Vision Charter School – Entity #4430

Narrative to support the Reading Performance Management Plan

1. Previous improvement efforts

Over the past five years, Vision Charter School has made multiple adjustments to the program to ensure students are receiving the education needed to meet the Arizona State Standards, benefit from the courses they take, and be productive citizens beyond high school graduation.

Prior to each new school year, the school's director and language arts teacher collaborate to interpret AIMS reading scores and measure growth from the previous five school years. Special attention is given to score patterns and trends with the intent to identify which teaching methods are and are not working. This leads to curriculum adjustments and revisions that intend to strengthen areas where students demonstrate weakness. In the areas that students are underperforming, the corresponding instructional material is revisited. This meeting is also used to implement changes reflecting updates made by the Arizona Department of Education on the Arizona State Standards. The overall curriculum is not generally replaced, but rather adjusted by adding supporting materials to strengthen student weaknesses. A longer instructional time period is often designated to necessary areas.

Within a week of receiving fall AIMS test scores, the language arts teacher (as well as teachers of other subjects) is given a copy of the students' results. The teacher is given two weeks to study the results before meeting with the director, where they discuss the results and the changes that must be implemented before spring testing. Special attention is placed on students who did not pass. All teachers become responsible for all students and subjects. Where the needs are greatest, teachers are required to teach across the curriculum to strengthen areas of weakness.

The director of Vision High School has been an active committee member of AIMS testing development since AIMS testing came into effect. She has also served on the Arizona Department of Education State Standards Committee. The experience gained is brought back into the school and is integrated into both the curriculum and the professional development of the teachers. Several times per year, a Vision Charter School Board member does a walk-through and at least a one hour observation of each teacher.

To ensure the language arts teacher is committed to students' progress, the teacher is required to submit a draft of all lesson plans for the trimester to the director two weeks in advance. The draft is reviewed by the director to ensure that the Arizona State Standards are addressed and adequate time is designated toward weak areas determined by student scores. Bi-weekly, the teacher is required to submit a final copy of the lesson plan. Additionally, the director does a weekly walk-through to monitor the teacher's interaction with students and to verify that approved lesson plans are being taught. Once per month, the director observes a full class period.

At the end of the school year, each teacher receives a formal evaluation reflecting the observations, adherence to the curriculum, and student academic growth (as measured by pre- and post-test performance). During the evaluation, the language arts teacher is shown AIMS data for the current and previous four years. The questions asked by the directed are: 1) where are the students today, 2) what do we need to do to show academic growth, and 3) how can this be achieved?

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2. Process used to analyze achievement data and findings

Being that Vision Charter School usually averages an enrollment of 40 students, an analysis was conducted by looking at each and every student assessed in spring 2010, the lowest performing year since 2007 (62% met the standards). Of the 14 students assessed, 10 were students who started at the beginning of the school year with us, 4 started after the start date, and 4 were special needs students with IEP's . The special needs students were part of the 10 students who started at the beginning of the school year, meaning only 6 students should have been calculated in. All 6 of those students met the standards, which is common for students to do when they start at the beginning of their freshmen year with us.

It is evident that our scores dropped from 87% in 2009 to 62% in 2010, but it also went back up to 83% in 2011. With the exception of 2010, Vision Charter School has a history of doing well. It is difficult to avoid the fluctuations with so few students.

3. Detailed description of PMP

Understanding the need to show AYP (annually yearly progress), Vision Charter School set forth a more challenging program as outlined in the Reading - PMP (Performance Management Program).

What the director learned after closely looking at the data is that it is very difficult for Vision High School to show ongoing growth. With the small number of students being assessed, one student can make a difference in whether or not the school shows improvement. With such small numbers it became necessary to look at each and every student's score to determine their need. Such action will continue to be taken after each fall and spring assessment and tutoring will be made available for students who are motivated to seek help.

To provide and implement a curriculum that improves student achievement, Vision Charter School will add a before and after school tutoring session for the students who are identified by an entrance test to be reading below the 9th grade level. Additionally, there will be a reading AIMS preparatory course offered during the second trimester to better prepare students for spring testing.

Teachers will receive training at the beginning of each school year on the Arizona State Standards/ Common Core. Implementation of approved lesson plans will be closely monitored by the director through hard copies, walk-throughs, observations, and evaluations. Current research-based materials will be made available for teachers as they become available.