Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc.
2012/2013 Performance Management Plan Annual Report

Cover Letter

May 7, 2013

Dear Ms. Morgan,

Background
Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc. (VHM), is a small charter school located on the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) Indian Reservation. VHM was chartered in 2000 to serve the incarcerated youth on the GRIC. Through the years the mission of the School has evolved while attempting to retain this original intent. Administration has employed various strategies that balance between keeping the original purpose of the school and meeting the academic rigor of the state academic standards. . With this letter we would like to provide the Charter Board a window into the processes administration employed to meet the academic and college and career needs of the unique student body that is VHM.

VHM was originally chartered to help adjudicated teens restore themselves physically and mentally, while regaining their academic goals; so that they could successfully transition into society as productive citizens. The school worked in conjunction with The Gila River Juvenile Detention Rehabilitation Center (JDRC) to help incarcerated youth recover lost credit due to being incarcerated. VHM planned to do this by helping students recover high school credits, while being offered mental health and cultural services to help motivate the students spiritually as well.

Four years ago, VHM underwent fiscal turmoil that resulted in total organization restructuring. The school was essentially bankrupt. The Governing Board and the new Administration made a concerted effort to redesign the school. . Administration and the School Board tackled the fiscal troubles of the school, while employing highly qualified teachers and an accredited “online curriculum” to create a Blended Learning model of instruction. The Board and Administration noted new trends among the students they were now serving; and through extensive needs assessments, learned what these groups of students, parents, and Community leaders desired to see offered in the school.

Professional Development
In the 2012/13 school year School Principal Franklin participated in the Aspiring Leaders Fellowship through the Arizona Charter School Association. The goals for this professional development were to increase the rigor and effectiveness of programs offered by VHM and prepare the school for renewal and possible replication after 2015. The opportunity to visit charter schools recognized for the excellence of their academic programs and to meet with leaders in the Charter School Movement in Arizona provided the opportunity to make immediate changes to and incorporate strategies observed during the site visits.
In addition the school provided training on Common Core to all teachers and members of the administrative team.

Enrollment Trends

In the last four years VHM attracted more: mainstream students, teen moms and dads, drop outs, over age, and behaviorally challenged teens from surrounding public high schools in addition to transitioning youth from incarceration. As the type of students being serviced has changed, the purpose and goals for which VHM was founded have evolved to reflect a greater emphasis on career and college readiness requested by students and their families and Gila River Indian Community. To attain these goals we have designed a unique program with a blended curriculum combined with college and career readiness, civic engagement and Akimel O'Otham (Pima) cultural activities.

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
65 students	59 students	58 students	77 students	83 students

Post-Secondary Employment or Enrollment in College or Trade school within the first 6 months following graduation: Based on Student Interviews with students in December following Graduation

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
0%	80%	86%	80%	TBA

2013/2014

Vechij Himdag Alternative is adding Northwest Evaluation Association to Galileo to provide formative data that will correlate to AIMS and PARCC and provide teachers with more accurate student intervention information.
Additionally, VHM is hiring a full time ELA instructor for SY14 and is adding two additional Junior Achievement courses as well as additional CTE elective courses.

At VHM, individual responsibility - taking ownership of one's own life and learning is the central organizing principle required of all our students. We provide many diverse learning opportunities for our students but we believe that it is up to the student to make the decision to help themselves.

Sincerely,
Lillian Kim Franklin
Principal
Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc.

Section One: Growth

Student Growth Percentile

Vechij Himdag was rated NR in this section. We used formative data collected on the Galileo assessment data identified in section two as our indicator of growth across bands on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards.

Math

Galileo results in math indicate that the interventions identified in the mathematics section have been successful in providing growth for individual students within bands Vechij Himdag is still concerned that increase will not be enough to move students across bands in math.

Reading

Due to technical issues, the Galileo formative assessments in reading had only one assessment point prior to AIMs testing. However curriculum based assessments indicated that the interventions outlined in Section Two ELA Reading were on track to promote student growth..

Section One: Growth

Improvement

. We used formative data collected on the Galileo assessment data identified in section two as our indicator of number of students who are likely to pass across on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards. This category also has a very low N count but the school believes that this data indicates there will be movement on the improvement graph this year.

Math

Galileo results in math indicate that the interventions identified in the mathematics section were effective in moving students to passing on the AIMS assessment.

.

Reading

Due to technical issues, the Galileo formative assessments in reading had only one assessment point prior to AIMs testing. However curriculum based assessments indicated that the interventions outlined in Section Two ELA Reading were on track to move students to passing on the AIMS assessment..

Section Two: Proficiency

Percent Passing

This is the same information presented in the improvement section as the two numbers are linked to percent passing the AIMS exam

We used formative data collected on the Galileo assessment data identified in section two as our indicator of number of students who are likely to pass across on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards. This category also has a very low N count but the school believes that this data indicates there will be movement on the improvement graph this year.

Math

Galileo results in math indicate that the interventions identified in the mathematics section were effective in moving students to passing on the AIMS assessment..

.

Reading

Due to technical issues, the Galileo formative assessments in reading had only one assessment point prior to AIMs testing. However curriculum based assessments indicated that the interventions outlined in Section Two ELA Reading were on track to increase the number of students prepared to pass on the AIMS assessment..

Section Two: Proficiency

Subgroup ELL

Vechij Himdag Alternative School has not had any ELL students enroll in the last five school years. But, if an ELL student were to enroll, the school would identify the needs of the student in their individual Student Learning plan and implement interventions as indicated.

Section Two: Proficiency

Subgroup FRL

90% of the student body at Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc. qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. As a school wide Title 1 school all interventions are applied to the entire student body.

Section Two: Proficiency

Subgroup SPED

The low n count for each cohort of Special Education students does not allow calculation due to FERPA.

But Special Education students have the accommodations identified in their IEP as well as participating fully in the interventions for all students and having a special tutor to assist with their individual instructional needs,

Section Two: Proficiency

ELA: Reading

2012/2013 Interventions for all students (including FRL):

- Revised ELA Courses (English 9, 10, 11, 12) to increased rigor in written language and reading selection complexity
    - EdOptions web based curriculum: Structure of Writing, English 1(2011), English 2, American Literature (2012), British Literature (The more rigorous English selections)
- Added School Wide literature study
    - 30 minutes of daily required reading paired with small group discussion and response journals.
- Added Junior Achievement course, "You're Hired" which focuses on reading and writing in the workplace (New requirement for graduation in 2013 and beyond)
- Added Gila River Indian Community Research Project: History of the Gila River Indian Community Water Settlement
  Reading Lexile Level 950+ with Research Paper

IDEA/SPED:

- Hired special education tutor

Vechij Himdag Alternative School (VHM) has implemented various reading strategies according to our performance management plan designed in 2010/2011. VHM has used data from AIMS as well as curriculum based tests to identify areas of need in the academic program. This narrative will show the processes implemented.

Note: The first administration of the Galileo formative assessment in the fall of 2012 was not properly administered and the data for that assessment was not usable. The second administration was successful but does not have a second data point at this writing. The final Galileo assessment is scheduled in the last week of May 2013 see figure 1

In 2010/2011, VHM was structurally reorganizing and making the changes necessary to increase the effectiveness of the academic programs within the school. One of the documents required to show how these changes was the Performance Management Plan (PMP). With this plan, VHM proposed to make several changes in instruction and curriculum. VHM laid out key strategies to address the persistent low performance in reading of the student body. AIMS results indicated that the student body traditionally performed below the 30 NCE level on both Stanford and AIMS assessments.

In 2009/2010 school year VHM administration initially selected the same web based ELA courses as those being taught by the feeder program at Gila River Indian Community Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Facility (JDRC) in order to ensure a seamless transition for students moving to or from incarceration. At the end of the school year 2011/2012 when State

assessments indicated that the students had not made sufficient growth and that the school progress indicator remained stalled. The administrative team met with the team from JDRC to look more closely at the curriculum to see if it was addressing student needs. VHM and JDRC moved to select a more rigorous set of courses that would focus on written language and higher level reading for the 2012/2013 school year.

For 2012/2013 the team decided to move to the more challenging course choices offered by the web based curriculum and put a greater emphasis on written language and more challenging reading selections. VHM also added Google Docs to the curriculum to allow for real time tutoring in writing and literary assessment (Google Docs allows teachers and students to work on projects in real time and gives the teacher greater ability to leave meaningful and effective comments for students as they are reading and writing.

In the current school year 2012/2013, administration began weekly meetings with staff and professional development for core teaching areas. These meetings addressed core class strengths and weaknesses, which began a collaborative approach to making the curriculum more effective.

Following professional development on alignment to the Common Core and observations of strategies used by Highly Effective Charter Schools across the Southwest and California, the principal (Who is also the English instructor) met with the staff and discussed implementing school wide literature study. All students and staff in the school read a selected novel (One title per 9 week period) Every student in the school had 30 minutes of required reading of the novel daily as well being required to keep an online literature journal and vocabulary log(Google Docs), engage in weekly small group discussions and write an essay using examples from the novel to explore a theme or literary concept. This proved highly engaging and had great support from students.

Additionally, the team decided to embed additional workplace reading and writing into the Junior Achievement: You’re Hired curriculum required of all students. Students used Google Docs to share workplace writing: business letters, memos, resumes, cover letters, reports with the teachers, mentors and volunteers from the business community.

The staff completed professional development on the ELA standards under Common Core and decided that as part of the required Gila River Indian Community /Cultural and Linguistic programs that a school wide research project would be conducted annually that would use scholarly articles, primary and secondary sources, interviews and other complex reading (Above 950 Lexile) to write and present a research paper on a topic covered in the Gila River History and Government course. The product of this research would be a written report required

annually of all students. The topic for 2012/2013: Gila River Water Settlement.

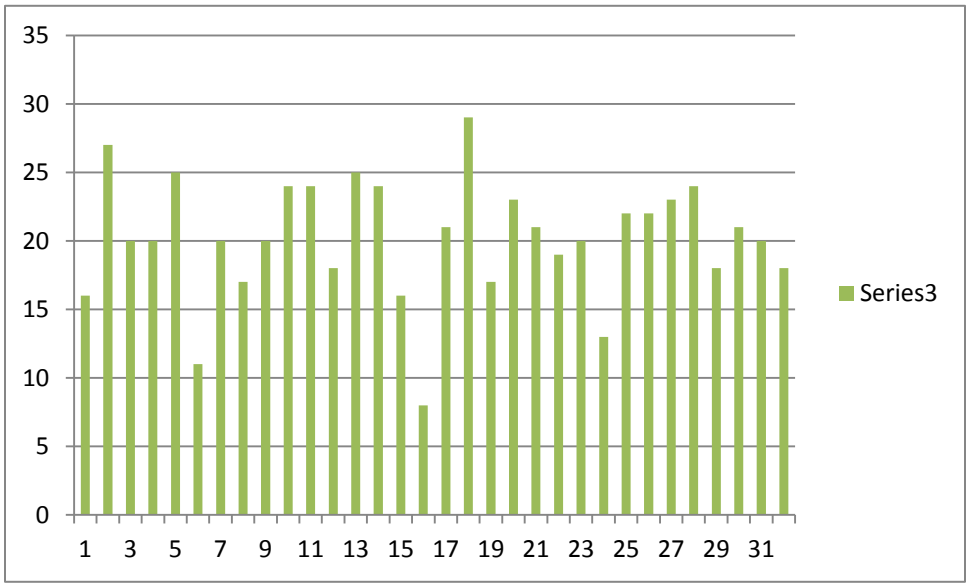

Figure 1

Mathematics

2012/2013 Interventions for all students (including FRL):

- Daily *Mad Math Minute* Basic Facts Review
- Hired a Full time Math teacher
    - Addition of math journals to all math classes
- Added Junior Achievement, *You're Hired Consumer Math* as graduation requirement for 2013 in addition to the four required mathematics courses Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus
- Added Junior Achievement, *Personal Finance* graduation requirement for 2013 in addition to the four required mathematics courses Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus
- Added EdOptions Academy (Summer Intervention)

IDEA/SPED:

- Hired special education tutor

Vechij Himdag Alternative School (VHM) has implemented various mathematics strategies according to our performance management plan designed in 2010/2011. VHM has used data from AIMS as well as curriculum based tests and in 2013 from Galileo to identify best practices by analyzing the organization of instruction and reliability assessment techniques. This narrative will show the processes implemented and provide data to show our techniques of analysis.

In 2010/2011, VHM was structurally reorganizing and making the changes necessary to increase the effectiveness of the academic programs within the school. One of the documents required to show how these changes was the Performance Management Plan (PMP). With this plan, VHM proposed to make several changes in instruction and curriculum. VHM laid out key strategies to address the persistent mathematics deficiency of the student body. The school identified the mathematics program for critical intervention as the Improvement indicators for math had not changed or shown any growth. First, we began to look at instructional change.

A full time certified math teacher was employed in the year 2011/2012 to supplement the math online curriculum. Acquiring a teacher gave the school instructional stability and allowed administration to look more closely at the curriculum to see if it was addressing student needs. As with reading the initial course selections had been aligned with the Gila River Indian Community Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center course selections. VHM administration and the Team from JDRC evaluated the existing math curriculum and found that they couldn't assess the fidelity of the math curriculum, until they had good baseline assessment data.

In 2011/2012, administration implemented a mathematics assessment program called Laurus Math. It was an online assessment program used to gauge the approximate grade level of incoming students. Administration found the utility of the program disappointing and

discontinued it after the 2011/2012 school year. Reflecting on all of the strategies implemented in the 2011/2012, many were experimental at best, however those experiences gave administration knowledge to implement better practices for the current year.

In the current school year 2012/2013, administration began weekly meetings with staff and professional development for core teaching areas. These meetings addressed core class strengths and weaknesses, which began a collaborative approach to making the curriculum more effective.

VHM employed curricular interventions in student mathematics programs such as the one shown in the figure1, below. This is called the “mad math minute”.

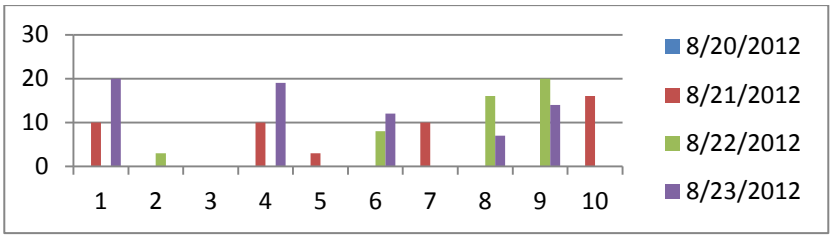

Fig 1.

The mad math minute was a math intervention designed to address the poor basic math operation skills of our students. With this intervention, the students were drilled a minute a day in basic math operations starting with addition and progressing to subtraction, multiplication then division. These grades were compiled weekly in a spreadsheet (fig 1). Through a several week analysis it was found that this intervention was a good start, but not as effective as instruction that was provided by a teacher.

The team then discussed ways to bring a systemic approach to the application of basic math. Consensus was reached to use the Career and Technical classes: Junior Achievement You’re Hired and Junior Achievement: Personal Finance that are required by the school for graduation, and add additional math content – consumer math and personal finance, that would require students to apply pre-algebra level mathematics to real world applications.

VHM also decided to implement Galileo testing, which allows for a series of formative tests that can be given throughout the year. This allows the school to not only compile longitudinal data, but allow the math teacher to assess students for gaps in knowledge of mathematical concepts.

Fig 2 shows the 85 students who were enrolled at VHM throughout the 2012/2013 school year. This type of data is useful in showing student improvement, but much more can be inferred from analyzing the data.

What isn’t directly shown is the amount of students that did not take either test, or the students that took one test but not the other or how many students took both tests. .

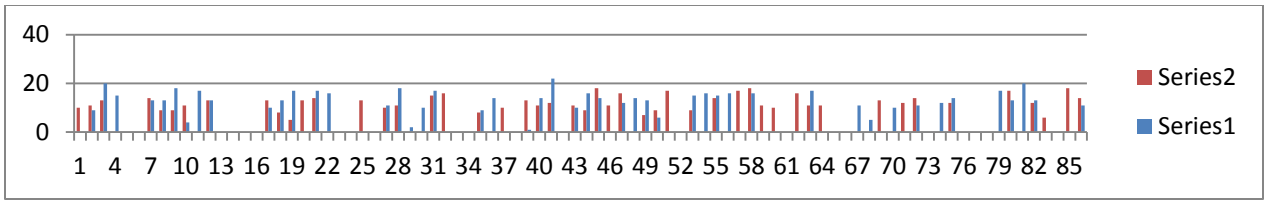

Fig 2.

VHM cleaned up this raw data, and compiled it into parameters that represented the core of the student population it served. Figure 3, shows the cleaned data. See the footnote for explanation.

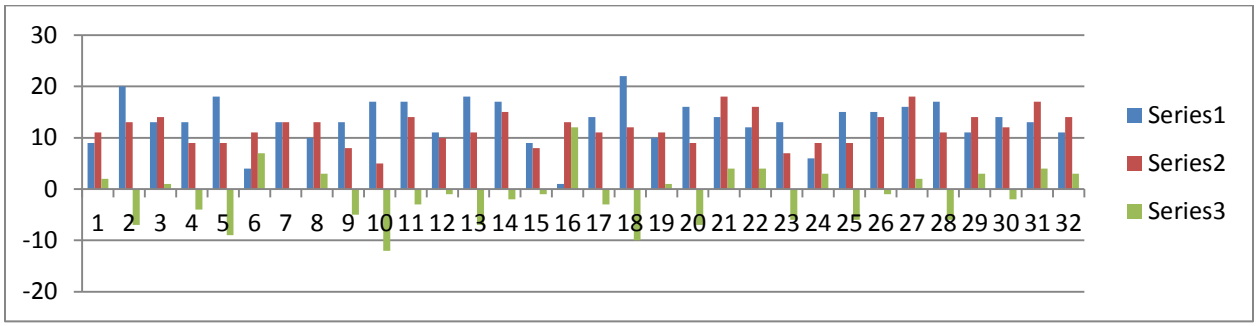

Fig 3.

To conclude, VHM is striving to help its students increase their potential in mathematics. The past couple of years have been a trial and error period for the school, with many different approaches to assessing our unique student body. By analyzing Galileo data, Administration noted that assessments required consistency in student enrollment. Increasing Full Academic Year enrollment while a goal has to be weighed against the open enrollment policy required by our unique mission. VHM has been working with families, students and groups within Gila River Indian Community to address this concern, and have been steadily increasing persistence in students' full academic year enrollment. This has allowed a more effective use of formative assessment tools that can be used for specific intervention. With the addition of NWEA assessments next school year, VHM believes we will have reliable data to drive additional intervention for both AIMs and PARCC. The knowledge obtained from this data analysis is the key to academic success for the VHM Student body

Section Three: State Accountability

State Accountability A-F Letter Grade

Vechij Himdag is an active member of the Arizona Alternative Education Consortium (AZ AEC) Vechij Himdag has been active in the work being done by AZ AEC and ADE to finalize the A-F letter grade that will be used for alternative schools. We believe it is critical for College and Career Readiness indicators to be evaluated as part of the work of Charter Alternative Schools.

We believe that the interventions described in the reading and writing sections of Section Two will improve the similar sections in the state system as well.

Section Three: State Accountability

Graduation Rate

All students are provided with individual student learning plans that combine the elements of the E-cap and an individual graduation plan. Students work with mentors in the nationally recognized Charting For Success program (Communities In Schools) to identify what they need for graduation and make a plan to achieve that goal. As an alternative school, Vechij Himdag looks at 4, 5, 6 and 7 year grad rate for students. We met this requirement this school year and believe we will meet it again this school year as well.

Section Three: State Accountability

Persistence
VHM students and parents understand that VHM is a business atmosphere, with programs such as Junior Achievement, Workforce Development and Service Learning, These programs, in conjunction with the blended learning model make VHM the perfect environment for students desiring not only an education, but a an education combined with work experience to help propel them into the workforce.

CCRI
Working with nationally recognized leaders in college and career readiness: Communities in Schools, and Junior Achievement as well as local business leaders and tribal workforce development, students apply the skills they have learned in the classroom to create dynamic resumes with authentic work and college experience. Vechij Himdag will be adding Microsoft Certification in 2013/14 school year.

- **College Bridge (Mesa Community College and Central Arizona College)**

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
0 students	9 students	6 students	9 students	11 students

- **Junior Achievement**

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
0 students	0 students	0 students	0 students	63 students

Civic Engagement
Leading efforts in Civic Engagement through Service Learning projects with organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters and East Valley Boys and Girls Club as well as Youth Leadership opportunities within Gila River Indian Community and the region, Vechij Himdag students are engaged in authentic ways with their community. Students use the skills and knowledge they have learned in class to help their community.

- **Service Learning**

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
0 Hours	750 Hours	1750 Hours	1500 Hours	1250 Hours to date

Social and Behavioral Health

Ensuring that students have access to services they need to regain *executive control* of their lives and are prepared to enter the world of work, Vechij Himdag partners with entities such as First Things First - Baby Smarts, Early Head Start, Gila River Health Care and San Tan Behavioral Health to provide teen parenting and childcare, social and behavioral support as well as programs designed to support students who are trying to overcome drug and alcohol addiction. Our teen parenting program for both mothers and fathers is the largest in Gila River Indian Community.

- **Teen parenting participants**

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
2 students	18 students	19 students	18 students	22 students

Cultural and Linguistic Heritage

Research has indicated that," the most successful (Navajo) students were for the most part fluent Navajo/English bilinguals" (Platero, 1986, p. 6). Lin (1990) found Native college students who had traditional orientations outperformed those with modern orientations. While the research is not new it supports anecdotal evidence provided by our alumni and tribal education department. Vechij Himdag requires O'otham Language, History and Government for graduation. ***These classes incorporate ELA standards for reading, research and written language as well as the content specific standards.***

- **Number of students enrolled in one or more Gila River Indian Community Class**

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012- 2013
0 students	59 students	58 students	77 students	83 students

Addendum:

Partnerships/programs
Drop Out Prevention
Gila River Health Care/First Things First: ***Baby Smarts***
Community Partner: ***FACTS of Life***
Gila River Health Care: **ASSIST Suicide Prevention**
Gila River Health Care ***Prevention Intervention Team***
Gila River Tribal Education, Early Head Start: ***Campus Child Care Center (6 Unduplicated Students)***
Gila River Health Care GENISIS/Diabetes Prevention: ***Campus Lactation Center***
Gila River Health Care/San Tan Behavioral Health: ***Campus Life Coach***
Gila River Indian Community Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation: ***Academic Transition***
Gila River Health Care: ***Mobile Medical Clinic***
Gila River Health Care: ***Kahv'Yoo Equine Program***
Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc. Required courses: ***Gila River History and Government*** ***O'otham Language and Culture***
Credit Recovery and GED Transfer

College and Career Readiness
Mesa Community College: ***Hoops of Learning***
Central Arizona College: ***College Bridge***
Communities In Schools: ***Charting For Success***
Gila River Indian Community Tribal education ***Parent Night: FAFSA Workshop:***
Gila River Indian Community Employment and Training/ Workforce Investment Act: ***Career Pathways : Employment/Career Certification***
Gila River Indian Community Employment and Training/ Workforce Investment Act: ***School to Work***
Gila River Indian Community Employment and Training/ Workforce Investment Act: ***Internships***
Vechij Himdag Alternative School Inc. : ***Service Learning***
*Business Leader Partnership: Pima Leasing and Finance: ***Junior Achievement***
*Business Leader Partnership: Gila River Indian Community Utility Authority: ***Summer Internship***
*Business Leader Partnership: Native Technology Solutions: ***Semester Internship***
*Business Leader Partnership: Starwood Corporation: Sheraton Wild Horse Pass: ***Employability Seminar***