

INDIANAPOLIS MAYOR'S OFFICE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

ANDREW J. BROWN ACADEMY

March 20 - 22, 2007

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Fourth Year Charter Review (FYCR) is designed to assess the extent to which a school is meeting the standards for renewal at the mid-point of its charter term. The FYCR Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as to school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

1. *Is the educational program a success?*

- 1.1. *Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?*
- 1.2. *Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?*
- 1.3. *Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.4. *Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

2. *Is the organization effective and well-run?*

- 2.1. *Is the school in sound fiscal health?*
- 2.2. *Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?*
- 2.3. *Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?*
- 2.4. *Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?*
- 2.5. *Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?*
- 2.6. *Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?*

3. *Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?*

- 3.1. *Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.2. *Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?*
- 3.3. *Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?*
- 3.4. *Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?*
- 3.5. *Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?*

4. *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

- 4.1. *Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?*
- 4.2. *Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?*
- 4.3. *For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?*
- 4.4. *Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?*
- 4.5. *Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?*
- 4.6. *Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?*
- 4.7. *Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?*
- 4.8. *Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?*

COMPLETION OF THE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office engages professionals to conduct site visits of schools in their fourth year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. The FYCR site visit uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: ***Core Question 4 and all of its sub-questions (4.1-4.8), sub-question 2.3 and sub-question 2.5.***

Responses to Core Question 1 and all of its sub-questions (1.1-1.4), Core Question 3 and all of its sub-questions (3.1-3.5), and sub-questions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 will be completed by the Mayor's Office.

The outcome of the FYCR will provide the school with a written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

- Does not meet standard*
- Approaching standard*
- Meets standard*
- Exceeds standard*

Note: In the case of the sub-questions under ***Core Question 3*** and ***Core Question 4*** of the *Performance Framework*, there is no rating for *Exceeds standard*. *Meets standard* is the highest possible rating.

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

ANDREW J. BROWN ACADEMY

<i>Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?</i>	<i>FINDING</i>
<i>1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?</i>	Exceeds Standard
<i>1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>1.3. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?</i>	Not Evaluated¹
<i>1.4. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?</i>	Not Applicable²
<i>Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?</i>	<i>FINDING</i>
<i>2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>2.2. Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?</i>	Approaching Standard
<i>2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?</i>	Not Applicable³
<i>Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?</i>	<i>FINDING</i>
<i>3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational structure and governance obligations?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>3.2. Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>3.4. Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?</i>	Does Not Meet Standard
<i>3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</i>	Not Applicable⁴

¹ The school was not evaluated in comparison to schools students would have attended.

² The school did not have school-specific educational goals that were evaluated for the FYCR

³ The school did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

⁴ This sub-question is not applicable because the school did not have English as a Second Language students enrolled.

<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>FINDING</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</i>	Not Applicable¹
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Does Not Meet Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Approaching Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Meets Standard

¹ This sub-question is not applicable to the school, because it does not serve secondary students.

FINDINGS, INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE

ANDREW J. BROWN ACADEMY

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?

1.1. Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress (AYP), as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?	
Does not meet standard	School has met AYP in less than half of student subgroups for the last two consecutive years.
Approaching standard	School has met AYP in more than half of student subgroups for one of the last two years.
Meets standard	School has met AYP across all student subgroups for the last two years.
Exceeds standard	School has exceeded the AYP target in all student subgroups in at least one of the last two years.

Exceeds Standard. Andrew J. Brown Academy (AJB) achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward statewide academic goals set by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Student performance exceeded statewide targets each year on both English/Language Arts and mathematics examinations. The school also achieved attendance and participation rate targets each school year.

Reports provided by the IDOE indicated that AJB made AYP in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Across school years, AJB met the required attendance and participation rate standard of 95%. AJB students exceeded performance targets established by the IDOE in both English/Language arts and mathematics for both the aggregate (i.e. all students) population as well as disaggregated subgroups (African-American students, students who qualified for free and reduced priced lunch) across school years in order to make AYP. AJB achieved AYP without relying on alternative methods such as the Safe Harbor Provision or alternate attendance rate standards.

In summary, the school exceeded the IDOE's standard for achieving AYP. It achieved AYP each of the past three years and exceeded AYP targets in all student subgroups.

1.2. Are students making substantial and adequate gains over time, as measured using value-added analysis?	
Does not meet standard	Value-added analysis indicates that less than 50% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Approaching standard	Value-added analysis indicates that 50%-74% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Meets standard	Value-added analysis indicates that more than 75%-89% of tested students made sufficient gains.
Exceeds standard	Value-added analysis indicates that at least 90% of tested students made sufficient gains.

Meets Standard. Analysis of data on fall-to-spring gains over four years revealed that an average of 86% of students achieved sufficient gains to reach proficiency over time. This percentage meets the Mayor's standard of at least 75% of students making sufficient gains.

The value-added analysis uses two sources of data, the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and the ISTEP+ to determine and predict student gains over time. Student

assessment results were analyzed in grades 2-8, in reading, language arts and mathematics to determine an overall percentage of students that are likely to achieve proficiency on ISTEP+ within two years time.¹

In the 2003-04 school year, analyses indicated that 94.3% of students at AJB would achieve proficiency by 8th grade. This is the highest average sufficient gain achieved by AJB students. The methodology for determining sufficient gains in subsequent years changed as the Mayor's office asked analysts to apply a more stringent standard. Beginning in 2004-2005 instead of determining the percentage of students that made sufficient gains to be proficient by 8th grade, analysts determined whether students made sufficient gains to become proficient within two years at most (e.g. the percentage of 3rd grade students making sufficient progress to achieve proficiency by the end of 5th grade, and thus able to pass ISTEP+ the following fall). Because the 2003-04 method allowed students more time to become proficient, the percentage of students achieving sufficient gains was generally higher in 2003-04, and a drop in this percentage in subsequent years does not necessarily indicate a decrease in school performance.

In the 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years, AJB students showed average sufficient gains of 74.6%, 89.6% and 85.8%, respectively.

Across the four years of the charter term, students achieved a multi-year average sufficient gain of 86.0%. This percentage meets the Mayor's standard of at least 75% of students making sufficient gains.

Year	Average Sufficient Gain
2003-2004	94.3%
2004-2005	74.6%
2005-2006	89.6%
2006-2007	85.8%
Multi-Year Average	86.0%

¹ For each student, analysts projected the student's test scores into the future based on the amount of progress that each student made on the NWEA MAP test between fall and spring. Analysts then compared that projected score to the score needed to pass Indiana's ISTEP+ exam at that future time (i.e., cut score). Finally, analysts calculated the average percentage across all grades (second through eighth where applicable), subjects (reading, math, and language), and years (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-2007). The result was a single percentage, which determines the rating for the school according to the rubric above.

1.3. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?	
Does not meet standard	School’s overall performance in terms of proficiency and/or growth is generally lower than that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend in each of the last three years.
Approaching standard	School’s overall performance in terms of both proficiency and/or growth is generally lower than that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend in two of the last three years.
Meets standard	School’s overall performance in terms of both proficiency and/or growth is generally as good as that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend.
Exceeds standard	School’s performance consistently outpaces that of the schools the students would otherwise have been assigned to attend.

Not Evaluated.

1.4. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?	
Does not meet standard	School has clearly not met its school-specific educational goal.
Approaching standard	School is making good progress toward meeting its school-specific educational goal.
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific educational goal.
Exceeds standard	School has clearly exceeded its school-specific educational goal.

Not Applicable. Andrew J. Brown Academy did not have school-specific educational goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?

2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents concerns in <u>three or more</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one or two</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement.
Meets standard	The school presents significant concerns in no more than <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement. In addition, if the school presents significant concerns in one area, it has a credible plan for addressing the concern that has been approved by the Mayor’s Office.
Exceeds standard	The school demonstrates satisfactory performance in all of the areas listed in previous levels.

Meets Standard. Andrew J. Brown Academy has demonstrated strong fiscal health over the first four years of its charter term. National Heritage Academies (NHA), the school’s educational management organization, provides significant financial management support to the school. The school has been audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts (ISBA) twice in the first four years of operation – for the period from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004 and from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2006. Each report included an unqualified opinion from the ISBA for the school’s financials. Each audit report outlined several findings related to the school’s financial management and accounting systems, none of which were deemed significant. Yet, many of the same findings appeared on both audit reports, indicating that the school had not yet satisfactorily resolved these issues.

Andrew J. Brown has established adequate staffing and systems for managing the school’s finances. Since it opened, the school has contracted with NHA to manage and provide for its financial management needs. NHA currently manages more than 50 charter schools in six states, and has a Michigan-based office staff with significant expertise in budgeting, accounting, and long-term financial planning. NHA insures that the school meets financial oversight requirements from the Mayor’s office and other regulatory bodies such as the ISBA. NHA communicates regularly with the schools administrative team regarding financial needs and also helps to develop and manage the school’s long-term financial goals. Any revenue shortfalls the school might experience reduces the management fee the school pays to NHA for operational, administrative, management, financial, and educational model development, and does not reduce or limit the school’s educational program. As a result of its relationship with NHA, the school has achieved a balanced budget, revenue projections and expenses for the next three years appear to be adequate, and the school has fulfilled all financial reporting requirements of the charter agreement in a timely manner.

Findings from the ISBA audits were deemed minor, yet the presence of the same findings on two consecutive audits suggest that school has not yet adequately resolved these issues. Repeat findings included that the school: (1) continued to not use many of the forms prescribed by the ISBA; (2) had not appointed a treasurer that is covered by an individual surety bond; (3) did not always issue receipts for monies collected; (4) did not report separate funds for Special Education Preschool and Textbook rental activity; and (5) used a basis for accounting method of accounting not prescribed by the ISBA. This is a clear area of attention for the school.

By maintaining current levels of financial compliance and ensuring that the school adequately attends to minor yet important repeat findings by the ISBA, Andrew J. Brown Academy will continue to experience strong fiscal health.

2.2. Are the school’s student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	
Does not meet standard	The school’s actual enrollment consistently falls short of target enrollment by <u>10% or more</u> . Student attendance and retention rates are consistently below the school’s agreed-upon target rates.
Approaching standard	The school’s actual enrollment consistently falls short of target enrollment by <u>1-9%</u> . Student attendance and retention rates are consistently below the school’s agreed-upon target rates.
Meets standard	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates are generally at or above the school’s agreed-upon target rates.
Exceeds standard	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates consistently exceed the school’s agreed-upon target rates.

Approaching Standard. Andrew J. Brown Academy has not been consistently fully enrolled in the first four years of its charter term. The school was near full enrollment during the 2004 and 2005 school years, yet fell short of enrollment targets agreed upon in the charter during the 2003 and 2006 school years. The following table displays the target enrollment compared with the school's official fall enrollment reported to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). In the fall of 2003 and 2006, the school's official enrollment was 29 and 43 students below target enrollment, respectively. In the fall of 2004 and 2005, however, official enrollment at Andrew J. Brown Academy was closer to the target enrollment, differing by less than 1.3%.

School Year	Target Enrollment	Fall Enrollment	Percent Below
2003-2004	418	389	6.9%
2004-2005	496	490	1.2%
2005-2006	574	572	0.3%
2006-2007	652	609	6.6%

Source: Target Enrollment data are from the school's charter. Fall Enrollment data are from the Indiana Department of Education.

Attendance rates at Andrew J. Brown Academy were consistently above the IDOE's target of 95% over the last three years for which data are available.

School Year	Attendance Rate
2003-2004	95.8%
2004-2005	95.4%
2005-2006	95.8%

Source: Indiana Department of Education.

No targets have been established for student retention rates for Andrew J. Brown Academy. Retention rates were at their highest from the Fall of 2003 to the Fall of 2004 (74%), but this rate has dropped and remained stable at about 64% for the last two years.

Years	Students Enrolled Initial Year	Students Re-enrolled Following Year	Retention Rate
Fall 2003 to Fall 2004	381	282	74.0%
Fall 2004 to Fall 2005	490	312	64.3%
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006	572	367	64.2%

Source: Mayor's office analysis of fall enrollment reports submitted by the school.

In summary, Andrew J. Brown Academy has been consistently above the state's target for attendance each of the last three years, but has not been consistently fully enrolled and has experienced a drop in its

retention rate. In order to meet this standard, the school will need to maintain its attendance rate, improve its enrollment and its ability to re-enroll students year-to-year.

2.3. Is the school’s Board active and competent in its oversight?	
Does not meet standard	The school appears to lack clear, consistent, and competent stewardship. The Board lacks the number of members specified in the by-laws; it is not well-balanced in member expertise; there has been consistently high turnover on the Board unrelated to the term limits stipulated in the Board’s by-laws; roles and responsibilities of the Board are not clear; it often fails to achieve a quorum.
Approaching standard	Board membership is not complete; there has been some unanticipated turnover on the Board unrelated to the term limits stipulated in the Board’s by-laws; it is reasonably well-balanced in member expertise; roles and responsibilities on the Board are reasonably clear; it is difficult to get a quorum; Board subcommittees are somewhat active; the Board is developing its ability to provide clear, consistent, and competent stewardship.
Meets standard	The Board’s membership collectively contributes a broad skill set and fair representation of the community; Board members are knowledgeable about the school; roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly delineated; Board meetings reflect thoughtful discussion and progress in the consideration of issues; overall, the Board provides consistent and competent stewardship of the school.
Exceeds standard	The Board meets the standard for this sub-question AND: displays exceptional expertise and stewardship, as evidenced by significant Board actions to enhance the school over time.

Meets Standard. The Board at Andrew J. Brown Academy (AJB) is active, experienced, and provides competent oversight of the school. There is a broad range of expertise on the Board, and Board members are knowledgeable about the school, its policies, and issues of concern. The roles and responsibilities of the Board and its members are clearly defined. A representative of National Heritage Academies generally attends Board meetings, as do the Principal and Assistant Principal.

Board membership has been somewhat stable since the founding of the school in 2003: of the eight members who have served on the Board, five of those are currently serving. These five current members have a wide range of expertise, knowledge, and extensive educational credentials, including the Vice-President of Youth & Family Programs at Indiana Black Expo, Inc.; the Pastor of Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, who is also a full-time professor at Martin University; the Senior Vice-President of Operations at Indiana Business College; an architect who serves as Senior Client Services Director at a local architectural firm, Paul A. Cripe, Inc.; and the Executive Director of the Ebenezer Church Foundation Bridging the Gap Project. An interview with two (2) Board members revealed that those Board members are knowledgeable about the school’s mission and are firmly committed to it.

The Board holds scheduled meetings several times during the school year, exceeding its By-Laws requirement of twice a year. During the past year, one meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum.

Although the minutes of Board meetings reflect discussions of a diverse range of school issues, those minutes do not reflect details of those discussions. The team review of minutes for four years (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07), and an interview with the school leadership team indicated that minutes need to provide sufficient detail to provide documentation of important discussions, deliberations, and decisions.

A recent survey of parents reflected that 82% of respondents were satisfied with the Board. An interview with the school leadership team and an interview with administrators both indicated that the Board’s

involvement was adequate and helpful. These two groups also reported that the relationship between the Board and National Heritage Academy (NHA) is very positive.

In summary, evidence indicates the Board includes some representation from the community, brings a range of skills, and provides consistent and competent direction for the school. To provide even greater stewardship for the school, the Board might be expanded in key areas, assess the need for and develop relevant committees, and publish minutes that reveal details of their deliberations. Therefore, the Fourth Year Charter Review (FYCR) site visit team concluded that the Board has met the standard.

2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	
Does not meet standard	Less than 70% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Approaching standard	More than 70% but less than 80% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Meets standard	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.
Exceeds standard	At least 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.

Meets Standard. Averaged across the last four years, 85% of parents surveyed indicated that they are satisfied overall with Andrew J. Brown Academy. In the spring of each year, the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis administered an anonymous survey to all parents and guardians of students enrolled at the school. Of the parents surveyed, between 80% and 91% of parents indicated overall satisfaction (see chart below).

School Year	Percent Satisfied
2003-2004	90%
2004-2005	84%
2005-2006	91%
2006-2007	80%

Note: “Percent Satisfied” includes “very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” responses which were on a five-point scale that also included “satisfied”, “somewhat dissatisfied”, and “very dissatisfied”.

Source: Confidential survey results administered by the University of Indianapolis.

2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) the leadership has insufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) turnover in leadership has been high and/or damaging to the school; c) roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are generally unclear; d) the school’s leadership does not appear to actively engage in a process of continuous improvement; it has made few mid-course corrections in response to problems.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) the leadership has insufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) turnover in leadership has been high and/or damaging to the school; c) roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are generally unclear; d) the school’s leadership does not appear to actively engage in a process of continuous improvement; it has made few mid-course corrections in response to problems.
Meets standard	The school’s leadership a) has sufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) has been sufficiently stable over time; c) has clearly defined roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board; d) actively engages in a process of continuous improvement which has led to some mid-course corrections.
Exceeds standard	The leadership displays exceptional academic and business expertise. Leadership turnover has been manageable and appropriate. Roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board are clear. The leadership has established exemplary processes to engage in continuous improvement which have led to significant enhancements to the school over time.

Meets Standard. Multiple sources of evidence indicate that the administration of Andrew J. Brown Academy is strong in its academic and business expertise. Teacher surveys and constituent focus groups and interviews with parents, board members, and teachers indicate that the principal is an exemplary leader who directs a process of continuous improvement in the school. Constituents note that having one very strong leader in the principal position throughout the history of the school has had a positive influence on the school’s growth and development.

The principal is the primary administrator at AJB and currently is assisted by a full-time assistant principal. The principal works closely with the Board and NHA to implement policies and programs, and to ensure the effective and efficient day-to-day operations of the school. An interview with the school leadership team indicated the principal leads in continuous school improvement. The implementation of a new math program was often cited as a very positive example of changes made to improve student performance. Since fall 2005, the school has had an Assistant Principal to ensure on-going administrative leadership for the school; the school leader has also established a leadership team to contribute to the stewardship of the school. The school leader reported that she is engaged in a process to identify lead teachers and to provide more leadership training for them.

Additionally, the most recent teacher survey indicated over 70% of teachers polled either “somewhat agree/agree/agree strongly” that the academic leadership of the school is strong. The most recent parent survey reflected that 92% of respondents were either “very satisfied/moderately satisfied/satisfied” with the school administration.

While the overall evidence indicates that the school leader is strong and competent, two areas of concern were identified. First, while the recent addition of an assistant principal was seen as a positive step, an interview with the school leadership team indicated that some staff were not always sure of the assistant principal’s roles and responsibilities and how they differed from those of the principal. Second, interviews with faculty and staff indicated that they are not always clear about the specific steps and

schedule for implementing the AJB teacher evaluation process. While there is written documentation that describes the evaluation process, interviews with the leadership team and with teachers indicate that communication about the system and its implementation can be improved. Furthermore, interviews with paraprofessionals and a document review indicate that there are no written job descriptions and no evaluation processes for paraprofessionals.

In sum, evidence indicates that overall AJB currently has sufficient expertise and leadership. While much of it continues to reside in the person of the principal, who the school’s self-reflection team in April 2006 described as an “exemplary . . . strong leader . . . very high expectations for her staff and students . . . caring approach . . . high visibility . . .,” the school is moving towards assuring the continuation of strong leadership by bringing in an assistant principal and organizing and training a school leadership team. While there are two areas noted above for improvement and further development, the FYCR site visit team concluded that the evidence indicates that the school administration has met the standard.

2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?	
Does not meet standard	School has clearly not met its school-specific organizational goal.
Approaching standard	School is making good progress toward meeting its school-specific organizational goal.
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific organizational goal.
Exceeds standard	School has clearly exceeded its school-specific organizational goal.

Not Applicable. Andrew J. Brown Academy did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated for the FYCR.

Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational and governance obligations?	
Does not meet standard	School presents significant concerns in two or more of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) maintenance of adequate “compliance and governance binder” containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate board minutes.
Approaching standard	School presents significant concerns in one of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) maintenance of adequate “compliance and governance binder” containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate board minutes
Meets standard	School has substantially completed all of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, including: a) maintenance of adequate “compliance and governance binder” containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate board minutes. Any concerns are minor and the school presents a credible plan to address them.

Meets Standard. Andrew J. Brown completed all of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook. During the school year, National Heritage

Academies, the school’s education management organization, was responsible for maintaining the compliance binder and documents, which have been submitted in a timely manner. The school also documents that background checks are conducted for all board members. Andrew J. Brown complies with public access and open door policy by posting notices of board meetings. Board meeting minutes are always kept and have been sent to the Mayor’s Office in a timely manner.

3.2. Is the school’s physical plant safe and conducive to learning?	
Does not meet standard	The facility requires <u>much</u> improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Significant health and safety code requirements have not been met AND/OR the school <u>lacks</u> many conditions such as the following: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; adequate maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.
Approaching standard	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met, but the facility needs <u>some</u> improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. It <u>partially</u> – but not fully – provides conditions such as the following: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; good maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.
Meets standard	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met AND the facility generally provides a safe environment that is conducive to learning, based on conditions such as: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; good maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.

Meets Standard. Andrew J. Brown’s facility meets all the health and safety code requirements and provides a safe environment conducive to learning. The facility’s design, size, maintenance, security, equipment, and furniture are all adequate to meet the school’s needs. The school is accessible to all including people with physical disabilities.

3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?	
Does not meet standard	The school’s enrollment process does not comply with applicable law AND/OR the school exhibits one or both of the following deficiencies a) a substantial number of documented parent complaints suggest that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; b) the school has not engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.
Approaching standard	The school’s enrollment process complies with applicable law but exhibits one or both the following deficiencies: a) a substantial number of documented parent complaints suggest that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; b) the school has not engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.
Meets standard	The school’s enrollment process complies with applicable law; there are minimal documented parent complaints suggesting that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; AND the school has engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.

Meets Standard. Andrew J. Brown's admission and enrollment practices meet the requirements of Indiana's charter school law. The Mayor's Office has received no complaints from parents regarding the school's enrollment practices. The school conducts extensive outreach to parents citywide, including advertisement in newspapers, tours by parent ambassadors, job fairs, distribution of brochures, and word of mouth.

The Mayor's Office receives copies of Andrew J. Brown's enrollment policies and marketing plans. Since its inception, the school has held an admissions lottery as the number of applications received has continuously exceeded the number of open seats at the school. The school has implemented a lottery system and gives preference to siblings of current students, as required by law.

3.4. Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?	
Does not meet standard	The school is not fulfilling its legal obligations regarding proper maintenance of special needs students' files, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve compliance such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences. A school does not meet the standard if any individual education plans have not been updated within the appropriate timeframe.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations proper maintenance of special-needs students' files, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding special-needs students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences.

Does Not Meet Standard. Andrew J. Brown Academy is not currently meeting the standard established for proper maintenance of students' special education files. The school had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that have not been finalized or are missing required components. Other files were found to be lacking the original documentation of eligibility for services and did not provide documentation for case conferences.

In order to evaluate this question, an outside team of experts conducted a file review in the spring of 2007 of the school's special education files. The team's focus was to determine whether the files contained all required components, including items such as parent consent form, documentation of case conference notifications to parents and other conference participants, signatures of attendees at case conferences and up-to-date IEPs. In addition, the team reviewed IEPs to ensure inclusion of all necessary information, including measurable annual goals, a statement of how the parent will be informed of the student's progress, and the date of the student's re-evaluation.

The team did not interview parents or evaluate the school’s provision of special education services beyond the information included in the special education files.

None of the student files were in complete compliance with all of the requirements. This indicates that the school does not yet have an effective system for maintaining or monitoring student IEPs. In many instances, the documentation for IEP case conference notification was missing, making it impossible to confirm whether adequate notice had been given to key stakeholders. Further, many files were out of compliance because they lacked a duration date for re-evaluation and/or development of an updated IEP. Additionally, finalized IEPs were not present in a file, and conferences for students with disabilities who were new to the school were held, but no IEP was present in the student’s file.

A small yet significant number of student files were out of compliance because a case conference was not conducted within 60 days of the initial referral. Further, a file contained a note with a date indicating a need for the development of an IEP, but further accompanying paperwork was not available. In addition, many files were missing original documentation of student eligibility for special education. While such paperwork may not have been received from the sending school district as of yet, this is still a compliance issue.

In summary, there are significant concerns about the maintenance of special education files at Andrew J. Brown Academy. The school should undertake a full review of all special education files and IEPs in order to bring files into compliance.

3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related To access and services to English as a Second Language (ESL) students?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is <u>not yet completely</u> fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Not Applicable. Andrew J. Brown Academy did not have any English as a Second Language students (or Limited English Proficient or Language Minority students) enrolled for the last three years, so this question is not applicable.

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Meets Standard. Evidence shows that Andrew J. Brown Academy has a high quality curriculum and supporting materials at each grade level. Because AJB is a National Heritage school, teachers are provided the NHA national curriculum and supporting materials. The principal and the school leadership team reported in interviews that many parts of the curriculum are currently aligned with Indiana Academic Standards and that additional work to ensure that all elements of the curriculum are aligned with Indiana standards is undertaken by individual teachers.

The school leadership team stated that there is a periodic review of the curriculum conducted by NHA national staff. In addition, AJB staff regularly review the NHA curriculum to identify gaps related to Indiana standards. In focus groups, teachers indicated a clear understanding of how to implement the NHA curriculum and how to use supporting materials in their classrooms. Classroom observations made by the FYCR site visit team revealed that the majority of teachers were using the identified curriculum and that specific Indiana standards were posted in 68% of the classrooms. Teachers overall reported that they are satisfied with the curriculum and that they have the supporting materials they need to effectively implement the AJB curriculum.

Interviews with teachers and administrators and classroom observations indicated that teachers use Open Court reading series, Scott Foresman math, supplemental novels, Write from the Beginning, Write for the Future, McDougal-Little Language Arts, Wordly-Wise vocabulary, and E-Curriculum. Teachers widely reported in focus groups that the Scott Foresman math program is successful and that there has been improvement over the previous program. The site team reviewed the NHA curriculum teachers’

handbook for each grade level and found that the handbooks provided a clear scope and sequence that was aligned across grades and content areas. Classroom observations indicated that the curriculum was implemented in the majority of AJB classrooms. Teachers and administrators stated that the curriculum is overall effective, that individual teachers supplement the curriculum as needed, and that they are overall satisfied with the curriculum.

The most recent teacher survey revealed 81% of the teachers polled believed the overall quality of education at AJB was good. Responses to one item on a 2005-06 survey showed that 64% of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students “strongly disagreed” and 22% “disagreed” with the statement “teachers expect very little from students.” Fewer than 20% of students polled in that survey felt that the “school has done a poor job in teaching.” In the same year, 81% of parents reported that they were “satisfied/very satisfied” with the school’s curriculum and materials.

When teachers were asked in focus groups how they know what to teach, the majority of teachers replied “Indiana Standards.” Most teachers indicated that standards are at the center of their planning and they reported that the math and language arts texts are aligned with Indiana Standards. However, many teachers noted that they must develop lessons based on Indiana standards, especially in science and social studies because NHA does not provide standards aligned curricula in those areas. A few teachers reported using a scope and sequence that is available on the public drive to assist with these “specials” classes.

Some school leadership team members stated in a focus group that the staff had been trained to use Acceleration Station, which is an online software system aligned with Indiana Standards that allows teachers to generate standards based activities and assessments. While some teachers found the program useful, others stated they need more professional development to make use of the system

The majority of teachers reported that they regularly use assessments such as the NWEA and ISTEP+ to measure learning and adjust scope and sequence. Several teachers indicated that they also use chapter tests and unit tests to measure learning and to adjust scope and sequence. Interviews with teachers and administrators and document review (e.g., data summary reports and binders) indicate that the majority of staff and administrators regularly use data to effect changes in instruction and student performance. The school leadership and teachers stated that data reports are distributed regularly by the administration and grade-level teams meet to identify gaps in the curriculum and to make adjustments where needed

In summary, document reviews, staff interviews and focus groups, student and teacher survey data and classroom observations indicate that the NHA national curriculum (and supplemental curriculum developed by AJB staff) results in a high quality, consistently implemented curriculum that is aligned with Indiana standards and that provides an appropriate scope and sequence that is aligned across grades and content areas. NHA national staff and AJB staff conduct periodic, systematic reviews of the curriculum to ensure alignment with Indiana standards. The majority of the school staff report and classroom observations confirm that AJB consistently implements (and supplements as needed) the NHA curriculum and uses assessments to identify gaps in student learning. Staff consistently identify reading, writing, and mathematics as high priority areas and classroom observations and test data show that student achievement is improving in these areas. Teachers report and classroom observations show that teachers have what they need to deliver the curriculum and to promote student achievement. Evidence is sufficient to conclude that the school meets this standard.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school’s mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

Meets Standard. The teaching process (pedagogies) at AJB are consistent with the school’s mission to provide students with a challenging academic program. The school’s mission statement is: “The mission of Andrew J. Brown Academy is to provide students with a challenging academic program which develops all students’ abilities to master fundamental academic skills and ultimately increase academic achievement while also instilling a sense of family, community and leadership within all of our students (Charter School Application, 2003).” The FYCR site visit team found that the curriculum was being implemented according to its design and focused on core learning objectives in the majority of classrooms visited. The classroom visits also revealed that the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery were of the appropriate pace and rigor in most classrooms. The team also observed a variety of instructional activities and/or differentiated strategies in a majority of classrooms visited. While most staff report that they receive sufficient feedback on instructional practices, a few staff indicated they would like to have more feedback (e.g., new teachers).

The National Heritage Academies provides well-organized and high quality curriculum guide books for all grades and subjects. Teacher interviews indicate that the curriculum focuses on core learning objectives and teachers report that it is implemented according to its design and is effective. A clear majority of students indicated in a recent survey that teachers expect a lot from them.

During the site visit, the team visited 28 classrooms, spending approximately 25-30 minutes in each one. Indiana Academic Standards were posted in nearly all classrooms. In 68% of the classrooms observed, the instruction focused on core learning objectives that were clearly posted and explained. The pace of instructions/lessons and content delivery were deemed of the appropriate rigor in 57% of the classes visited.

While a variety of instructional activities and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs was noted in 57% of the classes observed, the team observed other indicators suggesting that there is room for improvement in this area. Few lessons indicated any strategies for differentiation; the school leadership team focus group and teacher focus groups indicated that more needs to be done to address differential student abilities and learning needs. The school groups

students into three performance groups and staff report mixed opinions about the effectiveness of this system. The school should consider a detailed study of this policy to determine its value and impact.

The school has a new, full-time instructional coach to work with new teachers; and submitted a request to Indiana Department of Education to request this coach be allowed to serve as the mentor of record for new teachers, but to date has received no reply. The coach meets with new teachers on a weekly basis and offers assistance with classroom issues. The majority of the new teachers indicated they valued the support of the coach.

The 2006 teacher survey revealed that two-thirds of the teachers indicated that the principal actively monitors instruction. The principal stated that she regularly visits classrooms unannounced and provides informal feedback occasionally. More than 70% of the faculty interviewed said they have been evaluated a few times a month, or a few times a year. Teachers are required to submit lesson plans, but the principal stated that she does not review them. There is a formal teacher evaluation scheme in place, but teacher interviews indicated that that are not always clear on the process or the timeline. The site team weighed some conflicting evidence and concluded that there is sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices, but there is an explicit need for more formal feedback in a clearly defined and routinely applied manner (e.g., specified deadlines for observation, clear process for providing feedback).

The FYCR site visit team determined the curriculum was being implemented according to its design and focused on core learning objectives, the pace of instruction and content delivery were of the appropriate pace and rigor, a variety of instructional activities were employed, and in general, the school supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices. In conclusion, the FYCR site visit team found sufficient evidence to conclude that the teaching processes (pedagogies) are consistent with the school's mission and the school has met the standard.

4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Meets standard	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

Not Applicable. This sub-question is not applicable to Andrew J. Brown Academy, because it does not serve secondary students.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

Meets Standard. Andrew J. Brown Academy effectively uses learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction. The school administers a number of standardized tests and formative assessments that give the school information on student performance. The school effectively uses assessments in a routine manner to guide curriculum development and make adjustments to instruction.

The school employs a variety of classroom assessments to help guide instruction for a wide range of student ability levels. Teachers and school leaders mentioned an extensive array of assessment tools that the school currently uses. These include ISTEP+ annually, NWEA three (3) times a year, and Star Literacy three (3) times a year. The school leadership team stated in a focus group that the teachers had been trained to use Acceleration Station, which is aligned with Indiana Standards and generates assessment reports and activities. Teachers also report giving weekly quizzes, making informal observations, asking probing questions as some of the other methods of assessment.

The most recent teacher survey indicated that 90% of the teachers noted using data for multiple purposes. Teachers in focus group interviews revealed that they use data to inform instruction, lesson planning, and deciding on interventions. All evidence gathered indicates that assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions. The school’s shift from Saxon Math to Scott-Foresman was mentioned by several teachers and school leaders as an example of data driving curriculum modification.

Many teachers and school leaders indicated that the students are aware of their performance levels on assessments and that this is a positive motivator that pushes students to high levels of success. The school also uses prior ISTEP+ scores of new students to place them in classes. Interviews with school leaders

generated extensive data reports and reflected a strong understanding of them. The school leadership team expressed a need for a math assessment tool for students in pre-ISTEP+ grades.

The school leadership team stated that the staff meets regularly to discuss student academic performance. Assessments are used by the school to group students; however, evidence indicates a need to formally assess the results of the student grouping system. Focus group interviews revealed that there is no clear agreement on how well this works. The school leadership team agreed that differentiation of instruction is something that needs to be explored and developed.

Andrew J. Brown Academy effectively uses a wide variety of assessments to measure student performance and make adjustments to instruction. They are of sufficient variety and are used frequently in a timely manner to inform instructional decisions effectively. Therefore, the FYCR site visit team concludes that the school meets this standard.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

Does Not Meet Standard. The FYCR site visit team determined that Andrew J. Brown Academy deploys a sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity. Faculty and staff are certified/trained in the areas assigned. The professional development (PD) offered is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement for the most part, although the team found evidence to indicate a need for some changes in the PD program. Two areas of concern, however, resulted in the team determining that the school does not meet this standard. First, substantial evidence from multiple sources (e.g., administrator, teacher and board member interviews and parent focus groups) showed that the hiring processes are not sufficiently organized to support the success of new staff members. Second, while there is a formal teacher evaluation plan in place, evidence indicates that the plan is not sufficiently explicit and not regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

AJB currently has a sufficient number of faculty and staff to serve its present population. The school has recently added a Parent-Teacher Coordinator, an Instructional Coach to serve all new teachers, and 2.5 new teachers. The most recent survey of parents indicated that 84% of parents responding were satisfied with class size. Based on observations, the team concluded that class size is reasonable except in the kindergarten classes, where enrollment ranged from 22-27 students per class. In a teacher focus group, the kindergarten teachers stated that the classes were too large for them to effectively teach all the students in the class.

The principal of the school is licensed by the state of Indiana in Elementary Administration & Supervision. The Assistant Principal has been at AJB for 2 years and with NHA since 2001; she is listed as Principal in Residence, holds a Masters degree, but is not licensed by the state of Indiana. All teachers are certified by the state of Indiana, except for one who has applied for a license but has not yet received it.

The school provides a number of professional development activities that are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement. Nearly all of these activities are school-wide sessions held on site for the entire faculty. Teachers indicated that many of these are helpful, but teacher focus groups indicated a desire for more teacher input into the decision-making process. The principal stated that funds were available for teachers to participate in PD activities outside of the school, but many teachers reported that doing so was difficult or not possible because of the unavailability of substitute teachers, making it very difficult to be gone from school. In focus groups, some teachers indicated that there was sometimes confusion over what opportunities were available and what processes needed to be followed to participate in external PD opportunities.

A few returning teachers indicated frustration over the repetition of some PD activities, necessitated by the high number of new teachers each year. Overall, the site visit team concluded that there was evidence to indicate many appropriate examples of PD in the school; however, there is a clear need for the school to refine its current policies and procedures regarding PD, to involve teachers more in the planning/decision making process, and to publish clear guidelines and procedures related to PD that can be understood by all.

The team found significant evidence to conclude that the school's hiring process is not organized to support the success of new staff members and the human resource systems in the school are not adequate to retain qualified teachers. For the current school year, over 60% of the teachers are new to the school. During the period of September-December 2006, nine (9) new teachers were hired. The principal indicated that the high attrition rate can be attributed to the teachers not being the right fit for the school or their not being comfortable with the culture of the school. A recent teacher survey indicated 37% of the respondents felt some degree of dissatisfaction with the school; 45% indicated that they are not likely to recommend the school to friends and colleagues.

Many teachers indicated in focus groups that the lack of a contract, the lack of a retirement plan and other benefits, and the pay scale resulted in many teachers leaving the school. A few teachers stated that the lack of a contract meant they could be fired without notice. The school does not allot a specific number of sick or personal leave days for staff; however, the principal stated that she encourages staff to take days if they need to. Teachers indicated a reluctance to do so because being absent creates a hardship for other staff, since there are no substitutes available. The principal reported that compensation incentives are available for returning teachers from NHA, and that those are given based on performance as determined by the judgment of the principal. Many teachers said that they were not planning to return next year and were looking for other positions that offered a contract and defined benefits. Several teachers who have

been at the school for at least two years and are planning to return indicated that turnover in teaching staff is demoralizing to them. One remarked, "If all these others are leaving, why am I still here?"

Some teachers and parents stated that the high turnover causes disruption. Teachers expressed a desire to play a part in the hiring process. The principal indicated that she plans to include teachers on future interview committees; she also reported that teachers hired during the school year are expected to spend one-half day at the school observing classes and talking to teachers. However, teachers hired over the summer do not get this opportunity. Several new teachers stated that more orientation sessions would help them better understand AJB procedures and systems.

The Mayor's 2006 annual report noted that "many teachers expressed concerns about work conditions, satisfaction, and retention, including: the lack of a written policy for sick and personal leave." These problems continue to impact the school. One member on the school leadership team noted that there is "no time to develop average teachers." The majority of constituents interviewed during the site visit acknowledged that staff attrition is a problem. One parent expressed this by saying, "I'm always worrying about who is going to be around to teach my child next year."

Regarding the teacher evaluation plan, evidence indicates that while there is a written plan, it is not regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria. Many teachers noted confusion about the evaluation plan and how it works. The principal indicates that she observes and evaluates teachers informally on a regular basis. How this is integrated into the formal evaluation is not clearly understood by all teachers as reported in focus groups. The formal evaluation system does not include a schedule/calendar to indicate a time-line for all components of the process. The principal stated that she gives teachers a rating of A, B, or C and uses this rating to determine pay raise incentives. A recent teacher survey indicated that 52% of the respondents indicated that the school's "leader evaluates teachers using criteria related to school improvement efforts." Overall, the site visit team concluded that the evidence, and the lack of evidence in some cases, indicated that the school needs to work toward developing one evaluation system that is objective and clear to everyone, one that includes process steps and a timeline, one that is routinely implemented and used to determine all issues related to retention, promotion, and pay incentives.

Finally, the FYCR site visit team noted that the school deploys effectively a staff of certified teachers who work diligently to bring about the student progress demonstrated at AJB. Many effective PD efforts have contributed to this student progress, but two areas of concern were identified--the hiring processes to support the success of new staff members and the teacher evaluation plan. Both areas are tied to the cultivation of a stable teaching staff and are therefore critical to the future success of the school. No institution can flourish without developing its greatest asset--its personnel. As indicated before, virtually every constituency of the school has indicated that teacher attrition is a problem. Because of significant concerns in these two areas, the site visit team concludes that the school does not meet standard.

4.6. Is the school’s mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school’s mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school’s mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school’s mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school’s mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school’s mission.

Meets Standard. The mission of Andrew J. Brown Academy is fully understood by all stakeholders, including the members of the board, the principal, the teachers, parents, and students. The mission of AJB “is to provide students with a challenging academic program which develops all students’ abilities to master fundamental academic skills and ultimately increase academic achievement while also instilling a sense of family, community and leadership within all of our students.” Various reports and the fourth year review site visit clearly indicated a thorough understanding of the mission.

The Indiana Department of Education published enrollment figures indicate a successful communication of the mission. Teacher focus groups conducted during the Fourth Year Charter Review revealed that nearly all teachers could articulate the mission. Further, teachers noted that they upheld the mission through classroom practices, including instruction, curriculum development, and holding students to high expectations. Teachers also noted that the mission was communicated to all stakeholders in various ways, such as newsletters, hallway postings, written and face-to-face communication from administrators and teachers, commitment contracts, and handbooks. The majority of the teachers responding to the 2006 teacher survey indicated that they believe the school has a school-wide philosophy of learning.

There are clear indicators that many students receive extra help by the teaching staff, progress is being made on advancing ISTEP+ scores, and annual progress is being achieved. The 2006 parent survey indicated that parents are somewhat or very satisfied with the school: on various questions dealing with school quality, respondents replied with favorable comments 77-91% of the time. Evidence from the parent focus group, indicate that parents understand the mission, support it, and feel that the school is making progress in achieving the mission.

Based on multiple sources of evidence, the FYCR site visit team concludes that AJB meets the standard in this area.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school’s discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school’s discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school’s discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

Approaching Standard. The school climate at Andrew J. Brown Academy is sometimes conducive to student and staff success. However, the Fourth Year Charter Review site visit team gathered sufficient evidence to conclude that the school does not have a discipline approach that possesses high expectations for student behavior. Therefore, the school does not fully meet the standard, but rather it is approaching the standard.

While the school does have some clearly stated rules designed to enforce positive behavior, there are strong indicators that the school’s approach to discipline is not sufficiently realizing positive student behavior. The spring 2006 student survey statement “many students in the school don’t respect one another” received 50% “strongly agree” and 28% “agree” replies. Student interviews during the FYCR concurred with the findings. A teacher survey indicated that 58% of respondents felt that disruptive students impact classroom instruction. In spring 2007 teacher focus groups, nearly half of those interviewed felt that there was a problem with student behavior. In one teacher focus group, 80% of those responding felt part of the problem is that the school policies deal mainly with hallway procedures and not with classroom procedures.

The link between behavior problems and classroom management surfaced throughout the site visit. Minutes of a December 2006 meeting of the school leadership team reveal that classroom management is an issue; the agenda of a later meeting in March 2007 states that too many students were being referred to Saturday school. All teachers in focus groups indicated a desire for a more comprehensive school-wide plan for discipline and for more administrative support with discipline. While four teachers did note improvement in student behavior since the hiring of a school-parent liaison person, the evidence points to the need for the school to re-evaluate its approach to discipline as manifest in its policies and implementation, particularly focusing on in-class issues.

During the three days of the visit, the site visit team observed interactions between faculty and students that were respectful and supportive. The recent student survey indicated that 93% of the respondents received extra help from the teachers. During the morning arrival, the principal was present, greeting students in the hallways. All students interviewed indicated positive relationships with the teachers.

Focus groups of the school leadership team and also of teachers pointed to the Excel Club providing ways to recognize students for good citizenship.

The site visit team witnessed many interactions between faculty and administration that were professional and constructive. Many teachers reported very positive relationships with the principal and felt confident in being open with the principal regarding all school matters. However, this was not universal, as a few teachers stated that they feared repercussions for things said during the site visit. Also, a few teachers felt considerable pressure to get scores up and to perform well during site team visits. The site team concludes that barriers to greater positive faculty-administration can be linked to issues related to evaluations and job security, as outlined in another sub-question above (4.5).

In weighing all the evidence related to the school climate being conducive to student and staff success, the Fourth Year Charter Review site visit team concludes that due to high levels of concern among constituents and the absence of an effective discipline approach, the school is approaching the standard.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school’s communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents’ native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school’s communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents’ native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school’s communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents’ native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

Meets Standard. The ongoing communication with students and parents is clear and helpful at Andrew J. Brown Academy. Parents fully understand the reports produced by the school and sent home; they are also satisfied with the quality and frequency of other communications from the school.

The school uses the grade reporting system furnished by National Heritage Academies. The reports are clear, concise, and easily understood; they also allow for considerable detail regarding such topics as work habits, skill development, and participation. The recent parent survey indicated that 80% of respondents were “very/moderately or satisfied,” with the school’s communication regarding student learning. The school leadership team stated that the communication with parents is regular and effective. They also reported that the school-parent liaison person is making important contributions in this area. Several teachers said that the home visits were very positive.

The school shares results of standardized tests, such as the annual ISTEP+ test and the NWEA assessments conducted three times a year, with both students and parents in a timely fashion. Both school leaders and teachers widely reported that not only are parents made aware of the results, but students are also aware of their performance levels. Further, the school leaders and teachers indicated that the students also know what their goals are for improvement, and this creates a very positive, constructive climate for student growth.

The school also has a website to communicate with all stakeholders and the public at large. However, indications are that it can be updated and expanded to be more effective. Weekly newsletters generated by the grade-level teachers are informative and appreciated by the parents.

The parent survey also indicated that 89% of respondents were “very/moderately or satisfied” with communication from the school regarding meetings. The Board and school leaders stated that parental involvement is growing, but that much more needs to be done to get parents participating in the affairs of the school. The school should develop specific strategies to bring this about.

The FYCR site visit team concludes that there is strong ongoing communication with students and parents that is both clear and helpful. Therefore, the site visit team has determined that that Andrew J. Brown Academy meets this standard.

APPENDIX A

FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW TEAM

The Fourth Year Charter Review site visit to the Andrew J. Brown Academy was conducted on March 20-22, 2007 by a team of educators trained and supported by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis and SchoolWorks.

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