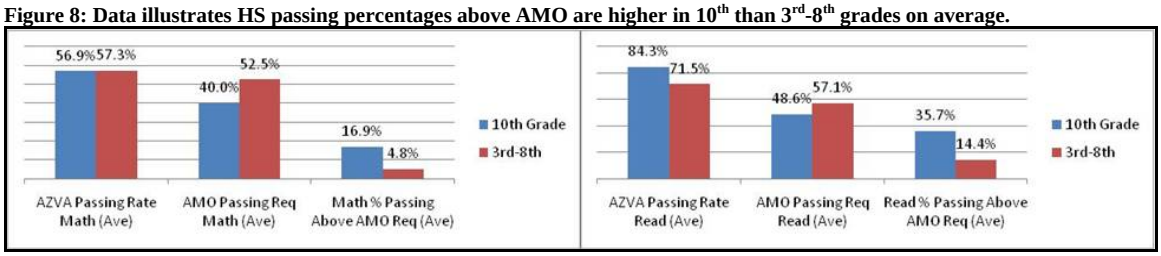

Figure 8

An example of improved academic gains can be seen in Figure 8. AZVA's high school program increased the amount of synchronous sessions from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009. High school required students regularly attend Elluminate instructional sessions and office hours. In addition, work samples were collected at least weekly in each course. The percentage of students who passed AIMS in both Math and Reading improved from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 by 3.6% and 6.6% respectively. In 2008-2009, high school students surpassed the AMO requirement in both math and reading by greater percentages than did students in grades 3-8 who do not attend as many synchronous sessions or submit as many work samples. While frequent use of Elluminate by both teachers and students has increased substantially, our current focus extends this effort to improving the academic quality and effectiveness of those sessions.

2. Disproportionate amount of students placed below grade level

***The Issue*:** Students were placed in courses based on limited diagnostic assessments and parent recommendation. From 2003-2004 until 2007-2008, these diagnostic assessments were aligned to courses, rather than state standards. Further, they were difficult to administer, score, and utilize as an effective diagnostic tool. Students who were academically struggling often were placed below grade level and did

not have sufficient opportunities work within the grade level curriculum at which they would be assessed. Specifically, during 2007-2008, 23% of students were placed two years below grade level in math and 26% were placed one year below grade level in math. Thus, nearly half of all students worked below grade level. In reading, 10% of students were placed two years below grade level and 16% were placed one year below grade level. Combined, 26% of total students were placed below grade level for reading in 2007-2008. Our overall assumption was students would benefit by being placed at their instructional level initially, and work toward grade level at an accelerated pace. However, this did not happen. These students remained below grade level and failed to meet the state proficiency levels.

***School Response*:** From 2003-2004 until 2007-2008, students were permitted to work two years below grade level in math and Language Arts. Course placement was based on diagnostic assessments and parent recommendation.

In 2008-2009, some students were able to work one year below grade level in math and Language Arts. Course placement continued to be based on diagnostic assessments and parent recommendation. In doing so, we reduced the amount of students functioning off multiple grade levels by 11% in math and 1% in Language Arts.

Current Status: We currently place the majority of students in grade level courses, with a small exception for students whose IEPs mandate otherwise. At this time, students' academic deficiencies are identified through Scantron Performance Series, a researched based, online assessment program. At-risk students receive additional interventions on a weekly basis. These interventions are provided by Highly Qualified teachers, guided by state standards, and measured by Scantron Achievement Series assessments. This practice allows ample exposure to and practice with grade level material along with structured support to remediate deficiencies. Rates from the current school year show that below grade level placements have decreased by 14% in math and 9% in Language Arts.

3. **Inconsistent progress measures and incompatibility between internal measures of progress and AIMS proficiency levels**

***The Issue*:** AZVA provides all students with the following six courses: Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, History, Music, and Art. In addition, students may take Music Appreciation, Physical Education, and World Language courses. Since AZVA's K-8 program is mastery based, each year we have set curriculum mastery levels that we encourage all students to meet or exceed. These levels have fluctuated throughout the past eight years. From 2003-2004 to 2005-2006, AZVA required students to reach 80% in all courses to reach mastery and completion. During that time, many families reported our curriculum was challenging and that attaining 80% was too demanding. As a result, we decreased our expectations of completed curriculum in Science, History, Music, and Art and created a tiered mastery expectation rate. For the next three academic years, 2006-2007 until 2008-2009, AZVA required that students achieve 80% completion in Math and Language Arts, 60% in Science and History, and 40% in Music and Art. As a result, students did not have to complete all lessons, assignments, or assessments to "master" the curriculum.

In addition, during the first six years AZVA was in operation, we relied solely on student progress in our online curriculum to inform us of student academic achievement, resulting in an incomplete picture of student learning. After the first few years, we learned student success in our online courses was not a predictor of academic success as measured by state testing. While we requested quarterly work samples from students for core subjects, submission rates remained low; despite strong messaging that this practice was mandatory. We did not connect report card grades to work sample submission or quality, but instead to online course completion. Therefore, many families failed to submit work samples as requested. When students did turn in work samples, they were often one-page documents that did not accurately reflect the depth of their knowledge and comprehension. Over the years, too many students considered proficient through our measures, were not. As a result, our internal measures of student progress were not good indicators of accurate academic achievement.

School Response: In an effort to develop better means for measuring progress and identifying accurate indicators of proficiency, we have introduced assessment tools and have redefined school policies and practices.

In 2008-2009, AZVA began using the Scantron assessments to measure math and reading academic levels. All students in grades 3-10 took the Scantron Performance Series (summative assessment) at the beginning and the end of the year. Students who scored below grade level in either the math or the reading assessment at the beginning of the year became a part of a "watch group" and were provided additional interventions during the year to help with remediation. In 2009-2010, AZVA added the Scantron Mathematics Achievement Series (formative assessment) to compliment our use of the Performance Series. All at-risk students (scoring below grade level on the fall math Performance Series assessment) have been provided 15.7 interventions so far this year and their progress is measured through weekly skill checks using the Scantron Achievement Series.

Additionally, we changed our policies and procedures for work sample submission and course completion percentages for 2009-2010. K-8 grading scales were adjusted to mirror AIMS proficiency levels. Falls Far Below (FFB), Approaches (A), Meets (M) and Exceeds (E) replaced Needs Improvement (N), Progressing Adequately (P), or Exceptional Progress (E) in the grading scale used for final marks. In addition, we raised the performance levels necessary for a student to earn an M or an E on progress/report cards to include completing 90% of each course and the quarterly submission of quality work samples.

***Current Status*:** Currently, AZVA students are measured by the Scantron Performance Series in the fall and spring to determine if they are below, at, or above grade level in both math and reading. If a student falls below grade level in math, they are placed in the "watch group" and receive more frequent interventions and regular skill checks through the math Achievement Series. Students below grade level in reading are invited to reading intervention sessions. In SY2010-2011, we will offer Achievement Series assessments in reading and math, and will make skills checks mandatory for all students, regardless of risk, in grades 3-10. Skill checks will be administered at the start of each week. Students who score below proficiency will be invited to attend multiple sessions to remediate and reassess if they do not meet 80% mastery of that week's performance objective.

Currently, 64.2% of students are on track in math and 62.7% in reading to meet the 90% completion requirements. The shift in expectations from 80% or lower to 90% in all subjects was difficult for some students and families; however, we have found that our students are making measurable progress. Moreover, we are routinely reminding families/students that work samples must be submitted, and those who fail to submit work samples become ineligible to earn an M or an E on report cards. Additionally, students who are not progressing or are not submitting routine work samples are required to meet more often with their teacher. In the future, we will pace students through their course and require monthly work samples that align with their lessons and state standards. Finally, student grades will be derived using a rubric that evaluates course progress, work samples, and Scantron assessment data.

4. **Population Growth and Increased Numbers of At-Risk Students**

***The Issue*:** In August 2003, Arizona Virtual Academy opened its doors as part of the Arizona distance learning expansion and as a program of PPEP and Affiliates Inc. The school offered kindergarten through seventh grade and served about 433 students that first year. In SY2004-2005, AZVA's student population was 1019 students. In SY2005-2006, AZVA's student population was 2040 students. In SY2006-2007, AZVA's student population was 3693 students. In SY2007-2008, AZVA's student population was 4878 students. In SY2008-2009, AZVA's student population was 5697 students. Since the advent of AZVA, our student population has grown at a rate of at least 150% yearly. Over the last six years, we have observed a slight decrease in new enrollees each year; however, new enrollees still far outnumber returning students. Specifically, in SY2008-2009, new enrollees comprised 63% of the total population. Please reference Figure 1. At-Risk population growth mirrors that of the general population growth. However, during SY2007-2008 and SY2008-2009, the At-Risk population grew at a higher rate than that of the general population. It became apparent that the school's structure could be a significant barrier to achieving state

passing rate expectations, as the challenges associated with this population warranted a critical reevaluation. Please see Figure 9.

Alongside student growth, new hires and staff turnover have impeded our ability to provide a comparable level of structure and academic support to all students. In addition to traditional classroom duties such as planning instruction, implementing assessments, parent communication, data analysis, and monitoring progress, AZVA teachers are responsible for a multitude of tasks necessary to prepare families to successfully school at home using technology. Particularly time consuming is the task of introducing newly enrolled families to our unique online platform and curriculum as they enroll consistently throughout the school year. The additional duties include: contacting new families via email and phone to welcome them and describe the school model, completing 45-Day Screening, explaining FERPA guidelines, making clear the log-in process, teaching families to navigate through the online school, making clear the attendance reporting procedures, clarifying how to use contingency plans (until materials arrive), explaining how to set up a student account, reviewing the Parent Orientation Guide, helping create a daily schedule, providing support on how to coach an actual lesson, and instructing families on how to access and use Elluminate. Further, all teachers are responsible for the documentation of each of these steps. Please see Figure 10. Consequently, this increase in population has also impacted our At-Risk population, since teachers have had an increasingly difficult time managing the individual needs of these extraordinary students.

Figure 9: Population growth rates for both the *At-Risk population and overall student body. Importantly, the percentages show growth within each group compared to the previous year's population.

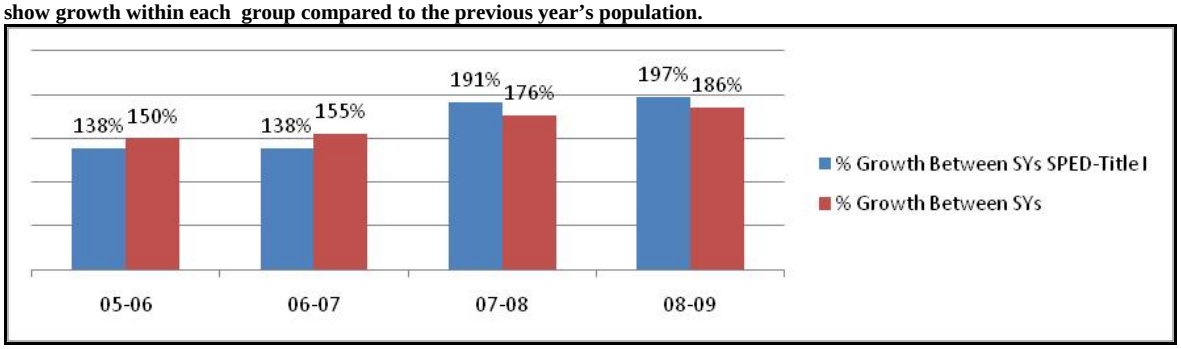

Figure 9

*At-Risk population includes students enrolled in Special Education or Title I due to academic need.

Figure 10: Data shows the percentage of new and returning teaching staff.

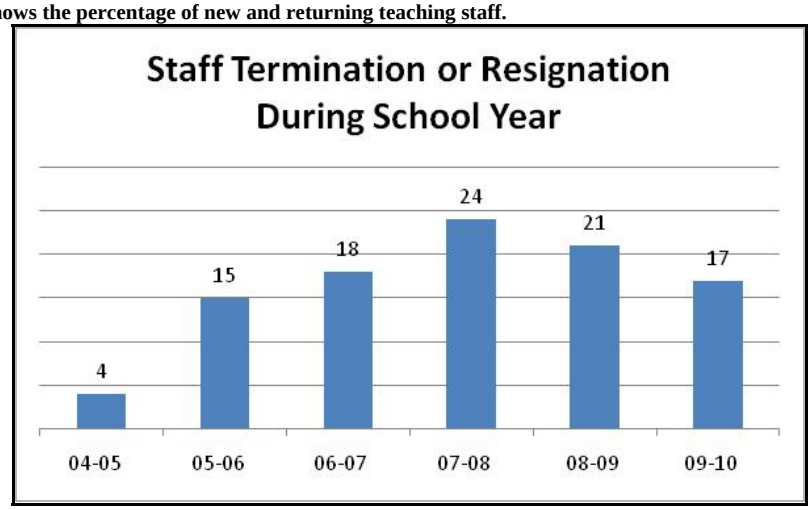

Figure 10

***School Response*:** Current efforts toward school restructure will redefine teacher roles and eliminate many of the additional clerical tasks. However, as students enroll consistently throughout the year, streamlining this process remains challenging. In 2007, AZVA created an Intake Program to combat this issue. While it

helped during summer months, the team was unable to handle the volume of newly enrolled students during the academic year. Therefore, these added duties continued to divert teachers' time away from tasks more closely related to student achievement.

***Current Status*:** AZVA is transitioning to a schoolwide Title I program. With this change, the Intake Program will be restructured. Accordingly, teachers will increase their synchronous instructional Elluminate sessions, provide course and grade level specific sessions, and assess students more efficiently to remediate areas of academic need. These changes will offer measurable benefits to our identified At-Risk population, in that student assessment, remediation, and achievement will become the focal point of all teachers' duties.

5. **School Organization/Teacher Structure**

***The Issue*:** Since AZVA's inception, students were offered a mastery-based program tailored to their individual developmental levels. In doing this, teachers taught all grade levels and covered all courses. It was not unusual to have a student on various grade levels within his/her courses. Teachers managed high volumes of students and multiple levels of curriculum; this has become a barrier to student achievement. Although programs such as Study Island and Scantron became available for supplementary practice and assessment, teachers had insufficient time to utilize them as intended. Further, our previous structure underestimated the tasks administration would face overseeing our growing teaching staff and their increasing job duties.

Teacher survey results consistently revealed dissatisfaction with time constraints that limited collaboration with others and their ability to offer needed instructional sessions. Parent surveys voiced a concern and desire to have more synchronous instructional sessions available to meet their immediate needs.

From SY2007-2009, data demonstrated success as shown by increased state passing rates within the Title I program. Title I teachers' caseloads were course specific and smaller. All Title I students had access to supplementary online programs, participation in regular synchronous instruction, and more frequent access to their teacher. In addition, Title I teachers were not responsible for the clerical duties of the general education teachers. Their primary focus has always been student achievement. Test scores support that this extra attention benefits overall passing rates. See Figure 11. Methodology from Title I will be implemented for all students in the proposed schoolwide Title I program for SY2010-2011.

Figure 11: Title I Academic Progress

Reading Title I Change from 07-08 to 08-09 AIMS		
Level Decrease/Increase	# Students	% Students
Decreased One Performance Level	6	8.96%
Increased One Performance Level	15	22.39%
Increased Two Performance Levels	2	2.99%
Same Performance Level	44	65.67%
Grand Total	67	
Writing Title I Change from 07-08 to 08-09 AIMS		
Level Decrease/Increase	# Students	% Students
Decreased One Performance Level	3	4.48%
Increased One Performance Level	30	44.78%
Increased Two Performance Levels	5	7.46%
Same Performance Level	29	43.28%
Grand Total	67	
Math Title I Change From 07-08 to 08-09 AIMS		
Level Decrease/Increase	# Students	% Students
Decreased One Performance Level	17	13.60%
Decreased Two Performance Levels	6	4.80%
Increased One Performance Level	20	16.00%
Increased Two Performance Levels	1	0.80%
Same Performance Level	81	64.80%
Grand Total	125	

Figure 11

***School Response*:** AZVA has initiated several programs over recent years.

- **2004-2006**

  Academic Outings
  - Goal: increase student achievement
  - Hybrid Setting (Phoenix, Tucson)
  - Teacher-led
  - Offered once each semester
  - Half-day sessions
  - Small and large group settings
  - Multi-grade level
  - Curriculum Areas: English, Math, and Science
  - Students completed a unit in the K12 curriculum

  Program Outcomes: Poor student attendance; varying ability levels hampered group instruction; many logistical challenges due to travel expense for parents/guardians; many students lived outside the designated area

- **2006-2007**

  Hybrid Model
  - Goal: increase student achievement
  - Hybrid Setting (Phoenix, Tucson)
  - Sessions provided weekly
  - Teacher-led
  - Students and teachers together in a classroom setting
  - Direct instruction and group activities
  - Core academics
  - Supplementary, not mandatory

Program Outcomes: Poor student attendance; varying ability levels hampered group instruction; many logistical challenges due to travel expense for parents/guardians; many students lived outside the Phoenix/Tucson area

- **2008-2009**
  Curriculum Specialists
  - Goal: increase student achievement
  - Weekly, synchronous instruction
  - General Education teachers assigned grade level/course
  - Sessions will include lesson overviews, test preparation, and tutoring opportunities
  - Instructional sessions recorded and distributed
  - Core academics

  Program Outcomes: Positive parent feedback; increased schoolwide writing passing rates; access to increased levels of synchronous instruction; increased teacher focus on course specific instruction; voluntary program affected attendance; lessons did not align to late enrollees' curriculum; large class size; students attended sessions outside ability level

- **2008-2009**
  Academic Portfolios
  - Goal: increase student achievement
  - Virtual student portfolios were administered online by teachers monthly
  - Mandatory
  - Identify specific areas in which additional academic focus must be given
  - Connected to curriculum, Arizona State Standards, and Study Island
  - Math, Language Arts & Science (Grades 4 and 8)
  - Linked to K12© curriculum and Study Island
  - Each standard matched with remediation activities; sent to parents

  Program Outcomes: Offered academic structure to conference calls; increased ability to assess progress; required attendance in Elluminate; added a new level of accountability for students, teachers, and parents; remediation activities difficult to follow up on; time-consuming to create; some parent and teacher dissatisfaction

- **2008-2010**
  Increased Elluminate Requirements
  - Mandatory weekly synchronous instruction within certain departments
    - Title I
    - High School
    - Middle School Pilot Program
    - Special Education
  - K-8 Level: Writing, Math, Science, Reading
    - Mandatory only for specific groups (STI, Academic probation)
    - AIMS test prep sessions
    - Recorded sessions available for absentees

  Program Outcomes: Some increased passing proficiency scores; teachers have begun to become more comfortable with Elluminate; positive parent surveys; positive teacher surveys; increased instructional time; increased student/parent accountability; difficult to track attendance (general education); some larger sessions lack individualized attention; increased work samples that demonstrated growth

- **2008-2009**

Middle School Pilot Program

- Families opt into program
- Small teacher-student ratios (Four teachers/110 students)
- Increased access to teachers
- Increased instruction time in core classes
- Pacing of synchronous instruction promoted progress in core courses

Program Outcomes: Increased curriculum passing rates; increased teacher comfortable with Elluminate; positive parent surveys; positive teacher surveys; increased instructional time; course and grade level specific instruction; additional tutoring opportunities; paced schedule with support as needed; increased requirements in work samples; virtual community building; creates a "bridge" to high school and its requirements; prepares students for the pacing; rigors and deadlines of the high school program

***Current Status*:** In SY2010-11, AZVA will provide structured synchronous instruction in all core curriculum courses. Students will be placed in grade level curriculum with few exceptions. All students will be assigned to grade level teachers. At-Risk students will be assigned to appropriate interventionists to address identified deficits preventing them from achieving academic success. Furthermore, teachers will administer the Scantron Performance and Achievement assessments to create a more accurate and complete picture of the student's current level, list of performance objectives to work on, and additional materials for remediation. Administration and teaching staff will be organized by grade and academic area to better address specific needs related to student achievement. Specialists in core academic areas will oversee teachers in an effort to foster team development, facilitate collaboration, and promote professional growth.

6. **Poor Graduation Rate**

***The Issue*:** AZVA's high school graduation rate for the 2009 cohort was a mere 23%; this was well below the state goal of 71%. Students were not earning the credits they needed to graduate on time or chose to drop out of school. As of fall 2009, AZVA's high school served a disproportionate number of academically At-Risk students who were under-credited and working below grade level. In fall 2009, fifty-seven percent of AZVA's high school students were taking remedial math courses and thirty-four percent were taking remedial English courses. Twenty-nine percent of tenth through twelfth graders had less than 5.5 credits (ending 9th grade). Forty-one percent of AZVA's new seniors were 18 years or older at the beginning of the school year.

***School Response*:** Our high school program began in SY2005-2006 and served only 9th grade. Many students struggled during that first year, especially students who transitioned from our self-paced 8th grade program to our pace high school program. We recognized a need for additional support and introduced a high school counselor program in SY2006-2007. Faced with low course passing rates, in SY2007-2008 AZVA began offering foundation level courses to meet students at the level at which they enter high school, as well as offering an extra opportunity to earn credits through a summer school program. Yet even with these changes, at the end of the school year, our passing rate was 57%. Further, forty-three percent of all course enrollments did not result in credit earned by students.

SY2008-2009 was the fourth year of the high school program and the first year with a graduating class. AZVA implemented changes such as introducing AIMS preparation classes, individualized learning plans (ILPs) for all students, and a new quarter credit course called "Finding Your Path" (FYP) that focused on college and career readiness. This course utilizes Naviance, a web-based counseling tool that provides students access to self-assessments, inventories, and information about career pathways and post-secondary education institutions. Four high school counselors used FYP, Naviance, and ILPs to bolster academic counseling for students and raise community awareness about earning credits, graduation requirements, and connecting high school success to post-secondary success. Furthermore, AZVA introduced the Academic Progress Program for one hundred At-Risk students and under-credited students. Students who failed 50% of their classes or were behind by 3 or more credits, were provided weekly success team meetings, monthly

conferences, and additional teacher support. Through these changes, AZVA raised its passing rates to 70%, a gain of 13% from the previous year. See Figure 12.

Figure 12: High School Progress Levels

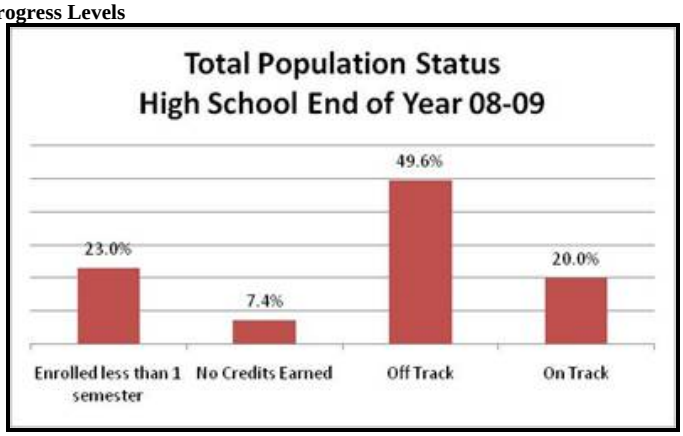

Figure 12

***Current Status*:** At this time, 66% of course enrollments are passing or higher. Currently, fifty-two seniors are on track to graduate this year out of a senior class of seventy. Two hundred students have been placed in the Academic Progress Program, which has become more structured, and renamed StARS- Student Academic Responsibility and Success. Finding Your Own Path currently has two levels, one for 9th and 10th grade, and one for 11th and 12th. Next year, there will be four levels. Students will progress through college and career readiness preparation yearly and earn a full elective credit upon completion. This semester, students have an opportunity to earn high school credit through our new service-learning course that will be expanded and enhanced for SY2010-2011. AZVA will also introduce new credit recovery courses this summer and continue to offer 16 (core) credit recovery courses in the future to meet the needs of students who need remediation.

Note: AZVA's 2009 reported graduation rate will likely increase as it is currently being appealed at the state level. AZVA's justification is that Arizona Department of Education (ADE) opens its database so adjustments can be made to change the withdrawal reason from dropout to transfer. This will raise the graduation rate for our school.