

Andrew J. Brown Academy

Section A: Section A: Performance Review

Core Question 1

1.1 Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectations, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 1.1					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
MS	MS	AS	DNMS	DNMS	DNMS
21/21	B	D	F	F	

Andrew J. Brown Academy (AJB) has *not* met state expectations as measured by Indiana's accountability system. We have not met our *own* expectations, either. But we *are* responding – not with despair or surrender, but with steps designed to reverse course as well as a steely resolve to make those steps work.

This approach is working. There are clear signs of improvement, and we seek our renewal to continue this progress. We have the people, plan, and passion to give students, community, and state the school they need and deserve.

Our recent performance demonstrates the many challenges we face – and our successful steps to confront them.

AJB's performance as measured by Indiana's accountability system has declined over the charter term. In 2010-11, the beginning of the current charter contract term, we achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and met our charter standards. The following year, Indiana introduced a new accountability system in which letter grades were assigned to schools based on their state assessment performance. Under this new system, we achieved a 'B' and received bonus points in English language arts (ELA) for high growth in the bottom 25 percent of students and top 75 percent of students. In 2012-13, our letter grade dropped to a 'D' for overall low student growth in math and ELA. Our performance continued to decline, and in 2013-14, we received an 'F' letter grade. This grade was a reflection of our school's decrease in proficiency and overall low student growth in math and ELA on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) assessment.

However, our focused improvement efforts began to produce positive results. In the 2014-15 school year, we demonstrated a strong increase in ELA. In the 2015-16 school year, we demonstrated a similar increase in math.

- **2014-15:** On the 2014-15 ISTEP+, we received a bonus point in ELA for high student growth in the bottom 25 percent of students. We needed an additional three students to achieve high growth in ELA in the top 75 percent of students to receive a second bonus point. This additional bonus point would have increased AJB's letter grade from an 'F' to a 'D.' While we aggressively targeted ELA in this school year, we failed to show improvement in math and received a deduction for overall low growth.
- **2015-16:** Preliminary 2015-16 ISTEP+ results show a proficiency increase of four percentage points in ELA and 11 percentage points in math. We are confident this proficiency increase will improve our grade to a 'D' in 2015-16.

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Below is a year-over-year proficiency comparison by grade.

ISTEP+ Proficiency Results						
		ELA			Math	
Grade	2014-15	2015-16*	(+/-)	2014-15	2015-16*	(+/-)
3	30.0%	32.2%	2.2%	18.6%	34.4%	15.9%
4	33.8%	43.1%	9.3%	41.0%	48.3%	7.3%
5	26.6%	40.0%	13.4%	40.9%	66.2%	25.3%
6	42.9%	33.9%	-8.9%	25.6%	30.4%	4.8%
7	38.9%	47.5%	8.6%	14.5%	13.6%	-0.9%
8	34.0%	34.0%	0.1%	20.4%	25.0%	4.6%
Overall	33.6%	37.7%	4.1%	27.9%	38.9%	11.0%

*2015-16 results are preliminary

While the 2015-16 state growth results are not yet available, we analyzed our School Conditional Growth Percentiles—which compares student growth across the nation, and allows for growth comparisons to be made between students performing at different points on the achievement distribution—on the 2015-16 Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). The NWEA MAP and comparing to schools nationally, is a norm-referenced assessment that adapts to each student’s achievement level—precisely measuring progress and growth for each individual student. On the spring NWEA MAP, all grades at AJB were at the 99th percentile in growth in reading, and above the 80th percentile in math.

2015-16 NWEA School Conditional Growth Percentile (Fall-Spring)		
Grade	Math	Reading
3	86	99
4	82	99
5	99	99
6	85	99
7	99	99
8	96	99

Although we have seen an increase in student performance on the ISTEP+ and our NWEA School Conditional Growth Percentiles, we recognize that we must do much more in order to accelerate student attainment and fulfill our school’s mission. To continue to improve AJB's letter grade, we need to do more to help bottom-quartile students grow. In the fall of 2015, 42 percent of students were in the bottom quartile, based on our NWEA results. These results reflect our students’ academic deficit and opportunity for improvement. In the 2015-16 school year, we made many improvements to our intervention program, as outlined below, to provide additional academic support to our bottom quartile of students.

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Below is our expected timeline for AJB to earn a 'C' on the state's letter grade system*:

Baseline 2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
F** (56.4)	D (60.0)	D (63.0)	D (66.0)	C (70.0)

*Under the assumption that AJB receives a 'D' in 2015-16. Timeline may change once 2015-16 results are released.

**Based on the sample 2014-15 report card under the 2015-16 accountability system.

Our timeline for achieving a 'C' letter grade is realistic and yet challenging, due in part to the academic deficits of our newly enrolled students. New students enter AJB two to three years below grade level in both math and reading on average. In 2015, 82 percent of new students were below grade level in math, and 77 percent of new students were below grade level in reading, as measured by the NWEA assessment.

Even with so many students starting their journey with us behind other students – a reality that is unlikely to change soon in a largely impoverished and transient community with a steady flow of immigrant families – we must strive to retain students from year to year (student retention efforts are outlined below). We are pleased to report that our intensified efforts have resulted in an increase in the percentage of students re-enrolling at AJB. From 2013-14 to 2015-16 we saw a 16 percent increase (65 percent to 81 percent) in the number of students who re-enrolled at AJB. We will not waver from our commitment to these efforts, and we expect that we will continue to re-enroll students at improved rates.

Root cause analysis and improvement efforts

Improving programs and procedures requires knowing where they are falling short. For this reason, we conduct a formal needs assessment each spring in which we collect and analyze data on student achievement, school programs and processes, perceptions, and demographics. We used this process to conduct a root cause analysis using the Office of Education Innovation (OEI) performance framework. Based on our analysis, we created a corrective action plan to quickly accelerate student attainment. We found that the root causes we identified for indicator 1.1¹ were also contributing factors to our performance for indicator 1.2,² 1.3,³ 1.6,⁴ and 1.7⁵. Below are findings for the aforementioned indicators and the improvement plan we have implemented during the current charter term to address these areas:

- **Ensure strong leadership.** We recognized that we needed a strong leader to implement our improvement efforts while also adding new energy to the passion our entire community brings to our educational opportunities and challenges. We identified a new Principal with a track record of success. In July 2014, Mr. James Hill was hired to serve as Principal of AJB. Mr. Hill has over 16 years of education experience in diverse educational settings. In addition, we hired a new K-2 Dean and middle school Dean to support our school's improvement efforts at each grade level.

¹ Indicator 1.1: Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectations, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?

² Indicator 1.2: Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth Model?

³ Indicator 1.3: Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?

⁴ Indicator 1.6: Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?

⁵ Indicator 1.7: Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

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- **Improve the intervention program.** During the course of the charter term, we have worked to implement an effective intervention program that meets the needs of students who are below grade level. However, these efforts were not producing the academic results needed to quickly accelerate student attainment. In fall 2014, we reviewed our approach to intervention thoroughly and concluded that it was not systematic enough and that we were not effectively tailoring interventions to best meet the needs of each student. Through this analysis and the support of our NHA team, we identified six areas that outline our systematic approach to improving intervention instruction. These areas are identifying students and developing student plans, monitoring progress, providing professional development for leaders, scheduling intentionally, and creating collaborative teams. We took the following steps to improve:
 - *Identifying students and developing student plans:* We used student assessment data to identify our at-risk students and examined this data to determine specific student achievement gaps. Based on each student's identified needs, we developed student plans to close these gaps.
 - *Monitoring Progress:* We set clear expectations and procedures for our intervention program. This included identifying intervention resources and progress monitoring tools. In 2015-16, we implemented Independent Reading Level Assessments (IRLA) and i-Ready to provide frequent snapshots that would help steer instruction and supplement other assessment data used by our teachers and interventionists. Interventionists also used i-Ready to provide supplemental instruction. This online intervention program provides individualized instruction for students and instantly downloadable cross-grade-level assessments that identify areas of weakness. This enables teachers to differentiate instruction and address individual learning deficiencies. In addition, we gave each teacher and interventionist professional development to learn how to use these tools effectively.
 - *Providing Professional Development:* We surveyed teachers to assess how well they can use data to drive instruction and to differentiate instruction to meet each student's needs. Based on these survey results, we decided to create professional development sessions to help them improve in identified areas of needed growth.
 - *Scheduling Intentionally:* Using assessment data, we found that the seventh- and eighth-grade students were performing far below grade level. We needed to take immediate action to prepare these students for success in high school. We created an intervention room for our middle school and built a 45-minute daily intervention block into our master schedule to address every seventh- and eighth-grade students' learning deficiencies.
 - *Creating Collaborative Teams:* AJB implements a distributed leadership model that consists of a Principal and three Deans who serve as the direct manager for a grade level cohort (K-2, 3-5, 6-8). Due to the need for more oversight of our intervention program, we hired a fourth Dean – a Dean of Intervention. AJB's Dean of Intervention oversees the intervention and special education programs, and provides coaching to intervention and special education staff on strategies to accelerate student attainment.
- **Respond to the change in student demographics.** From 2011 to 2015, our English Language Learner (ELL) population increased from 10 percent of our student population to 37 percent. From 2012-13 to 2013-14, we experienced our largest year-to-year increase when we recorded an 18 percent increase in our ELL population. We were not fully prepared for this shift in our student demographics, and we did not act quickly

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enough to adapt to the needs of our growing ELL population. Over the course of 2014-15 and 2015-16, we took steps to strengthen our ELL program so we can better serve our ELL students. These steps included:

- *Enhanced professional development:* NHA's Special Populations Manager worked closely with our ELL teachers and paraprofessionals to provide training and instructional resources in weekly in-school sessions. In addition, classroom teachers completed Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) professional development by Pearson in the spring of 2016.
 - *Hired an additional paraprofessional:* We hired an additional paraprofessional so we could provide additional instructional support to students.
 - *Created a newcomers' program:* We started a program to facilitate ELL students' cultural adaptation.
 - *Conducted a tutoring program for parents:* We conducted a tutoring program for parents to give them the tools to better support their student's academic success at home.
- **Teacher turnover.** During the charter term, we struggled with teacher turnover. NHA's internal research show that instability in teaching ranks creates a significant challenge to the learning environment, something that we've seen at AJB. In 2012-13, we reached an all-time high in teacher turnover rates when 72 percent of our teachers left AJB. This spike in teacher turnover coincided with the decrease in our state letter grade from a 'B' to a 'D'. We understand that we need to retain outstanding teachers to ensure that excellent instruction is occurring in every classroom, every day, so every student's academic needs are being met. We put the following efforts in place to decrease this turnover:
 - *Improve the climate and culture in the building:* We identified a need to improve teacher-student relationships and staff relationships throughout the building to further enhance the learning environment. Improvement in this area involved programmatic solutions coupled with professional development to ensure that educators knew how to utilize our Behave with Care system and our new school-wide and classroom frameworks.
 - *Improving teacher-student relationships:* We began implementing (more consistently) our positive behavior system, Behave with Care, which is a school-wide behavior management program designed to build trust, increase respect, and nurture caring relationships between teachers and students. To give teachers the tools they need to more consistently implement this program, teachers and leaders participated in professional development to support the Behave with Care program. In addition to Behave with Care professional development, staff participated in professional development on our new school-wide and classroom frameworks (see Attachment A for more details). These frameworks help us monitor the quality of instruction and promulgate explicit expectations about classroom culture.
 - *Improving leadership and staff relationships:* Leadership continually surveyed AJB's staff to gain feedback on leadership, school culture, program implementation, etc. Results of these surveys were reviewed and action was taken to improve the identified areas.
 - *Add extra support for new teachers:* To properly support new teacher's pursuit of success in the classroom, we conducted new teacher boot camps. These boot camps were led by our Deans and focused on the professional development needs of our new teachers. Examples of boot camp sessions included differentiated instruction and the use of formative assessments.

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- *Revised compensation and benefits program:* We believe that attracting and retaining talented people is a key driver of organizational success and that compensation and benefits programs are crucial to achieve our objectives. Prompted directly by feedback from our teachers, and in partnership with NHA, we implemented new compensation, benefit, and retirement offerings to improve our ability to attract and retain talent, reward performance, and respond to the supply and demand of teachers. This includes increasing starting salaries for new and returning teachers with up to three years of experience. NHA also implemented a more consistent approach for performance based increases for teachers with four or more years of experience. This new approach included higher increase percentages than in previous years for top performing teachers in an effort to increase retention of this group.
- *Create a 'High Five' recognition program:* During 2015-16, we also implemented the High Five recognition program. This is an online, points-based recognition program for staff that celebrates the great work that is happening inside and outside of the classroom. Leadership receive points to award to teachers in the system and provide written recognition on a social network platform for teachers doing great things; employees also recognize one another on the social platform. Employees can use their points for their choice of reward from an online catalog.

We are pleased to report that as we began to implement our teacher retention efforts, we saw a decrease in our teacher turnover rates. From 2014-15 to 2015-16, we had a 44 percentage-point reduction in teacher turnover (58 percent to 14 percent YTD).

- **Implemented curricular tools that better align to state standards.** We evaluated our reading and math curricular tools – Imagine It (K- 5), Houghton Mifflin Literature (6-8), Think Math (K- 5), and Holt Math (6-8) – to ensure they align with the new state standards. We determined that these tools were not optimal for helping our students meet the new demands. As a result, we conducted research to identify new, better-aligned programs. In 2014-15, we adopted Reading Street and Math Expressions in grades K-5 and Big Ideas Math and Holt Literature in grades 6-8.
- **Improve instructional practices and procedures.** We had great variances in instructional practices and procedures in each classroom and within each grade-level wing. In turn, this created great variances in student learning. We set the following practices and procedures in place to improve instruction throughout the building:
 - *Strengthened our assessment strategy:* We evaluated our assessment tools and strategy to determine if we had the most relevant data available to drive instruction and improve student attainment. We determined that we needed both an assessment that better aligned to the ISTEP+ assessment and a progress monitoring tool to gauge student progress throughout the year. Based on this evaluation, we strengthened our assessment strategy in the following ways:
 - We adopted common assessments in ELA and math that align to the state's Learning Standards to provide common benchmarking data to ensure that students are mastering the essential knowledge they need to be successful on state exams.
 - We continued administering a nationally norm-referenced assessment in all grades in the fall and spring in reading and math. Students in grade K-2 also take a nationally norm-referenced assessment again in the winter. These

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assessments provide an annual student achievement measurement comparable to national norms.

- We implemented two new progress monitoring tools, i-Ready and IRLA, to progress-monitor our students. Teachers and the interventionists used this data to identify academic gaps, determine interventions to meet individual student's learning needs, and measure the academic progress of at-risk students.
 - *Effectively using Professional Learning Communities:* We formed Professional Learning Communities,⁶ at each grade level to give teachers a scheduled time to collaborate each week. During these meetings, teachers and Deans discussed student performance and used data to determine which instructional adjustments are needed to accelerate student achievement.
 - *Define expectations for lesson planning:* We created a template for teachers' lesson plans for core instruction and small groups that all teachers use for classroom instruction. Teachers submit their lesson plans to Deans weekly, and Deans provide feedback. Teachers then revise their lesson plans based on Dean feedback.
 - *Implemented Behave with Care:* Student behavior issues were affecting learning in the classroom. During 2014-15, we had 427 suspensions. To give students a safe learning environment free from disruptions, we needed to set expectations for our students and establish a behavioral management system that students followed and our staff strictly enforced. As mentioned above, we implemented the Behave with Care system. In 2015-16, our suspension rates decreased to 268.
 - *Implemented the school-wide and classroom framework:* As mentioned above, we implemented a rubric to monitor the quality of our instruction called the school-wide and classroom framework. Both frameworks align to instructional competencies that better focus on increasing student achievement. Please see section B under for more details on the school-wide and classroom framework.
- **Improve student re-enrollment.** As mentioned above, new students entering AJB are, on average, two to three years below grade level in both math and reading. We need to keep these students enrolled in the school in order to continue to positively impact their long-term learning trajectory and increase our school's overall academic performance. To improve our student re-enrollment efforts, we have worked to strengthen relationships between parents and school staff. These efforts include improving upon the educational program that we provide families, improving school culture, and implementing many parent-involvement initiatives. In addition, we have ensured that the existing re-enrollment efforts outlined below are executed with fidelity:
 - *Newsletters:* Regular newsletters from Principal Hill and teachers are distributed to parents. These newsletters typically share important information on school-wide performance, initiatives, and programs. We distribute these in both English and Spanish.
 - *Social media:* We have an excellent website that gives parents quick and easy access to general information on the school as well as specific information about their children. This includes academic details such as grades and attendance information. In addition, we make cautious, appropriate use of Facebook and other social media to form connections between school leaders and parents.

⁶ A PLC is a group of teachers that meets regularly to collaboratively improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.

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- Parents without access to the Internet can use the computer and Internet access available at the school.
- *My NHA*: Parents have access to an online student information platform developed by NHA from any computer with internet access through a specially-designed parent portal. The system provides parents information related to assigned student homework, report scores on various assessments, and post newsletters and school calendars. It also provides parent access to information on attendance. The system synchronizes with teachers' gradebooks, and is designed in part to help remind teachers of previous and ongoing student needs.
 - *Classroom communication*: Teachers frequently send communications home to parents so that they know about everything from weekly schedules to educational goals for students. Teachers also share regular progress reports – via letter, online communication, the school's gradebook system, phone calls, and/or in-person meetings. They also use ClassDojo so parents can receive real-time updates on their students and activities occurring in the classroom. ClassDojo is an application that can instant message parents. Teachers can also instantly share class photos and videos and post announcements. These communications focus on each student's academic progress and performance.
 - *Conferences*: The school conducts parent-teacher conferences twice each year. These conferences ensure that parents have opportunities to engage and interact with classroom teachers and discuss the progress of their child. As needed, staff may also conduct home visits. Each year, we conduct a family orientation at the end of the summer so new and enrolled families can meet the Principal, their child's teacher and classmates, and other school staff. We believe these early contacts help establish and sustain a healthy rapport with parents.
 - *Parent Room*: To help parents feel at home in school and to encourage their involvement in their child's education, the school provides a dedicated parent room just off the school lobby. This room gives parents a place to gather, build relationships with one another, discuss matters of mutual interest, grow more comfortable with the school, and gain a sense of ownership with the school.

1.2: Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth Model?

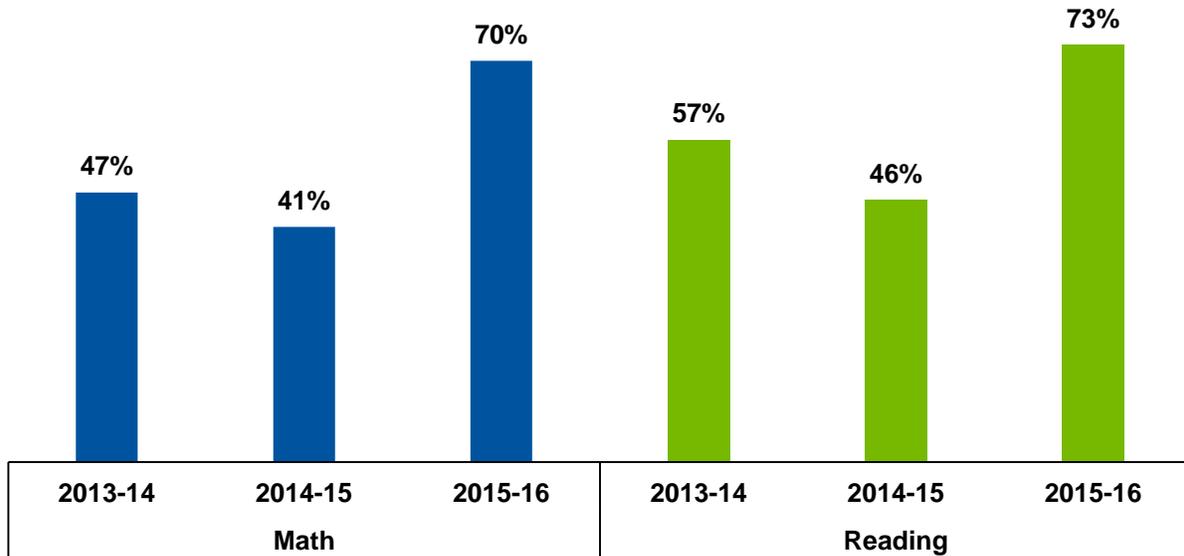
AJB's Performance on Indicator 1.2					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
AS	AS	DNMS	DNMS	DNMS	AS
ELA: 71% Math: 76%	ELA: 71% Math: 62%	ELA: 58% Math: 55%	ELA: 51% Math: 44%	ELA: 67% Math: 52%	

Over the course of our charter term, the percentage of students meeting typical or high growth on the state assessment has fluctuated. We are pleased to report that we are now on the right track to meeting this performance framework indicator. The improvement efforts mentioned above resulted in an increase in student growth. Seventy percent of students are now meeting typical or high growth in both math and ELA. From 2013-14 to 2014-15, the percentage of students meeting typical or high growth increased by 16 percentage points in ELA and eight percentage points in math. And 67 percent of students met typical or high growth in ELA, which is three percentage points away from “meeting standards” for this indicator.

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While the 2015-16 state test growth results are not yet available, we analyzed our 2015-16 NWEA MAP results in grades three through eight to determine our progress towards meeting this indicator. In 2015-16, we saw large gains in growth on the NWEA assessment. Seventy-three percent of students met their fall-to-spring typical growth target in reading, and 70 percent of students met their fall-to-spring typical growth target in math. This is an increase of over 25 percentage points in both math and ELA from 2014-15 to 2015-16. This performance puts AJB in the 99th percentile nationally in reading growth and well-above the 80th percentile nationally in math growth.

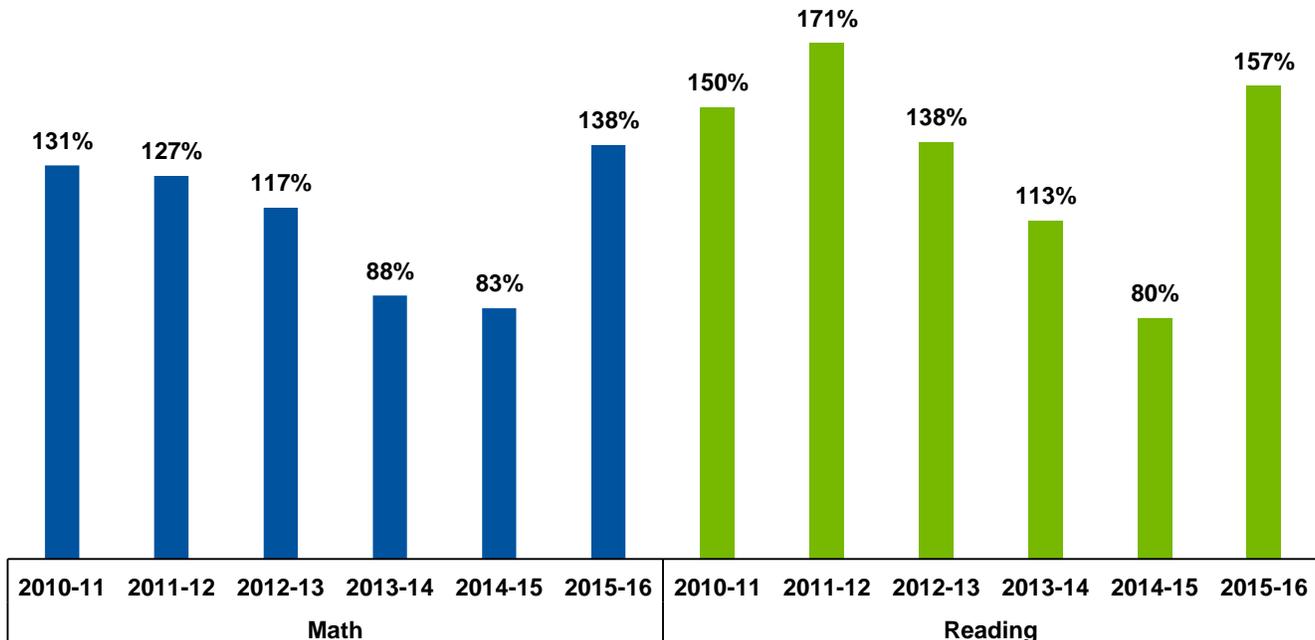
**Percent of Students Meeting Typical Growth* on NWEA Assesment
(Grades 3-8)**



*These results are based on 2015 NWEA Norms.

In addition, the magnitude of our students' growth in math in 2015-16 was larger than in any other year in the charter term; the 2015-16 rate of growth in reading was larger than all but one year in the charter term. On average, our students' combined academic rate of growth was almost 50 percent greater than the national average (100 percent).

Median Rate of Growth* on NWEA Assessment (Grades 3-8)



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*These results are based on 2015 NWEA Norms.

We know that our students must continue to grow at these high rates in order to reach proficiency and to meet this performance indicator. Our 2014-15 median student growth percentiles, as measured by the state assessment, confirm that we can and must improve; the majority of grades remain below the state average (50th percentile).

2014-15 ISTEP+ Median Student Growth Percentiles by Grade		
Grade	Math	ELA
4	53.0	44.5
5	23.0	23.0
6	30.0	49.0
7	40.5	64.0

As detailed in indicator 1.1, we improved our intervention program and focused on effectively using student assessment data to identify each student’s individual learning needs and to drive instruction. We expect that student growth will improve as a result of these improvements. Please see indicator 1.1 for more details about our intervention program and use of data.

Below is our expected timeline for 70 percent of students at AJB to meet typical or high growth on the state assessment:

Baseline: 2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
ELA: 67%	ELA: 70%	ELA: 70%
Math: 52%	Math: 60%	Math: 70%

1.3: Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?

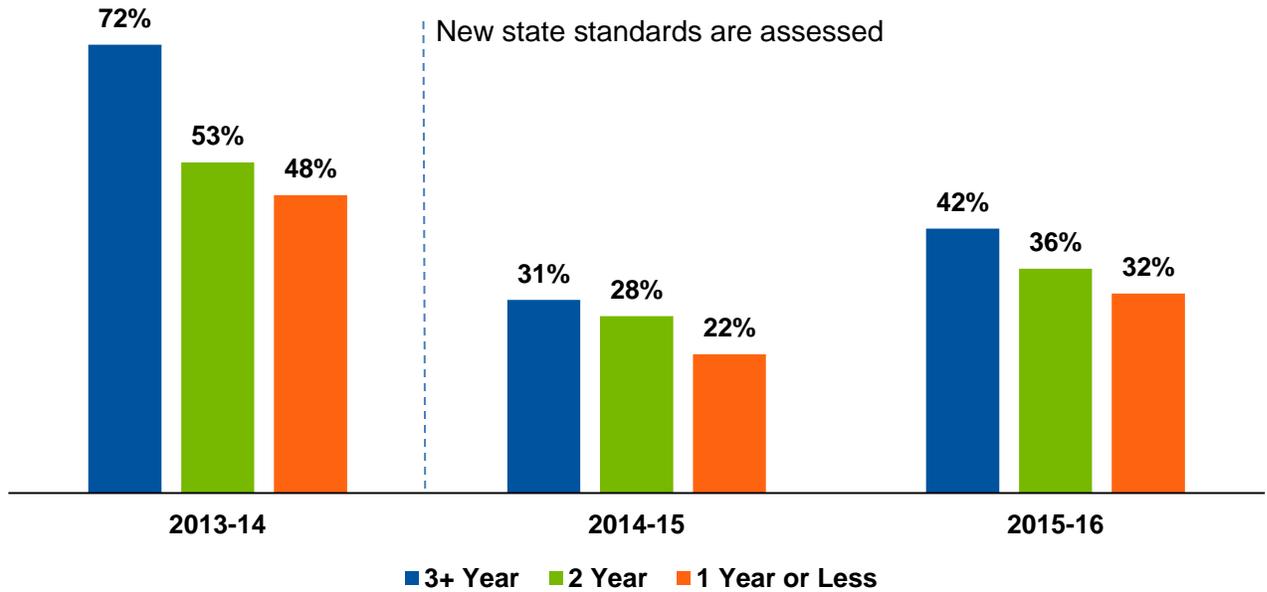
AJB Performance on indicator 1.3		
2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
DNMS	DNMS	DNMS

In 2014-15, ISTEP+ assessed students on Indiana’s new state standards. Due to changes on the state assessment, proficiency results throughout Indiana dropped by 14 percentage points in ELA and 23 percentage points in math, on average, from 2013-14. The state average proficiency in 2014-15 was 66 percent in ELA and 60 percent in math. Because of this state assessment change and the overall drop in proficiency, it is difficult to assess year-over-year proficiency for our students. However, we know our tenured students – those who have been at AJB for three years or more – are more proficient than their peers.

In each of the past three years, proficiency rates have been greater for our tenured students than their peers. In 2015-16, 42 percent of tenured students were proficient on the state assessment in math. This is 10 percentage points greater than the score of students enrolled in AJB for one year or less.

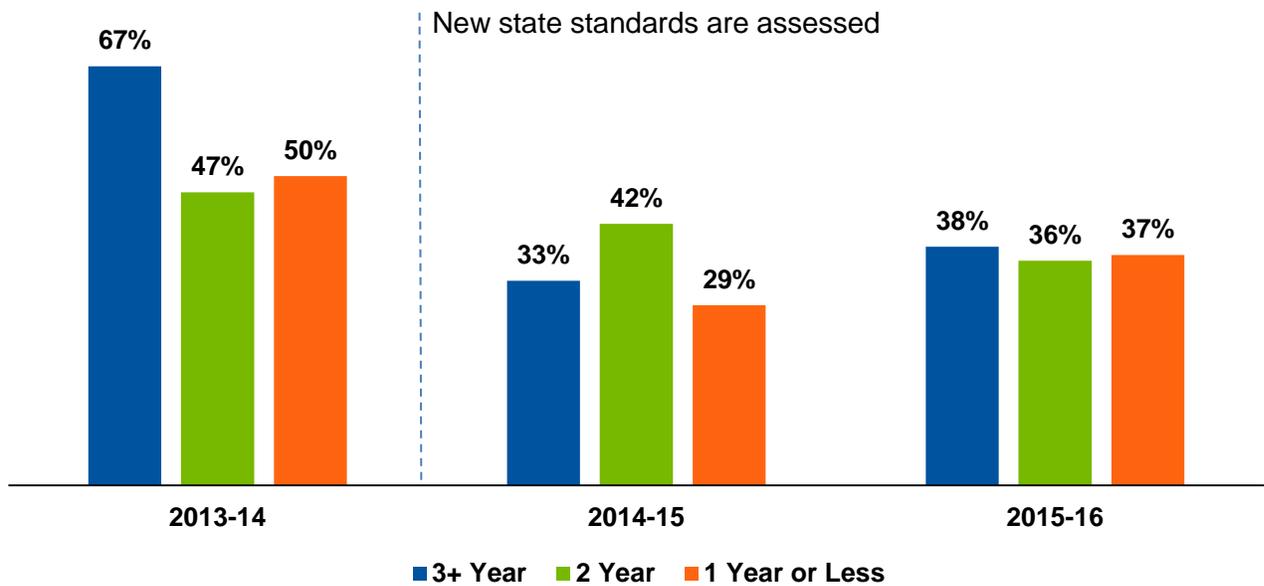
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ISTEP+ Math Proficiency Results by Tenure



Historically, we have not seen this same trend in ELA.

ELA ISTEP+ Proficiency Results by Tenure



In 2015-16, proficiency rates for tenured students were less than their peers in fourth and fifth grade.

2015-16 ISTEP+ Proficiency by Grade and Tenure		
Grade	3+ Year	<3 Year
3	36%	27%

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4	36%	55%
5	39%	42%
6	35%	32%
7	55%	39%
8	35%	31%

During the next charter term, we will emphasize increasing the rigor of instruction in ELA, to address the ELA proficiency of our tenured students. This will include professional development to further develop teachers' use of student assessment data to create effective instructional plans for students below, at, and above grade level. We will also strive to ensure that planning is aligned with standards, weekly learning goals, curricular resources, activities, and assessments. Teachers will receive professional development in cognitive engagement strategies so they effectively incorporate strategies involving high-order thinking questions into instruction. In addition, Deans will work to develop teacher goals in these areas and then coach teachers in weekly one-on-one meeting to help them meet these goals.

Below is our expected timeline for achieving proficiency on the state assessment for 60 percent of students enrolled for two years and 70 percent of students enrolled for three or more years:

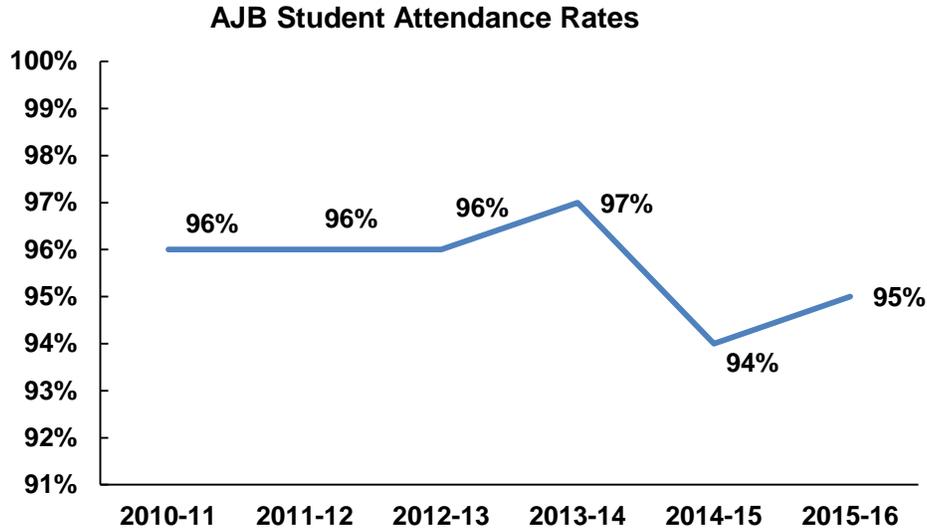
Tenure	Baseline: 2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021	2021-2022	2021-2022
2 Year	Math: 36% ELA: 36%	Math: 41% ELA: 41%	Math: 46% ELA: 46%	Math: 51% ELA: 51%	Math: 56% ELA: 56%	Math: 61% ELA: 61%	MS	MS
3+ Year	Math: 42% ELA: 38%	Math: 47% ELA: 43%	Math: 52% ELA: 48%	Math: 57% ELA: 53%	Math: 62% ELA: 58%	Math: 67% ELA: 63%	Math: 72% ELA: 68%	Math: MS ELA: 73%

1.5 Is the school's attendance rate strong?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 1.5		
2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
MS	DNMS	MS

Except in 2014-15, our student attendance rate has been above the 95 percent threshold to meet this indicator. In 2014-15, our student attendance rate dropped to 94 percent. In 2015-16, we increased our attendance rate to 95 percent and, therefore, met this standard. See below:

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We attribute this dip in attendance to the need for better communication with families on the harm excused and unexcused absences have on student learning and academic achievement. We have made a concerted effort to provide parents with information about the impact of chronic absenteeism. We have held parent nights to provide parents with information and strategies for improving attendance. We have partnered with the Indiana Truancy Department to have representatives discuss the importance of school attendance and provide information on the consequences of student truancy. We have also outlined clear expectations that a student should not miss more than five days of school in a school year.

In addition, we have hired a Student Family Liaison to help remove barriers at home that prevent students from consistently attending school. We also hired an "accountability teacher" who works with students with very high needs and academic challenges to help them feel more comfortable in the school setting.

We will continue with these efforts in the coming charter term – because they have proven to be successful.

1.6 Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 1.6					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
ES	MS	MS	AS	AS	AS

On the 2014-15 ISTEP+ assessment, AJB students' overall proficiency in math was above their peers, but in ELA, students' overall proficiency was lower. Students had a higher Median Growth Percentile than their peers in ELA, but not in math. We earned a rating of "approaching standard" on indicator 1.6 because our performance against the schools our students would otherwise attend has declined due to low growth, however, we frequently outperform these schools in proficiency.

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AJB's Proficiency and Growth vs. Comparison Schools				
School Year	Proficiency		Growth	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
2010-11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2011-12	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2012-13	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2013-14	Yes	Yes	No	No
2014-15	No	Yes	Yes	No

As outlined in indicator 1.1, we have implemented many improvement efforts during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years that will help us to improve our performance against our neighboring schools. In addition, we have outlined our improvement efforts under Ongoing Improvements that will also allow us to meet this indicator in the next charter term.

Below is our timeline for meeting standard 1.6:

Baseline: 2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
AS	AS	MS	MS

1.7 Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 1.7		
2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
DNMS	AS	AS

In 2013-14, AJB's school-specific academic goal was for 80 percent of students to meet their necessary growth target in math and reading as measured by the NWEA assessment. Necessary growth is the amount of growth required to put a student on a college readiness path. Necessary growth targets are often bigger than NWEA's typical growth target. While this goal was not met, our students have shown improvement in both math and reading under the 2015 NWEA norms and updated college-readiness thresholds. We almost doubled the percentage of students who met their necessary growth target in math from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Reading also improved.

Percent of Students Meeting NWEA Necessary Growth Target		
Academic Year	Math	Reading
2013-14	25%	42%
2014-15	20%	30%
2015-16	48%	49%

In 2014-15, AJB's school-specific academic goal was to have at least 50 percent of students meet their individual growth targets in math and reading in grades 2-8. Under the 2011 NWEA norms, we met this standard in math (52.5 percent) and were approaching this standard in reading (47.2 percent). Under the 2015 NWEA norms, we were approaching this standard in both math and reading.

We were especially pleased to see significant improvement in each grade from 2014-15 to 2015-16. In 2015-16, we met this goal in every grade in both math and reading.

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Percent of Students Meeting NWEA Typical Growth				
Grade	Math		Reading	
	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16
2	31%	60%	38%	51%
3	38%	61%	39%	70%
4	45%	61%	47%	72%
5	35%	78%	46%	71%
6	37%	70%	38%	72%
7	39%	88%	70%	90%
8	53%	69%	35%	71%

The root cause analysis that was completed for this indicator is identical to the analysis that was completed for indicator 1.1. Therefore, please see indicator 1.1 for this information.

AJB created new school-specific academic goals for the 2015-16 school year:

- During the charter term, the percentage of students who pass the spring and summer administration of the I-READ 3 assessment will meet or exceed the local district within 5 percentage points.
- The median Student Growth Percentile of the lowest 25 percent of students in the school will be at least 50 and less than 66.

We do not yet have data that will show if we have met these goals. We expect it to be available in late fall.

Core Question 2:

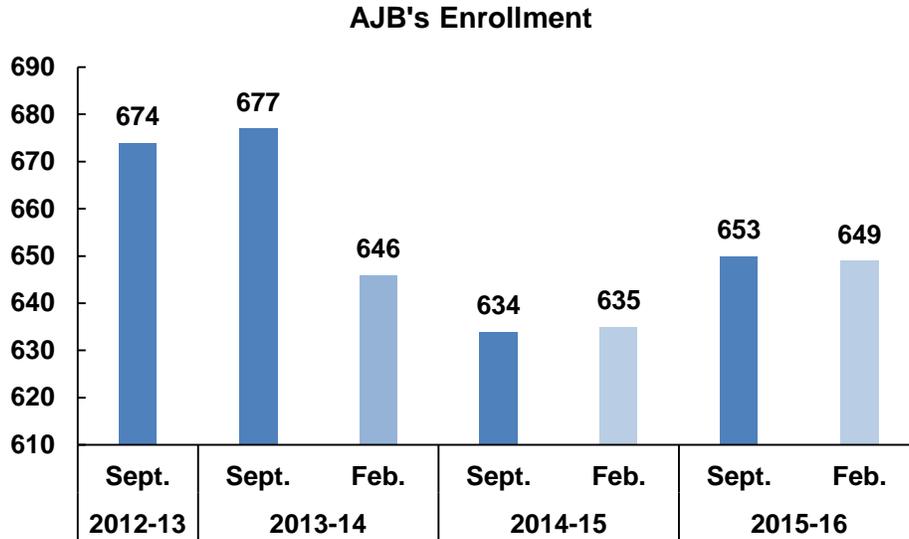
2.1 Is the school in sound fiscal health?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 2.1					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
Not Evaluated		AS	AS	AS	AS

Enrollment ratio. During the course of the charter term, we have received an "approaching standard" rating for the enrollment ratio sub-indicator due to our enrollment ratio being between 90-98 percent. Since 2012-13, our count-day enrollment has come in slightly under our target of 704. In 2013-14, the OEI also began to look at the variance between our September enrollment and February enrollment. In 2013-14, we continuously enrolled 95 percent of our students during the September-February period; in 2014-15 we continuously enrolled 100 percent of our students during this period. Our enrollment ratio equaled or exceeded 95 percent in both years and, as a result, we met the February Enrollment Variance sub-indicator in these years.

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In the 2015-16 school year, our count-day enrollment increased to 653. Although we saw an increase in our enrollment, we are still earning an "approaching standard" rating for the enrollment ratio sub-indicator. In 2015-16, we continuously enrolled 100 percent of our students from September to February and met this standard again in 2015-16. Please see below:



We have conducted a review of our enrollment efforts and have determined that we need to strengthen our plan for recruiting students. In addition, as we continue to increase our academic performance, we expect to see a further increase in our student enrollment.

We currently employ a Student Recruitment Specialist (SRS), who in cooperation with the school team, is responsible for fulfilling the school's enrollment strategy and recruitment efforts. We are using the following methods to increase enrollment:

- Our Student Recruitment Specialist (SRS), will initiate and participate in events with our community partners, such as the Indiana Black Expo, to provide families with information about AJB and give them an opportunity to apply to the school.
- A new school tours program is in place. The tour now has 12 tour stops throughout the school that the guide uses to explain benefits of the AJB educational experience. These tours are offered each week to perspective AJB families. Evening times will be available to accommodate families' schedules. The SRS also reaches out to applied families to invite them for a school tour. This action helps to solidify their interest in AJB.
- During the first month of school, teachers are calling families to *check-in* on their back to school experience and help with their assimilation and satisfaction.
- Teachers and school leadership will make calls to families that have indicated that they will not be returning to AJB to see if we can remedy any issue that may have caused the family to want to leave our school.
- We are evaluating our busing plan to see if we need to expand it to accommodate more students.

Below is the expected timeline for when we expect to meet our enrollment target.

Baseline: 2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
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634	653	675	704
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Current ratio. Under indicator 1.2, we received an "approaching standard" rating on the current ratio sub-indicator because our current ratio is between 1.0-1.1. Between 2012-13 and 2014-15, AJB had fewer current assets than current liabilities as measured by the OEI's performance framework. This is because our management agreement with NHA requires it to assume the obligation for all expenses and all financial risk. In return, NHA retains most of the assets. NHA has met its obligation to bring significant resources to the school: facilities, real estate, and start-up and ongoing operating capital, as needed.

Performance on Current Ratio Sub-Indicator		
2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
1.05	1.06	1.05

It should be noted that anything purchased with Board funds is the property of AJB. We do not plan to change this part of our management agreement in the upcoming charter term, and we are pleased with our partnership with NHA.

Days cash on hand. Under our management agreement, we allocate all revenue to NHA in exchange for operation of our school. This feature of our service agreement explains why we did not meet the days cash on hand sub-indicator on the OEI performance framework. As mentioned above, NHA willingly accepts all financial risks associated with operating the school. We know that some charter schools' partnerships with education management operators expose the schools to the risk of debt. Our agreement with NHA leaves the school with no such exposure. Our agreement confirms that NHA neither requests nor expects repayment for its contributions to the school consistent with the approved operating budget. This partnership limits the school's net assets and cash on hand – but it also ensures that AJB maintains the financial stability needed to sustain operations and support the academic program.

In 2015-16, we met our days cash on hand indicator and we plan to be able to meet this indicator moving forward. Cash transfers on behalf of the school are driven by Board authorization. At fiscal year-end our Board will ensure that there is sufficient cash on hand to meet the compliance requirement and not transfer the full amount of cash to NHA.

Core Question 3

3.3 Is the school's Board active, knowledgeable, and does it abide by appropriate policies, systems, and processes in its oversight?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 3.3					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
MS	MS	AS	AS	AS	AS

From 2012-13 to 2014-15, our Board received an "approaching standard" rating for indicator 3.3 on the performance framework. The following factors were cited:

- Lack of a comprehensive and diverse Board roster.
- Concern over the Board's capacity to independently manage governance obligations.

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- Board member attendance.

During 2015-16, OEI issued a formal notice of deficiency. We recognized that we needed to strengthen our Board governance, and we have taken several steps to improve our governance as noted below.

Lack of a comprehensive and diverse Board roster. Throughout our charter term, our Board has remained intact. We have been proud of the dedication of our long-standing Board members, and we believed that this was a strength. However, with OEI's guidance and our partnership with BoardOnTrack (see more about our partnership below), we recognized that new Board members bring new perspectives and ideas that can strengthen our governance and allow us to build a more comprehensive and diverse board.

In 2013-14, we changed our bylaws to increase our Board membership from five to seven. We also concluded that we needed to set two-year limits for each position on the Board. In spring 2016, we revised our bylaws to include two-year term limits for each position. This will allow us to build capacity among existing Board members and allow for fresh perspectives and new ideas in each role on the Board. If Board members wish to serve on the Board for more than two years, they may do so in a different capacity.

In addition, in summer 2016, members of our Board changed roles to allow for new insights in each position. After serving for 13 years as AJB's Board president, Dr. Thomas Brown stepped down from his position. Richard Hailey, the Board's former secretary and treasurer, was appointed Board president. Marilyn Gill moved from her role as director to become secretary and treasurer.

Currently, our Board is strategically recruiting additional members based on skill set and passion for our charter school and its mission. In particular, we are looking for potential members with a marketing or finance background to strengthen Board oversight in these areas. We have candidates that we are interviewing to determine if they will be a good fit for our Board, reflect the needs of the school, and help us address our identified gaps in Board governance.

In 2016-17, we expect that we will have completed our search and we will fill these gaps.

Board member attendance. Our Board has struggled with Board attendance over the course of the charter term. We had one Board member who lived in another state frequently miss Board meetings as a result.

We have now set clear expectations that all Board members must attend Board meetings. Each Board member is expected to be fully engaged and to participate actively. We have also updated our Board bylaws to institute automatic removal of directors who do not attend at least eight of 12 Board meetings in a year.

In spring 2016, we took action to remove the Board member mentioned above due to continually missing meetings. We expect that we will meet Board attendance expectations moving forward.

Board's capacity to independently manage governance obligations. Under our management agreement, NHA provides support for governance obligations. As noted in OEI's renewal report, this includes posting meeting notices and typing up meeting minutes from the notes taken by our NHA Representative who is present at each of our Board meetings. While

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NHA may provide governance support, our Board has taken independent measures to ensure that we are meeting governance obligations. This includes partnering with BoardOnTrack, a third-party consultant that specializes in supporting Boards to strengthen their governance. We consult BoardOnTrack resources to discuss our Board's progress toward meeting our goals. BoardOnTrack provides guidance on how to achieve our goals and provides coaching on overall best practices for running an effective Board.

In addition, we retain David Corbet of Krieg DeVault LLP, as legal counsel to the Board. Mr. Corbet ensures that the school is compliant with open meetings law and other applicable laws and regulations, and that it manages potential conflicts of interest appropriately. With his guidance, we are compliant with our bylaw requirements related to the number of meetings, quorum obligations, posting of calendar items, and production of our agenda and minutes.

If our partnership with NHA ends, we will continue to consult with our Board attorney to ensure that we are meeting our governance obligations under the law. In addition, we will create a plan to assign to Board members tasks now done by NHA that support our governance efforts.

We believe with the improvements that we have made in the last year, that we will be able to meet this standard in 2016-17.

3.4 Does the School's Board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 3.4					
2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
Not Evaluated			DNMS	AS	AS

Our Board received an "approaching standard" rating for this indicator because we did not have a monitoring and evaluation system for the Principal and NHA at the end of the 2014-15 school year.

Evaluation of the Principal. Under our management agreement, we assign to NHA all day-to-day management responsibilities, including the details of the performance evaluation for Mr. Hill. For this reason, in the past, we have not conducted an evaluation of Mr. Hill. Our philosophy of governance has been to provide oversight to ensure the academic, financial, and organizational viability of the school. NHA manages the Principal evaluation process on our behalf, but we do not abdicate accountability. In 2015-16, we outlined a process for reviewing Mr. Hill's evaluation and providing any necessary feedback to him about his performance. We completed this process in August 2016.

In addition, Mr. Hill provides our Board with a monthly report for review that includes key initiatives, student achievement data that shows progress toward goals, and instructional and operational practices being implemented to increase academic achievement. Each month we also review the school's performance report. This report shows student performance and highlights trends on state assessments, norm-referenced assessments, enrollment numbers, attendance, discipline, at-risk populations, parent-satisfaction results, and parent-teacher conference attendance. We use this data to assess the Principal's performance and to ensure that the school is fulfilling its mission and goals.

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In partnership with NHA, we will continue evaluating AJB's Principal and reviewing monthly school reports to evaluate the Principal's overall performance.

Evaluation of NHA. In the past, we have assessed NHA's performance to decide whether to continue our relationship. We based this assessment on financial and academic information provided by NHA as well as our own review of the school's academic and operational performance. Our reviews of monthly financial statements and other data are also an integral part of our review of our agreement with NHA. This annual review has improved our Board's ability to account for and verify costs and expenses attributable to the school. This process helps ensure that the school's contractual arrangement with NHA remains reasonable and in the best interests of the school.

In October 2015, our Board instituted a process to further evaluate NHA's performance based on four key benchmarks. Our Board will now conduct this evaluation annually. A copy of these benchmarks is attached as Attachment B. Board members discuss results of this evaluation to identify NHA's strengths and opportunities for improvements. We then provide this feedback to our NHA Representative.

As mentioned above, during 2015-16, our Board implemented an evaluation processes for both the Principal and NHA, meeting the requirements outlined by OEI. We will continue to conduct these formal evaluations in the next charter term.

3.6: Is the school meeting its school-specific non-academic goals?

AJB's Performance on Indicator 3.6	
2014-15	Contract Renewal Rating
AS	AS

Parent satisfaction. Our first non-academic goal in 2014-15 and 2015-16 was to achieve an overall parent satisfaction rate of 80 percent, with at least 50 percent of parents responding to a school-administered parent survey. We exceeded standards by earning a parent satisfaction rate of 86 percent, with 67 percent of parents participating in the survey. Parent satisfaction continues to increase. In 2015-16, parent satisfaction increased to 92 percent. Additionally, 86 percent of respondents said they are likely to recommend AJB, and 87 percent said they are likely to re-enroll their student.

During the charter term, we have put initiatives in place to increase parent satisfaction. This has included conducting parent nights, improving our communication with parents, improvement of the academic program offered to our families, and implementing our Behave with Care behavioral management system. We are pleased that these initiatives have proven effective.

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Level 5 and 6 discipline referrals. Our second non-academic goal in 2014-15 was to reduce level 5 and 6 discipline referrals. Although we saw a decrease in overall suspension rates from 2013-14 to 2014-15, we saw no deduction in referrals and, therefore, did not meet the standard for this goal. As mentioned under indicator 1.1, we recognize that student behavior has been an issue at AJB during the charter term and we must keep working to remedy this challenge. We have implemented our Behave with Care behavioral management system to address these issues (see more details of our Behave with Care program in Section D below). In addition, we intensified our commitment to CHAMPs to ensure that students are ready to learn. CHAMPs stands for:

- **C**onversation – Level of voice students may use during a task.
- **H**elp – How students can signal for help during a task.
- **A**ctivity – What is the task or objective.
- **M**ovement – How much movement the students are allowed within the classroom during the activity.
- **P**articipation – What students do that demonstrates they are participating.
- **S**uccessful students – The end result when a student follows the program.

Staff will also receive additional professional development on Behave with Care in the next charter term.

To supplement the previously mentioned Behave with Care program, teachers use Positive Behavior Replacement Plan (PBRP) tools, developed by NHA. The PBRP is a collection of 30 mini-course packets – available to staff online – that serve as a resource for teachers on student behavior issues. This information helps students understand the consequences of their behaviors, why they are not acceptable, and how they can change. Specifically, the program:

- Fosters dignity and respect for students.
- Gives students positive behavior alternatives.
- Saves time dealing with negative behavior issues.
- Reduces school suspensions due to negative behavior.
- Helps students facilitate positive change.
- Instills in students an awareness of current and future consequences of their actions.

In 2015-16, our improvement efforts resulted in approximately a 52 percent reduction of our level 5 and 6 discipline referrals (defined as severe impulsive and intentional misbehaviors).

Employee satisfaction. In 2015-16, we changed one of our non-academic goals. We decided to strive to achieve an overall employee satisfaction rate of 75 percent, as measured by the spring employee satisfaction survey. We met this standard with an overall employee satisfaction rate of 77 percent. Please see our teacher retention efforts under indicator 1.1, which we believe contributed to our increased employee satisfaction.

Section B: Sustainability and Improvement

1. Sustainability

a. The governing board

Our Board has several plans and strategies in place that will allow us to build long-term sustainability and success during the next charter term. In addition to the items mentioned

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below, our Board has made several governance improvements that will allow us to sustain success. These are noted in the above indicators 3.3 and 3.4 and in the Ongoing Improvement section below.

Board structure. The collective qualifications of our Board effectively position us to fulfill the school's mission for the families we serve. Our individual experiences in education, finance, business, community engagement, and legal matters provide the basis for a competent governance structure.

- *Board President:* Mr. Richard D. Hailey is an attorney and partner of the law firm Ramey & Hailey. He has over 35 years of legal experience. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association and helped to start the South African Trial Lawyers Association.
- *Board Vice President:* Mr. Fredrick Green is president and chief operating officer of Cripe Architectural and Design firm. He is also on the Board of Directors for the Indiana Architectural Foundation and on the Board of Advisors for the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art.
- *Board Treasurer/Secretary:* Ms. Marilyn Gill serves as executive director of Indiana Christian Leadership Conference.
- *Board Director:* Dr. Thomas Brown is a founding member of the AJB Board. The school was named in honor of his father, Andrew J. Brown, a prominent civil rights activist. For 33 years, Dr. Brown was the senior pastor at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church. For 42 years, Dr. Brown has hosted a local radio show on AM 1310 PraiseIndy. He is a civil rights advocate and is very active in the Indianapolis community.
- *Board Director:* Dr. Phillip Shobe is minister at St. John's Missionary Baptist Church. Dr. Shobe has served as president of four organizations and served in the military.
- *Board Director:* Ms. Thelma Wyatt was the founding Principal of AJB and retired in 2013-14. Ms. Wyatt is a veteran educator who, prior to AJB, has spent over 30 years in public education in Indianapolis.

Together, we govern the school by:

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving the school's mission throughout the entire school community.
- Overseeing and managing the partnership with NHA.
- Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Receiving training on aspects of governance.
- Monitoring performance toward meeting academic and operating goals.
- Reviewing, recommending, and approving the school's budget, thus ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and that they are being effectively implemented.
- Approving policies and procedures for the general operation and management of the school.
- Guarding against conflicts of interest.
- Retaining and seeking guidance from independent legal counsel.
- With independent counsel, adopting, amending, repealing, and reviewing bylaws as needed.
- Entering into agreements on behalf of the school.
- Retaining an independent auditor to conduct an annual audit of the school.
- Ensuring that there is proper insurance in place for both the Board and the school.

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Importantly, we have retained as our legal counsel an attorney who specializes in the organization and regulation of charter schools. David Corbet of Krieg DeVault LLP has served as general counsel to charter schools and has extensive experience advising on matters ranging from fiduciary obligations to education-law compliance. His advice and counsel shaped the management agreement with our operational partner, NHA. He has ensured that the school is compliant with open meetings law and other applicable laws regulations and manages potential conflicts of interest appropriately. With his guidance, we are compliant with our bylaw requirements related to the number of meetings, quorum obligations, posting of calendar items, and production of our agenda and minutes.

At these meetings, we conduct the school's general business, including reviewing policy issues and hearing updates from the school's Principal and leadership team. Each meeting includes a review of the school's monthly performance report, which shows student performance and highlights trends on the ISTEP+ assessment, school assessments, enrollment numbers, attendance, discipline, at-risk populations, parent satisfaction results, and parent-teacher conference attendance. We use this data to make informed decisions and ensure that the school is aligned with its mission.

Professional development. To further ensure effective governance of our school, we make it a priority to participate in ongoing training and development. As mentioned previously, we have partnered with BoardOnTrack to provide our Board with professional development and guidance for effective governance. We are also aware of, and take advantage of, some excellent national and local sources for governance training. For example, Board members have attended the National Charter Schools Conference. Training is offered as needed to ensure continuity and the sustained effectiveness of our Board. When needed, we have also asked NHA department leaders from the Service Center in Michigan to conduct presentations for our Board on topics such as finances and personnel. We have worked with our legal counsel to ensure that we follow proper procedures to comply with the Indiana Open Meeting Law. Our Board has chosen to follow Robert's Rules of Order for its meetings. With our legal counsel's oversight, we use these rules to evaluate our meeting procedures. We also evaluate other applicable governance structures.

In addition, we have access to the following suite of learning modules made available by NHA for our continued development:⁷

Module #1

- Board Roles/Responsibilities
- Board Member Job Description
- Parliamentary Procedures
- Authorizer Roles and Responsibilities
- School Governance and Flow Chart
- School Information – Past & Present Management Agreement
- EMO Roles and Responsibilities

Module #2

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Management Agreement
- Contract with Authorizer
- Lease agreement
- Non-Profit (501c3)
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Executive Session
- Expulsions
- Public Comment

Module #3

⁷ The learning modules were developed by NHA to support our governance needs.

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- Budgets/Financial Statements
- NWEA Reports/State Report Cards
- Parent Satisfaction Surveys
- Annual Report
- Crisis Management Plans
- School Improvement Plans
- AYP / No Child Left Behind
- Parent/Student Handbook

Oversight of our management company. We embrace a philosophy of governance that requires the Board to provide oversight of the educational program, set school policies, monitor finances, and represent the school to stakeholders. We pay special attention to meeting all of the school's responsibilities under its charter, meeting performance targets, and furthering the mission of the school. We do not take an operational role in the school. We assign day-to-day management of the school to NHA, as spelled out in our management agreement. Our partnership with NHA requires it to provide a broad range of services relating to the school's operations, including:

- Curriculum development.
- Educational best practices.
- Human resources.
- Teacher training and development.
- Financial management.
- Information technology.
- Facilities management.
- Purchasing and procurement.
- Legal and regulatory compliance.
- Marketing, communications, and crisis management.

This partnership is described in detail in our management agreement, which delineates services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees.

A fundamental responsibility of our Board is to effectively manage this relationship with NHA and hold it accountable for providing deliverables needed to operate a successful school. We do this by both monitoring and evaluating NHA's performance and by providing clear direction and frequent, direct feedback to the company through its representative, who is in constant contact with us. We review NHA's overall performance by comparing results to the goals and commitments outlined in the management agreement and charter. Based on the outcome of these reviews, the Board strives to ensure that the school is aligned with its mission and that the Board and NHA are also aligned. Individual Board members participate in various in-school and after-school functions. During these visits, we have been able to further assess the services NHA is providing to our school and ensure that the allocation of staff resources, time, and funding support the school's mission and key design elements.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Board structure:** Completed.
- **Professional Development:** Will be completed on an annual basis.
- **Oversight of our management company:** Will be completed on an annual basis.

Person responsible:

- **Board structure:** Board of Directors.
- **Professional Development:** Board of Directors.
- **Oversight of our management company:** Board of Directors.

b. The leadership team

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During the charter term, the leadership team has been essential in driving efforts to improve our school performance. We feel that it is important to have strong leaders within the school coaching teachers and ensuring that we are fulfilling our school's mission. It is also key that our leadership structure allows for the future growth of school staff and provides sustainability regardless whether there are changes within the leadership team. These structures are in place at AJB and will allow us to sustain long-term success.

Building a strong leadership team. As previously mentioned, each Board meeting includes a review of the school's monthly performance report. Based on the reports, we found that AJB was not accelerating student attainment quickly enough to satisfy neither our Board nor our education management partner, NHA. Our shared concern focused on the school environment and academic performance. In light of this, we asked NHA to find a school leader with a track record of success. In July 2014, Mr. James Hill was hired as the school's new Principal with the primary responsibility of enacting change to directly improve the school environment and accelerate student attainment. In addition, a new middle school Dean was hired in July 2014. In January 2015, a new K-2 Dean and a new Dean of Intervention were hired. Together, this new team has brought a notable increase in energy to their work, embracing the opportunities and challenges they face.

Structure of our leadership team. AJB's leadership team consists of Principal James Hill and four Deans: Katie Taylor (K-2), Victoria Vyborny (grades 3-5), Saleetra Bell (6-8), and Kristy Jones (intervention and special education). Since Mr. Hill was hired in July 2014 to serve as Principal of AJB, he has worked to build a strong leadership team. Together, Mr. Hill and the Deans have built a cohesive and stable team that has put the school on a path for improved academic growth.

The leadership team meets weekly to discuss progress towards implementing the school's improvement plan, student performance, teacher performance, and other issues that may need to be addressed that week. Through these continuous check-ins, the leadership team builds a collaborative environment while ensuring that everyone knows about going-ons at each grade level.

This distinctive distributed leadership model also provides more stability than more traditional leadership systems. When a member of the AJB leadership team leaves the school, others on the team have the capability and knowledge needed to provide support to teachers and staff until the position is filled.

In addition, this model helps nurture future Deans and Principals. Like NHA, we strive to recognize high-performing Deans and teachers. Outstanding Deans are coached and developed to become Principals, and outstanding teachers are coached to prepare them to become Deans if they choose. Promoting from within also helps to ensure that the Principal and Deans are familiar with instructional practices and administrative procedures.

Leadership professional development and coaching. Mr. Hill conducts weekly one-on-one meetings with each Dean. During these meetings, Mr. Hill and the Dean identify areas for growth, discuss plans and options for improving, analyze progress, and celebrate goal accomplishments.

Principal Hill also receives support from a veteran school leader who serves as AJB's Director of School Quality (DSQ), overseeing the school monitoring process for AJB and

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serving as a coach and mentor to Mr. Hill and the Deans. The DSQ is a seasoned educator and former Principal with a record of successfully leading academic improvement in an urban school environment. The DSQ regularly visits the school to monitor the academic program and operations and to provide guidance to Mr. Hill, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Vyborny, Ms. Bell, and Ms. Jones. Mr. Hill meets weekly with the DSQ to provide feedback, coaching, and support to improve his instructional leadership skills and help him manage effectively.

Additional professional development is provided to leadership based on individual growth plans and schoolwide initiatives. In addition, NHA offers several leadership professional development opportunities throughout the year. For example:

- *Leadership Summit*: This annual five-day conference for Principals and Deans offers a variety of professional development opportunities.
- *Principal Series/Dean Development Series*: Each year, school leaders have opportunities to grow through peer collaboration and coordinated training and development events. These are often a combination of centralized, regional, and virtual events.
- *OnCourse Leadership Performer Support*: AJB offers ongoing professional development sessions throughout the year related to performance, hiring, student data, serving parents, special education, intervention investments, teacher satisfaction, and other topics of interest to school leaders. These sessions are conducted through podcasts or virtual classrooms and are recorded for access at any time.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Building a strong leadership team**: Hiring of leadership team was completed in January 2015.
- **Structure of leadership team**: Completed.
- **Leadership professional development and coaching**:
 - Professional development for leadership: Completed on an annual basis.
 - One-on-one meetings: Completed weekly.

Person responsible:

- **Building a strong leadership team**:
 - Responsible for Deans: Mr. Hill and Director of School Quality.
 - Responsible for Principal: NHA and Director of School Quality.
- **Structure of our leadership team**: Mr. Hill and Director of School Quality.
- **Leadership professional development and coaching**:
 - Professional development for Deans: Mr. Hill.
 - Professional development for Principal: Director of School Quality.

c. Teaching staff

To sustain long-term academic success, we need to ensure that we have the systems in place to monitor the quality of instruction in every classroom and that every teacher has the tools and coaching needed to provide high-quality instruction. It is also important that we retain our high-performing teachers and recruit teachers who are dedicated to our mission and to serving the students of AJB.

Monitoring the quality of instruction. As previously mentioned, AJB implements a distinctive distributed leadership model that allows us to closely monitor the quality of instruction. Each Dean serves as the direct manager of teachers in his/her cohort, and each

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teacher has dedicated time each week (30 minutes) to meet with his/her manager and review instructional practices and student academic data.

Mr. Hill and Ms. Taylor, Ms. Vyborny, Ms. Bell, and Ms. Jones use a school-wide and classroom framework to monitor instruction, create teachers' individual growth plans, and provide focus for the weekly observation and feedback meetings.

- *School-wide framework:* We follow a school-wide framework for excellence that includes five specific elements.
 1. *Establish a professional culture of excellence:* Our Principal, Mr. Hill, leads a community that is motivated to achieve high expectations and exhibits high care for all members of the community.
 2. *Systematize collaborative improvement:* Deans, teachers, other instructional professionals, and all other staff members work in collaborative, data-driven teams, seeking improved student learning through the shared study and implementation of instructional best practices.
 3. *Lead instructional excellence:* Deans have focused instructional coaching as their top priority. The goal is to ensure high-quality learning for every student, in every classroom, every day.
 4. *Implement systematic intervention:* The needs of academically at-risk students, special education students, English language learners, and students with behavioral challenges are identified quickly, and appropriate services are provided while systematically monitoring student progress.
 5. *Cultivate meaningful parent partnerships:* Parents and school staff strive to understand and support each other – working in partnership to help every child achieve college readiness.

- *Classroom framework:* To complement the school-wide framework, we also implement a classroom framework of instructional competencies. This framework is structured to improve academic results for individual students and the school as a whole. There are four key instructional competencies in this classroom framework:
 1. *Classroom culture:* Teachers strive to lead self-managing classrooms by building positive relationships, maintaining physical space, sustaining classroom routines and procedures, and holding students accountable to clear behavioral expectations.
 2. *Planning:* Teachers plan instruction by identifying and analyzing standards that will direct their teaching throughout the year, aligning instructional resources and activities to those standards, and preplanning differentiated opportunities to meet individual learning needs.
 3. *Teaching:* Content is taught at an appropriate level of rigor that cognitively engages students, intentionally uses all time for learning, personalizes instruction, and ultimately challenges students to drive their own learning.
 4. *Assessing:* Teachers implement assessment strategies to understand student learning needs, provide actionable feedback, and guide instructional decisions.

Please see Attachment A for more detail on the frameworks we use to monitor instruction.

As previously mentioned, during classroom observations, Deans observe and track current focus skills and other relevant teacher and student behaviors. During weekly one-on-one meetings, Deans meet with each teacher to give coaching and feedback that is relevant, frequent, and based on evidence.

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Creating a collaborative, professional environment for staff. We know that the presence of excellent teaching in every classroom has the greatest impact on student learning. For this reason, we recruit teachers who are committed to our mission and possess an unwavering dedication to promoting high expectations and academic growth. Teachers do not work independently in their classrooms but collaborate with their colleagues to plan lessons, hone instructional techniques, and achieve learning objectives. In fact, we encourage all staff to participate collaboratively and professionally with colleagues and with parents, volunteers, and the community.

To support collaboration among peers, the master schedule provides dedicated time each week for common grade-level planning. Teachers spend time as a professional learning community reviewing student data, adjusting the current week's lesson plans as needed, and planning upcoming lessons – all to ensure common delivery and alignment with the school's curriculum.

Professional development for teachers. Our professional development program focuses on the training and support that will help our staff develop the skills and expertise to meet students' needs. To this end, we implement a multi-prong approach to professional development:

- *School-wide professional development:* We provide all staff with school-wide training on common topics. Topics include implementation of the Common Core, state testing protocols, Behave with Care, and policies and procedures.
- *Grade-level or wing-level professional development:* We also provide grade-level or wing-specific professional development. Topics include horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, instructional differentiation, instructional planning, and curricular programs.
- *Teacher regionals:* During the year, teachers have opportunities to attend professional developments with peers from other NHA partner-schools in their region. Examples of topics include classroom culture, instructional planning, and using assessments to drive instruction.
- *Individual professional development:*
 - Teachers new to the school attend New Teacher Orientation sessions that focus on modeling and practicing essential instructional strategies to be most effective at the start of the school year.
 - As noted above, Deans observe individual teachers at least once per week and more often as needed. Teachers are also observed for at least two full lessons during the school year. Each teacher collaboratively develops an individual growth plan each fall after the initial full lesson observation. School leaders and teachers meet weekly for a 30-minute one-on-one meeting at which the Dean gives the teacher feedback and coaching. Since this process is designed to help teachers grow professionally, feedback will be relevant, frequent, and based on evidence. During these one-on-one meetings, the Dean and teachers identify areas for growth, discuss plans and options for improving, analyze progress, and celebrate goal accomplishments.
 - Teachers also have access to an extensive library of eLearning Courses. All eLearning is classified by educational topic to provide school staff easy access to resources to immediately meet their specific area of need. These courses and others are available to all teachers and school leaders and can be accessed from any location, at any time.

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- Teachers may be offered opportunities to attend additional professional development sessions tailored to a specific professional need.

Recruiting teachers. Recruiting and hiring effective teachers is essential for AJB to be able to accelerate student attainment. Our partnership with NHA provides our school with access to a broad recruiting network and hiring capabilities. NHA conducts a full candidate search for open positions based on school and student needs. In doing this, we leverage both internal and external candidate pipelines. Our sourcing strategies include:

- *Traditional recruiting:* NHA has a strong and experienced talent acquisition team of recruiters who have been trained to recruit high-caliber teaching candidates while leveraging local, regional, and national networks. NHA is constantly seeking and screening potential candidates through traditional and new media strategies. Open positions are advertised online, in the local market, and throughout NHA's internal network of operating charter schools.
- *Special education recruiter:* The NHA talent acquisition team has expanded to include a strategic sourcer dedicated to special education. This individual is focused solely on building a pipeline of qualified candidates who will meet the needs of the students requiring additional support and resources.
- *Campus relationships:* NHA leverages its established partnerships with colleges and universities because this provides immediate access to the best student teachers and upcoming graduates. Examples of schools that NHA works with include, but are not limited to, Ball State University, Calumet College of St. Joseph, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Purdue University Calumet, University of Indianapolis, and Indiana State University.
- *Referral networks:* Research indicates that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals. For this reason, NHA actively pursues new candidates through referrals from its current employees and will continue to do so.
- *Career fairs and conferences:* Recruiters and ambassadors actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences. This allows access to upcoming teacher graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.

Retaining teachers. Retaining highly effective teachers has been a focus for our school in 2014-15 and 2015-16. To sustain stability and continue to build a strong instructional team, we must retain highly effective teachers.

We believe in a market and performance-based compensation approach to retain our staff. For this reason, we implemented the "Total Rewards" structure offered by NHA to its partner schools. This approach rewards school leaders, faculty, and staff who have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement. Total Rewards uses all aspects of staff compensation (base pay, recognition programs, benefit design, tuition programs, etc.) to help attract and retain staff. Non-teaching staff may earn an annual pay increase based on individual performance. Teachers can earn annual increases based on their performance and on market rates for teachers.

NHA pays at market for the first three years of teaching and then pays for performance in years four and beyond. In partnership with NHA, we adjusted our pay practices beginning in the 2015-16 school year, to reflect this new compensation model. This approach increased teacher salaries and allows us to attract and retain teachers while giving new teachers an opportunity to grow and develop in the teaching profession. In year four and beyond,

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teachers receive pay increases based on performance and greatest impact on student learning so that we can retain our top performing teachers through the largest increases.

In addition, we provide a comprehensive benefit package to employees. The suite of benefits includes health insurance (medical, dental, and vision), life insurance, disability, tuition assistance, and information on educator discounts. We also offer a 401(k) plan with matching contributions for retirement investing.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Monitoring the quality of instruction:**
 - School-wide and classroom framework rubrics: Completed in 2014-15.
 - Classroom observations: Completed weekly.
 - One-on-one meetings: Completed weekly.
- **Creating a collaborative, professional environment for staff:** Completed weekly.
- **Professional development for teachers:**
 - Professional development: Completed annually.
 - One-on-one meetings: Completed weekly.
- **Recruiting teachers:** NHA will recruit teachers as needed.
- **Retain teachers:** Total Rewards was completed in 2015-16.

Person Responsible:

- **Monitoring the quality of instruction:** Deans.
- **Creating a collaborative, professional environment for staff:** Mr. Hill, Deans, and teachers.
- **Professional development for teachers:** Mr. Hill and Deans.
- **Recruiting teachers:** NHA.
- **Retain teachers:** NHA and Mr. Hill.

d. Academic achievement

Although our optimism for the future is not diminished in any way, we acknowledge without hesitation that AJB, in recent years, has not performed as expected. We recognize the need to continue to improve so we can give students a rigorous education that will prepare them for success. Today, we have the systems and personnel in place to accelerate academic attainment – and we are making progress towards our vision. We are confident that AJB now is on a positive trajectory and is well positioned for success. As detailed on the following pages, we deliver a rigorous curriculum, use effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of every learner, use interim assessments to drive our instruction, and implement programs to better serve our special populations. These strategies provide the foundation that will allow the school to sustain and continue to increase academic achievement.

As mentioned in Section A, we are pleased to report that we have demonstrated progress towards meeting the standards within the OEI's performance framework. Consider the following:

- From spring 2015 to spring 2016, our I-READ 3 scores have increased by 30 percentage points.
- Our 2016 preliminary ISTEP+ data shows a 4-point increase in ELA proficiency and an 11-point increase in math proficiency.

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- We almost doubled the percentage of students who met NWEA necessary growth targets in math from 2013-14 to 2015-16. We also saw improvement in reading.
- Our School Conditional Growth Percentiles were above the 80th percentile in math in all grades and in the 99th percentile in reading in all grades.
- From 2014-15 to 2015-16, our overall parent satisfaction increased from 86 percent to 92 percent.
- We are meeting our staff satisfaction goal, and our teacher turnover has shrunk significantly, from 58 percent in 2014-15 to 14 percent in 2015-2016 (YTD).
- We have seen a decrease in our student mobility rates from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- In December 2015, School Organization Solutions conducted a third-party evaluation of AJB's educational program, as required by OEI in the sixth year of a school's charter term. AJB met each indicator under Core Question 4 of the OEI's performance framework.

Curriculum. We view the AJB curriculum as much more than a collection of courses, textbooks, software, standards and other tools that drive teaching and learning. Our curriculum is all that and more: It is the very foundation upon which we strive to place and maintain a new font of hope and future opportunity for our students.

For these reasons, we bring a special passion to implementing the curriculum provided by NHA. This curriculum is built on Indiana Academic Standards (IAS) – and on our passion for helping our students overcome long odds to create a better tomorrow for themselves and this community.

Here is a list of the current curricular tools that AJB staff uses to implement the curriculum.

- *Scope and sequence (i.e., blueprint):* We provide teachers with sample scope and sequence documents that outline the breadth and depth of content to be covered in the curriculum during the school year.
- *Standards:* The curriculum has been carefully aligned with the IAS for ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, and the co-curricular content areas. We provide all teachers in each subject and grade an outline of the standards as well as information on how the curriculum is aligned with standards.
- *Year-long planners:* We provide teachers with sample year-long planners that organize grade-level curricula into a long-range framework. These year-long plans are used to ensure that students have the time and opportunity to learn everything necessary to meet all essential grade-level standards as outlined in the curriculum. Teachers use this instructional framework to organize learning opportunities. The instructional framework is an outline of what students are expected to learn over the course of the school year.
- *Programs:* Our curriculum includes established and respected curricular programs, such as Reading Street, Holt Literature, Big Ideas Math, and Math Expressions.

School leaders and professional experts from NHA collaborate to evaluate the curriculum and the effectiveness of our curricular programs by monitoring the fidelity of implementation, soliciting teacher feedback, and analyzing student-learning results. NHA also consulted with outside experts to evaluate the effectiveness of the curricular tools.

Serving our ELL population. Our ELL population has grown significantly during our charter term from 10 percent to 37 percent.

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To effectively serve our ELL students, we embrace a set of guiding principles recommended by the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at The George Washington University. These principles include the following:

- ELL students are held to the same high expectations of learning established for all students.
- ELL students develop full receptive and productive proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students.
- ELL students are taught challenging content to enable them to meet performance standards in all content areas, including reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the fine arts, health, and physical education, consistent with those for all students.
- ELL students receive instruction that builds on their previous education and cognitive abilities and that reflects their language proficiency.
- ELL students are evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned to state and local standards and that take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural background of the students.
- The academic success of ELL students is a responsibility shared by all educators, the family, and the community.

Our ELL program focuses on Structured English Instruction (SEI) and English Language Development (ELD). In addition, all teachers have been trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and use instructional strategies connected to the model's components. ELL students receive all content-area instruction in English in the SEI classroom, where instructors help ELL students acquire English language proficiency and meet the same challenging academic standards all students face. Supplemental to this, students may be eligible to receive ELD services consisting of instruction to acquire English for social and academic purposes. The amount of ELD services each child receives is determined by his or her proficiency in English, which is determined by the initial English proficiency assessment and updated with the results of the annual assessment of English Language Proficiency.

Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities receive instruction tailored to meet their individual educational needs. We educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as determined by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Students are provided Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) both directly and indirectly by a certified special education teacher in small group, pull-out, or push-in models. Additionally, related services are provided in accordance with a student's IEP. These services include but are not limited to speech and language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social work. On behalf of AJB, NHA employs and/or contracts with professionals who provide these services to meet the students' needs and IEP requirements.

Educators track service delivery and individual students' progress toward IEP goals and/or objectives throughout the school year. They use progress-monitoring data to complete student IEP progress reports, which are distributed to parents consistent with report card marking periods. AJB gives parents the opportunity to discuss these reports in detail with the special education and general education teachers during scheduled parent-teacher conferences throughout the year. We also encourage parents to contact special education

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teachers at any point throughout the school year to discuss their students' performance and overall progress toward meeting their IEP goals.

Instructional strategies. While our curriculum specifies what students must know and be able to do, classroom instruction drives student engagement with the curriculum. For this reason, teachers' instructional methods and strategies are designed to promote engagement, clarify instructional intent, to be appropriately rigorous and, importantly, to meet the needs of all learners. Instruction takes various forms, including focused lessons, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent work. The best instructional approach is driven by students' progress toward meeting instructional goals.

Focused lessons may include direct instruction, modeling, demonstration, development of metacognitive awareness, and/or teacher think-alouds. Teachers may conduct them in whole-group or small-group settings as student needs dictate. They may offer guided instruction with large groups or with small, needs-based groups during workshop time or during content-area learning blocks. When provided in small-group settings, guided instruction allows teachers to differentiate instruction in purposeful, meaningful ways to meet individual student needs. Collaborative learning is used when and where needed to give students the opportunity to learn from their peers, to discuss or debate ideas and information, and to participate in collaborative, inquiry-based learning. Instructors sometimes assign independent work to give students time to practice applying knowledge and skills that have been previously learned, to extend individual learning through the application of knowledge and skills to novel situations, and to promote the individual development of higher-order thinking skills.

Beyond this, instruction includes effective, research-based strategies embedded in daily lesson plans and implemented during instruction. Teachers use strategies that have high probabilities of effectiveness based on learning outcomes expected from the lesson; teachers select these strategies based on student need. Such instructional strategies include the following, which have been identified as highly effective by researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning: (1) Identifying Similarities and Differences; (2) Summarizing and Note Taking; (3) Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition; (4) Homework and Practice; (5) Nonlinguistic Representations; (6) Cooperative Learning; (7) Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback; (8) Generating and Testing Hypotheses; and (9) Cues, Questions, and Advanced Organizers. Teachers integrate these methods into their instruction as appropriate, based both on student need and what research identifies as the most effective approach for content delivery.

The selected instructional approach ensures that students master the essential learning goals articulated by the curriculum and develop college readiness in accordance with the school's educational program, goals, and mission. As teachers plan and implement instruction using these methods and strategies, students acquire the knowledge, proficiency, and skills needed to perform at high levels.

Assessments. We are a data-driven school. We believe that examining data from student assessments is essential to understanding each student's academic needs and then ensuring that those needs are met. Assessment data helps teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses – and differentiate instruction accordingly. Teachers use assessment data to monitor progress and adjust instruction to meet the identified needs of students. Teachers use these data points in three stages:

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- *Before instruction (pre-assessment).* As previously mentioned, we administer nationally norm-referenced assessments in the fall and in the spring. In grades K-2, we also administer a norm-referenced test in the winter. Teachers use data from the fall administration to plan instruction. In addition, AJB administers classroom assessments before instruction to help teachers discover students' needs, interests, previous experience, knowledge, and skills related to curricular objectives. This information also helps teachers determine a particular instructional approach or strategy for new learning. Some examples of assessments that teachers administer before instruction are:
 - Teacher-led discussion and questions.
 - Observation.
 - Student evaluation of sample work products using a scoring rubric.
 - Teacher-developed or commercially produced quizzes or pre-tests.
- *During instruction (formative assessment).* Teachers administer assessments during instruction to determine students' understanding and progress and to identify students' successes or difficulties in learning. This information allows teachers to effectively adjust instruction. Examples of assessments that teachers administer during instruction, each of which can be used formatively to guide further instruction, include:
 - Teacher-developed or commercially-developed mid-unit quizzes.
 - Homework.
 - In-class observation.
 - Questioning strategies.
 - Graphic organizers.
 - Teacher-developed or commercially produced worksheets.
 - Learning logs.
 - Lab reports.
 - Anecdotal notes.
 - Teacher-led discussions.
- *After instruction (summative assessment).* Assessments administered after instruction help teachers determine what students have learned and the quality of that learning. This information helps the teacher gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and changes their teaching methods as needed. Here are examples of assessments that teachers administer after instruction to determine students' understanding of the lesson:
 - Teacher or commercially-developed post-tests.
 - Projects.
 - Papers.
 - Oral reports.
 - Student presentations.
 - Self-assessments.
 - Peer assessments.

During 2014-15, we adopted a common assessment framework in grades K-8 for ELA and math. The common assessments allow us to identify struggling students more frequently and quickly. These assessments and our curricular tools align to Indiana's Academic Standards. Common assessments provide common benchmarking data to ensure that students are gaining proficiency with the essential knowledge and skills they need to succeed on the ISTEP+. These assessments clearly tell teachers which standards students have mastered and allow teachers to adjust instruction based on individual students' learning needs. The assessments also support appropriate instructional pacing.

Behave with Care and Moral Focus. Our behavior management system, Behave with Care, emphasizes preventing problematic behavior, developing pro-social skills, using problem-solving techniques, and imposing consistent consequences to address negative behaviors. Teachers and school staff consistently reinforce positive behavior by building

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relationships, developing classroom social contracts, giving students precise praise for positive behavior, and affirming students as individuals. Teachers set expectations for students in their classroom at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year, teachers refer to and reinforce expectations, with support from a six-level, color-coded, school-wide system. At all times, students know what is expected of them, and they are challenged to hold themselves and one another accountable. This approach ensures that students feel welcomed and supported. It also sets forth clear rules, procedures, and structures designed to help students understand the consequences of their actions.

We implement a similar approach in all classrooms and grades to create a consistent understanding of expectations, familiarize all students with the rules, and help teachers develop self-managing classrooms and reduce disruptive behavior.

We also know that individual responsibility, integrity, personal character, and effort are important contributors to success in school, college, and life. For this reason, AJB makes Moral Focus an explicit and integrated component of the curriculum. Our Moral Focus program builds on such virtues as prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Key benefits include: a positive school climate; recognition by students and staff that the school is a caring, safe, child-centered place; appropriate student behavior; increased academic motivation; improved achievement scores on school and standardized tests; and improved student problem-solving skills, emotional competencies, and other aspects of social and emotional intelligence.

Students also participate in Moral Focus assemblies, during which staff and students speak about the monthly virtue and how they have made it a part of their own lives. Students are encouraged to share their experiences, and the school recognizes their progress in developing good character.

School Performance Review. During the school year, NHA's School Performance Review (SPR) team helped AJB implement the corrective action plan outlined under indicator 1.1 and to confirm that our school was making the necessary improvement to accelerate student attainment. The SPR team consists of individuals who specialize in data analysis, intervention, and school turnaround. This team conducted regular scheduled check-in calls with Mr. Hill and the Deans to measure progress implementing the corrective action plan. During these calls, school leaders discussed progress and roadblocks enacting the plan. The SPR team provided support to overcome any issue that Mr. Hill and the Deans identified. To complement these check-in calls, the Executive Director of School Performance visited AJB regularly to monitor our efforts by observing teaching and learning. Classroom observations were completed and staff was interviewed to determine what progress the school was making. This process will continue in the 2016-17 school year.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Curriculum:** Completed.
- **ELL Instruction:**
 - ELL program: Completed.
 - ELL instruction: Ongoing.
- **Instruction for special education:**
 - Special education program: Completed.
 - Special education instruction: Ongoing.
- **Instructional strategies:** Completed daily in the classroom.

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- **Interim assessment:** Administered according to our assessment schedule. See Attachment C.
- **Behave with Care and Moral Focus:**
 - Moral Focus: Program implementation completed. We will continue using the Moral Focus program daily.
 - Behave with Care: The program was completed in 2014-15. Teachers will continue to use this program to manage student behavior each year of the charter term.
- **School Performance Review:** Year one completed in 2015-16. Year two to be completed in 2016-17.

Person Responsible:

- **Curriculum:** NHA and Mr. Hill.
- **Instruction for ELLs:** Mr. Hill, Dean of Intervention, and ELL teachers.
- **Instruction for special education:** Mr. Hill, Dean of Intervention, and Special Education teachers.
- **Instructional strategies:** Deans.
- **Interim assessments:** Mr. Hill, Deans and teachers.
- **Behave with Care and Moral Focus:**
 - Moral focus: Mr. Hill and Deans.
 - Behave with Care: Mr. Hill and Deans
- **School Performance Review:** NHA's School Performance Review team.

e. Financial health

We have demonstrated financial soundness throughout the term of our charter. Our Board has successfully governed the school with a track record of compliance and sound financial oversight. We have adopted policies that help us oversee and hold NHA accountable for the financial compliance and stability of the school, and we adhere to those policies. In our management agreement, NHA commits to make financial contributions needed to fund operations in the event that school expenses exceed revenues. These are contributions, not loans. This obligation is NHA's alone, and no repayment is expected. This arrangement ensures the school's short-term financial viability, our long-term sustainability, and provides flexibility and comfort to our Board to focus on long-term goals that will lead to the academic improvement of AJB.

Each year, we adopt a preliminary budget before the new school year to guide spending decisions. The budget, which is drafted by NHA, is based on estimates of student counts and on prior experience with such things as services costs, costs of resources (textbooks, supplies, equipment, etc.), and required staffing. We review line items, assumptions, and estimates for reasonableness and completeness. We require NHA to explain more deeply any assumptions or plans we question, and then we work with NHA to resolve differences to our satisfaction. Throughout the year, we monitor actual costs, compare them to the school's actual accomplishments, and amend the budget. Our amended budget reflects changes in enrollment and all necessary costs. We decide if we need to request additional resources to meet expectations.

The Board reviews and refines the budget each fall and then votes on all proposed changes. We also receive quarterly financial statements from NHA. We compare them to the budget and analyze any significant variances. On a monthly basis, NHA gives Mr. Hill a detailed

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income statement, and the Board receives a reconciliation of its discretionary funds at each monthly meeting.

Each year, we contract with an independent audit firm that is licensed in Indiana and is approved to audit the school's financial statement. The audit is conducted in accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards. In the event that the school expends \$500,000 or more in federal funds during a fiscal year, the independent auditor also performs the federally required Single Audit. The audit expense is included in the school's budget approved by our Board. To the extent that the school purchases capital assets with public funds, the assets are subjected to testing required by auditing standards and by the compliance requirements of Indiana. We are pleased to report that AJB has received unqualified audits during the charter term.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Management agreement with NHA:** Will be re-signed in June 2017.
- **Adoption of preliminary school budget:** Completed annually.
- **Approval of final budget:** Completed annually.
- **Annual audit:** Completed annually.

Person Responsible:

- **Management agreement with NHA:** NHA and Board of Directors.
- **Adoption of preliminary school budget:** Board of Directors.
- **Approval of final budget:** Board of Directors.
- **Annual audit:** Board of Directors and Audit firm.

2. Improvement efforts

a. Academic improvement

We recognize that AJB has not performed as expected and that we must accelerate academic achievement to fulfill our mission and give students the educational opportunities they deserve. In partnership with NHA, we have responded by investing new resources in the academic program as mentioned under indicator 1.1. We will continue improving. In July 2016, stakeholders (parents, staff, Board representative, etc.) gathered to review school data and to define an updated corrective action plan for the 2016-17 school year. We determined to focus on the following areas:

- **Continue improving our K-6 intervention program.** We made many improvements to our intervention program in the last two years of our charter term. We focused mainly on installing processes and systems to build an effective intervention program so we could quickly accelerate student achievement. In addition, we centered much of our attention on closing achievement gaps of our seventh- and eighth-grade students because these students were significantly below grade level and we had little time to put them on a path to success in high school and college. We now have solid intervention processes and systems in place. In addition, our teachers and interventionists have a toolbox of effective intervention strategies that they can use with students. We will begin to build on this foundation during the

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next charter term to further improve our intervention program including adding a dedicated intervention room for our K-6 students and a new progress-monitoring tool.

- **Expand the intervention room.** We will increase the intensity of our K-6 intervention program. For example, in 2016-17, we will create an intervention room for K-6 students. As we did with for seventh- and eighth-grade students, we will dedicate 45 minutes daily in our master schedule for intervention for these students. We will target intervention to each student's learning level. This effort will include new instructional support for gifted students to let them continue accelerating their learning.
- **Implement AIMSweb.** In 2016-17, we will implement a new progress-monitoring tool, AIMSweb. In 2015-16, we used IRLA for progress monitoring, and while it serves as a strong leveled reader program and measures increases in reading by student level, AIMSweb will allow us to measure incremental progress in individual reading skills. It will also help us set grade level targets and determine if a student is learning quickly enough to close the achievement gap and determine the intensity of interventions in a more timely manner. This web-based program is used for universal screening, progress monitoring, and managing of student data. The accurate, continuous, and direct student assessment provides helpful guidance for teachers and school leaders.

As noted, students entering AJB are, on average, two to three years below grade level in both ELA and math. We have to close these achievement gaps quickly to put students on a path of college readiness. That is why we feel it is necessary to take steps to increase the effectiveness of our intervention program.

- **Teacher subject specialization.** We have seen great growth in our classrooms. In classes that have seen high growth in certain subjects, we analyzed factors that drove this growth to see if we can replicate this in other classrooms. We determined that we need to better utilize the talents of teachers in these classroom so both teachers and students can benefit from their expertise.

In 2016-17, we will identify teachers who have a record of high growth in a subject area and give student's access to those teachers. For example, if we identify a third-grade teacher who has helped students grow in math, we will have that teacher teach math to students outside of her assigned homeroom class. This process will function like our middle school with our 3-5 students rotating classes with teachers that specialize in certain subject areas. These teachers will also share his/her practices with peers so they can learn from his/her instructional methods and perhaps replicate the success.

- **Implement looping.** As mentioned under indicator 1.1, we have struggled with student behavior issues during the charter term and we have worked to improve in this area. We have seen improvement in student and staff relationships throughout the building, but we must further strengthen these relationships. We care for our students as we would care for our family. We want to ensure that our students sense this every day because the absence of this trust creates another barrier to learning.

To continue strengthening academic outcomes, student behavior, and teacher-student relationships, we will implement looping – the practice of keeping teachers

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with the same group of students for more than one school year – in 2016-17. This will allow teachers to work with the same students longer, improving both relationships and understanding of students' academic strengths and weaknesses. When students return for a second year with the same teacher, the teacher can build on an existing foundation of trust and knowledge. They already know each student's academic levels. They understand how each student learns best. As a result, time in that second year that would normally be spent on the essential process of acquiring knowledge and building trust can now be devoted to instruction.

- **Increase the rigor of instruction.** While we have seen academic gains in 2014-15 and 2015-16, we need to focus on increasing the rigor of our instruction to continually challenge our students and continue accelerating student achievement. In the current charter term, we focused much of our attention on setting up instructional processes and procedures. With these systems in place, we must take instruction to the next level. We see rigor in each classroom – and we want to ensure that this becomes an embedded part of everyday instruction. In the next charter term, we will put an emphasis on increasing the rigor of instruction for students below, at, and above grade level. This will include professional development to further develop teachers' use of student assessment data to create effective instructional plans for students at each level of learning. It will also include steps to ensure that planning aligns with state standards, weekly learning goals, curricular resources, activities, and assessments. Teachers will receive professional development in cognitive engagement strategies so they can effectively incorporate strategies that use high-order thinking questions into instruction. In addition, Deans will develop teacher goals in these areas and then coach teachers in weekly one-on-one meetings to help them meet these goals.
- **Increase parent involvement.** Parents play a large role in their student's success – and we continue to struggle with parent involvement. We believe that if parents are better informed about assessments and the tools that we use to teach and monitor their child's progress, parent involvement will increase. We will hold additional parent nights to increase parents' involvement in their child's academic success. Parent nights will:
 - Give parents an overview of our curricular tools.
 - Offer parents resources to help them help their child(ren) with homework.
 - Provide an overview of our progress-monitoring tool.
 - Help parents interpret students' progress monitoring data.
 - Provide an overview of state assessments like ISTEP+ and IREAD-3 so parents understand the assessments.
 - Advise parents on how they can help prepare students for these assessments.
- **Initiatives to better serve our ELL population.** We have been dedicated to ensuring that our ELL population feels welcomed at AJB. We are committed to serving our changing student population. We want to ensure that our families and students also sense this commitment and know that we feel privileged that parents entrust us with their student's education. We have plans for the following enhancements to better serve our ELL population:
 - *Hire bilingual staff:* As we hire new staff, we are conducting a search for individuals who are bilingual.

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- *Create a student culture committee:* We have formed a student group that will put initiatives and activities together to recognize each student's heritage and culture. Our plans include a festival of heritages.
- *Add to our student library:* We will be adding books that reflect the different cultures of our ELL students.

Today, AJB has the systems and personnel in place to accelerate academic attainment. We are confident that we are headed in the right direction and that the school is well positioned for success.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Expanding the Intervention Room:**
 - Adding intervention to Master Schedule: Complete.
 - Create K-6 intervention room: August 2016.
 - Begin interventions: August 2016.
- **Teacher subject specialization:**
 - Identify specialization teachers: August 2016.
 - Instruction with teachers: Will begin September 2016.
- **Implement looping:** August 2016.
- **Efforts to increase rigor of instruction:** August 2016-June 2017.
- **Increase parent involvement:** August 2016-June 2017.
- **Enhancement to better serve our ELLs:** August 2016-June 2017.

Person Responsible:

- **Expanding the Intervention Room:** Mr. Hill, Dean of Intervention, teachers, and interventionists.
- **Teacher subject specialization:**
 - Identify specialization teachers: Mr. Hill and Deans.
 - Instruction with teachers will begin: Mr. Hill and Deans.
- **Implement looping:** Mr. Hill and Deans.
- **Efforts to increase rigor of instruction:** Mr. Hill and Deans.
- **Increase parent involvement:** Mr. Hill and Student Family Liaison.
- **Enhancement to better serve our ELL's:** Mr. Hill and the Dean of Intervention.

b. Organizational and operational improvement efforts

As mentioned above, during 2015-16, our Board was issued a formal notice of deficiency from the OEI. Upon receiving this notice, we took several steps to strengthen our Board governance as outlined in indicator 3.3 and 3.4. As most of the changes were made recently, we will be working to fully implement many of these improvement efforts during the next charter term. We have also identified the following areas to further improve upon during the next charter term:

- **Increased governance oversight.** As we look to the next charter term, we do not want to lose sight of the challenges of our past and the positive direction that our Board and school is now headed. In order to ensure we stay on a continued path of improvement, it is essential that we focus our efforts on further strengthen our board and stay on a path of academic improvement. We have identified the following improvement efforts to address this area:

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- **Board Committees:** Our Board recognizes that improvement is needed in the areas of governance and academics. We determined we needed to create committees dedicated to providing increased oversight in these areas to ensure improvement occurs. We have formed two committees to focus specifically on these areas:
 - **Governance Committee:** The Governance Committee was established in the spring of 2016 and meets monthly. The committee established key results (per BoardOnTrack methodology) including the development of the board retreat agenda, recommendations for changes to the bylaws and board member recruitment. The committee continues to develop improvements in the areas of board member recruitment, onboarding, and board bylaws.
 - **Academic Committee:** The Academic Committee was established in the spring of 2016 and meets monthly. The committee established key results (per BoardOnTrack methodology) in the areas of academic growth and student attendance and established multiple measures of reviewing progress toward results.

These committees meet on a monthly basis to discuss governance and academic issues and then reports out during our monthly Board meetings.

- **Additional Board meetings.** The Board now meets twelve times per year, including a day-long summer retreat for strategic planning.
- **Build a more comprehensive and diverse Board roster.** As previously mentioned, the collective background of our Board lacks expertise in the areas of finance and marketing. We have been actively recruiting Board members with a background in these areas and plan to add Board members to fulfill this need. Recruitment efforts have also focused on diversity representative of the student population as well as higher education.

The Governance Committee recently recommended the candidates listed below for appointment at the August 16, 2016. This will increase Board membership to nine members:

- **Nashelle Gaddis:** Old National Bank- Ms. Gaddis has over fifteen years of experience in the financial sector and community outreach and education.
- **Cindy Gil:** IUPUI: Ms. Gil works as the Coordinator of Hispanic Engagement Initiatives. She has experience in coordinating programs and leading community project.
- **Jose Rafael Sanchez:** Indiana University- Dr. Sanchez is the Director of Engineering Programs for IU's Department of Physics and Earth-Space Science.

In addition to strengthening our board with 9 members. The Governance Committee is considering a proposal that would extend the number of members. Additional candidates under consideration for future appointment:

- **Martel Vanlandingham:** Old National Bank- Mr. Vanlandingham has over ten years of experience in the financial sector including management.
- **Crystian Alatorre:** RCI North America- Mr. Alatorre is a travel professional with experience in marketing, sales, and operations management.
- **Harold Johnson:** Old National Bank- Mr. Johnson is a manager with nearly ten years of experience in the banking industry.

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- **Continued Board coaching and professional development.** The professional development and coaching that we have received from BoardOnTrack has been key to building a stronger and more effective Board. We have more work to do in this area and feel it is important to continue our relationship with BoardOnTrack in the 2016-17 school year. As our Board membership changes, the roles of our Board members change and we continue to shape the scope of work for our Academic and Governance committees, BoardOnTrack's guidance will be beneficial.

Timeline for implementation:

- **Board Committees:** Completed. The Board may institute additional committees as needed.
- **Additional Board meetings:** Completed.
- **Build a comprehensive and diverse Board:** August 2016.
- **Continued Board coaching and professional development:** September 2016.

Person responsible:

- The Board of Directors are responsible for each initiative listed above.