E-Institute Charter High School's

Submission to the

Arizona Charter School Board Association

June 10th, 2013

Because the majority of the student population at the E-Institute High Schools have statistically spent several semesters out of school or experienced more semesters of academic failure than success, significant attention to remediation and basic learning skills must be embedded into all curriculum and instruction.

Curriculum

All curriculum content is offered through a hybrid model of computer-based (A+ Learning, Florida Virtual, Pearson Nova Net) and teacher-directed classes. The content of Language Arts and Math computer classes is adjusted for areas where students need more repetition to increase their speed and accuracy. These computer classes not only allow teachers to modify/individualize practice according to each student's needs but also provides instant analysis of class- and school-wide results at multiple stages to pin-point specific performance indicators that require extra attention. The culminating project for each computer-based class is a program of specific written research assignments that requires students to analyze and synthesize course information and support a selected position by finding and citing additional sources. This component is designed to help students build knowledge (Marzano) through content-rich non-fiction. These essays are scored on the 6-Traits+1 Writing Rubric to increase writing skills for every student as well as for demonstration of sufficient content comprehension. All e-Institute curriculum content is being aligned to Common Core standards directed toward college or career readiness through conventional subjects (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, the Arts and Technology), as well as Dual Enrollment Community College classes and work/study programs. Personal financial management, job-seeking and workplace skills are embedded in other content areas. Reading, math and science teachers participated in Phase 1 and 2 training from the Maricopa County Education Service Agency to design objectives and lessons that shift from fact-based instruction to the new model. All teachers have attended training to increase skills in writing lesson objectives that address the new standards at a deeper depth of knowledge.

The following chart reveals the 2011 – 2012 AIMS results for all e-Institute Charter Schools:

Mathematics Percent Passing					**Reading Percent Passing**			
Cohort	State	County	e-Institute		Cohort	State	County	e-Institute
2012	17	17	18		2012	30	32	39
2013	21	22	**13**		2013	43	45	**32**
2014	60	64	**26**		2014	80	82	**67**

Mathematics Curriculum

Based on the district-wide analysis of AIMS math results from SY 2011-2012, teams of teachers and administrators met to revise and standardize curriculum content in all core and supplemental math classes. Content was restructured to move toward Common Core standards: building conceptual understanding, procedural skills, fluency and application. Additional data is amassed from Nova Net and Galileo benchmark tests given each block and used to adjust modes of instruction and remediation.

The teacher teams also created pacing guides that align the Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-calculus and Trigonometry content in A+ Learning and Nova Net courses to that used in the new Holt series to ensure quality effective instruction for each 12-week block in the school calendar. Math content and instruction is tied to standards across the curriculum as students learn to link, apply, write about and make presentations that apply classroom calculating to everyday life, work, and decision-making.

Recognizing that a majority of the students who are drawn to e-Institute schools are significantly lacking in basic math skills, special attention was given to assigning skills-based practice programs on the computer. These programs are tiered in escalating complexity and operations, and progress is publically celebrated when speed and accuracy are achieved. A Title I Math teacher provides additional support and instruction to assist English language learners and other students who scored in the lowest 25% in AIMS math. Teachers and administrators devote prep-times to provide extra assistance to students working on computer-based practice to ensure understanding. Teachers in direct instruction classes amass additional data with frequent mini-assessments in every class. Upper grade students who did not take an AIMS test during the last round or scored poorly are placed in a block-long computer-based AIMS Math Preparation course enhanced by direct instruction from a certified Math teacher. Special AIMS math tutoring was provided for qualified deficient students through an ADE grant.

Title I District Math Data

e-Institute Buckeye					
9th	**W/D**	**10th**	**W/D**	**FTC**	**Completed**
9	2	21	10	2	19
30.0%	22.2%	70.0%	47.6%	**9.5%**	**90.5%**

Making sense of the Title I Data: Examining Buckeye as our example. A total of 30 students were originally enrolled in Title I e-Math. 9 or 30% were in the 9th grade; of those, 2 of the 9 or 22.2% withdrew from the district. For 10th graders, 10 or 47.6% of the 21 enrolled Title I students also withdrew. The final two columns are students who either successfully completed the program or did not finish the course. Some of those students are also counted in those who withdrew but finished the course before doing so. So, out of

a total of 21 students from this district, 2 or 9.5% **F**ailed **T**o **C**omplete, while 19 or 90.5% completed the course - the highest of all the e-Institute High School math courses (elective, core, traditional, or computer-based) administered.

Metro					
9th	**W/D**	**10th**	**W/D**	**FTC**	**Completed**
49	20	N/A	N/A	13	21
	69.0%			***38.2%**	**61.8%**
	*Most of these came in late during 3rd Block				
Surprise					
9th	**W/D**	**10th**	**W/D**	**FTC**	**Completed**
25	6	29	12	8	25
46.3%	24.0%	53.7%	41.4%	**24.2%**	**75.8%**
Union Hills					
9th	**W/D**	**10th**	**W/D**	**FTC**	**Completed**
17	5	N/A	N/A	1	7
	29.4%			**12.5%**	**87.5%**

Metro had the highest number of Freshmen among all e-Institute High Schools. Freshmen were chosen as the key Title I target as they were identified as needing the most skills remediation. **Surprise** had the highest number of students overall and both 9th and 10th graders were included in the Title I e-Math program. **Union Hills** had several inherent difficulties toward implementing the same Title I structural program in that location feasible: space for private tutoring and space for segregating 9th and 10th grade students per their grade level is not possible. At this point, there is insufficient data for the **Avondale** campus as implementation is currently being administered. The **Grovers** campus exclusively enrolls Juniors and Seniors, emphasizing students that have passed AIMS math on the majority.

Reading Curriculum

The curriculum for English Language Arts 1 has a strong focus on the rules of grammar and building vocabulary, uses short stories to assess the author's style, theme, and plot, and moves through each step of the writing process from developing thesis statements to pre-writing to final drafts, especially in the skill of writing about literature. In ELA 2, students expand skills in formal and informal writing and in grammar and vocabulary usage. The study of literature is a vehicle for increasing comprehension while examining theme and plot in a variety of genres. Juniors and seniors work on deeper levels of understanding in narrative devices, argument and reason, and on conducting, analyzing and writing about researched topics. World

cultures, events and writers, as well American history and literature are blended in to give a humanities-based vision of our political, social and intellectual development. Students at every level of proficiency are also required to complete research projects of escalating complexity to produce written and spoken presentations of their findings. Teachers provide extra support and practice for low performing students after school and during prep times.

Beginning in October 2011, teachers met during several Professional Development days and after school to realign the ELA curriculum to the Common Core standards combining the newly adopted Holt McDougal textbooks, the A+ Learning and Nova Net Language Arts materials. They created pacing guides to accommodate the content to a 12-weeks-to-a-block-schedule. An additional task for all teachers has been to design curriculum that melds ELA into other content areas. Results from these revisions are gathered and analyzed after benchmark testing and adjusted at the indicator-level. This sequence of assessment/analysis/revision steps is repeated at several points throughout the year. At the same time, teachers and administrators at each site individualize instructional content and methods to ensure challenging content is assigned based on each student's AIMS strand and concept scores. Supplemental computer-based courses on basic reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics are used for students whose deficiencies resulted in scores that "Approach or Fall Far Below" the standards. Upper grade students who scored poorly or did not participate in AIMS testing during the previous round are placed in a computer-based AIMS Preparation course enhanced by direct instruction from the certified Language Arts teacher. English language learners and other students with poor spoken grammar habits also have specific "oral reading and practice" in grammar and mechanics to attune their ears to the standard language practices expected in college and career-ready graduates.

Instruction

Based on the data analysis from the calendar year 2011-2012 for the area of instruction the following strategies and objectives were established. Classroom observations, teacher evaluations, professional development opportunities in the areas of content, classroom management, teaching strategies, lesson planning, technology integration and special education all have been reviewed and evaluated to insure optimal outcomes in the area of instruction.

The beginning of the 2012-2013 school year baseline testing for all students was conducted using the BASI testing instrument. The data analysis of this information provided a framework for insuring that all students were placed in the appropriate course, and when necessary, additional instructional support was provided to insure academic growth in the areas of math, science, language arts and reading. At the onset of the 2012-13 school year the district was still experiencing difficulties with the Galileo program due to unforeseen bandwidth complications. AIMS data was utilized at the independent sites in an effort to schedule classes based upon collective student deficiencies where available.

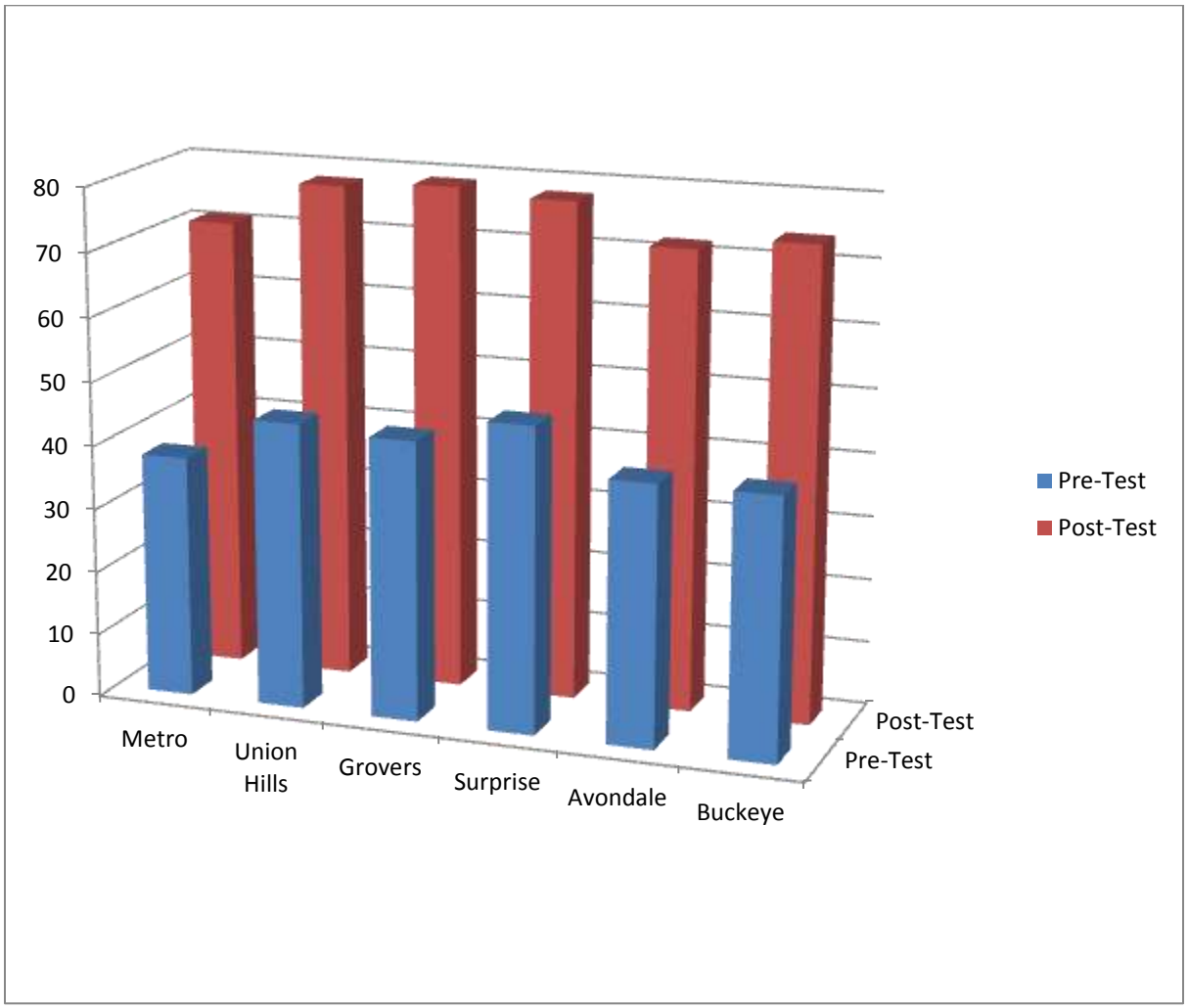
Secondly, all direct instruction class lesson plans, and teaching strategies were reviewed and revised as necessary so that they were aligned with the Common Core. We partnered with Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA) to provide enhancement to classroom instruction and increased teaching effectiveness by use of the REIL teacher evaluation tool. Additionally, classroom observations and informal walk-throughs during direct instruction and computer lab sessions were conducted on a monthly basis. During monthly staff meetings feedback was provided from these observations so that continuous improvement could be realized and measured.

Instructional staff attended professional development seminars presented by MECSA as well as Common Core Curriculum training. Also, professional development seminars were presented on site to further support instructional staff development.

Thirdly, in the area of technology integration we employed cross over methods of learning from direct instruction to the computer lab. Computer modules were designed for students so that the learning continuum from the classroom to the computer lab was consistent and supported the learning from the classroom. Recognizing e-Institute High School's emphasis on blending traditional classes with computer-based instruction, a consistent effort has been made to strengthen our technology instruction. We have implemented computer-based instruction with NovaNet Courseware that is quite interactive, aligned with the standards, and makes the assessment of student growth capable through the use of intuitive pre- and post-test materials embedded throughout each course (see chart).

Fourth, effective class room management was consistently reviewed and evaluated so that the learning environment would be as rich and deep as possible for effective learning. Opportunities for continued improvement in classroom management were discussed during brownbag lunch mini PD's and action plans were put in place, as needed, to insure success.

NovaNet Pre and Post Test Data 2012-13

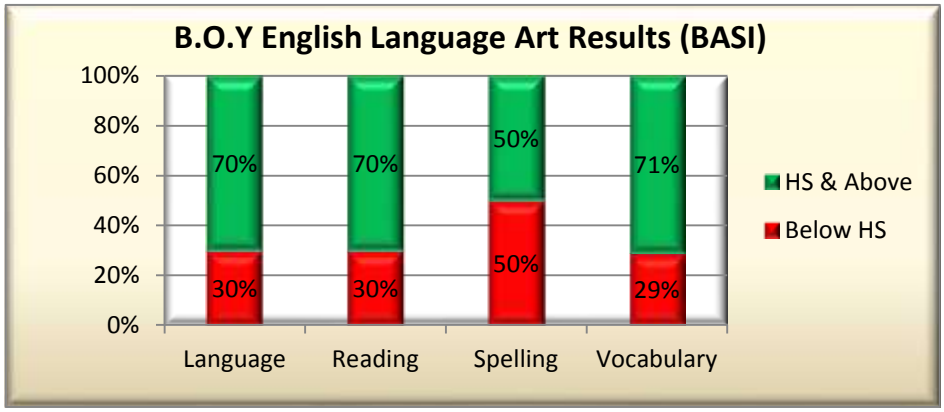


ASSESSMENT

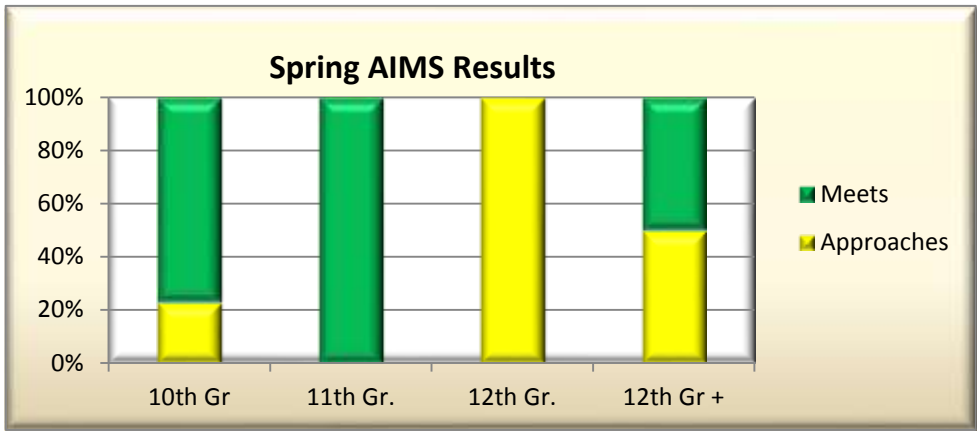
During the spring of 2012, members from each site within our district met and collaborated in content level/cross curricular teams to revise grade level materials to meet district and common Core State Standards. These teams began revising the curriculum maps, compiling content/ grade level resources to bring continuity within our district, identifying the benchmark goals for the 12 wk schedules and revising instruction accordingly.

At the onset of the 2012-13 school year in response to the major technical and synchronizing issues we experienced throughout the 2011-12 school year with implementing Galileo and district-wide deficiencies in both math and reading we shifted our focus to the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI); which is an assessment tool incorporated with NOVA Net (our computer based instructional program provided by Pearson). Baseline data was compiled from the Beginning of the Year test (B.O.Y.)

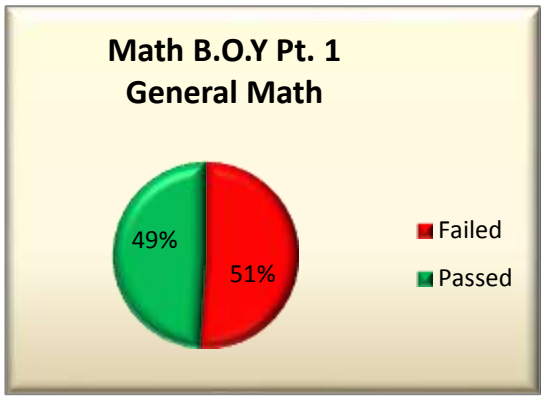
Beginning of the Year Tests (B.O.Y.)

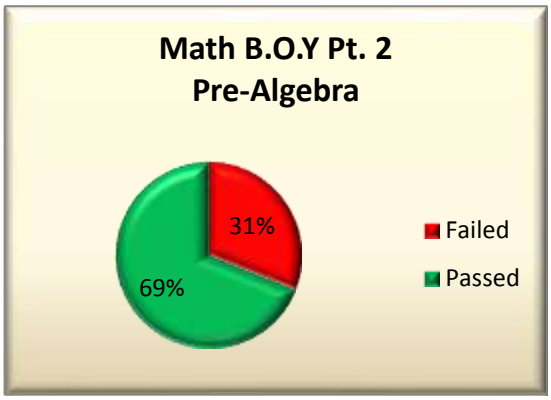


A Strategic Reading course was created to help remediate the deficiencies found on the B.O.Y test for students. Aims results demonstrate an improvement across the board in Reading as a result of the student's enrollment in the strategic reading course.

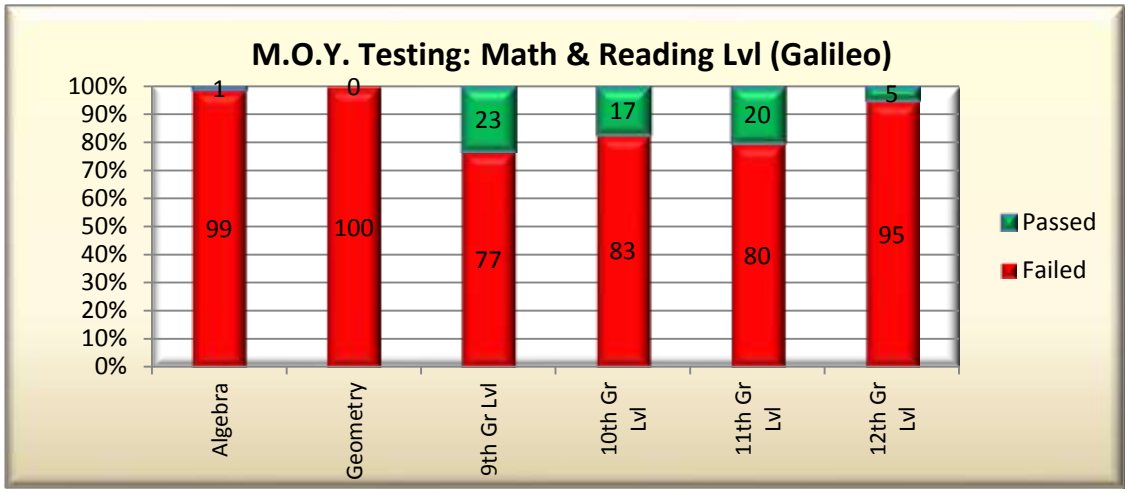


As a result of the B.O.Y test in math, our Title I Math Specialist provided targeted instruction at all sites, and the site math teacher continued in his absence. Xtra Math and Catch up math were utilized in an effort to solidify general math & Pre-Algebra concept mastery.





Middle of the year test (M.O.Y.)

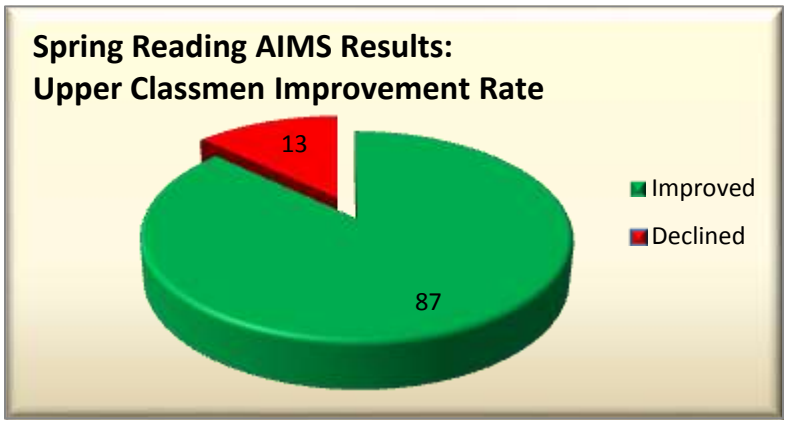


(Test data reflects the students that were enrolled at the time, but not necessarily F.A.Y)

Students enrolled at the time of the M.O.Y. tests demonstrated proficiency in general math and Pre-Algebra, as a result of the remediation provided by the Title 1 instructor, but still lacked skills required to successfully pass the Algebra and Geometry assessments on Galileo. Students were enrolled in the Algebra and Geometry classes as were available based upon students enrolled at the time and student need.

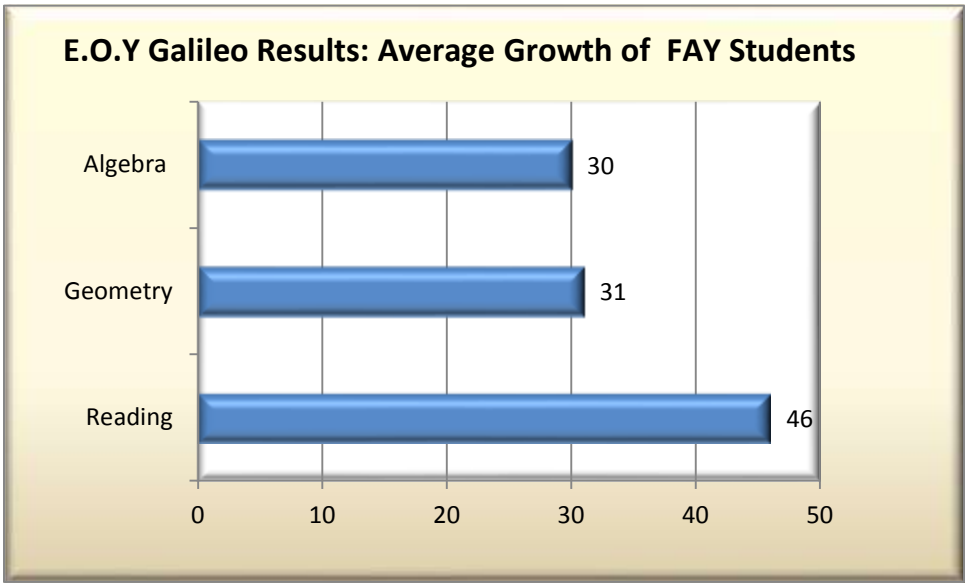
During monthly bag lunches/mini PD's student achievement data was reviewed and action plans were created as needed to meet the need of student remediation and to address disconnects in teaching delivery. Discussions addressed strategies that proved to be successful when delivering certain concepts to students at the given sites and spiraling of the concepts in an effort to aid students in mastery and retention.

End of the Year test (E.O.Y.)



Students demonstrated an overall improvement on the spring AIMS test in reading. Although a few students demonstrated a slight decline in score, there weren't any students ranging in the falls far below category.

Math has continued to be a challenge within the district as was demonstrated on the E.O.Y. Galileo tests. Of the students that tested at the beginning of the year and remained with the school consistently, on average 30% students tested showed an increase in the Algebra scores, a 31% showed an increase in the Geometry scores and a 46% showed an increase in the reading scores.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At E-Institute we recognize the importance of professional development for both our teachers and our administrators. Much of the available research indicates that one of the most effective factors influencing student achievement is having knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers in the classroom. At E-Institute, we continue to revamp and upgrade our professional development program in light of this premise.

Until the 2011-2012 school year, there was no formally defined professional development plan for any of the E-Institute campuses. Teachers and administrators attended workshops and conferences primarily offered by the Arizona Department of Education. An emphasis on math workshops is evident from the invoices available for the 2010-2011 school year and that math training was the focus in order to familiarize teachers with the newly revised math standards.

Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, we began to develop and put into practice a professional development plan that now focuses on achieving student learning goals and supporting student learning needs. This professional development plan is intended to be a collaborative effort with teachers and administrators working together in developing and implementing the plan. We utilize school-based, job-embedded, and outsourced professional development opportunities with the goal of supporting the needs of all staff, both teachers and administrators, in providing differentiated training opportunities.

In developing and identifying the professional training opportunities, we look to support the vision, mission, and goals of the E-Institute campuses and Learning Matters Educational Group. As part of the development process, the plan undergoes annual evaluations based upon student achievement and staff needs. However, given that we are a small district, we have the ability to react quickly to issues that are brought to our attention during the school year. Therefore, in addition to the annual evaluations, we can and do make changes to our training with each block as needed.

We strive to train our teachers in the best practices of both math and language arts instruction. We use student data as the basis to guide our instructional planning. All math teachers are encouraged and required to integrate the concepts learned in professional development into their courses such as charts, graphs, statistics, prediction, etc. Our language arts teachers use reading strategies on a daily basis in the classrooms: graphic organizers, Cornell notes, critical reading strategies, etc.

Both the administrative staff and the teachers undergo formal evaluations two times each year. This will increase to three times each year in the coming year. In addition to these formal evaluations, administrators do walk-throughs and observations on a no-notice basis

throughout the school year. Teachers who need remediation in math or language arts strategies will receive additional training. We are also implementing a program where our teachers can observe their colleagues who demonstrate strong teaching skills in the classroom.

Our teachers and administrators continue to meet on scheduled professional development days to participate in growth activities. The following page shows the professional development days that were scheduled and implemented for each of the last two years. The "District Wide" professional development days are those where all teachers and administrators were required to attend training. The "District Wide" training sessions are displayed in the first two blocks of data. Although the number of all district professional development days decreased during the current year, there was a corresponding increase in the number of individual professional development days for both teachers and administrators.

The last block on the following page shows some of the courses our teachers attended during the current year in addition to the required "District Wide" training. Not every teacher attended every course, but all math and language arts teachers were required to undergo professional development training in the Common Core State Standards in their respective fields.

As you can see from the data, this year we began to rely heavily upon the training offered by the Maricopa County Education Service Agency. This year, McEsa provided our teachers professional development in the areas of: lesson design, writing objectives and sub-objectives, modeling and practice, constructing knowledge as well as Common Core requirements.

In addition to the training offered by McEsa, we also utilize their instructional evaluation tool, the REIL Learning Observation Instrument for our formal teacher evaluations. All administrators were required to attend the 30-hour McEsa REIL Leading Observation Instrument training and the follow-up training. Further follow-up training for the Leading Observation Instrument is scheduled for Summer, 2013.

We recognize that our formal professional development plan is relatively recent and is open to improvement. We do evaluate it yearly as well as during each block and, with each passing year, we fully expect to see changes and improvements in the quality of the training as well as the topics covered. Given this, we welcome any suggestions the Charter Board would like to make for our professional development training in the future. Like our teachers and our schools, our professional development plan is ongoing and collaborative and we fully intend to modify it as we learn from our students and our colleagues.

2011-2012 Professional Development – District Wide (All teachers and Admins attended)

Dates	Topics	Hours
Aug. 10-11, 2011	Special Education, Curriculum, Instruction, Goal Setting	14
Oct. 7, 2011	Assessment Technologies Training – Galileo	7
Oct. 18, 2011	Align Language Arts Curriculum to new Holt textbooks	2.5
Nov. 10, 2011	Academic Vocabulary, Teaching to Rigorous Objective, EnGrade, Thinking Maps	6.5
Feb. 17, 2012	Common Core, Motivation and Intervention, Classroom Mgmt.	6.5
Feb. 23, 2012	Curriculum – NovaNet	6
May 4, 2012	Common Core State Standards, McEsa Overview for 2012-13	6.5

2012-2013 Professional Development – District Wide (All teachers and admins attended)

Aug. 14-16, 2012	NovaNet, Galileo, ECAP/ASCIS, Evaluations, Special Education	14
Sept. 12, 2012	McEsa Professional Development	7
Oct. 5, 2012	McEsa – Creating Lesson Objectives	6.5

2012-13 Professional Development / Administrator Training

July 24-25 and Aug. 7-8, 2012	REIL Qualified Evaluator Training	30
Oct. 11, 2012	REIL Leading Observation Instrument Overview	2
Nov. 15, 2012	McEsa – English Language Arts Phase 1 for Leaders	6.5
Feb. 19-20, 2013	McEsa – ELA Phase 2 for Leaders	13
Nov. 8, 2012	McEsa – Math for Leaders	6.5
Mar. 22-23, 2013	AZLEADS – Management and Leadership Seminar	13
April, 2013	AZLEADS – Creating a Culture of Learning Workshop	7
May, 2013	AZLEADS – CCSS: Implication for Classroom Practice	7

2012-13 Professional Development – Individual Training

Oct. 30-31, 2012	McEsa – CCSS Phase 1	13
Nov. 13-14	McEsa – English Language Arts Phase 1	13
Nov. 14-15, 2012	McEsa – CCSS Phase 2	13
Dec. 4-5, 2012	McEsa – Common Core Standards for Teachers	13
Dec. 11-12, 2012	McEsa – English Language Arts Phase 2	13
Jan. 22-23, 2013	McEsa – CCSS Phase 1	13
Jan. 29-30, 2013	McEsa – CCSS Phase 2	13
Feb. 5-6, 2013	McEsa – ELA Phase 1	13
Feb. 6-7, 2013	McEsa – Math Phase 2	13
Feb. 19-20, 2013	McEsa – ELA Phase 2	13
Feb. 26-27, 2013	McEsa – Math Phase 2	13
November, 2012	McEsa – Common Core Math for Teachers	32
December, 2012	Steve Spengler Science Camp	8
Jan.-Apr., 2013	STEM in the Middle	40

Accountability

William Deming is credited with the adage, “you can’t expect what you don’t inspect”. This statement holds true when implementing plans to improve student growth and performance. We have many plans in place which, if properly executed, will help bring about the improvements in individual student achievement as well as our overall Report Card Letter Grade. How successful we are in reaching these goals depends upon how well we “inspect” our improvement plans in the areas of Professional Development, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

The most effective resources available to increase student growth and performance are the teachers and administrators working daily with our students. Professional Development is an important key to having knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers in the classroom. We strive to train our teachers in the best practices of math and language arts instruction. Student data is used to guide our instructional planning and all teachers are required to integrate the concepts learned in professional development into the instructional time. We provided three levels of professional development last year. District wide (27.5 hours), which included all administrators and teachers; administrators (85 hours), which was required of all admins; and individual (223 hours), which focused specifically on teachers.

E-Institute high schools provide their teachers with more than your basic textbook curriculum. With the addition of online programs like NOVA net, Catch-up Math and Extra Math, teachers have the flexibility to customize a student’s program to meet their specific learning needs. Regular staff meetings allow teachers to continually evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum being used by a student. Changes can be made quickly before a student finds themself lost and discourage in their studies.

Effective instruction begins with properly prepared teachers who have the resources needed to enable students to succeed. Teachers will undergo formal evaluations a minimum of three times next year. These evaluations include reviewing expectations for lesson plans and instructional methods to be used to deliver curriculum; the process for monitoring the integration of the Arizona Academic Standards; classroom observation and recommendation for adjustments as necessary. Teachers needing remediation in math or language arts strategies will receive additional support and training.

Student assessment begins with establishing a baseline upon enrollment. Galileo is used to determine a student’s entry level knowledge of Arizona Academic Standards. Scores are evaluated to create a student’s academic goals. Student progress is monitored and compared with the use of benchmarks and post-tests. Curriculum is reviewed and modified for underperforming students.

Students who have not passed AIMS are identified and receive programs designed to increase their AIMS preparedness. AIMS tutoring is also provided for students in advance of each exam date.

Increasing Graduation Rate

When a student enrolls at e-Institute the ultimate goal is to graduate. Each student has an individual program of study which outlines their graduation requirements. Students are required to access the Arizona Career Information System (AZCIS) to guide them with a college and career action plan. The staff monitors each student to make sure they are on target for their individual goals. We have found that these components are vital to increasing our graduation rate.

Each student is given an individual program of study when they begin school. This program of study is a map of all the classes they have taken and shows them the classes that need to be completed for graduation. Students work with an advisor to plan each block with classes that will enable them to meet the time frame for their graduation. Students know exactly what classes they have to complete and when they have to have them done in order to stay on target. There are also credit recovery classes that are available for qualifying students. Some students also start taking college classes while working on their high school requirements. Working with the program of study and the elements that go along with it encourages students because they see graduation can be accomplished and what their responsibilities are to make it happen.

Students start working with the AZCIS program when they begin school. This program works along with their program of study for completing their high school plan. There are self-inventory and interest tests that help them identify areas of interest for college and a career. They are able to research colleges and start making decisions towards higher education. Students are guided through the AZCIS system with the help of a teacher. Higher education representatives are also brought in to present information so students have a well-rounded arena of choices. The goal for the AZCIS work is to make sure they have higher education and/or career plans that enforce the need for a high school diploma.

Staff support is an integral part for students meeting their graduation requirements. Teachers will meet weekly with students to ensure they are on target. Students that need extra help with classes have tutoring available, along with AIMS prep classes for students that still need to pass. Students are also encouraged to stay at school longer if more hours are what they need to succeed. Staff also involves parents if there are attendance or behavior issues that are interfering with graduation goals so that a plan of action can be put in place. Students have complete support of the staff at e-Institute which plays a vital role in their high school success.

Increasing our graduation rate is essential for us at e-Institute. Our program of study gives students an outline for what is required of them to graduate. Using the AZCIS system gives students the opportunity to develop a plan for college and career. Staff support guides students

through high school and with their plans for a higher education and career. Our goal is to educate students and have them accomplish their high schools goals with graduation.

e-Instutute Charter High Schools Graduation Rate %

Accountability Years = 2010 Through 2013

Grad Rate	2013 (cohort)	2012	2011	2010
4 yr Student	81	71	78	76
5 yr Super Senior		82	82	87
6 yr Super Senior			88	87
7 yr Super Senior				89

Academic Retention and Persistence

Academic persistence and retention is one of the most critical components to the success of any academic institution. Offering a quality education is no longer enough to ensure the success of our students. Recognizing that we had a dropout and turnover rate that could significantly be improved became fundamental to our architecture as we moved forward over the last few years. Almost by default based on the program we offer and the clients we serve, our students fall into the at-risk category. Accepting that they have not been traditionally successful and offering something that is alternative was not going far enough to retain, support and help these kids. Over the last two school years, we have implemented key components and strategies to a comprehensive and identified academic persistence program developed throughout the district. Over time, there have been administrative shifts and changes, which have led to shifts and changes in our programs; however, the fundamental purpose of academic retention (leading to higher graduation rates) has remained the same.

Our student support program has been founded on three key principles: 1) early identification, 2) intervention, and 3) staff/faculty support. We use a predictive model upon enrollment to immediately identify students that have previously determined risk-factors. The most telling risk factors that we have seen students overcome have been statistically poor attendance rates and students in need of credit-recovery. Students with discipline issues at previous schools have not had the same retention success as those identified with at-risk academic and attendance performance rates. In fact, e-Institute High Schools have adopted as a policy that we no longer enroll students that are on expulsion or long-term suspension (one-year or more). The positive affects this policy has had on our other students and the desire for their parents to be confident in a safe environment has outweighed the loss in enrollment. Other identifiers of potentially early intervention practices include students that bring low GPA's, are being re-instated from suspension or probation, transitional students that lack longevity in one institution, and self-identified students. An administrator meets with every identified at-risk student with an orientation either with the adult student or with parents/guardians of the minor. At the orientation, students are put on a comprehensive academic plan (Program of Study) that identifies all credit deficiencies and academic strengths. This also provides e-Institute the opportunity to communicate expectations toward academic, attendance, and deportment right from the beginning. Orientation enables us to cultivate a relationship with the student and a partnership with the parent.

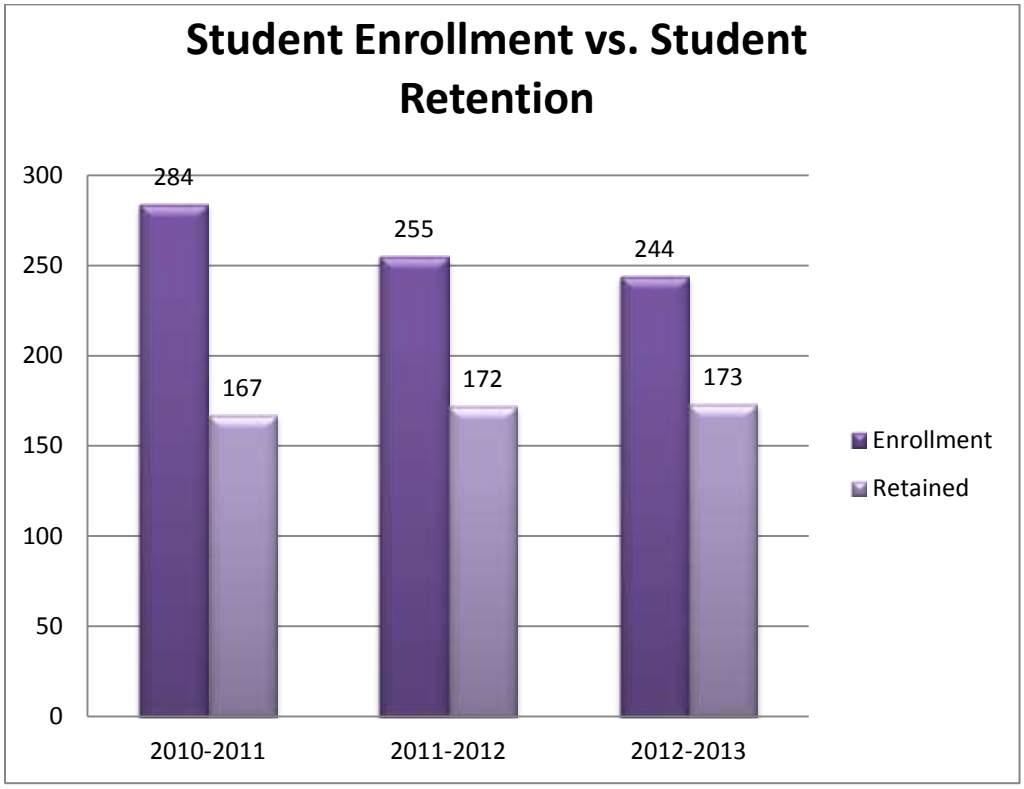
Our first objective of our academic persistence goals was to articulate the district vision for successful retention and the desire to improve. We now strive to increase student achievement by fostering a supportive environment with a distinct focus on effective teaching practices and an inherent structure that promotes flexibility and student support. Emphasis is placed on academic, life, and professional goals right from the onset. Students regularly update

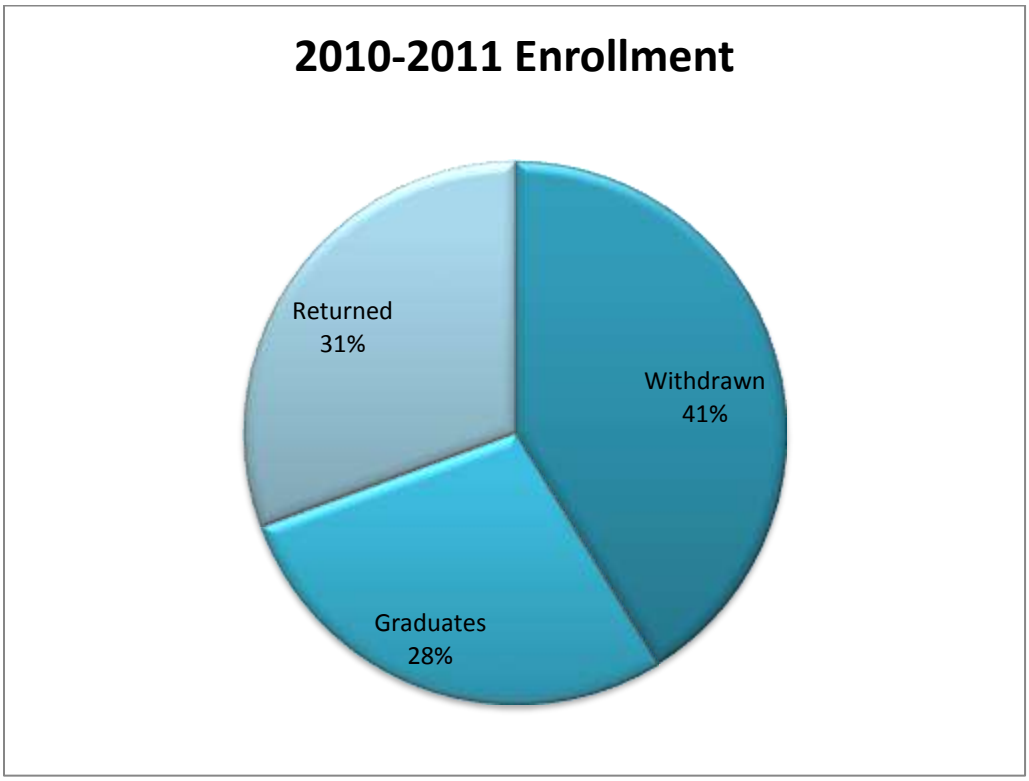
and assess their progression toward life objectives through our ECAP program. Also, the role of early retention intervention has moved away from individuality (student, administrator, parent, etc) and has transitioned to the responsibility of everybody at the school. Specific to a student's success must be staff buy-in into the retention program, which must address the need for academic advisement, support, and potential mentoring. Creating a nurturing and caring environment promotes the desire to work more vigorously for an instructor. The same identifiers that are utilized upon enrollment are also factors for intervention as a student proceeds, with additional and valuable data now coming from staff and teachers (low grades, poor attendance, focus issues, behavior signs, decrease in performance, etc). At these intervals, we now implement additional strategies such as outreach, support meetings, probation, tutoring, academic analysis, continuous monitoring and more. Through recent e-Institute data, we have witnessed the increased graduation rate for super-seniors beyond their cohort year if we can keep them in school.

In terms of staff development and instruction, it has become more and more important that faculty actions, in particular within the classroom, are essential toward our objectives to promote student persistence. Faculty that does not understand or support the administrative and district persistence vision will not trust in its effectiveness. We asked our teachers what areas of concern we need to address and they brought their specific and informed opinions to the mission. Outside of the telling low grades and poor attendance, they emphasized the students' personal concerns and lack of motivation. As we ultimately strive to increase our graduation rate, we have worked to build morale and motivate all participants. By creating a vision that focuses on student success, faculty buy-in and graduation rates will inherently be maximized. One concern that was brought to our attention by staff was the notion of taking action. It is one thing to identify an action plan, but an altogether other thing to implement it successfully. With increased teacher and staff buy-in, successful implementation has definitely increased.

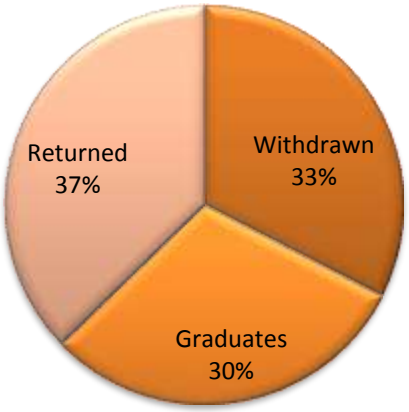
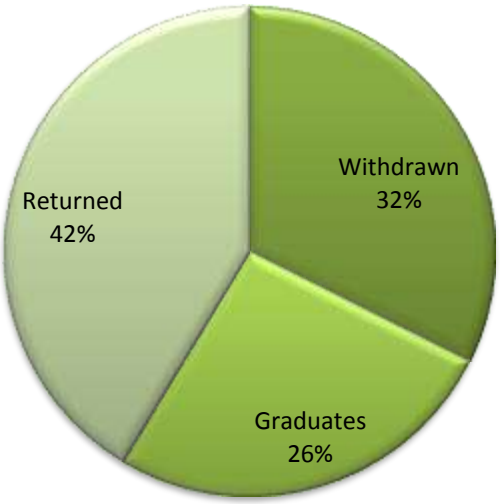
Our ultimate objective to raise persistence and retention lies in our ability to address a student's personal needs and the flexibility to foster as successful an environment as possible. Through accelerated courses and traditional courses, we manage to keep student motivation high in many difficult situations. If a student believes they can promote to that next level, albeit through tutoring for AIMS or credit recovery, the level of persistence is maximized. The flexibility to arrange or alter a student's academic schedule enables us to nurture the tumultuous relationship that students balance between academic, work, family, and personal responsibilities. The more we foster the personal bond between our schools and the students (along with their families), the more we increase our chances for better retention. We have established a form for academic advisement and college and career readiness/coaching. In addition to this, we have incorporated free scholarship-based programs where students can

implement transition into higher education while still in high school. By creating a student-centered focus, over a retention-centered program, we have been able to maximize the benefits and participation of our efforts.


Student Enrollment vs. Student Retention
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
284
167
255
172
244
173
2010-2011
2011-2012
2012-2013
Enrollment
Retained


2010-2011 Enrollment
Returned
31%
Withdrawn
41%
Graduates
28%

2011-2012 Enrollment



2012-2013 Enrollment