

# MARIAN UNIVERSITY

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## Indianapolis

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### Academy for Teaching and Learning Leadership

### School Evaluation

### **Vision Academy @ Riverside**

Prepared For: Office of Education Innovation  
Office of the Mayor, City of Indianapolis

Site Visit Date: October 28, 2015

Principal: Ian Yearwood

Evaluation Team Members: Cindy Farren  
Sr. Jeanne Hagelskamp  
Jeff Hannah  
Dr. Jeff Kaufman  
Jim Larson  
LaTonya Turner

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<sup>1</sup> Because Vision Academy does not serve high school students, Indicator 4.3 (i.e., supporting students for post-secondary options) is not addressed in this report.

## Part I: School Evaluation Overview and Methodology

Vision Academy @ Riverside (hereafter referred to as Vision Academy) is a public charter school sponsored by the Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation (OEI). The school opened in August, 2014. During the second year of a school's charter, the OEI requires its sponsored schools to undergo a comprehensive review guided by its performance framework. The OEI performance framework consists of four core questions:

1. Is the educational program a success?
2. Is the organization in sound fiscal health?
3. Is the organization effective and well-run?
4. Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

The OEI is responsible for evaluating its sponsored schools on the first three core questions, but during the comprehensive review an external evaluator is charged with addressing the fourth core question. Thus the school evaluation described herein only examines the OEI's fourth core question. This report includes:

1. An explanation of the school evaluation process;
2. An overview of Vision Academy's demographic and academic performance data;
3. Findings from the school evaluation;
4. A summary of the school evaluation.

## Process

The school evaluation process involved two phases of data collection and synthesis – (1) pre-site visit document review as well as (2) on-site observations and interviews. Prior to the site visit, the evaluation team reviewed Vision Academy’s mission statement, original charter proposal, family handbook, and staff survey results. In advance of the site visit, Vision Academy staff (n=20) completed a set of survey questions aligned to Core Question 4’s indicators (e.g., curriculum, school culture, professional development, family engagement).<sup>2</sup> These guiding documents and staff survey results informed the questions asked during focus groups and one-on-one interviews conducted during the site visit. The site visit consisted of the following components:

- Document analysis (e.g., scopes and sequences, lesson plans);
- Classroom observations of the vast majority of teachers (note: substitute teachers were not observed);
- Eight focus groups with teachers, generally by grade level;
- Four focus groups with students representing grades four through seven;
- One family member focus group;
- Interviews with the Principal, two Assistant Principals, and Master Teachers;
- Review of services and supports for Exceptional Learners;
- Review of services and supports for English Language Learners.

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<sup>2</sup> The responses were on a 4 point scale, with 1 = strongly agree ... and 4 = strongly disagree.

## **Part II: Vision Academy Background Information**

As a part of the Community Charter Network, Vision Academy serves students in kindergarten through seventh grade in Indianapolis' Riverside neighborhood. Vision's academic model is built around its use of the Core Knowledge curriculum, blended with the Indiana state standards. This curriculum is designed to prepare students to succeed in specialized courses in high school and beyond by first building a strong foundation of knowledge. As a part of its mission, Vision also prioritizes providing a safe, structured environment where all students have the opportunity to achieve, are able to develop other aspects of their being through a wide array of extra-curricular activities, and are supported to reach their full potential.

Vision aspires for a school culture that can be characterized as positive, consistent, and happy. Through initiatives such as daily communication with parents and a variety of family supports, Vision invests and involves family members as instrumental contributors to students' growth and the school's overall success.

### **Student Demographics**

Vision Academy began serving students in 2014, with 255 students in grades K-6. This school year, Vision enrolls 372 students in grades K-7. 90.6% of these students are eligible to receive free or reduced price meals. The racial and ethnic breakdown of

Vision’s student population is: Black (83.9%), Multiracial (8.3%), Hispanic (5.4%), White (1.9%), Asian (0.3%), and American Indian (0.3%).<sup>3</sup>

### Student Performance

The charts below describe Vision Academy’s results on the state’s school accountability model and assessments. Because Vision Academy @ Riverside has been open only two years, there is limited data to report.

<b>State School Accountability Designation<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>2014-15</b>
Description or Letter Grade	Academic Progress (“C”)

In 2014-15, Vision Academy’s first year of operation, the percentage of students who passed IREAD was almost seven percentage points below the state pass rate.

<b>Year of IREAD-3 Results</b>	<b>Percent Passing - Vision</b>	<b>Percent Passing - Indiana</b>
2014-2015 <sup>5</sup>	83.9%	90.7%

In that same year, a significantly smaller percentage of Vision Academy students passed ISTEP+ tests than did students in other schools across the state. However, it must be

<sup>3</sup> Indiana Department of Education. (2015, Fall). Enrollment overview. Retrieved November 20, 2015 from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/enrollment.aspx?type=school&id=5899>.

<sup>4</sup> Indiana Department of Education (2016, Spring). Accountability history. Retrieved January 15, 2016, from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/reportcard.aspx?type=school&id=5899>.

<sup>5</sup> 2014-2015 IREAD-3 results are based on preliminary data available from the Indiana Department of Education. Retrieved December 20, 2015, from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/iread3perf.aspx?type=school&id=5899>.

noted that all students who took ISTEP+ had transferred in to Vision Academy from other schools.

Year of ISTEP+ Results <sup>6</sup>	Percent Passing Both E/LA & Math	Percent Passing E/LA	Percent Passing Math
2014-2015 <sup>7</sup>	19.8%	63.8%	47.4%

### Student Growth

The Indiana Median Student Growth Model calculates student growth. Vision’s overall Growth Model data for Spring 2015 is recorded below.

Year of ISTEP+ Results <sup>8</sup>	Median Growth in E/LA	Median Growth in Math
Spring 2015	61.0%	27.0%

<sup>6</sup> Indiana Department of Education. (2015, Fall). ISTEP+ Overview. *IDOE: Compass*. Retrieved January 6, 2016, from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/istep.aspx?type=school&id=5899>.

<sup>7</sup> Based on concerns about the accuracy of scores statewide, the 2014-2015 ISTEP+ results are also subject to change.

<sup>8</sup> Indiana Department of Education. (2015, Spring). Report Card. *IDOE: Compass*. Retrieved February 26, 2016, from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/reportcard.aspx?type=school&id=5899>.

### Part III: Core Question 4 Indicator Ratings

Core Question 4 of OEI's performance framework consists of ten indicators and three possible ratings. The chart below summarizes the evaluation team's assessment of Vision Academy in a manner that is aligned to these indicators and ratings.

<b>Does not meet standard</b>	School exhibits significant concerns in two or more elements of the indicator
<b>Approaching standard</b>	School exhibits significant concerns in one element of the indicator
<b>Meets standard</b>	School does not exhibit significant concerns in any elements of the indicator

<b>Core Question 4 Indicator</b>	<b>Rating</b>
4.1: Curriculum and Supporting Materials	Meets standard
4.2: Pedagogy	Meets standard
4.3: Post-Secondary Guidance	Not applicable
4.4: Assessment	Meets standard
4.5: Talent	Meets standard
4.6: Mission	Meets standard
4.7: Climate	Meets standard
4.8: Communication	Meets standard
4.9: Exceptional Learners	Meets standard
4.10: English Learners	Meets standard

## Part IV: Findings

<b>Indicator 4.1: Curriculum and Supporting Materials</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>
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Element	Evaluation
<i>a) Does the curriculum align with state standards?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
Findings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the beginning of each year, faculty have taken time to work diligently on curriculum. They have created long term maps, essentially they have done a scope and sequence. Then they sat down as grade level teams and wrote out each state standard for that grade level on an index card, laid them out by quarter (Q1,Q2,Q3,Q4), identified the power standards, and then manipulated them so as to map when and where they would teach the standards.</li> <li>Particular attention was given to math and reading at the beginning of the year. The faculty used Core Knowledge as a resource, along with resources they found on their own, to do the maps for science and social studies.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Does the school conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
Findings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At their Curriculum Institute in June, faculty will take the curriculum and review it for all subject areas and grade levels. They will then develop and/or modify their objective and unit plans so that they have a detailed plan for each subject for each grade level. They will also create the unit assessments for each subject for</li> </ul>	

quarter one.

- Currently, the administration has brought two grade levels together at a time to look at the long term plans and identify if/how they are aligned to eliminate gaps.
- The faculty could use some of their weekly meeting time to identify gaps based on student performance, but currently they do not.
- Currently, the administration is talking to the Board about some additional early dismissals so that faculty will have more time to work on refining curriculum, identifying gaps, etc.

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Does the school regularly review its scopes and sequences to ensure presentation of content in time for testing?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During professional development days in February, after the second round of NWEA and Acuity, the faculty spend significant time digging into the data to identify their gaps in knowledge. However, they have not gone back to look at the maps at that point to try to fit things back in; rather they say what they will do moving forward.</li> <li>• The administration acknowledged that they could do a better job of reviewing the maps more regularly.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Does the school have a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that focuses on core learning objectives?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As mentioned above, teams pair up to ensure that there is a cohesive sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that focuses on core learning</li> </ul>	

objectives. The teams are basing some of their work on the curriculum developed by Avondale Meadows Academy, which has a curriculum that is properly scoped/sequenced.

Element	Evaluation
<i>e) Does the staff understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During classroom observations, members of the evaluation team looked for the following evidence that faculty understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and materials to effectively deliver instruction. These expectations have been communicated to teachers.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The lesson’s standard is clearly and completely displayed in the classroom and stated;</li> <li>2. The lesson aligns to the standard displayed in the classroom;</li> <li>3. Student work is posted in/outside of the classroom;</li> <li>4. The observer should see and/or hear evidence of positive incentives;</li> <li>5. The gradual release (“I do/we do/you do”) method should be utilized in instruction;</li> <li>6. Rules/expectations should be posted;</li> <li>7. The teacher is following a lesson plan to deliver instruction; and</li> <li>8. Curricular resources are being used by the teacher and students in a manner aligned to the lesson’s standard.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• With the exception of #1 &amp; #6, these elements were incorporated in one way or another in almost every classroom.</li> <li>• It was clear that lesson plans were being followed, that resources were at the teachers’ fingertips, and that the curricula were aligned to standards. However,</li> </ul>	

<p>the standards were posted in only about half of the classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student work was often posted in the hallways, and classroom walls were used for displays reminding students of prior instruction or to enhance current instruction.</li> <li>• In nearly every classroom there were visible incentives for positive behavior at the individual and at the whole class level. However, some classrooms did not have classroom expectations posted.</li> </ul>
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Element	Evaluation
<i>f) Does the staff have the materials to effectively deliver the curriculum?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<p>Faculty were surveyed about a number of topics, including curricular resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of survey respondents (17/20) agreed or strongly agreed that they have the curricular materials and resources needed for their courses.</li> <li>• 70% of survey respondents (14/20) agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to high-quality curricular materials and resources.</li> <li>• 60% of survey respondents (12/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy has clear procedures for acquiring needed curricular materials and resources.</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 4.2: Pedagogy</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>
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<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<i>a) Is the curriculum implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design?</i>	<b><u>Yes</u></b> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For its core subject areas, Vision Academy expects teachers to structure most of their lessons plans around three instructional phases – obtain (“I do”), develop (“We do”), apply (“You do”). This gradual release method of instruction ensures that students are actively engaged in the lesson, and it gives the teacher the opportunity to ascertain the degree to which the students have some understanding of the content being taught.</li> <li>In nearly every classroom, the teacher effectively executed this instructional model. However, because the observers did not stay in a classroom for the duration of a class period, in a few classrooms it was not always clear whether the method was being executed.</li> </ul>	

<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<i>b) Is instruction, as delivered, focused on core learning objectives?</i>	<b><u>Yes</u></b> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In each classroom visited, evaluation team members observed instruction that was focused on a given objective. However, only 50% of teachers actually posted the objectives. Generally, those who did post them had them written in the form of “I can” statements.</li> <li>In nearly all classrooms in which learning objectives were not posted, the instruction was covering an appropriate learning objective.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Does the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possess the appropriate rigor and challenge?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In nearly every classroom, observers found almost all students engaged in work that was aligned to the lesson’s standard.</li> <li>• In about 40% of the classrooms, questions that were asked required deep, higher level thinking. In a few of the classrooms, there were very few questions asked that were beyond comprehension.</li> <li>• In nearly every classroom, observers found almost all students engaged in appropriately challenging work aligned to the lesson’s standard. Additionally, all or almost all students provided meaningful verbal or written evidence to support their thinking.</li> <li>• In three classrooms, the rigor of the lesson was diminished by infrequent opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Do instructional activities use differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities, and learning needs?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 7 of the 18 classrooms observed, teachers posed questions that required students to cite evidence to support their thinking and/or to follow up on a previous student’s answer.</li> <li>• In 16 classrooms, observers saw at least two different instructional strategies being used effectively during the observation window.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>e) Does the school supply sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Academy uses the System for Teacher and Student Advancement (“TAP”) to guide teacher improvement processes and mentoring. As such, teachers receive ongoing, focused feedback and communication about improvement of their instructional practice.</li> <li>• Through comments shared on the staff survey and during teacher focus groups, it is clear that Vision Academy provides evidence-based feedback to its teachers. In addition, modeling is done by master teachers to assist other teachers in improving.</li> <li>• 100% of survey respondents (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that the school has a clear procedure for providing teachers with feedback on their instruction.</li> <li>• 100% of survey respondents (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback they receive helps them to improve their instruction.</li> <li>• 95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback they receive on their instruction is timely.</li> </ul>	

**Indicator 4.4: Assessment**

Meets standard

Element	Evaluation
<p>a) <i>Are the standardized and/or classroom assessments accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives?</i></p>	<p><u>Yes</u> / No</p>
<p><b>Findings</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Academy uses several “off the shelf” assessments that help them to assess their scholars’ progress. The Northwest Evaluation Association’s (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is administered in fall, winter and spring to students of all grade levels. These assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards or the Indiana Academic Standards.</li> <li>• Vision Academy grades K-2 are participating in the Core Knowledge Reading Program, a national pilot program administered through the Core Knowledge Foundation. In order to track these students’ progress in reading, they take both DIBELS and Reading A-Z assessments several times each year. The latter assessment can be scored as a running record so that each student’s instructional needs can be determined on a regular basis.</li> <li>• On the faculty survey, 95% (19/20) indicated that the school’s formative assessments are aligned with each of their classes’ scopes of learning standards and objectives.</li> <li>• 95% of the faculty (19/20) also indicated that the school’s formative assessments are aligned with each of their classes’ sequences of learning standards and objectives.</li> <li>• Vision Academy has also developed its own end of unit assessments that align to its curriculum maps.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Does the school distribute assessment results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that they receive their students' formative assessment data in a timely manner.</li> <li>95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that the way they receive their students' formative assessment data makes it easy to determine how they need to modify their instruction.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Does the school select assessments that have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision Academy uses a mixture of locally-developed benchmark assessments as well as national formative assessments to evaluate students' academic progress throughout the school year. These assessments are delivered in three different manners - verbally one-on-one with a teacher, via computer, and on paper. There are also project-based assessments. This variety allows students to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of mediums.</li> <li>Given the importance of building elementary school students' reading and math skills, most of Vision Academy's formative assessments focus on these two subject areas. As noted previously, all students take the NWEA MAP assessment three times a year in reading and math. The young students (K-2) also take DIBELS and Reading A-Z.</li> <li>Students also complete locally-created benchmark assessments that are used at the</li> </ul>	

end of each unit. The results of these benchmarks are used to shape subsequent instruction.

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Does the school use assessments with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions effectively?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to the previously described standardized formative assessments administered three or four times a year, teachers also use a variety of daily, weekly, and unit-based assessments to monitor students' progress towards mastery of standards and to determine how best to modify their instruction to address students' learning gaps.</li> <li>• Teachers at Vision Academy take time at their weekly cluster meetings and during quarterly professional development days to work with their colleagues to examine students' assessment results.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>e) Does the school use assessment results to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of survey respondents (16/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy has provided them with the necessary training and support to be able to modify their curriculum and instruction based on their students' formative assessment results.</li> <li>• Vision Academy teachers continue to grow in taking the time to look at assessment results frequently and to make adjustments in curriculum. They are</li> </ul>	

engaged in doing this more regularly at their cluster meetings, in addition to their schoolwide data digs on specified professional development days.

<b>Indicator 4.5: Talent</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>
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<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<i>a) Are the school's hiring processes organized and used to support the success of new staff members?</i>	<b>Yes / No</b>

<b>Findings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview are done by a committee of six people. Candidates are expected to provide a cover letter, resume, reference list, and letters of recommendation. First, one of the committee members conducts a phone screen, followed by an interview in person or SKYPE at least with three people who are on the committee. If that interview goes well, then the candidate's teaching is examined. S/he can come in to teach, video, or or someone from the committee goes to visit the candidate's school to watch him/her teach. The background check has been done after hiring. It was recommended that the background check be done prior to hiring.</li> <li>• Vision Academy has been very successful in retaining effective teachers: 86% of their proficient teachers returned in year two.</li> <li>• Vision Academy has also been instrumental in removing ineffective teachers from the classroom. The administration always considers what is in the best interests of the students and their education.</li> <li>• Vision Academy has engaged the services of master teachers to help support and mentor other teachers.</li> <li>• Additionally, the school uses the TAP program to provide a platform for teacher development.</li> <li>• Master and mentor teachers provide support for clusters of grade levels;</li> <li>• Teachers participate in weekly cluster meetings with colleagues and administrators.</li> <li>• 90% of survey respondents (18/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision</li> </ul>

<p>Academy’s staff mentoring program provides all staff with peer feedback and support that improves student achievement and promotes professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of survey respondents (15/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision’s staff induction program is structured to provide all new staff with a clear understanding of the school’s mission, policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Several faculty commented, both in person and on the survey, at the effectiveness of the TAP process for mentoring.</li> </ul>
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Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Does the school deploy sufficient number of staff to maximize instruction?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
Findings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Academy has invested significant resources in order to support faculty to maximize instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are two assistant principals, one for K-4, SPED, and PE; and the other for grades 5-7, SPED, and Performing Arts.</li> <li>• Additionally, there is a master teacher for grades K-3 and a master teacher for grades 4 - 7.</li> <li>• There are also mentor teachers for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-7.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Are faculty and staff certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
Findings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All faculty and staff are degreed and/or certified/trained in the areas to which they are assigned.</li> <li>• The performing arts teacher is degreed but not certified. The Special Ed teacher is</li> </ul>	

degreed and licensed. All other classroom teachers either are both degreed and licensed or are in Transition to Teaching programs. Master teachers are all licensed. Two of the administrators are degreed, have done BLA course work, and will be taking the licensure test in spring. The social worker has her MSW. Deans are degreed but not licensed.

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Is professional development related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the topics for before school PD are reoccurring from year to year (e.g., staff handbook, culture, curriculum mapping), but Vision Academy also selects a few specific initiatives to focus on each year. For example, earlier this year work was done on RULER, an emotional intelligence program. Later this year, six teachers will go to receive training on The Anchors of Emotional Intelligence and will subsequently train the other teachers.</li> <li>• 90% of faculty (18/20) indicated that the professional development that they are provided through Vision Academy is targeted to address their own particular areas of growth.</li> <li>• 90% of faculty (18/20) responded that Vision Academy’s professional development offerings allowed staff to improve school-wide programs and procedures.</li> <li>• 90% of faculty (18/20) responded that Vision Academy’s professional development is targeted to address the school’s areas for growth.</li> <li>• They also requested additional training on meeting students’ socio-emotional needs and behavior management, particularly as it relates to students who demonstrate more intense behavior issues.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>e) Are professional development opportunities determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development days are determined according to the needs of the school. Significant time is spent on professional development days looking at data so that faculty can plan curriculum accordingly.</li> <li>• Because Vision Academy is a new school, time has also been spent working on developing the culture of the school.</li> <li>• 95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy’s PD offerings are determined through analyses of student data.</li> <li>• 90% of survey respondents (18/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy’s professional development offerings allow them to improve their students’ achievement and growth.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>f) Does the school explicitly and regularly implement its teacher evaluation plan with a clear process and criteria?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is Vision Academy’s first year of using TAP. Faculty provided very favorable feedback about its use. As one faculty member noted: “It is our first year of using TAP. I really like it so far, and feel like the feedback and evaluation system is very fair. I feel that the feedback is timely and useful. I appreciate the TAP system!”</li> <li>• 100%of faculty (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy’s staff evaluation process is clear (i.e., each of the phases of the evaluation process is</li> </ul>	

clearly defined and staff know what to expect during each phase).

- 100% of survey respondents (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy's evaluation process is fair and accurate.
- 100% of survey respondents (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy's evaluation process has a clear timeline for observations, feedback, and conferences and that it is consistently followed (i.e., observations occur on time).
- 100% of faculty (20/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy's evaluation process is implemented consistently.

<b>Indicator 4.6: Mission</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>
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Element	Evaluation
<i>a) Does the school have a mission that is shared by all stakeholders?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When asked to rank the school's strengths and areas of growth, Vision Academy faculty ranked mission understanding and alignment as its greatest strength.</li> <li>Vision Academy is driven by its mission to provide a college-preparatory education through a rigorous, literacy-based academic program that ensures that their scholars are prepared to succeed on the path to college with a vision for the future. They do this by providing students with a structured and supportive learning environment that educates the whole child.</li> <li>95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that all key stakeholders (e.g., student, families, teachers, administrators) have a clear understanding of the school's mission.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Do stakeholders possess widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that they are committed to Vision Academy's mission.</li> <li>80% of respondents (16/20) agreed or strongly agreed that all key stakeholder groups (e.g., student, families, teachers, administrators) are deeply and equally committed to the school's mission.</li> <li>During the parent focus group, participants spoke about their deep appreciation</li> </ul>	

that the school was focusing on giving their children the same opportunities that other students have.

- Several themes emerged from the parent focus group that provide evidence of parents' awareness of and shared investment in the school's mission and approach.
- Parents appreciate the focus on maintaining rigorous academic standards and on frequent communication of students' academic progress.
- Parents also appreciated Vision Academy's efforts to provide students with opportunities to become well-rounded.
- Overall, feedback from the parent focus group was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated their commitment to Vision Academy's mission.

**Indicator 4.7: Climate**

Meets standard

Element	Evaluation
<i>a) Does the school have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Academy’s rules are based on their core values: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. These core values help to reinforce the habits and behaviors that the school hopes to engender in every student. Their list of school rules and expectations is succinct and clearly written, with explanations about why these rules promote a positive school culture.</li> <li>• In early November, Vision Academy created a Dean of Discipline position. Faculty were really looking forward to this change, for they felt that he would be able to help them work more effectively with a few students who were demonstrating significant behavior issues.</li> <li>• 95% of survey respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy has clearly stated rules for students.</li> <li>• 90% of respondents (18/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy’s rules for students reinforce positive behavior.</li> <li>• However, only 80% (16/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy has rules that set high expectations for behavior.</li> <li>• Only 45% of respondents (9/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy consistently follows-through on student rules and consequences. During focus groups, faculty expressed delight that the position of Dean of Discipline was about to be created, for they felt that his presence would help with consistent enforcement of rules and consequences.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Does the school's discipline approach possess high expectations for student behavior?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As noted before, Vision Academy's discipline is centered around their core values: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. These values set forth the high expectations that Vision Academy faculty and staff hold for their students.</li> <li>• Vision Academy aspires to a positive school culture that both sets high expectations for students and supports them to meet these standards through positive reinforcement and various supports.</li> <li>• Vision Academy administration recognized the need to create a Dean of Discipline position so that they could better address some of the behavior issues that were surfacing in the school.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Are interactions between faculty and students respectful and supportive? Are faculty and students clear about processes for conflict resolution?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the faculty/staff survey, 75% of survey respondents (15/20) agreed or strongly agreed that interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive.</li> <li>• While only 60% of faculty (12/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy has a clear process for resolving conflicts between teachers and students, 95% of survey respondents (19/20) indicated that conflicts between staff and students are resolved in a complete and timely manner.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Are interactions between faculty and administration professional and constructive?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of faculty (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that interactions between faculty and administrators at Vision Academy are productive and professional.</li> <li>• Feedback during focus groups with faculty was very positive. They noted that members of the administration are approachable and responsive to their concerns. They indicated that they would feel very comfortable approaching Mr. Yearwood with a concern.</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator 4.8: Communication</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>
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<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<i>a) Does the school have active and ongoing communication with parents?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of respondents (19/20) agreed or strongly agreed that Vision Academy actively communicates with its students' families.</li> <li>• This communication takes a variety of forms. Once a week, the school sends out an automated message via phone and email to all parents, sharing information on upcoming activities. There is also a monthly newsletter.</li> <li>• Middle school, kindergarten, and grades two through five send out a bi-weekly progress reports that include both grades and behavior.</li> <li>• There are also progress reports and report cards that are sent out.</li> <li>• Every day, parents must come into the school during dismissal to retrieve their student. This provides an additional opportunity for teachers to communicate in person with parents.</li> <li>• During the focus group, parents spoke very positively about Vision Academy's communication with parents. They were appreciative of the frequent updates, about their ability to communicate with faculty by phone or email, and about faculty's proactive reaching out to parents.</li> <li>• The administration recognizes the need to increase communications in Spanish as the population of Spanish-speaking families grows.</li> </ul>	

<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<i>b) Does the school utilize communications that are both timely and relevant to parental concerns?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No

Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the faculty survey, 100% of respondents (20/20) indicated that the school responds to families' concerns in an effective, frequent, and timely manner.</li> <li>During the parent focus group, parents expressed their comfort in being able to address concerns directly with their child's teacher or a school administrator, whoever was more appropriate. There was clearly an atmosphere of trust between parents and school personnel.</li> </ul>

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Does the school communicate student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No

Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents confirmed what faculty had noted earlier: that they commonly conference with faculty via text, notes, and phone calls about specific assignments and Parents were also appreciative of faculty taking the time to share good news with parents as well as opportunities for growth.</li> <li>Formally, parents receive academic progress reports, report cards, and midterm updates. Parent-teacher conferences also occur in October and at the beginning of spring break. Additionally, there are February conferences for students at risk of retention.</li> <li>Parents are informed of assessment results during parent conferences and during Parent University.</li> </ul>

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Are the school's communication methods designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No

## Findings

- Vision Academy provides information to families through a variety of media. Additionally, there are learning opportunities for parents.
- Each spring, families that are new to Vision Academy participate in an orientation specifically designed for them. This orientation takes place on a Saturday and involves both parents and students. New students go to meet their prospective teachers and do some preliminary assessments. Meanwhile, administration meets with parents and talk about the vision/ mission of the school, expectations for the students by the time they graduate, routines of the school, discipline, curriculum, college visits, and communication.
- Family members are also invited to monthly movie nights and a spring carnival. Middle school parents are also invited to “Parent University.” There is also a PTO.
- Parents coach and chaperone for field trips.
- During the school year, Vision Academy has workshops for parents that focus primarily on literacy. Each session is devoted to helping parents better understand how they can work with their children on specific aspects of literacy.
- One area of continuous improvement may be that of communicating with families in the families’ native language. Only 50% (10/20) agreed or strongly agreed that the school had a clear and effective process for doing so. Because some of the families are native Spanish speakers, faculty expressed concern that there be more communication to those families in Spanish.

**Indicator 4.9: Exceptional Learners**

Meets standard

**Background**

- Vision’s Exceptional Learners program creates an environment conducive to supporting its students’ needs across the school.
- The compliance monitor has a firm grasp of the relevant laws and oversees the program with exceptional attention and care for students.
- Students’ files and related paperwork are well organized and in compliance.
- Younger children receive direct instruction in a small group setting throughout the day.
- When observed, the resource room was active with intentional, effective teaching.
- Two teachers in the Exceptional Learners Program have received extensive training and experience, providing them with unique and relevant skills for teaching math, reading and writing.
- The learning support room was a warm, caring environment where students were respected and taught in a manner conducive to learning and engagement.
- Overall, Visions’ Exceptional Learners program has much strength that benefits the students it serves in the resource room and general education setting.

Element	Evaluation
<i>a) Do services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As mentioned above, IEPs reviewed were found to be in compliance and representative of best practices, including by describing services that matched</li> </ul>	

students' exceptional needs.

- Consideration should be given to the needs of students with behavior concerns, with appropriate programming and a behavior plan identified.

Element	Evaluation
<i>b) Do each of the needs identified within the IEPs have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEPs reviewed included goals and corresponding assessment plans. Vision uses a system to support its progress monitoring efforts. While this platform provides easily accessible data on a students' progress, the evaluation team did identify a few related areas for growth.</li> <li>• Identifying the specific lagging or missing skills to define the goal, provides teachers and parents with a clear picture of what the student's present level of performance is, where the student will be at the end of the year and a clear method for monitoring individual progress towards that goal.</li> <li>• Progress monitoring of IEP goals and the progress of students with exceptional needs could happen more often, informing instruction.</li> <li>• While there are some behavior goals, there also needs to be clear behavior plans to teach replacement skills for individual students based on the results of their functional behavior assessments.</li> <li>• Programming and progress monitoring for students with behavior intervention plans needs to be clearly stated.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>c) Are the goals outlined in IEPs rigorous and based on state and national learning standards?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No

Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In IEPs reviewed, the specified goals were explicitly connected to state academic standards. By doing so, Vision ensures that these goals are appropriately targeting grade-level skills.</li> <li>• Although IEPs clearing state missing or lagging skills prior to writing goals, attention should be given to PLAAFP statements coinciding with written IEP goals.</li> <li>• The evaluation team noted the importance of writing behavior goals and plans that improve and change behaviors of students with behavior disorders or behavior concerns.</li> </ul>

Element	Evaluation
<i>d) Does explicit evidence exist to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
Findings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In IEPs reviewed, there is clear evidence that goals have evolved annually, but student progress over time was not always evident.</li> <li>• For students who have been retained and have scores that are not improving, the evaluation team noted the importance of being reflective about past services and supports in a manner that directly informs evolved or new strategies to meet these students' needs.</li> <li>• The evaluation team noted the importance of documentation of progress monitoring of goals for students with exceptional needs, occurring more often than school wide progress monitoring.</li> <li>• The evaluation team noted the importance of functional behavior assessments and behavior plans that can easily be identified and found in student special education files.</li> </ul>	

Element	Evaluation
<i>e) Is a specifically designed curriculum outlined in each IEP?</i>	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In IEPs reviewed, there is a specific curriculum aligned to the students' needs and goals.</li> <li>• There are opportunities to strengthen the behavior skills curriculum to build students' skills to meet classroom and school wide expectations in a manner that supports a proactive approach to meeting their behavior goals.</li> </ul>	

**Indicator 4.10: English Language Learners**

Meets standard

**Background**

- Currently, Vision Academy serves 12 English Language Learners. Students were tested using WIDA. Six of the twelve have exited services and are being monitored.
- Of those still receiving services, one first grader is at Level 1; one kindergarten student is at Level 2; one kindergartener and two third graders are at Level 3; and one fifth grader is at Level 4. Most are high ability English speaking.

Element	Evaluation
a) Do appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services?	<u>Yes</u> / No
<b>Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently, the Special Ed teacher has an understanding of the law and has administered the WIDA tests.</li> <li>• The Home Language Survey is part of the application packet and is required of all families.</li> <li>• Intervention teachers, along with the Special Ed teacher, work directly with the ELL population.</li> <li>• All students at levels 1-4 are receiving appropriate ELL instruction by the Special Ed or intervention teachers.</li> <li>• Not all staff have a clear understanding of current legislations, research, and effective practices relating to the provision of ELL services. There is recognition among school administrators that faculty and staff still have a lot to learn regarding best practices for serving ELL students.</li> </ul>	

- Administration is considering moving a native Spanish speaker into a part-time ELL role to better service the students and their families.

Element	Evaluation
<p>b) Are relationships with students, parents, and external providers well-managed and comply with law and regulation?</p>	<p><u>Yes</u> / No</p>
<p><b>Findings</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who are new to the school have been tested with WIDA and those who have exited services are being monitored.</li> <li>• The family language survey is completed at the time the student applies to the school, so that Vision Academy personnel have a clear understanding of the language(s) spoken at home.</li> <li>• The Special Ed teacher received training to administer the WIDA tests.</li> <li>• Parents understand that they may waive their right to ELL services for their children.</li> <li>• Administration acknowledges that staff at large still have a lot to learn to better serve ELL students and families.</li> </ul>	

## Part V: Closing

Based on the evaluation done by the team, including classroom observations, faculty/staff survey results, interviews with administration, analysis of artifacts, and focus groups with key stakeholders, the evaluation team concluded that Vision Academy is fulfilling its mission of providing every student with the support and expectations necessary to actualize their full potential. Faculty and staff are dedicated to ensuring that students are provided a strong, rigorous curriculum, and administration are determined to have strong teachers in the classroom. It is evident that faculty and staff care for the students, work hard to engage each student in the learning process, and want to provide as much individualized help as possible for those who struggle.

While this evaluation report illustrates many of Vision Academy's strengths, the evaluation team also surfaced a small number of targeted areas for sustained growth.

- Continue to work with teachers to ensure that they are deploying positive behavior intervention strategies in a manner that does not compromise students' intrinsic motivation to learn.
- Ensure that as the ELL population grows, staff as a whole should be given training in best practices for working with ELL students to develop their language proficiency.
- Continue to refine the process for reviewing curriculum and execute it with fidelity.
- Work with teachers to more frequently identify opportunities to ask follow-up/deeper thinking questions.
- Provide more communication to families in Spanish.

The evaluation team commends the Vision Academy school community for its significant growth in such a short amount of time, for its focus on continued growth, and for making an impact in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of the children in urban Indianapolis.