

# Supplemental Report 1

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School Detailed Performance Assessment and Profile



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<http://www.21ccharter.org>

▪ Grades served in 2002-03	K-6
▪ Maximum school size in 2002-03	125 students
▪ Grades served at capacity	K-12
▪ Maximum school size at capacity	240 students

This supplemental report presents information about the school in three sections:

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School's Students (enrollment and demographic information)
- Performance at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School
- Detailed Description of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School's Programs and Activities

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School's Students

**Figure 1. Enrollment and demand for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School in 2002-03**

	Number of students
Maximum possible enrollment in first year pursuant to Charter	125
Number of students enrolled <sup>1</sup>	117
Number of applications received <sup>2</sup>	287

<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education, based on school's count of "Average Daily Membership" (measure the Department uses to count enrollment).

<sup>2</sup>Source: School self-report of data.

**Figure 2. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School student composition**

Gender <sup>1</sup>		Race & Ethnicity <sup>2</sup>				Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch <sup>2</sup>	Special Education <sup>3</sup>	Limited English Proficient <sup>4</sup>
Male	Female	African-American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Other			
55.8%	44.2%	61.6%	1.7%	23.9%	12.8%	40.2%	11.8%	0%

Note: See main report for comparative data.

<sup>1</sup>Source: School self-report of data on the last day of school.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, count reported December 2002.

<sup>4</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Language and Minority Programs, count reported October 2002.

**Figure 3. Percentage of students in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School, IPS, and Indiana passing ISTEP+ tests at the *beginning* of the fall 2002 school year<sup>1</sup>**

	English			Math			Both		
	21C	IPS	IN	21C	IPS	IN	21C	IPS	IN
Percent of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Passing	63%	58%	72%	31%	57%	67%	19%	44%	59%
Percent of 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders Passing	50%	40%	69%	22%	32%	67%	22%	25%	59%

Source: Indiana Department of Education. City-wide data unavailable.

<sup>1</sup>Since the charter school's students took these tests near the beginning of the school year, these percentages represent the starting levels of performance of the charter students, not how much the students learned at the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School.

## Performance at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School

The section below describes 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School's performance over the first school year by addressing the common performance indicators in the Mayor's Charter School Performance Framework. The complete Performance Framework may be viewed on-line at [http://www.indygov.org/mayor/charter/accountability\\_report](http://www.indygov.org/mayor/charter/accountability_report).

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## Is the academic program a success?

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### Are students making substantial gains over time?

**Test score analysis.** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School administered the standardized Terra Nova exam to its 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in both fall 2002 and spring 2003. Each number in Figure 4 indicates the percentage change in the average test score achieved in a particular grade and subject from fall to spring. For example, the +7.7 in the first row indicates that the average reading score for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders was 7.7% higher in spring 2003 than it was in fall 2002.

**Figure 4. Percentage change in average Terra Nova Test scores between fall 2002 and spring 2003 at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School**

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Reading	+7.7	+4.3	+2.9
Math	+6.3	+3.9	+2.9
Language	+6.2	+4.3	+3.5

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data," prepared by New American Schools, Arlington, VA, 2003.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Figure 4 shows that students made progress, on average, between the fall and the spring in all grades and all subjects tested. But how large were these gains? One way to find out is to compare the progress of 21<sup>st</sup> Century's students to that of other students nationally who took the same exams at the same points in their academic careers.

Since Terra Nova is a national standardized test, we can ask the following question: if we ranked all the students across the country who took the Terra Nova, where would *21<sup>st</sup> Century students stand on average* in that ranking?

Figure 5 provides the answer. The first row of the table shows how 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at 21<sup>st</sup> Century performed in reading. In the fall, on average 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at 21<sup>st</sup> Century scored as well as or better than 33% of all students nationwide in reading. We call this number, 33, 21<sup>st</sup> Century's "Fall Average Percentile" for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in reading. The next column shows that by the spring, on average 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2<sup>nd</sup> graders performed as well as or better than 49% of all students nationwide. The school's "Spring Average Percentile" was 49.

**Figure 5. Academic progress of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School students, fall 2002 through spring 2003**

Grade/subject	Fall Average Percentile	Spring Average Percentile	Gained ground vs. students nationally	Stayed even with students nationally	Lost ground vs. students nationally
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Reading	33	49	✓		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Math	59	59		✓	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Language	26	48	✓		
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	31	41	✓		
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	25	28	✓		
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Language	26	31	✓		
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	44	64	✓		
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	45	49	✓		
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Language	38	59	✓		

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data," prepared by New American Schools, 2003.

Note: Conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

What does this mean? It means that, on average, 21<sup>st</sup> Century's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders *moved up in the national ranking* in reading between the fall and the spring. So on the right side of Figure 5, we indicate that 21<sup>st</sup> Century students "gained ground" versus students nationally. As displayed in Figure 5, it is evident that they gained ground in all grades and all subjects, with the exception of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade math. In math, on average 2<sup>nd</sup> graders performed as well as or better than 59% of students nationally in both the fall and in the spring. So the table indicates that 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students "stayed even" in math. As Figure 4 illustrates, on average, they did progress in math — but they progressed just enough to stay even with students across the country.

**Expert site visit findings.** The expert site visit team found that the school had established "well-developed and consistently functional" processes for having students use the A+ Learning System, a computer-based system through which students progress through academic material at their own pace. According to the team, the school could do more to support students' experiences with the technology, such as by providing helpful feedback and designing activities in response to questions that arise.

### **Is the organization viable?**

**Is the school in sound fiscal health?** The Mayor's Office commissioned a review of each school's finances. A summary of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School's finances, including financial statements, appears in Supplemental Report 4. Sixty-six percent of parents surveyed at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School reported they are satisfied with the school's finances. Sixty-two percent of school staff reported their satisfaction with school finances.

**Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?** The school's attendance rate was 96.1% in 2002-03 (see Figure 6). Of parents surveyed, 84% expressed their intention to continue to enroll their children in the school as long as the school serves students their children's age.

**Figure 6. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School attendance rate in 2002-03 school year**

	Attendance rate
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Charter School <sup>1</sup>	96.1%
Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) <sup>2</sup>	95.3%
All Indiana Public Schools <sup>2</sup>	95.7%

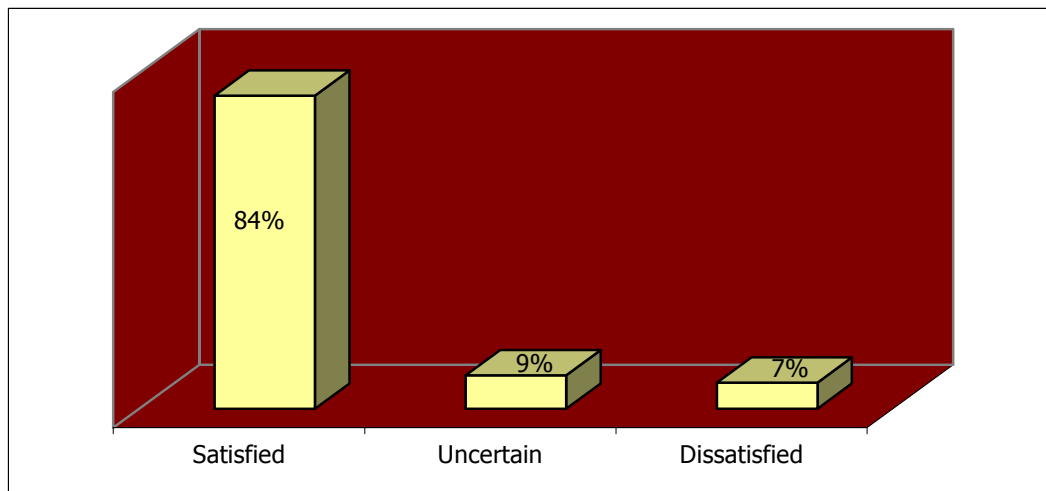
<sup>1</sup>Source: School self report.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education. City-wide data unavailable.

**Is the school’s board active and competent in its oversight?** Governance reviews showed that 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School’s management has made effective use of fundraising skills, construction oversight, and software research to build a unique charter school.

**Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?** More than four in five 21<sup>st</sup> Century parents reported they were satisfied overall with their charter school, as shown in Figure 7. Figure 8 shows the percentage of parents who were satisfied with specific aspects of the school.

**Figure 7. Overall parent satisfaction with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School**



Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. "Satisfied" includes "somewhat satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses. "Dissatisfied" includes "somewhat dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" responses.

**Figure 8. Parent satisfaction with features at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School**

School Feature	Satisfied <sup>1</sup>	Don't Know	Dissatisfied <sup>2</sup>
Class size	82%	0%	18%
School size	93%	0%	7%
Length of the school day	96%	0%	5%
Length of the school year	86%	0%	14%
Individual attention teachers give to students	82%	0%	18%
Academic standards for students	88%	2%	10%
Curriculum	89%	0%	11%
Materials to support the curriculum	84%	2%	14%
Quality of teaching	84%	0%	16%
Technology	93%	0%	7%
Extracurricular activities	86%	0%	14%
Opportunities for parent participation	96%	0%	5%
Parent information about student learning	80%	0%	21%
Communication from the school	93%	0%	7%
Sense of pride teachers and students have in school	89%	0%	11%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Includes "satisfied," "moderately satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "moderately dissatisfied" responses.

**Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?**

The governance review conducted by the Mayor’s Office found that the school has developed an organizational structure that enables effective teacher mentoring and academic planning. According to this review, the management team’s skill in securing resources is evident in the school’s ability to win grants, implement an automated learning system, and create flexible and efficient learning spaces in a converted train station. Further, the school improved its management systems over the course of 2002-03 by creating a chief academic officer position that may provide a sound and replicable model for academic planning, teacher development, and student evaluation in a start-up school. The expert site visit team reported that while there were challenges related to opening the school, school leaders and staff are working to effectively address these challenges. A high percentage of staff (81%) reported that they were satisfied by the leadership provided by their school’s administration. Of parents surveyed, 88% reported they were satisfied with the people running 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School.

**Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations related to: organizational structure and governance obligations; physical plants that are safe and conducive to learning; fair and appropriate pupil enrollment processes; reasonable and safe transportation options available to eligible students; and legal obligations related to access and services to special needs and English as a second language students?**

21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School satisfactorily met its obligations in 2002-2003 for compliance with laws and regulations and access to students across Indianapolis. Neither the Mayor’s Office’s internal

systems nor the expert site visit team indicated any significant concerns related to these obligations. Figure 9 displays parent and staff survey responses to questions about school operations.

**Figure 9. Parent and school staff satisfaction with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School operations**

School Feature	Parents <sup>1</sup>			School Staff <sup>1,4</sup>		
	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Don't Know	Dis-satisfied <sup>3</sup>	Satisfied <sup>5</sup>	Un-certain <sup>6</sup>	Dis-satisfied <sup>7</sup>
School leadership	88%	0%	12%	81%	13%	6%
Safety	66%	5%	29%	88%	13%	0%
School facilities	93%	0%	7%	88%	0%	13%
Enrollment process	91%	5%	5%	93%	7%	0%
Services for special needs students <sup>9,10</sup>	85%	N/A	15%	67%	13%	0%
Transportation (overall) <sup>10</sup>				93%	7%	0%
Drop-off/Pick-up time	83%	N/A	17%			
Drop-off/pick-up location	73%	N/A	27%			
Bus condition/reliability	80%	N/A	20%			
Time your child is on bus	72%	N/A	28%			

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup>Blank areas denote that the applicable group was not surveyed about satisfaction with the particular feature.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "satisfied," "moderately satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "moderately dissatisfied" responses.

<sup>4</sup>Calculations for staff surveys do not include "don't know/not applicable" responses.

<sup>5</sup>Includes "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

<sup>6</sup>Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

<sup>7</sup>Includes "not too dissatisfied" and "quite dissatisfied" responses.

<sup>8</sup>Wording of parent and staff surveys questions vary slightly.

<sup>9</sup>Special needs students include those for whom English is a second language or who have disabilities, academic difficulties, etc.

<sup>10</sup>N/A denotes "not applicable." Since not all students used special education or transportation services, only the responses of those parents who expressed an opinion about these services were included in these calculations.

## Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

**Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?** The expert site visit team found that students, parents, teachers, and administrators participating in focus groups are "aware of, committed to, and enthusiastic about the mission – using technology to individualize learning for each student." All staff members surveyed reported that they were aware of the goals of the school.

**Does the school have a high quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?** The school uses the computer-based A+ Learning System for its curriculum needs. The site visit team reported that technological support for A+ is stronger because the hardware and software appear to work consistently without problems; but the site team recommended additional curriculum and classroom support. Additionally, 84% of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School parents reported that they were satisfied with their school's materials to support the curriculum. As Figure 10 illustrates, two out of three 21<sup>st</sup> Century staff members also reported satisfaction with the resources available for instruction at their charter school.

**Figure 10. School staff satisfaction with features at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School**

School Feature	Satisfied <sup>1</sup>	Un-certain <sup>2</sup>	Dis-satisfied <sup>3</sup>
School size	100%	0%	0%
Length of the school day	88%	6%	6%
Length of the school year	75%	19%	6%
Student-teacher ratio with respect to individual time given to students	75%	13%	13%
Ability of school to fulfill mission	81%	19%	0%
Academic standards for students	94%	6%	0%
Curriculum	88%	13%	0%
Resources available for instruction	67%	13%	20%
Quality of teaching	81%	13%	6%
Classroom management and student behavior	75%	13%	13%
Use of computers and other technology	88%	13%	0%
Parent participation and involvement	27%	33%	40%
Information about student learning that parents receive	80%	20%	0%
Accessibility and openness to parents	88%	6%	6%
Sense of pride students and staff have in school	88%	13%	0%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing or "don't know/not applicable" responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Includes "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "not too dissatisfied" and "quite dissatisfied" responses.

**Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?** As Figures 8 and 10 illustrate, 88% of parents and 94% of staff members reported satisfaction with the academic standards for their students. The expert site visit team reported that the school could build on this foundation by developing an explicit process for teachers to support students' work with the A+ Learning System.

**Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?** According to the expert site visit team, "teachers and students [at 21<sup>st</sup> Century] feel empowered," and there is a strong expressed belief that students can and are learning. Nearly nine in ten parents and school staff members at 21<sup>st</sup> Century reported satisfaction with the sense of pride students and teachers have in their school. Three-quarters of 21<sup>st</sup> Century staff members reported satisfaction with classroom management and student behavior at their charter school, and nearly nine out of ten staff members were satisfied with school safety.

Additionally, teachers were asked to rate on a nine-point scale (from no influence to a great deal of influence) how well they are able to influence areas that typically create difficulties in helping students succeed. A summary of these survey results for 21<sup>st</sup> Century are provided in Figure 11.

**Figure 11. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School teachers' belief in their ability to influence student success**

School Feature	Little or no influence (1-3)	Some influence (4-6)	Quite a bit to a great deal of influence (7-9)
Controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom	6%	13%	81%
Motivating students who show low interest in student work	0%	38%	63%
Getting students to believe they can do well in school work	0%	19%	81%
Helping students to value learning	6%	19%	75%
Getting children to follow classroom rules	6%	13%	81%
Calming a student who is disruptive or noisy	0%	25%	75%
Establishing a classroom management system	6%	13%	81%
Assisting families in helping their children do well in school	6%	25%	69%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?**

Consistent with the school's mission, the expert site visit team found that "the structure and processes for having students use A+ (hardware, software, [and] teaching children to use [it]) is well-developed and consistently functional." About eight in ten staff members reported their satisfaction with the school's ability to fulfill its stated mission.

**Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?** The expert site visit team found that the school provides good communication with students and parents; "the school provides information about learning to parents and currently provides periodic reports, newsletters, conferences, and parent meetings/workshops." About nine in ten 21<sup>st</sup> Century parents reported that they were satisfied with communication from their school, such as about special activities, events, and meetings. Four in five school staff and four in five parents also reported satisfaction with the information parents receive about student learning, as illustrated in Figures 8 and 10.

**Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?** The site visit team offered special commendation for the school's planned professional development activities for the summer of 2003. At the same time, the site visit team suggested that "a regular performance evaluation and review (observations, review of lesson plans, etc.) and feedback might be used to ensure teacher accountability and professional growth." Figure 12 shows how staff members responded to a survey about their satisfaction with professional features of their school.

**Figure 12. Staff satisfaction with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School’s professional features**

School Feature	Satisfied <sup>1</sup>	Un-certain <sup>2</sup>	Dis-satisfied <sup>3</sup>
Salary related to experience	77%	23%	0%
Benefits such as health and life insurance, retirement, etc.	75%	17%	8%
Work environment	81%	0%	19%
Number of hours spent engaged in classroom instruction	73%	20%	7%
Number of hours spent engaged in other activities	77%	23%	0%
Time allowed for planning and preparation	69%	15%	15%
Amount of paperwork required	80%	13%	7%
Greater teacher autonomy in the classroom	93%	7%	0%
Level of teacher involvement in school decisions	80%	13%	7%
Opportunities for professional development	69%	15%	15%
Evaluation or assessment of teacher performance	71%	29%	0%
Teachers’ non-teaching responsibilities	69%	31%	0%
Time staff spend together discussing the needs of individual students	75%	8%	17%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing or “don’t know/not applicable” responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup>Includes “somewhat satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses.

<sup>2</sup>Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

<sup>3</sup>Includes “not too dissatisfied” and “quite dissatisfied” responses.

## Detailed Description of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School’s Programs and Activities

*Sources: Interviews with school officials and expert site visit team members (June 2003) and review of the school’s charter application. It is important to note that this information was provided primarily by the schools. It is provided here to offer the public a more detailed picture of the school’s programs and activities.*

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Charter School’s mission is to ensure that all students grow in character, academics, life skills, the arts, and wellness using teaching skills tailored to meet the needs of each student. The school’s educational program combines innovative technology-based and small group instruction, and project-based learning to allow students to learn at their own pace and to enable teachers to provide students with more individualized attention. Students of different ages are in the same classroom, building mentoring and leadership skills in older students. Pairs of students receive laptops to share with one another. This program fosters a collaborative classroom atmosphere and also provides families access to technology at home.

The school uses the A+ Learning System to provide students with individualized computer-based instruction. The school’s entire K-12 curriculum is on the computer, so students can move through subject matter at any grade level throughout the school year. In a major shift from the traditional learning environment, the teacher supports what the student is learning on the computer, instead of the computer supporting what teachers are teaching. Teachers monitor student progress on a daily basis and identify areas that need additional reinforcement. Students are promoted only after they have achieved mastery in the subject matter.

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School leaders believe students at this school are challenged every day because the individualized instruction meets every child at his or her own level and pushes the student forward accordingly with new material. Students do not wait until the end of a school year to begin working on particular subject matter for the next grade level – they move on in each subject as soon as they have achieved the standards for that subject and its related grade level. For example, a student in 6<sup>th</sup> grade may only be at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level; at any time during the school year, once the student successfully masters the 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level he/she moves on to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading curriculum. While students are placed in “grade” levels based on their age so they are with same-age peers, each student works on material appropriate to his/her current *ability* level – not grade level. Mastery is the essential ingredient – age does not arbitrarily determine what a student is learning at a particular time during that student’s enrollment at 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Thus students in the same “grade” level all will be moving at different paces, and individual students may be at different grade levels in the various subjects which they are learning, e.g., learning 4<sup>th</sup> grade math and 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading if the student is stronger in reading. Under the individualized system this school has adopted, it is virtually impossible for a student to be socially promoted – the computer-based curriculum does not allow students to progress to subject matter at a new grade level until they have mastered the previous material.

According to school leaders, instead of being passive participants in their education, students at this school learn from their first day the lessons they will need to complete in order to stay on pace (i.e., the sequence of lessons that must be successfully completed to move on). John Hayden, the school’s chief academic officer, says “children here have accepted learning as their responsibility.” Students do not focus solely on what they know how to do at a certain point in time; they also examine how far they have come.

### **Parental involvement**

- *Commitment.* Some parents have become integrally involved in the school. Two parents who were originally school volunteers are now full-time employees: one currently functions as a learning guide and in-house substitute; the other, with a degree in social work, is the school’s Title I coordinator. School leaders mentioned a third parent, whose child is not returning to the school because the family is moving, still plans on volunteering at the school next year.
- *Building the school library.* Two parents with library science degrees volunteered to put the school’s library together at no cost. Parents created and ran a book sale for the school which yielded more than \$1,200 worth of equipment for the school library.
- *Weekly newsletter.* A weekly newsletter to parents provides them with important school policy information and an upcoming events calendar.
- *Mobilization.* Parents have developed an organization with various committees that meet regularly. Committees include: athletics, curriculum advisement, fundraising, and library development. The parents organized a list of questions for the administration such as: what work should kids be bringing home; who pays for and what are teacher salaries; who owns the school space and what is the lease arrangement; and how is the school receiving its funds. School leaders believe the fact that parents have mobilized and are asking these types of questions indicates that parents feel empowered at this school.

### **On-going evaluation**

- *Daily monitoring.* Teachers monitor student progress on a daily basis. The A+ Learning System enables teachers to print a report of the lessons the student covered during the day, including an analysis of the concepts mastered and those still requiring additional instruction and practice.
- *Updates to parents.* Parents receive daily computerized reports on student progress that review what their child learned and how well their child performed both in lessons and behavior. To encourage the continuation of learning from the school to the home, teachers can print lessons the student is currently learning and send them home for students to practice with parents.

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### **Character education**

- *Shaping school culture.* According to school leaders, character education has transformed the school culture to one of honesty, trust, and self-discipline. As students learn about a particular character trait, they are evaluated in each of their classes on how well they demonstrate the trait over a period of time. Leaders report the character education program has become an integral part of instruction and school life. For example, when students learned about disabilities awareness, they tested the entire Union Station building – including the part housing the charter school – to check its handicap accessibility. The school’s leaders believe the program has brought their students together – from all over the city and from a diverse set of backgrounds – to respect and care for one another.

### **Partnerships and donations**

- *Student volunteers.* A student from the Pacers Academy – an Indianapolis Public Schools alternative school also located in Union Station – completed her school’s community service requirement at 21<sup>st</sup> Century. She volunteered at the school twice a week for 3-4 hours, tutoring students and assisting teachers in their classrooms. Students from a Butler University urban politics class also volunteered at the school. Each student in the class came to the school once per week; thus there was at least one Butler student in the school on any given day. Students studied all aspects of the school operations; some volunteered in classrooms while others worked with school administrators.
- *School playgrounds.* The school received a \$40,000 anonymous donation to build the school’s rooftop playground and purchase equipment for physical education. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) donated approximately \$10,000 worth of plants for the playground in the fall and engaged teachers, students and parents in the planting. In the spring, KIB followed up with an additional donation of approximately \$20,000 worth of trees and shrubs.
- *Physical education.* During this past school year, the National Institute of Fitness and Sports administered the school’s physical fitness program, which provided a comprehensive regimen of health and aerobics education. The school will be administering its physical education program in-house in the 2003-04 school year.
- *Transportation.* For a small monthly fee, Indygo – Indianapolis’ public transportation agency – provided parking, cleaning, and fuel for the school’s buses.
- *Arts.* The Indianapolis Opera performed a mini-opera at the school in the fall. The Opera also worked with students and staff to help them develop and perform “La Boheme” at the school in the spring.

### **Supplemental programs and activities**

- *Clubs.* The school offered a variety of clubs throughout the school year, including cheerleading, step team, chess, jump rope, arts and crafts, intramural sports (softball, basketball, and relay races), drumming, introduction to music, dance, and “boys to men” mentoring. The offerings were based on the activities that generated the most student interest. Of note, the “boys to men mentoring” club involved two male staff members, a father volunteer, and an additional male volunteer who all mentored small age-based groups of boys at the school. All of the clubs were offered during the school day, enabling all students to participate.
- *Before-school program.* The school offered a before-school program that served breakfast and provided an opportunity for students to participate in music and dance activities.
- *After-school program.* The after-school program ran daily until 6 p.m. and offered homework help and recreational activities. The school also offered an after-school tutoring program for remediation as well as acceleration.

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### **School staff**

- *Commitment.* School leaders believe 21<sup>st</sup> Century's teachers demonstrated great commitment to the school. For example, after the school year ended, the majority of school staff still came in regularly during the vacation to work on lessons and planning for the 2003-04 school year. Several impromptu staff meetings were even conducted during this time.
- *No outside substitute teachers.* The school structure has enabled the school to function without outside substitute teachers. The intimate school setting means that all of the teachers know all of the students. The individualized programs and mixed age groups make it easy to move students around when teachers are out. School officials report that non-classroom teachers also interact frequently with the students, have developed a good rapport with each class, and are very familiar with the instructional model in the classrooms; thus they are able to cover classes when the classroom teachers are out.

### **School governance**

- The school's board supports the school leaders through a wide range of important expertise, including members with experience managing public dollars, overseeing public schools, and governing nonprofits. Board members at this school were actively involved in the development of the charter school proposal and thus are intimately involved with the details of the school. Board members include: a parent representative, several educators and administrators at the K-12 and post-secondary levels, a former lieutenant governor, major business leaders, and a member of the Indianapolis Public Schools board.

### **School management**

- Over the course of 2002-03, the school developed an approach to management that divided responsibilities between three leaders: Chief Executive Officer Kevin Teasley, Chief Academic Officer John Hayden, and Principal Teacher Dante Brown. Mr. Teasley is responsible for all operations of the school with a special focus on the school's business and finance issues. He is directly responsible to the school's board of directors. Mr. Hayden focuses on the academic issues of the school including curriculum, teaching staff, testing, and compliance with state, federal and local authorities. Mr. Brown focuses on the day-to-day instructional delivery and all responsibilities related to working with the students and families.

### **Facilities**

- The school leases its downtown historic Union Station space from the City of Indianapolis. The school spans approximately 28,000 square feet – 10,000 of which is a rooftop playground that bridges Meridian Street and is complete with a playground, basketball courts, and greenery the students planted through a Keep Indianapolis Beautiful grant. Reflecting the school's "one-room schoolhouse" philosophy, the school was designed with an open, free-flowing layout, though walls and partitions provide some separation between classes.