

Executive Summary

Report on Strategic Plan Charter: Achievement Zone

Achievement Zone Charter Background

The Achievement Zone (AZ) was envisioned in Strategic Plan 2010. This was part of high academic achievement goal. The program was implemented in January 2007. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools partnered with Parthenon Group to create a business plan for the AZ. Staff utilized data to identify schools which had a variety of significant challenges and then selected ten challenged schools to be a part of AZ.

- Two Elementary Schools
 - Billingsville Elementary
 - Shamrock Gardens Elementary
- Four Middle Schools
 - Bishop Spaugh Community Academy
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
 - Sedgefield Middle School
 - Wilson Middle School
- Four High Schools
 - Garinger Traditional High School
 - Waddell High School
 - West Charlotte High School
 - West Mecklenburg High School
- Midwood High School was added in June of 2007

I. Purpose

- A. To provide more intensive support and intervention to a select group of highly challenged schools
 - 1. Additional learning community and school level staffing
 - 2. Highly focused and data-driven approach

II. Challenges

- A. Performance Gap
 - 1. In 2005-06, there was nearly 25% difference in AZ versus non-AZ students in performance (EOG and EOCs at Grade Level)
- B. Student Challenges
 - 1. Limited English Proficiency Students
 - 2. Exceptional Children
 - 3. Free and Reduced Lunch
 - 4. Unexcused Absence Rates
 - 5. Suspension Rates
- C. Teacher Challenges
 - 1. AZ schools had more teachers with limited experience
 - 2. AZ students were 50% more likely to have a novice teacher as compared to non-AZ students
 - 3. AZ schools had teacher turnover rates above the district average
 - a. Of the 84 district-wide teacher vacancies in 2007-2008, 27 were at AZ High Schools
 - 4. AZ schools (9.7 per year) had teacher absences above the district average (5.2 per year)

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III. Budget

	# of Positions	Budget
Salary/Benefits	40.8	\$3,194,573
Contract Services		\$30,000
Travel		\$2,500
Mileage Reimbursement		\$23,461
Supplies/Materials		\$44,700
		\$3,295,234
Gates Foundation Grant		\$570,628
Total Achievement Zone		\$3,865,862

IV. Results

A. Reading EOG

B. School	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08*	Change Between 2005-06 and 2006-07
District Average	85%	85% (0)	55%	0%
Billingsville	54%	63% (+9)	27%	9%
Shamrock Gardens	68%	76% (+8)	49%	8%
Bishop Spaugh	62%	60% (-2)	18%	-2%
Martin Luther King Jr.	69%	68% (-1)	29%	-1%
Sedgefield Middle	64%	69% (+5)	33%	5%
Wilson Middle	62%	63% (+1)	27%	1%

** Reading test scores were re-normed during 2007-2008 school year which prevents comparison to previous years*

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B. Math EOG

School	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Change Between 2005-06 and 2007-2008
District Average	65%	65% (0)	68% (+3)	3%
Billingsville	28%	43% (+15)	44% (+1)	16%
Shamrock Gardens	49%	50% (+1)	67% (+17)	18%
Bishop Spaugh	31%	29% (-2)	24% (-5)	-7%
Martin Luther King Jr.	34%	42% (+8)	45% (0)	8%
Sedgefield Middle	35%	39% (+4)	46% (+7)	11%
Wilson Middle	31%	34% (+3)	40% (+6)	9%

C. EOC Composite

Schools	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Change Between 2005-06 and 2007-2008
District Average	66%	67% (+1)	71% (+4)	5%
Garinger Traditional	46%	50% (+4)	43% (-7)	-3%
Midwood	--	--	18%	--
Waddell	49%	48% (-1)	57% (+9)	8%
West Charlotte	40%	46% (+6)	61% (+15)	21%
West Mecklenburg	48%	52% (+4)	58% (+6)	10%

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V. Strategies

- A. Focus on Data-Driven Decision Making
 - 1. Provided a framework for all professionals in the AZ to prepare, inquire, and act
 - 2. Integrated into all aspects of the AZ
 - 3. *Data Wise* process guides teacher work (across grades or content areas) to assess student data and make appropriate instructional decisions
 - a. School-level data teams
 - b. Data analyst at each high school

- B. Focus on Quality Staff
 - 1. Between 2006-07 (23%) and 2007-08 (15%) there was a 8% reduction in teacher turnover at AZ schools

- C. Focus on Safety
 - 1. Intervention Teams
 - a. School intervention teams in the AZ have been working to provide multiple layers of academic and behavioral interventions for all students
 - b. Some teams have already partnered with MeckCares to incorporate the System of Care concepts into their processes
 - 2. Suspension Data Tracking
 - 3. Alternatives to Suspension
 - a. Check-in and check-out process

- D. Focus on Literacy
 - 1. Literacy Professional Development
 - a. NC READS at Shamrock Gardens
 - b. AVID
 - c. West Charlotte Reading Apprenticeship program
 - 2. Reading Excellence Amongst Distinguished Students (READS) program
 - a. \$100,000 in external funding from Target
 - b. Family Literacy Nights
 - c. Guys Read and Girls Read Clubs in all elementary and middle schools

- E. Focus on Public Perception
 - 1. Significant Partnerships
 - a. 100 Black Men
 - i. Focus: To mentor middle school males through its *Black Men Care* program
 - b. Bank of American
 - i. Focus: To provide mentoring, lunch buddies, and field trips to AZ middle schools
 - c. Charlotte Post/Crossroads Charlotte
 - i. Focus: To create a literacy program that assists low-performing third-graders
 - d. Fifth Third Bank
 - i. Focus: To provide AVID tutors and computers to Wilson Middle
 - e. Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

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- i. Focus: To provide mentoring and tutoring to AZ middle schools and high schools
- f. Leadership Charlotte
 - i. Focus: To help increase parent involvement and participation in Parent University for Achievement Zone schools
- g. Target Stores
 - i. Focus: To provide funding for AZ literacy initiatives
- h. West Blvd. Neighborhood Coalition
 - i. Focus: To increase parent involvement for West Blvd. corridor residents

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VI. Lessons Learned

Challenged schools require:

- A. Strong leadership
 - 1. Principals, Assistant Principals and Teachers

- B. Adequate, equitable, and reliable funding
 - 1. Investment should equal the level of challenge
- C. Collective efficacy
 - 1. Coalition building and network formation will promote collaborative reform efforts
 - 2. High expectations and standards are mandatory components for reculturing challenged schools

- D. Partnerships
 - 1. Parents, businesses, and national foundations

- E. Strategic planning
 - 1. Goals and processes for continuous improvement

- F. Professional development
 - 1. Key lever for school reform
 - 2. Building capacity among all educators, novice and veteran alike, is the most impactful practice to ensure school improvement

- G. Challenged schools are succeeding beyond their public image
 - 1. AZ schools and those who work with them must dedicate time and talent to telling their stories
 - 2. The emphasis placed on establishing healthy relationships has yielded positive results
 - 3. An ethic of caring must underlie the relationships at all levels (learning community, schools, faculty, staff, parents, children, community)