



FERRIS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Imagine More

**MICHIGAN CONNECTIONS
ACADEMY**

REAUTHORIZATION REVIEW

November 15-16, 2012

MISSION

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office recommends authorization of Public School Academies and provides oversight focused on continuous quality improvement

VISION



CORE VALUES

We value a collaborative and supportive working environment, as demonstrated by our commitment to –

- A shared vision
- Cooperative spirit
- Teamwork
- Consensus building
- Mutual support for all

We value providing opportunities for those who don't have many, as reflected in our –

- Compassion
- Valuing of diversity
- Humaneness

We value continuous improvement, as reflected in our ongoing commitment to –

- High expectations and standards
- Strong oversight practices
- Opportunities for professional development
- Support of risk taking
- Accountability for actions
- Academic excellence
- Critical thinking

We value integrity and trust, demonstrated by our –

- Loyalty
- Freedom to act
- Encouragement of civil discourse
- Transparency of roles and responsibilities
- Commitment to effective communication

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Charter Schools Office (CSO)

Declaration of Intent and Purpose

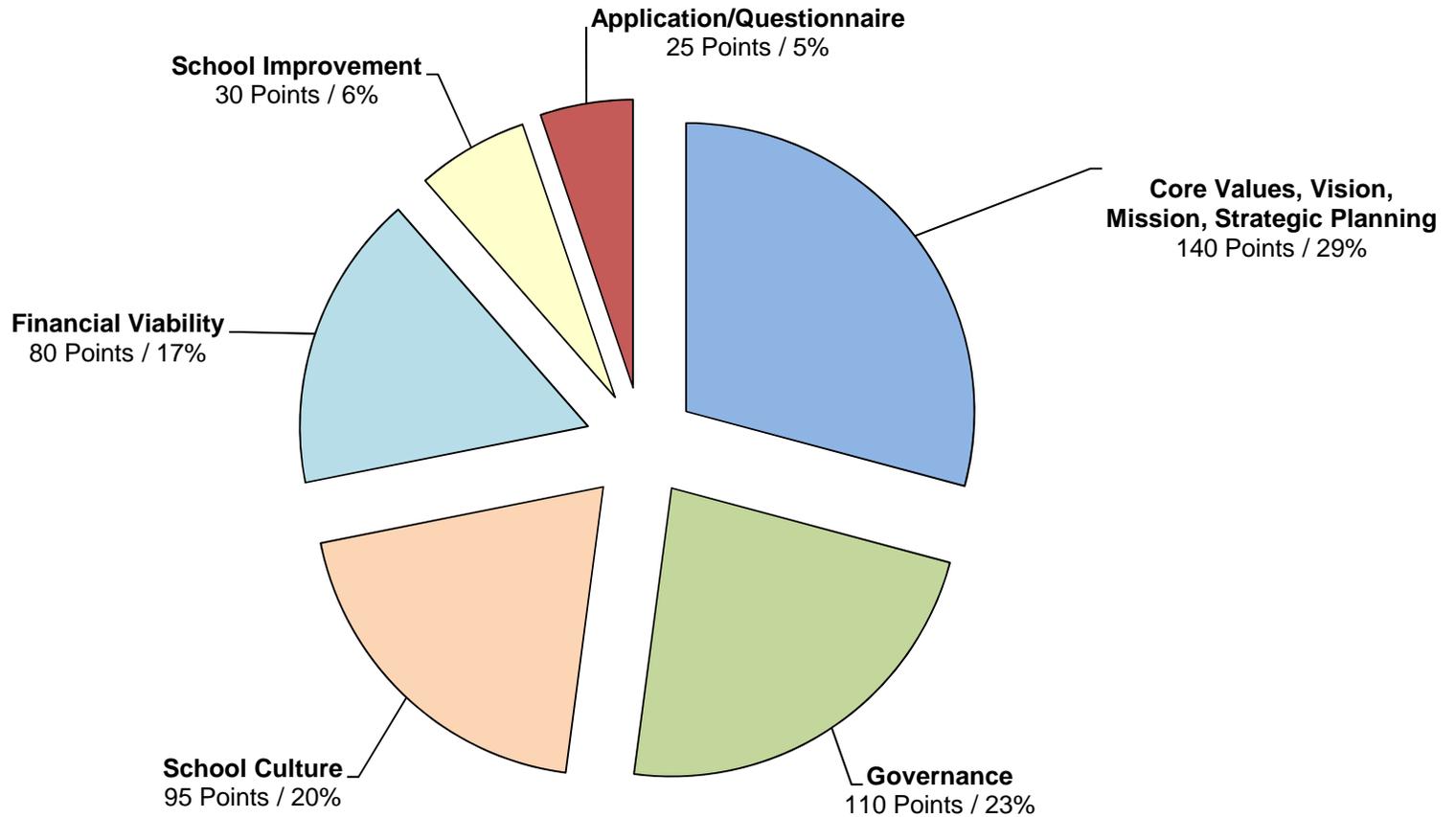
Next to the authorization of a Public School Academy (PSA), the oversight, evaluation, and reauthorization of that Academy are the most important tasks a State authorizer performs. The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office accomplishes this responsibility in two stages:

1. **Annual Academic Performance Report.** All FSU-authorized academies receive an *Annual Academic Performance Report* in August. This report is a comprehensive analysis of the academy's progress towards their contractual educational goals and contains extensive information about student performance levels on a wide variety of measures.
2. **Mid-Contract Review or Reauthorization Review.** All FSU-authorized academies undergo two team visitation reviews during each contractual period as per contractual requirement. The first, the *Mid-Contract Review*, takes place at the mid-way point of the contractual period. The second, the *Reauthorization Review*, is held in the fall of the last academic year of the charter school contract. Both Reviews are significant events in the life cycle of a PSA. The Mid-Contract Review and the Reauthorization Review cover aspects of academy performance separate from academic performance reported in the Annual Academic Performance report such as: Governance, Financial Viability, and Strategic Planning.

While both stages of an Academy's evaluation are significant, the CSO emphasizes that the Annual Academic Performance Report and an Academy's progress toward their contractual educational goals are the *most important factor* in determining recommendations to the FSU Board of Trustees regarding Reauthorization.

This report was prepared by a Visitation Team comprised of CSO members. The Team may also have included one or more outside reviewers hired for this specific review. All attempts have been made to make the report as factual as possible based on data, interviews, observations, and documentation provided by the Academy and/or gathered by the interviewers. *All data contained in this report are deemed as **accurate as possible** by the Charter Schools Office at the time this report was prepared. For further information on CSO Reviews, please visit our website: www.ferris.edu/charterschools.*

Mid-Contract/Reauthorization Review: Formula 2012-13



Total Score		
Maximum: 480 points		
382 - 480	Exceeds Standards	90%+
360 - 481	Meets Standards	75% - 89%
288 - 359	Needs Improvement	60% - 74%
287 & Below	Deficient	Below 60%

Mid-Contract/Reauthorization Review: Point Tally Sheet 2012-13

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Dates of Visit: **November 15-16, 2012**

Status: **Meets Standards**

Overall Percentage: **77.5%**

Evaluation Criteria	Points Possible	Points Achieved	Percentage Achieved	Category Achieved
Core Values/Vision/Mission/Strategic Planning	140	92.5	66	Needs Improvement
Governance	110	68.75	62.5	Needs Improvement
School Culture	95	95	100	Meets Standards
Financial Viability	80	70	87.5	Meets Standards
School Improvement	30	26.25	87.5	Meets Standards
Application/Questionnaire	25	19.62	82	Meets Standards
Total Score:	480	372.12	77.5%	Meets Standards

Visiting Team Members

Name: Jim Ridders	Signature: <i>James H. Ridders</i>
Name: Lee Robinson	Signature: <i>Lee C. Robinson</i>
Name: Mindy Britton	Signature: <i>Mindy Britton</i>
Name: Larry Lindquist	Signature: <i>Larry Lindquist</i>
Team Chair: Jim Ridders	

Total Score

maximum: 480 points

432-480	Exceeds Standards	90%+
360-431	Meets Standards	75% - 89%
288-359	Needs Improvement	60% - 74%
287 & Below	Deficient	Below 60%

Annual Academic Performance Audit Score: 79.8%

Monitoring Status: General Monitoring

MICHIGAN CONNECTIONS ACADEMY REAUTHORIZATION REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 15-16, 2012

INTRODUCTION

The Reauthorization Review Team has compiled the results of its visitation notes and findings. We commend all stakeholders for their commitment to the success of Michigan Connections Academy (MICA), and are pleased to report a very positive summary of accomplishments and encouraging indicators for the future of the Academy. Our general observations include an exceptionally professional staff at all levels that is committed to the success of each individual student in a cyber school environment.

It is obvious that, in addition to the professionalism of the staff, a primary factor for the success of the Academy is the unique partnership between the school and the education service provider, Connections Academy of Michigan, LLC, which provides specialized educational services, technology and instructional management systems. Ongoing support from this organization is critical to the successful management of individualized instruction by the highly qualified staff.

The addition of the FAM program during the second year of the Academy's existence has represented unique management and financial challenges for MICA. Necessary for the Academy to increase its enrollment beyond the statutory limit of 400 students, the board employed the Ombudsman organization to assist with oversight and instruction at the two Detroit area centers. Specific comments regarding this program are included in the following observations.

The materials provided to the Reauthorization Team before and during our visit were very well organized, and provided a clear picture of the Academy's current status and future plans. The Reauthorization Application was very informative.

REVIEW RESULTS

The Reauthorization Review Team considered the evaluation criteria included in the Reauthorization Review Model and determined an overall performance score. Scores earned in each of the categories, combined with the reauthorization

application score, results in an overall rubric score of 375.5 points out of a possible 480 points. This is a level of 78.2% of total possible points, which is within the *MEETS STANDARDS* category of the reauthorization rubric.

As you know, the reauthorization review does not include an examination of student achievement. Those results are reported separately by the Charter School Office. However, the Review Team recognizes that the Academy has met Michigan's Adequate Yearly Progress standards and received a grade of "A" on the State Report Card. FAM program students, all high school drop-outs, also demonstrated significant academic growth.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our review revealed many commendable strengths and notable achievements. The following are highlights of those discoveries:

- The Review Team was especially impressed with the level of commitment of staff members to the academic achievement of each individual student. There is significant training in place for teachers, students and learning coaches for the implementation of instructional management programs that are specifically designed to support online, personalized instruction.
- Efforts to provide social connections for students through field trips, clubs and enrichment activities are commendable.
- School improvement efforts are well organized and responsive to the needs of students. Online tools are used effectively to provide feedback to teachers and support personnel. Results of ongoing assessments inform instructional decisions and necessary curriculum changes.

The Review team recognized many positive aspects of the Academy's operations. However, the Review Team offers the following suggestions for growth or development:

- While the school has developed the foundations of beliefs, mission and vision statements, there is a need for comprehensive strategic planning at the board level.
- There has been significant turn-over of board members, beyond the control of the Academy. This results in a need for ongoing board development. Board member attendance at FSU-CSO professional development activities is encouraged.

- Board minutes do not reflect a consistent focus on student achievement reporting and discussion of school improvement issues. This should be a primary focus of the governance function
- The Academy has experienced exponential growth in its early years of operation. The Review Team advises that future growth decisions be made deliberately, with a focus on preserving the excellent quality of the current program.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

We noted that the Academy continues to show consistent progress and demonstrates significant capacity for future success.

The Charter School Office and members of the Review Team thank all MICA stakeholders who were involved in the outstanding hospitality offered during our visit. We also recognize and commend the efforts of all who are involved in working toward the success of the Academy.

James Ridders, Review Team Chair

Criterion:

Core Values, Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning

Points Possible 140	Points Achieved 92.5
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Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Core Values: Foundation	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the Academy's stakeholders, the Board has developed Core Values The Core Values are the foundation for the Academy's Vision and Mission statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has identified some Core Values but there was little or no collaboration with the Academy's stakeholders The Core Values do not serve as the foundation for the Academy's Vision and Mission statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has no discernable Core Values identified 	
Point distribution		10 points	7.5 points	6 points	0 points	
Core Values: Communication	10/10	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Core Values have been communicated to all stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Core Values have been communicated to most stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Core Values have been sporadically communicated to stakeholders	There is no evidence to show that the Board's Core Values have been communicated to stakeholders	
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	n/a	
Core Values: Continuous improvement	5/5	Board minutes and/or other documents clearly indicate that the Board's Core Values have been updated or reaffirmed on a continuous basis at Board retreats and meetings during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents indicate that the Board's Core Values have been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents do not indicate that the Board's Core Values have been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period		

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Vision Statement: Linked to Core Values	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with stakeholders, the Board has developed a Vision Statement that articulates a realistic view of what it desires the Academy to become in the future The Vision Statement is clearly linked to the Academy's stated Core Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In minimal collaboration with stakeholders, the Board has developed a Vision Statement that articulates an unrealistic view of what it desires the Academy to become in the future The Vision Statement is not clearly linked to the Academy's stated Core Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has no discernable Vision Statement identified without links to the Core Values 	
Point distribution		10 points	7.5 points	6 points	0 points	
Vision Statement: Communication	10/10	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Vision Statement is communicated to all stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Vision Statement has been communicated to many stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Vision Statement has been sporadically communicated to stakeholders	There is no evidence to show that the Board's Vision Statement has been communicated to stakeholders	
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Vision Statement: Board evaluation	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has a clear and rigorous method of evaluating the achievement of the Academy's Vision in place The plan evaluates both long and short-term goals and contains quantifiable performance measures of all goals relative to the accomplishment of the stated Vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has a method of evaluating the achievement of the Academy's Vision in place; however it is not well defined The plan does not specifically address both long- and short-term goals and is not quantifiable relative to the accomplishment of the stated Vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board does not have a method in place for evaluating the Academy's Vision 	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	n/a	
Vision: Continual revision and reaffirmation	3.75/5	Board minutes and/or other documents clearly indicate that the Board's Vision Statement has been updated or reaffirmed on a continuous basis at Board retreats and meetings during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents indicate that the Board's Vision Statement has been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents do not indicate that the Board's Vision Statement has been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period		
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Mission: Linked to Core Values	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with stakeholders, the Board has developed a Mission Statement that articulates a realistic view of the Academy's identity and role The Mission Statement is clearly linked to the Academy's stated Core Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In minimal collaboration with stakeholders, the Board has developed a Mission Statement that articulates an unrealistic view of the Academy's identity and role The Mission Statement is not clearly linked to the Academy's stated Core Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has no discernable Mission Statement identified without links to the Core Values 	
Point distribution		10 points	7.5 points	6 points	0 points	
Mission Statement: Communication	10/10	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Mission Statement is communicated to all stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	Evidence has been provided that the Board's Mission Statement has been communicated to many stakeholders using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, posters, letterhead, PTO	The Board's Mission Statement has been sporadically communicated to stakeholders	There is no evidence to show that the Board's Mission Statement has been communicated to stakeholders	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Mission Statement: Board evaluation	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has a clear and rigorous method of evaluating the achievement of the Academy's Mission The plan evaluates both long- and short-term goals and contains quantifiable performance measures of all goals relative to the accomplishment of the stated Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has a method of evaluating the achievement of the Academy's Mission in place; however it is not well defined The plan does not specifically address both long- and short-term goals and is not quantifiable relative to the accomplishment of the stated Mission 	The Board does not have a method in place for evaluating the Academy's Mission	
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	n/a	
Mission: Continual revision and reaffirmation	3.75/5	Board minutes and/or other documents clearly indicate that the Board's Mission Statement has been updated or reaffirmed on a continuous basis at Board retreats and meetings during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents indicate that the Board's Mission Statement has been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period	Board minutes and/or other documents do not indicate that the Board's Mission Statement has been updated or reaffirmed at least once during the review period		
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Written Strategic Plan: Meets quality and SMART standards	0/10		The Board's written Strategic Plan meets all of the requirements of the CSO Definition of Quality and follows SMART goal format	The Board's written Strategic Plan meets at least 4 of the requirements of the CSO Definition of Quality and follows SMART goal format	The Board's written Strategic Plan meets less than 4 of the requirements of the CSO Definition of Quality and does not follow SMART goal format	The review team encourages the Board to pursue the development of a written strategic plan.

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	20 points	12 points	0 points	
Written Strategic Plan: Continual revision and reaffirmation	0/20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has developed a written comprehensive Strategic Plan and actively pursues it Board minutes reflect that the Board frequently discusses progress toward accomplishing its plan The Strategic Plan has been updated or reaffirmed on an annual basis at Board retreats and/or meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has developed a written Strategic Plan However, Board minutes reflect that the Board does not discuss, or only rarely discusses, progress towards accomplishing its plan The Strategic Plan has been updated or reaffirmed sporadically at Board retreats and/or meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board has no discernable Strategic Plan in place 	
Point distribution		n/a	15 points	9 points	0 points	
Written Strategic Plan: Communication	0/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board's written Strategic Plan has been communicated to all stakeholders Tools for measuring progress toward accomplishing the plan have been developed and implemented throughout the Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board's written Strategic Plan has not been well communicated to most stakeholders There is no evidence that tools for measuring progress toward accomplishing the plan have been developed or communicated throughout the Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no evidence to show that the Board's Strategic Plan is in written form or has been communicated to stakeholders 	

Core Values, Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning: Total score for all competencies				
Total Points Achieved		Percentage Achieved	Category Achieved	
92.5/140		66%	Needs Improvement	

Criterion:

Governance (as reflected in Board minutes and observations)

Points Possible 110	Points Achieved 68.75
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Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	0 points	
Leadership: Policies and procedures	5/5	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has all relevant policies/procedures in place in accordance with state and federal laws references appropriate policies at Board meetings when making decisions 	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has all relevant policies/procedures in place in accordance with state and federal laws demonstrates some familiarity with them 	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has all relevant policies/procedures in place in accordance with state and federal laws does not demonstrate familiarity with the policies 	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has few policies/procedures in place that are required by state and federal laws has not regularly updated its Policy Manual 	
Leadership: Meeting schedule	0/5	The Board has not rescheduled any meetings during this review period	The Board has held no more than one rescheduled meeting during this review period	The Board has held 2-3 rescheduled meetings during this review period	The Board has held more than 3 rescheduled meetings during this review period	5/24/11 5/21/12 8/31/11 6/13/12 10/27/12 1/25/12
Leadership: Monthly quorums	0/5	The Board has not cancelled a meeting during this review period due to lack of a quorum	The Board has not cancelled more than one meeting during this review period due to lack of a quorum	The Board has cancelled 2-3 meetings during this review period due to lack of a quorum	The Board has cancelled more than 3 meetings during this review period due to lack of a quorum	2/16/11 4/18/12 4/21/11 5/16/12 5/18/11
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	7.5 points	0 points	
Leadership: Monthly progress reports	0/10		As evidenced by Board minutes, the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives detailed monthly reports on student achievement regularly engages in discussion about these reports 	As evidenced by Board minutes, the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> periodically receives detailed monthly reports on student achievement occasionally engages in discussion about these reports 	As evidenced by Board minutes the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not receive detailed monthly reports on student achievement rarely discusses student academic achievement 	While the review team was informed of periodic reports, evidence is not found in the board minutes.
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Leadership: Candidate pool	0/5		The Board has an active candidate pool on file with the CSO		The Board does not have an active candidate pool on file with the CSO	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points		0 points	
Leadership: Management Company Evaluation	10/10		There is a correlation between the Board's annual evaluation(s) of the Management Company that accurately reflects the academy's academic achievement status and progress along with the provided business services		There does not seem to be a correlation between the Board's annual evaluation(s) of the Management Company and the academy's academic achievement status and progress along with the provided business services	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Administrator Continuing Education Unit(CEU) credits	5/5		All administrators meet CEU requirements		Not all administrators meet CEU requirements	
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	n/a	
Professional development	5/5	The Board encourages & supports professional development activities: • includes funds in annual general fund budget • each member is on schedule to meet their professional development activity credit requirement	The Board encourages & supports professional development activities: • includes funds in annual general fund budget • most members are on schedule to meet their professional development activity credit requirement	There is little or no evidence that the Board encourages & supports professional development activities: • does not include funds in annual general fund budget • most members are not on schedule to meet their professional development activity credit requirement		
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	0 points	
Compliance reporting AOIS: accurate and complete	3.75/5	All documents submitted to AOIS are marked "accurate and complete" (a blemish-free record)	95-99% of all documents submitted to AOIS are marked "accurate and complete"	90-94% of all documents submitted to AOIS are marked "accurate and complete"	89% or fewer of all documents submitted to AOIS are marked "accurate and complete"	97% 199 of 205 documents
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Compliance reporting AOIS: rate	0/5		The Academy meets the CSO percentage requirement for AOIS reporting		The Academy does not meet the CSO percentage requirement for AOIS reporting	99% 2010-11 99% 2011-12 97% 2012-13 (as of 11/8/12)

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Compliance: Transparency Reporting	5/5		The Academy website meets requirements for transparency reporting		The Academy website does not meet requirements for transparency reporting	Please see 2/9/12 MDE Transparency Requirement memo
Compliance: AYP Accreditation Reporting	5/5		The Academy website meets requirements for AYP and Accreditation reporting		The Academy website does not meet requirements for AYP and Accreditation reporting	
Professional participation	5/5		The Board has a consistent representation at a majority of CSO-sponsored events, such as the Back To School Event and Board Professional Development	The Board has less than a majority of representation at CSO-sponsored events, such as the Back To School Event and Board Professional Development	The Board has little or no representation at CSO-sponsored events, such as the Back To School Event and Board Professional Development	2-3 board members regularly attend
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	n/a	0 points	
Academy updates	0/10		Board minutes reflect that the Board receives monthly updates on the Academy's progress toward its School Improvement Plan and academic contractual goals		The Board minutes do not reflect that the Board receives monthly updates on the Academy's progress toward its School Improvement Plan and academic contractual goals	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Enrollment process	5/5		The Academy's enrollment process is in compliance as defined by the Revised School Code		The Academy's enrollment process is not in compliance as defined by the Revised School Code	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Board meetings: Timeliness	5/5		The Board begins its meetings within 15 minutes of the posted time		The Board does not begin its meetings within 15 minutes of the posted time	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Board meetings: Notices of annual meetings	5/5		The Board posts timely notices of its annual meeting schedule and all regular and special meetings		The Board does not post timely notices of its annual meeting schedule and all regular and special meetings	10/19/11 Not posted per OMA guidelines.
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Physical facilities	10/10		The physical facilities provided by the Board are always inviting, attractive, clean, well-maintained, and conducive to learning	The physical facilities provided by the Board are not always inviting, attractive, clean, well-maintained, and conducive to learning	The physical facilities provided by the Board are not inviting, attractive, clean, well-maintained, and conducive to learning	

Governance: Total score for all competencies				
Total Points Achieved		Percentage Achieved	Category Achieved	
68.75/110		62.5%	Needs Improvement	

Criterion:
School Culture

Points Possible 95	Points Achieved 95
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Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Safe & orderly environment: Behavioral expectations	10/10		Academy staff & the Board have developed behavioral expectations and implemented systems that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a safe and orderly academic environment • are conducive to learning 	Academy staff & the Board have developed behavioral expectations and implemented systems, however: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are not consistently enforced • the academic environment is not always conducive to learning 	Little or no evidence exists that the Academy & the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have developed behavioral expectations or systems that are consistently enforced • have established an academic environment that is conducive to learning 	
Safe & orderly environment: Safety plan	10/10		The Academy has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a comprehensive safety plan in place and there is evidence that it is known by staff • implemented safety and security measures into daily operations 	The Academy has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a comprehensive safety plan in place; however it does not seem to be known by staff • implemented some safety and security measures into daily operations 	The Academy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not have a comprehensive safety plan in place • has not implemented safety and security measures into daily operations 	
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	n/a	0 points	
Safe & orderly environment: Student discipline	10/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members consistently demonstrate that they share responsibility for student discipline • Staff and students are observed supporting and encouraging respectful and collaborative behavior throughout the Academy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence exists that staff members consistently demonstrate that they share responsibility for student discipline • Staff and students are not observed supporting and encouraging respectful and collaborative behavior throughout the Academy 	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	n/a	0 points	
Staff stability: Administration	10/10		The Academy has had minimal building administrative turnover (2 or less) during the review period		The Academy has had significant building administrative turnover (3 or more) during the review period	
Staff stability: Faculty	10/10		The Academy has had less than 40% turnover in teaching staff during the review period		The Academy has had 40% or more turnover in teaching staff during the review period	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Site and facilities: Emergency systems	5/5		All emergency systems are operational, well-maintained, and inspected on a regular basis		There is little or no evidence that emergency systems are in working order inspected on a regular basis	
Site and facilities: Hazardous materials	5/5		All hazardous chemicals and cleaners are properly labeled and safely secured		Hazardous chemicals and cleaners are not properly labeled or safely secured	FAM West team noted unsecured cleaning products.
Site and facilities: HVAC system	5/5		All areas in the Academy are well ventilated and heated/cooled and are conducive to a positive working and learning environment		The Academy's ventilation and heating/cooling are not suitable for the positive working and learning environment	
Point distribution		n/a	10 points		0 points	
Site and facilities: Restrooms and public areas	10/10		All restrooms and other public areas are well-maintained, clean, and inviting		Restrooms and other public areas are not well-maintained, clean, and are generally unsatisfactory	
Site and facilities: Lighting	10/10		All areas are well lit and all lights are functioning properly to provide an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning		Not all areas are well lit and some lights are not functioning properly. Lighting is generally poor and not conducive to teaching and learning	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Parent / family involvement and communication	5/5		The Academy employs a variety of strategies to promote and sustain engagement by students' parents / families		The Academy does not employ a variety of strategies to promote and sustain engagement by students' parents / families	
Community involvement	5/5		The Academy has established partnerships with business or community agencies (where appropriate & practical) to supplement comprehensive health and human services for students and families		The Academy has not established partnerships with business or community agencies (where appropriate & practical) to supplement comprehensive health and human services for students and families	

School Culture: Total score for all competencies						
Total Points Achieved	95/95	Percentage Achieved	100%	Category Achieved	Meets Standards	

Criterion:
Financial Viability

Points Possible 80	Points Achieved 70
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Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Budget development	10/10		The Board has established and adheres to a timeline for budget development	The Board has established a timeline for budget development but does not adhere to that timeline	The Board has not established a timeline for budget development	
Opportunity for input	10/10		Board meeting minutes document that the full Board had the opportunity to provide input into the budget development process two times or more prior to budget adoption	Board meeting minutes document that the full Board had the opportunity to provide input into the budget development process only once prior to budget adoption	No evidence can be found that the full Board had an opportunity to provide direction for the budget development process	
Point distribution		n/a	15 points	9 points	0 points	
School improvement plan	15/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy's budget reflects and supports the school improvement plan with budget allotments for each strategy Budgeted amounts are consistent with the Board's overall strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy's budget appears inconsistent with the school improvement plan Budgeted amounts are not consistent with the Board's overall strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy's budget does not take school improvement into consideration Budgeted amounts are not consistent with the Board's overall strategic plan 	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	3 points	0 points	
Access to monthly financial statements	5/5		Each member of the Board receives monthly financial statements as part of the agenda packet prior to each regularly scheduled Board meeting	Only the Board Treasurer receives monthly financial statements in his/her Board packet prior to each regularly scheduled meeting	Monthly financial statements are distributed "at the table"	
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Audit / fund balances: External audits	5/5		The Board requests RFPs for external auditing services no fewer than every three 3 years		The Board does not request RFPs for external auditing services every three 3 years	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	6 points	0 points	
Audit submission	10/10		During this review period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Academy's audit was completed in a timely manner submitted to the State by or before October 31 results were shared with the Board of Directors in advance of the public presentation 	During this review period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Academy's audit was performed within the specified timeframe the Board of Directors did not receive it in advance of meeting for review 	During this review period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Academy's audit was not performed within the specified timeframe 	
Point distribution		n/a	10 points	n/a	0 points	
Report status	10/10		During this review period, the Board received only unqualified reports		During this review period, the Board received one or more qualified reports	
Point distribution		10 points	7.5 points	6 points	0 points	
Fund balance	0/10	The Board maintains a fund balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of at least 10% of general revenue 	The Board maintains a fund balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 3% -9.9% of general revenue 	The Board maintains a fund balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within 1% - 2.9% of general revenue 	The Board maintains a fund balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of less than 1% of general revenue 	The MICA fund balance is currently below 1%
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
Long-range planning	5/5		The Board has an identifiable long-range plan for fund balances		The Board does not have an identifiable long-range plan for fund balances	

Financial Viability: Total score for all competencies					
Total Points Achieved		Percentage Achieved	Category Achieved		
70/80		87.5%	Meets Standards		

Criterion:
School Improvement

Points Possible 30	Points Achieved 26.25
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Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		5 points	3.75 points	3 points	0 points	
Strand I: Teaching for Learning <i>(Education Yes! Performance Indicator)</i>	5/5	The Academy has implemented most School Improvement Framework (SIF) rubrics to "Exemplary" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Partially Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Getting Started" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	
Strand II: Leadership <i>(Ed Yes! Performance Indicator)</i>	5/5	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Exemplary" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Partially Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Getting Started" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	
Strand III: Personnel & professional learning <i>(Ed Yes! Performance Indicator)</i>	3.75/5	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Exemplary" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Partially Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Getting Started" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	
Strand IV: School & community relations <i>(Ed Yes! Performance Indicator)</i>	3.75/5	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Exemplary" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Partially Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Getting Started" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	
Strand V: Data & Informational management <i>(Ed Yes! Performance Indicator)</i>	3.75/5	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Exemplary" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Partially Implemented" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	The Academy has implemented most SIF rubrics to "Getting Started" level (defined by MDE; documented in <i>Ed Yes!</i>)	

Competency	Score	Exceeding Goals	Meeting Goals	Needs Improvement	Deficient in Meeting Goals	Reviewer Comments
Point distribution		n/a	5 points	n/a	0 points	
School improvement plan (<i>Ed Yes! Performance Indicator</i>)	5/5		The Academy maintains one annually-updated comprehensive written plan that encompasses all current educational mandates (such as PA 25, Title 1, NCLB, <i>Ed Yes!</i> , and other school-wide improvement efforts)		The Academy maintains a school improvement plan; however, it lacks some of the key components required by the state	

School Improvement: Total score for all competencies				
Total Points Achieved		Percentage Achieved	Category Achieved	
26.25/30		87.5%	Meets Standards	

BOARD INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Do you feel the academy is accomplishing its mission? How do you know?

- Yes – monthly board reports, testing results, feedback from FSU; need to do better in math, but moving forward to goal of high level of achievements.
- Assessment reports are reviewed in depth at least two times/year.

2. Are you confident that students are leaving this academy performing at a high level of academic achievement? Upon what evidence do you base your answer?

- Those that have graduated demonstrated positive results, but look forward to future experience. Interested in tracking graduates and will be brought up to the Board.
- In general, all students are performing well based on scores; individualized learning a plus;
- Constantly looking at ways to improve.

3. Tell us about your knowledge of the charter school contract with FSU. What do you believe to be the most important information Board members should know?

- Standards for academic achievement; prime area of concern
- Oversight connection between FSU and the Board
- Partnership nature of relationship with FSU; supportive, provide resources, good feedback;
- Instructive and insistent on high standard of achievement
- Open Meetings Act support

4. What are you most proud of at this academy?

- Achievement level of students
- Enthusiasm of teachers and parents
- Collaborative learning arrangement
- Excellence of staff

What could be improved?

- Math scores – confident that we have a handle on it

5. Does your Board have a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years? If yes, what is the main focus of that plan? If no, do you see value in developing such a plan?

- Plan will be developed at the January retreat. First several years was focused on getting up/running, budget and academic achievement. May bring in a facilitator to assist with the development of a strategic plan.
- Plan will need to be reviewed annually; without vision, we could lose control of everything.

What about growth?

- Concerned; need to balance it with quality of staff and academic achievement
- We're a quality provider and want to grow because we believe in the product we provide, but we need to do so at a point where we feel comfortable.
- Some motivation to capture the market before low quality providers do

6. Are you satisfied with your Board's association with the Connections organizational structure – financially, etc.?

- Need to look at their business model vs. the Board's business model..

7. Anything for our attention?

- Many board changes; very comfortable with the group we have now – interested in being successful and board being more stable.
- Blessed with good leaders; fun organization to be associated with.

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Do you feel the academy is accomplishing its mission? How do you know?

- Yes; we individualize instruction; basis of our success is student success; learning coaches help make that happen.
- We keep working on achieving our mission.

2. What are you most proud of at this academy?

- People working here – so proud of what they accomplish and what they give of their lives; commitment to students
- Culture here – culture/climate eat strategies for lunch; can have all the best strategies in the world, but without good culture/climate, won't get anywhere.
- Staff willing to work. Love coming to work every day.
- Student AND teacher growth
- Students and families who take a risk to be part of MICA.

What could be improved?

- Majority of items are out of our control; FSU goal for student achievement (MEAP); address the negatives that come in
- Maintain the quality in coming growth
- Better communication about what our program is – continue to get the word out

3. Are you confident that students are leaving this academy performing at a high level of academic achievement? Upon what evidence do you base your answer?

- Track post high school plans. Confident that grads are equipped for post-graduate success

- FAM – community college partnerships are a resource.

4. *Anything for our attention?*

- At the end of the day, our mission is to make students be successful.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Do you feel the academy is accomplishing its mission? How do you know?

- Yes – we're maximizing student potential every day. We receive and use data all the time.
- Yes – know through conversations with learning coaches as well as the students; see it through the portfolios, challenging lessons
- Personal learning plan is evidence
- Opportunities are given to students to excel – additional support
- Able to give more one-on-one
- We're rewarded by success. Amazing experience compared to a brick/mortar
- Get to focus on teaching
- Staff is supportive of each other

2. On a scale of 1-10 (10 Highest), rate the culture/climate of this academy.

- 9-10

3. Do you feel the academic expectations here are appropriate for the students who attend this academy?

- Academic load is appropriate – don't have to deal with not finishing curriculum at the end of year
- Don't have classroom issues to slow you down.
- For those that do have issues, we create strategies.
- More consultative role for student motivation issues
- Recognition is constant and relevant
- Expectations are developed by all of us – PLCs
- Parents appreciate high expectations

4. *Anything for our attention?*

- Appreciates the support/help from each other; staff complement each other.
- PLC direction for the future is unique.
- Use photos for developing relationships
- Technology support is great – quick response

SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Do you feel the academy is accomplishing its mission? How do you know?

- Believe students are happy to be here; when people leave, reasons are because it's academically too hard for the students or the parent/learning coach or the student misses social/friends. Good retention
- Additional staff have worked well. Truly a family and all really care for their students and what they do
- Staff is very focused on that common goal; very willing to help each other
- MICA isn't for everyone – but for those it serves well, it is a very successful program

2. What are you most proud of at this academy?

- Family feel; camaraderie
- We recognize that MICA doesn't work for everyone and encourage them to find what will work for their family
- The mesh of new staff

What could be improved?

- Expansion is daunting
- Space
- Time management and expectations
- Technical support on site

3. **On a scale of 1-10 (10 Highest), tell us your feelings about the level of support you receive for each of the following areas:**
 - a. **Materials and Supplies** 10 – we get what we need
 - b. **Professional Training** 10 – receive funds for work related training
 - c. **Clear Description and Understanding of The Expectations For Your Work** 10 – clear understanding/lot of support for what we do

4. **On a scale of 1-10 (10 Highest), rate the culture/climate of this academy.**
 - 10 – variety of ages and experiences; lots of energy and excitement

5. **Do you feel the academic expectations here are appropriate for the students who attend this academy?**
 - Yes – See above

6. **Would you enroll your child at this academy?**
 - Depends on the child's self motivation; if child was interested, yes

7. **If money was not an object, what changes would you like to see made to the academy (Example: building, curriculum, staffing, etc)**
 - Bigger building – so all can be together and grow; more storage, bigger conference room
 - Technical support and improvement

8. **Anything for our attention?**
 - Like coming to work; proud of where we work

PARENT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Why did you choose to have your child(ren) attend this academy? On a scale of 1-10 (10 highest), how satisfied are you with that choice?

- Always home schooled our children, but some subjects are more difficult at certain levels to teach. Teacher support is important and appreciated, especially high school level (AP classes; burden of costs lifted) - 10
- Same reasons - 10
- Issues with public school; cost burden of home schooling is huge; need to assure core curriculum tests are passed – assists with AP classes, better chance at scholarships, etc; MICA has a set of accountability that is helpful. - 10

2. How responsive is the school administration, board, or teachers to concerns or complaints?

- For the most part, good experience with communication; teachers are focused on the students individually.
- Teachers are always there when you need them; rarely get teacher's voice mail – if you do, call is returned quickly.
- Large workload for younger grades – poor grammar, poor spelling because of cyber education – Microsoft teaches their grammar. MEAP tests – not the best set up as compared to brick/mortar. Teachers are good at communicating with middle schoolers. Every teacher knows my kids better than their brick/mortar counterparts. Response to issues/ideas/suggestions – very good.

3. On a scale of 1-10 (10 highest), rate the culture/climate of this academy. Please tell us why you gave the rating you did.

- 9 - Very positive, upbeat always, trying to improve, trying to keep students excited about what they're doing. Lot of effort in making school a community, trying to make it more personal.
- 9-10 very positive – students are excited to do their schoolwork; great support and feedback from teachers
- 9-10 positive; our kids miss the classroom contacts, but this is no conflict resolution needed on the playground. Culture here is very accommodating.

4. Are you satisfied that your child is learning to their full potential at this academy? Please tell us why you feel the way you do.

- Yes- see previous answers

5. What is the number one complaint your child has about attending school here?

- Slackitude/procrastination because of more freedom, less routine. More live lessons would be helpful; do need more hands on
- Heavy workload

6. What is the number one thing your child really seems to enjoy?

- Teachers – love them; build great relationships with them
- Live lessons because of the teachers

7. Tell us about the level of communication you receive from this academy? Is it adequate? Do you understand what is being communicated?

- Good job of communication; good follow-up to learning coaches
- Orientation for new parents not very clear. Need more time for it, show what a “typical” day would be like and meet face-to-face

8. Anything for our attention?

- Would recommend to others and have done so.
- The cyber school is not a sham! Our kids attend a global academy
- Still expensive to attend – have to pay for field trips and provide transportation to do so.
- Maybe should have a bus to pick up kids to take to common experiences such as day camps or retreats
- Manipulatives needed for hands-on.

STUDENT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Academy Name: **Michigan Connections Academy**

Date: **November 15-16, 2012**

The following is a summary of responses, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. Do you enjoying attending this school? If you had a choice to attend anywhere else, would you?

- Like it here
- Wouldn't go anywhere else

2. Do you feel you are learning at this school? Are you being challenged enough, too much, or at just the right amount?

- Learning here is just right
- Get help when I need it from teachers and classmates.

3. Do you feel that overall, the adults here at this school are fair to students?

- Yes, they're fair

4. What is your favorite subject? Why?

- Science – do experiments in the kitchen or outside, depending on the season
- Math – it's a challenge
- Language arts – like writing
- Science – like blowing up stuff

5. Is there anything (classes, activities, etc) you wished this school offered that they do not currently offer?

- Already have clubs for everything; writing, reading, mechanics; kids can participate in things they really like
- Enjoys field trips – Kalamazoo air museum

6. How long did it take you to learn how to use the technology? Chat rooms, programs, etc?

- Check own grades – easy to do.
- Had training/orientation, but easy to figure it out
- MICA computer works well; but one time it didn't work and it got fixed fast
- Started with firewalls but once they started adding academic games, etc., firewalls were removed

7. Describe your typical school day.

- Get up early and do schoolwork until noon, then take the afternoon off to do other things. Have to be online by 8:30 am
- More motivated – don't have to wait for others in the class to get it done.

8. Would you recommend this school to other friends or family?

- Yes and have done so. Friends are joining this school
- Yes; learn at your own pace

9. Anything for our attention?

- More field trips
- Likes seeing online friends at field trips

Michigan Connections Academy School Improvement Team Interview November 15-16, 2012

1. Describe for us two of the most effective programs or innovations implemented as a result of MICA's school improvement planning.

- Parent face-to-face informational meetings held at ten different sites in August to review Academy expectations. Still under development.
- More effective use of Study Island - wasn't being used to its potential. Now used as intervention for specific learning needs.

2. What systems are in place to track and analyze student achievement results?

Assessments for math and language arts are correlated to common core standards. Data shows what students are mastering or not. Teachers can then focus in on specific standards where students need extra help. Data is used to develop personal learning plan, which is discussed with parents four times/year.

Administration also uses data and shares with staff in PLCs, where strategies are identified.

Management company provides monthly training on how to use AOPR – Assessment Objective Progress Report.

3. How are school improvement efforts coordinated to meet the needs of both the online and FAM programs? How do you ensure that each program is afforded adequate attention in your planning?

FAM staff involved last year are not there this year. Counselor visits FAM to promote School Improvement, and FAM does have their own Plan. However, majority of School Improvement Planning efforts are with MICA.

The MICA School Improvement Plan drives instruction. Staff "lives" the SIP.

4. What would we observe if we were to attend a typical School Improvement Team meeting? How would the meeting be managed, and what items would a typical agenda include?

We respect each other as individuals and as educators. The agenda includes tasks to complete based on Michigan Department of Education website. All work to stay on task. PLCs target specific student goals – really look at what can be done to meet goals and still meet MDE requirements.

5. Describe the use of Professional Learning Communities to improve the MICA instructional program

See previous responses. Time is carved out each week to look at data and plan for improvement. Working on SMART goals from parent satisfaction surveys. Staff attended PLC training this past summer and gained better insight into the PLC process and incorporating knowledge into MICA's PLC this year.

6. What significant challenges do you see facing the Academy that are not currently being addressed by the School Improvement Team?

- Continuing to achieve at the levels accomplished early on in our existence. We come to work for the right reasons.
- Double in size in a year – we're up to it because we have people that will work to make it happen.
- Students arrive at a much lower level than what they presented themselves to be.
- Inform people about who we are and what is expected
- Maintaining quality

7. What school improvement efforts are you most proud of? Why?

- Home School Compact – parent/teacher/student commitments. Information was condensed to an understandable format.
- Developed a plan that will increase school growth over time

REAUTHORIZATION APPLICATION SCORING RUBRIC

1. A. Is the academy making academic progress?	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 1.5 Pts.	Answered 2 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 2.5 Pts.	A C A D E M I C P R O G R A M	
	1A.					
B. How does the academy compare academically relative to the State, resident district, and demographically comparable district? Discuss both criterion referenced testing such as MEAP, and standardized testing such as Scantron or Terra Nova Tests.	1B.					
Total Possible Pts=5	<p>What reviewers will look for: In all cases, claims must be backed by clear and quantitative evidence. What has the trend for student achievement been during the current contract period? Have gains outweighed any lack of progress? Have any specific weaknesses been identified? How have those weaknesses been addressed? Include discussion of the progress cohorts (students who have been with the academy for three or more years) have made over time. Where does the academy stand in comparison to the State, local district, and demographically comparable district? What specific progress has been made in addressing the academy’s contractual educational goals? Do stated goals reflect sufficiently high standards? Discussion of the continuous updating of curriculum materials, objectives, and School Improvement Plans should be included.</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: Because of the unique nature of MICA/FAM as cyber schools, some of the usual measurements of cohort academic progress proved difficult. Nevertheless, the academy provided significant evidence about the status of academic achievement among its students. For the most part, that evidence shows a positive growth trend among academy’s elementary and middle school students. Where that was not the case, no attempt was made to hide those deficiencies. Though some mention was made of efforts to implement new programming or other actions to address the identified achievement shortcomings, I was disappointed that the applicant did not provide more specific details about how those shortcomings will be addressed. The Appendices referenced in this section might have provided more of those details, but the Appendices were not attached to the application that I received, at least not that I saw.</p> <p>The impression throughout the application is the presentation of two separate schools – MICA and FAM</p> <p>Difficult to show trends in just 2 years. Difficult to analyze cohort in 2 years. FAM results will be different than Connections Academy. Difficult for academy to address question thoroughly due to short time of existence and thus the 4.0 instead of 5.0 points.</p> <p>This reviewer struggled with this question. Specifically, I don’t think they could address the entire question because of their short history.</p> <p>Data is clearly presented. Obviously, there is more substance to the MICA information than for FAM due to the short history of data available for FAM.</p>					

	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 1.5 Pts.	Answered 2 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 2.5 Pts.
2. A. What progress has been made toward meeting the academy's mission?	2A.			
B. What changes are proposed (if any) in the Academy's Mission Statement or Vision for the new contractual period?	2B.			
<p>What reviewers will look for: What evidence is there that the academy has met or is making progress toward its stated vision or mission? Specific data should be included that shows relations between student outputs and the mission statement. If aspects of the academy's mission/vision are not measurable, what is being done to remedy this situation? Explain how the academy's mission and vision is shared with all stakeholders, and how these documents guide decision making at the academy.</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides both subjective and at least one example of somewhat objective evidence that it is making good progress toward meeting its mission statement. However, there is little specific data to confirm the applicant's statements as required by the rubric. Likewise, no attempt is made to inform the CSO about any plans to create more specific data to back up the claims made in the application. Likewise, neither of the last two questions in the paragraph on what the reviewers will look for is answered satisfactorily.</p> <p>While I do believe that the applicant makes a good case for the fact that the academy's mission is being met, it is not done in accordance to rubric standards. For instance, there is no mention of how the mission is shared with stakeholders. Likewise, the applicant does not address any attempt to create a rubric or other instrument to measure the degree to which it is meeting its established mission.</p> <p>Contrarily, section 2B is answered with a very definite response—there is absolutely no plan to change the academy's mission. It is obvious that MICA and FAM are committed to the current mission for the foreseeable future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not provide specific data showing relation between student outputs & mission statement • Did not refer to measurable/not measurable areas or how it will be remedied if necessary • Did not indicate how the mission/vision is shared with stakeholders • Did not indicate how documents guide decision making <p>The use of a personal story of achievement was a unique approach to demonstrating progress toward the school's mission.</p>				
<p style="color: red;">Total Possible Pts=5</p>				

ACADEMY MISSION

3. A. Is the academy financially solvent and stable?	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 1.5 Pts.	Answered 2 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 2.5 Pts.
<p>Total Possible Pts=2.5</p>				
<p>What reviewers will look for: A clear and concise narrative statement about finances will provide evidence that the academy Board has competently and effectively managed its finances. The statement will also address the Board's philosophy of fund balances, facility upkeep, and allocation of resources to help achieve the academy's mission and vision. Describe how the academy Board is making investments in staff and training, in books and supplies, and in technology. Any reportable conditions on yearly audits during the contract period will be addressed here.</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: The applicant paints a confident picture concerning school financial stability, although without much specificity. Still, it is obvious that the applicant believes that the academy's governing body gives satisfactory support to each of the academy's initiatives through the employment of an ESP to operate the academy's programs.</p> <p>Did not refer to/answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board's philosophy of fund balances, facility upkeep or allocation of resources to help achieve the academy's mission and vision. <p>Board's philosophy of fund balance?</p> <p>More detail regarding fund balance levels and philosophy would have been helpful. I wonder to what degree the board relies on corporate support for budgeting decisions.</p>				

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3. B. Is student enrollment stable and near capacity?	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 1.5 Pts.	Answered 2 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 2.5 Pts.
Total Possible Pts=2.5				
<p>What reviewers will look for: A clear and concise statement about the enrollment history of the academy during its current contract. A comprehensive narrative documenting demand and turnover, with a clear explanation and analysis of reasons for student turnover. Demographic trends in the vicinity of the academy will be noted as should general trends in staff stability.</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides detailed information about its MICA and FAM enrollment history, giving special attention to general enrolments, lotteries, and dropouts with accompanying reasons for the dropouts.</p> <p>There is no specific mention of demographics in the enrollment area, except that they come from a variety of life situations. Likewise, no details are given about staff stability.</p>				

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4. How does the academy (staff, administrators, and Board) use assessment data to make decisions?	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 2 Pts.	Answered 3.5 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 5 Pts.
<p>Total Possible Pts=5</p>				
	<p>What reviewers will look for: Explain in detail how the use of data drives decision making at the academy. Are there internal and external assessments that match the academy's academic goals and mission? How is the progress toward the School Improvement Plan monitored and measured?</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: The applicant did an outstanding job of identifying the ways in which data is collected and analyzed, then translated into individualized differentiated student instruction. The application also states that future emphasis will be placed on developing the ability of the Board of Directors to utilize data in a more effective way. It's difficult to have my answer influenced by their academic model. Thus, the 5.0 pts.</p> <p>MICA and FAM are appropriately addressed</p>			

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	Did Not Answer 0 Pts.	Somewhat Answered 1.5 Pts.	Answered 2 Pts.	Outstandingly Answered 2.5 Pts.	C H A L L E N G E S / O P P O R T U N I T I E S	
5. A. If the academy is reauthorized by the Ferris State University Board of Trustees, what are the biggest challenges facing the academy during the new authorization period?	5A.					
How does the academy intend to address those challenges? (What is the Board's long-range plan?)	5B.					
<p>B. Describe how the Board of Directors has demonstrated growth as a governing body during this contractual period.</p> <p>Total Possible Pts=5</p>	<p>What reviewers will look for: There will be narrative that shows long-range planning to address challenges facing the academy. As much as possible, resources should be identified along with a timetable for implementation. Identify how the challenges have been incorporated into the School Improvement Plan, how the plan will be monitored, and by whom.</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: The applicant identifies one of its challenges as maintaining effective data driven, personalized, targeted instruction even with the anticipated rapid growth enrollment. It also identifies ways in which this concern is being addressed through additional teacher training in best practices for on-line learning and the continued development of effective PLCs.</p> <p>The second challenge identified is maintaining a consistent cadre of board members. The academy hopes to address this challenge through good recruitment along with effective training for both prospective and current board members beginning in October of 2012.</p> <p>The question in item 5 B is not addressed at all by the applicant.</p> <p>No description of how the Board of Directors has demonstrated growth as a governing body, but rather a history of who filled what Board seat. There has been growth by current members in governance, but unfortunately, none of that growth is related here.</p> <p>Growth as a governing body is not addressed</p>					

Question	Points Possible	Points Awarded	
1	5	4,4,4,4	
2	5	4,3,5,4.5	
3	5	3.5,3.5,4.5,4	
4	5	5,3.5,5,3.5	
5	5	2,3.5,4.5,3.5	TOTAL SCORE: 19.62

**PSA Reauthorization Application
Michigan Connections Academy (MICA)
September 2012**

Content

Please provide answers to the following questions.

Academic Program (5 points)

Performance Overview

By virtually any measure, students at both Michigan Connections Academy (MICA) and FAM Academy of Detroit (FAM) are demonstrating academic progress. As MICA is just entering its third year in existence, and FAM its second, neither school has yet had the opportunity to develop progress cohorts. Nevertheless, specific data for the 2011-2012 school year shows Michigan Connections Academy made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the tested subjects (mathematics and reading), and the school received an "A" on the State Report Card.

MICA did not receive an AYP designation in 2010-11 as it was the school's first year of existence, nor did FAM in 2011-12 for the same reason.

MICA

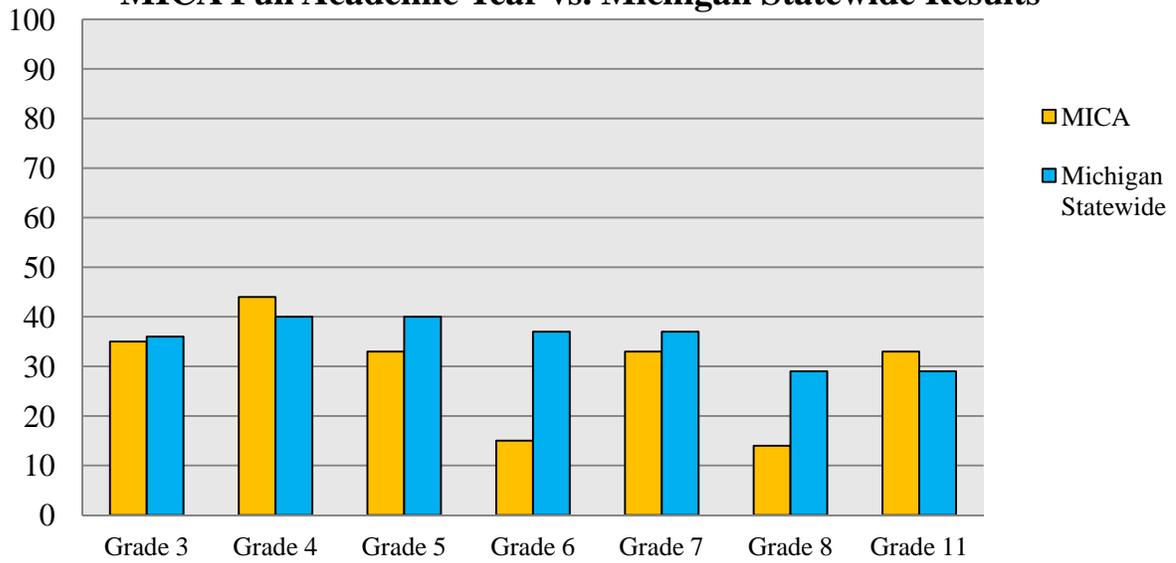
MICA enrolls students in grades K-12 from across the state of Michigan. Our assessment data provides quantitative evidence that our gains have outweighed lack of progress in student achievement; as noted above, the school made AYP and earned a grade of A the first year it was rated.

While more comprehensive data for both MICA and FAM are provided later in this section, MICA tends overall to score within five percentage points of the statewide average in all tested subjects and grades, with the exception of 5th, 6th and 8th grade math, 4th grade writing, 8th grade science, and 6th grade social studies. MICA scores above or significantly above the statewide average in reading in all grade levels except grade 7, where MICA is marginally below the state average.

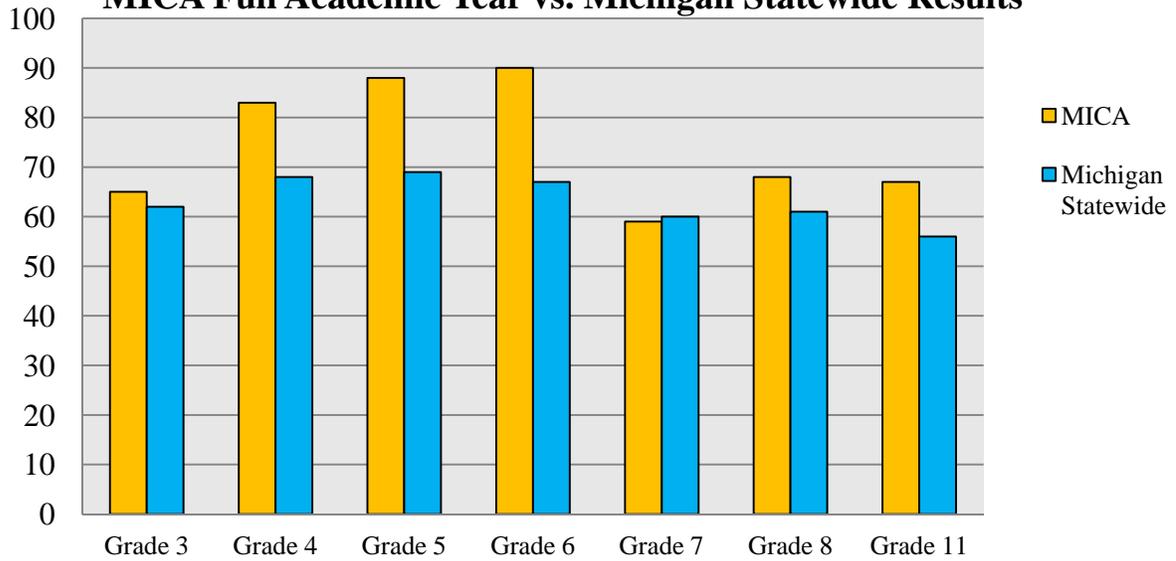
Statewide Michigan results (graphs and tables on the following pages) are as reported by the Michigan Department of Education. MICA results for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) are based on students enrolled for a Full Academic Year as defined by Michigan for Grades 3-8 and for students enrolled from October 15, 2011 through the time of testing for Grade 11.

"Proficiency" is defined as scores at the Proficient or Advanced level on the MEAP/Michigan Merit Examination (MME).

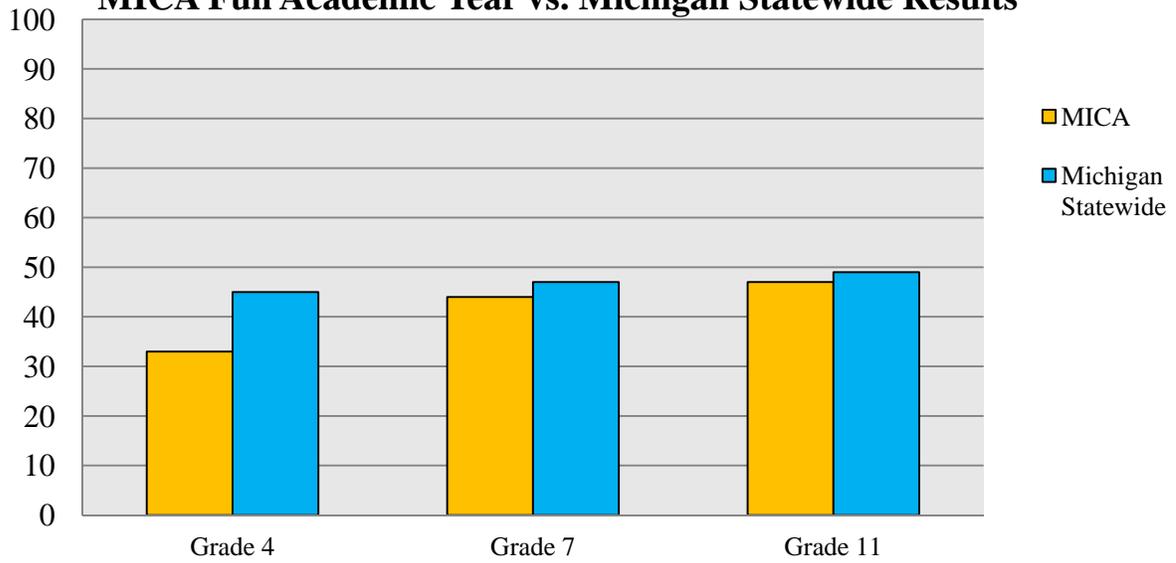
**2011-12 Math State Test Proficiency:
MICA Full Academic Year vs. Michigan Statewide Results**



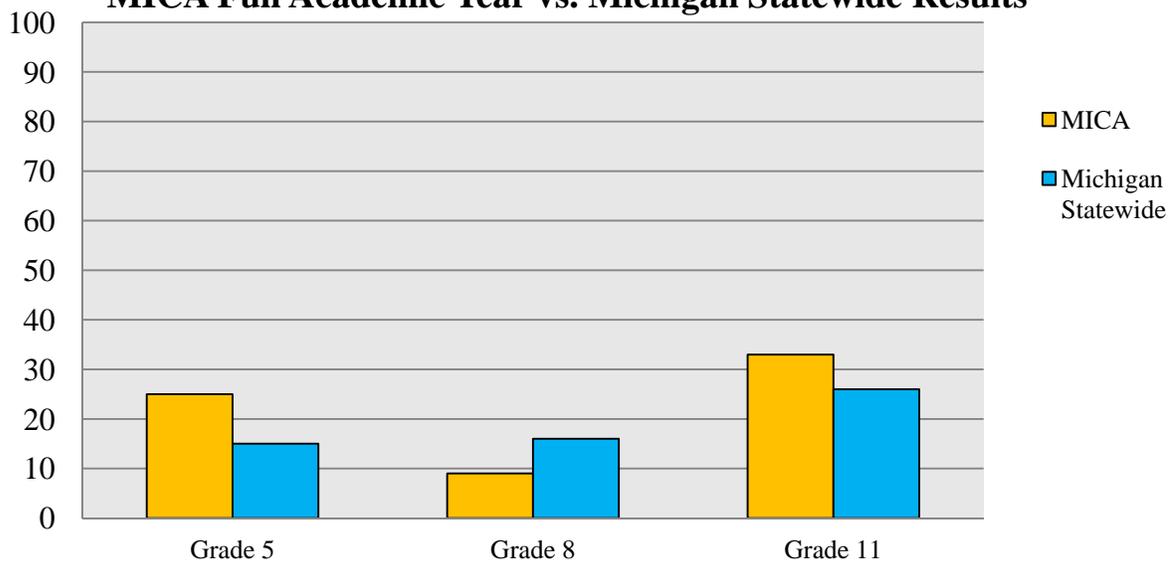
**2011-12 Reading State Test Proficiency:
MICA Full Academic Year vs. Michigan Statewide Results**

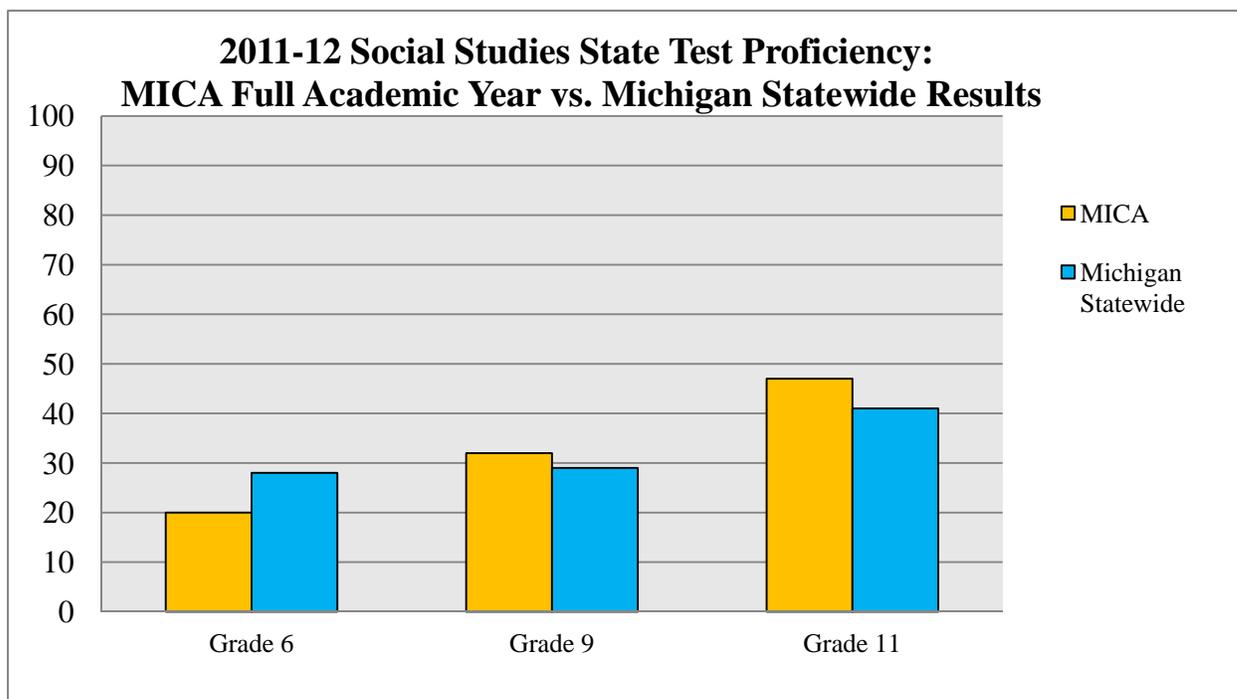


**2011-12 Writing State Test Proficiency:
MICA Full Academic Year vs. Michigan Statewide Results**



**2011-12 Science State Test Proficiency:
MICA Full Academic Year vs. Michigan Statewide Results**





Finding a “comparable” school or schools is difficult for MICA, as schools that match MICA in terms of a common demographic such as Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) eligibility do not match MICA in terms of either grade span, enrollment, or both grade span and enrollment. The most comparable school is Michigan Virtual Charter Academy (MVCA), operated in partnership with K12, Inc. Comparison data for MICA, MVCA, and Michigan statewide are provided below.

MICA - Met AYP and received an *Education YES!* rating of “A”

Michigan Virtual Charter Academy - Met AYP and received an *Education YES!* rating of “B”

Overall percentages of AYP proficiency (including students who were Partially Proficient) for Full Academic Year students:

Math

MICA	53.4%
Michigan Virtual Charter Academy	53.1%
Michigan Statewide	57.5%

Reading

MICA	89.2%
Michigan Virtual Charter Academy	82.9%
Michigan Statewide	83.0%

At MICA, our most significant area of weakness is in math, particularly the middle school grades. Our School and District Improvement plans are designed to improve student achievement in all four core academic areas with specific attention to our identified weaknesses and outline specific ways to address those weaknesses and achieving our contractual educational goals.

Planned methods for improving math scores include (but are not limited to):

1. Reduction in class size by hiring additional middle school math teaching staff.
2. Additional and more immediate "Tier I" (see Student Support section below for additional information on "Tier I, II and III") interventions for students struggling with math.
3. Providing additional "Tier II and Tier III" interventions in the form of additional Title I services provided to struggling students at that grade level.
4. Concentrated Professional Development on improvement of teaching techniques and methodologies through Professional Learning Community (PLC) initiatives. The PLC concept has been developed and evolved over a period of years; its focus is on student learning. MICA's Professional Learning Community is a group of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of inquiry and action research to achieve increased results for their students. Significant time will be dedicated to this work in this area throughout the school year.

FAM

FAM targets students who previously withdrew from high school and then chose to re-enroll in school in order to earn a high school diploma. FAM is not a GED program, it is a full high school diploma program. Students are required to meet MI high school graduation requirements. FAM is an innovative, flexible high school designed to help previous high school dropouts become successful high school graduates. The student population by its very nature shows significantly lower scores overall than MICA; as such, for its first year (2011-12), the school measured success by the overall gains the students made over the course of the year. In math, FAM students showed two full years' learning gains in one year based on BASI (Basic Achievement Skills Inventory) testing, and in Reading, students showed one full year's learning gain in a year. Although overall FAM students are not yet performing on tests at the proficiency levels we would like, we are very pleased with the significant academic gains students showed over the course of one year, particularly in the school's first year of operation. We look forward to continued student growth in all academic areas and improving the proficiency levels on state testing.

Connections Education, the educational services provider for both Michigan Connections Academy (MICA) and Fusion Academy of Michigan (since mid-2012 known only as FAM, due to trademark issues with the name Fusion), formally redevelops its curriculum on a 6-year cycle. However, daily maintenance occurs as needed within this six year cycle, based on feedback from students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. Annual revisions are made based on customer feedback, state standards, iNACOL (International Association for K-12 Online Learning) standards, and internal assessment analyses. **Attachment 1, "2011-12 Curriculum Memo,"** and **Attachment 2, "2012-13 Curriculum Memo,"** provide extensive information about improvements made to the curriculum for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. These memos are provided to the school board each Spring. The full Connections curricular offerings are presented in the [Connections Education Program Guide](#), available online. **Attachment 3, the Connections Education Curriculum Development and Revision Process,** outlines Connections' curriculum development and maintenance process. School Improvement plans for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are included as the following attachments:

Attachment 4 – MICA District Improvement Plan 2012-13 (MICA DIP)

Attachment 5 – MICA School Improvement Plan 2011-12 (MICA SIP)
Attachment 6 – MICA School Improvement Plan 2012-13 (MICA SIP)
Attachment 7 – FAM School Improvement Plan 2012-13 (FAM SIP)-

Finally, **Attachment 8 – Progress Towards Meeting Contractual Goals** , summarizes the progress MICA has made in achieving these goals as of August 2012.

MICA enrolls students in grades K-12, while FAM enrolls students in grades 9-12 only. Additional data for both schools are presented below.

Supporting Detail: MICA State Testing Data

The data below is taken from the state School Summary Report released in the fall 2011 and is for all tested students. Over the course of our current contract, MICA students have demonstrated academic growth in many academic areas. Areas of most significant growth included: 4th, 5th, 7th and 11th grade math, 4th grade reading and writing, 5th grade reading, 6th grade reading, and 11th grade reading and writing.

MICA 2010-11 and 2011-12 MEAP and MME Math data

Grades 3-4 MICA MEAP Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
3	44%	42%
4	24%	38%

Thirty two students or 71% of the tested Fall 2011 fourth graders, were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing, from grades 3 to grade 4, of which 6% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 28% of those students demonstrated improvement, 41% of those students maintained, 22% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 1% demonstrated a significant decline.

Grade 5 MICA MEAP Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
5	14%	33%

Thirty six students or 67% of the tested Fall 2011 fifth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 4 to grade 5, of which 14% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 33% of those students demonstrated improvement, 31% of those students maintained, and 22% of those students demonstrated a decline.

Grade 6 MICA MEAP Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
6	19%	19%

Twenty six students or 62% of the tested Fall 2011 sixth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 5 to grade 6 of which 19% of those students demonstrated improvement, 35% of those students maintained, and 42% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 4% demonstrated significant decline.

Grade 7 MICA MEAP Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
7	35%	36%

Thirty students or 64% of the tested Fall of 2011 seventh graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 6 to grade 7 of which 1% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 37% of those students demonstrated improvement, 50% of those students maintained, and 10% of those students demonstrated a decline.

Grade 8 MICA MEAP Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
8	19%	8%

Thirty two students or 63% of the tested Fall of 2011 eighth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 7 to grade 8 of which 9% of those students demonstrated improvement, 41% of those students maintained, 47% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 3% demonstrated significant decline.)

Grade 11 MME MICA Math

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
11	11%	33%

MICA 2010-11 and 2011-12 MEAP and MME Reading/Language Arts (Writing) Data

Grades MICA 3-4 MEAP Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
3	75%	64%
4	71%	82%

Thirty two students or 71% percent of the tested Fall of 2011 fourth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 3 to grade 4 of which 41% of those students demonstrated improvement, 38% of those students maintained, and 22% of those students demonstrated a decline.

Grade 4 MICA MEAP Writing

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
4	37%	38%

Grade 5 MICA MEAP Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
5	72%	78%

Thirty six students or 67% percent of the tested Fall 2011 fifth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 4 to grade 5, of which 3% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 42% of those students demonstrated improvement, 31% of those students maintained, 17% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 3% demonstrated significant decline.)

Grade 6 MICA MEAP Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
6	76%	83%

Twenty six students or 62% of the tested Fall of 2011 sixth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 5 to grade 6 of which 1% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 35% of those students demonstrated improvement, 38% of those students maintained, 43% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 3% demonstrated a significant decline.)

Grade 7 MICA MEAP Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
7	73%	60%

Thirty students or 64%of the tested Fall of 2011 seventh graders were successfully matched from the Fall of 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 6 to grade 7 of which 1% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 13% of those students demonstrated improvement, 37% of those students maintained, and 22% of those students demonstrated a decline.)

Grade 7 MICA MEAP Writing

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
7	50%	33%

Grade 8 MICA MEAP Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
8	66%	57%

Thirty three students or 65% of the tested Fall 2011 eighth graders were successfully matched from the Fall 2010 testing to the Fall 2011 testing from grade 7 to grade 8 of which 1% of those students demonstrated significant improvement, 39% of those students demonstrated improvement, 42% of those students maintained, 9% of those students demonstrated a decline, and 6% demonstrated significant decline.)

Grade 11 MICA MME Reading

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
11	56%	67%

Grade 11 MICA MME Writing

Grade	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
11	22%	47%

Supporting Detail: MICA State Testing Data

An examination of student growth in state test performance at MICA from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is somewhat complicated by the Fall testing on the MEAP state test. The MEAP assesses student learning and knowledge within a tested subject at the start of a given year which is an indication of what the student learned during the previous year. As MICA’s first year of operation was in 2010-11, MEAP proficiency for that year does not provide information on student performance at MICA. The change in proficiency from 2010-11 to 2011-12 on the MEAP does provide a useful measure of student growth, if examined for students who tested in 2011-12 as Full Academic Year students (i.e., students who were present at MICA for most of 2010-11).

The MME test for 11th Grade takes place in the Spring. In this case, performance is an indication of how well students did while at MICA for any given year.

Results below for grades 4-8 are presented for performance level changes from 2010-11 to 2011-12 for MICA’s students that were Full Academic Year students at the time of Fall 2011-12 MEAP testing. Results are presented for Grade 11 students who were enrolled from the October count day through the time of Spring MME testing.

MEAP growth data Grades 4 - 8

Student growth from 2010-11 to 2011-12 can be shown by examining how student proficiency on the MEAP changed across those years. For Grades 4-8, MEAP Performance Level Change Scores (Significant Decline, Decline, Maintaining, Improvement, Significant Improvement) were examined for students with both 2010-11 and 2011-12 test scores who were enrolled at MICA for a Full Academic Year at the time of MEAP testing for 2011-12. Student growth is defined by having a 2011-12 MEAP Performance Level Change score of Improvement or Significant Improvement, regardless of 2010-11 MEAP proficiency, and Maintaining, if students were Proficient or Advanced on the MEAP in 2010-11.

MICA MEAP Proficiency Changes 2010-11 through 2011-12

Data reported on the chart below is based on Full Academic Year status calculated from student enrollment information in the Connexus database; therefore, numbers may vary slightly from other

data. Results are based on students enrolled for a Full Academic Year at the time of 2011-12 MEAP testing with a 2011-12 MEAP Performance Level Change Score.

Grade	Math: Number of Students	Math: % of Students: Maintaining*, Improvement, or Significant Improvement	Reading: Number of Students	Reading: % of Students: Maintaining*, Improvement, or Significant Improvement
4	15	67%	15	73%
5	20	55%	20	85%
6	15	27%	15	73%
7	22	55%	22	55%
8	17	24%	17	82%

**Performance Level Change score of Maintaining is only counted for students who were Proficient in 2010-11.*

In Math, for grades 4, 5, and 7, at least 50% of students at each grade level showed growth from 2010-11 to 2011-12. All grades had at least 50% of students showing growth in Reading, with particularly high levels for 5th and 8th Grades.

MICA MME growth data Grade 11

Data reported on the chart below is based on Full Academic Year status (defined as students enrolled from the October count day through the time of test). This data was calculated from student enrollment information in the Connexus database; therefore, numbers may vary slightly from other data.

Grade	Number of Students Tested 2010-11	% Proficient and Advanced 2010-2011	Number of Students Tested 2011-12	% Proficient and Advanced 2011-12
Math	8	13%	15	33%
Reading	8	63%	15	67%
Writing	8	25%	15	47%

Although the small numbers of students make conclusions somewhat tentative, MICA showed significant growth in 11th Grade student performance in all of subjects above from 2010-11 to 2011-12.

Supporting Detail: MICA LEAP Data

MICA students in grades K-2 participate in LEAP (L_{ongitudinal} E_{valuation} of A_{cademic} P_{rogress}) testing for pre- and post-test measures. LEAP is a (proprietary) psychometrically valid benchmark assessment system developed by Connections Education and used in elementary and middle School in reading and math across the country. Students receive a score of percent correct on the pretest and posttest LEAP reading and math assessments. Students are considered to have made satisfactory progress if they score a minimum of 75% on the posttest assessment and/or if they increase their score from the pretest to the posttest by at least 10 percentage points. LEAP results are presented below. Results below are based on students that completed both the pretest and posttest for a given year.

LEAP Math 2010-11 and 2011-12

Grade	2010-11			2011-12		
	Average Math Pretest Score	Average Math Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress	Average Math Pretest Score	Average Math Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress
Kindergarten	88.9%	95.6%	100.0%	80.4%	94.6%	95.5%
1	74.9%	88.9%	94.7%	74.8%	92.6%	97.5%
2	n/a	n/a	n/a	89.7%	97.3%	100.0%

LEAP Reading 2010-11 and 2011-12

Grade	2010-11			2011-12		
	Average Reading Pretest Score	Average Reading Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress	Average Reading Pretest Score	Average Reading Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress
1	78.5%	92.3%	100.0%	77.5%	93.2%	94.6%
2	n/a	n/a	n/a	97.7%	97.7%	100.0%

Supporting Detail: MICA Scantron Data

MICA students in grades 2-8 participate in the Scantron Performance Series test. MICA students take a pretest and a posttest for math and reading.

Pretest and Posttest performance below is assessed by examining students' average Standard Item Pool (SIP) scores from pretest to posttest. SIP scores are an estimate of the probability of a student correctly answering each item within the item pool for his/her enrolled grade for that test subject.

In order to facilitate the measurement of student growth as assessed by the Scantron test, Performance Band Values were calculated by Connections Academy at pretest and posttest based on comparison of a student's scale score value relative to Scantron normative data for Fall and Spring Scale Score inter-Quartile Ranges. Possible performance band values that result are: Below Average, Low Average, High Average, and Above Average. Satisfactory progress is defined as maintaining a High or Above Average score from pretest to posttest or improving at least one performance band value from pretest to posttest. Results below are based on students that completed both the pretest and posttest for a given year.

Scantron Math 2010-11 and 2011-12

Grade	2010-11			2011-12		
	Median Math SIP Pretest Score	Median Math SIP Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress	Median Math SIP Pretest Score	Median Math SIP Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress
2	68%	83%	68%	67%	85%	73%
3	64%	81%	79%	63%	81%	75%
4	56%	75%	70%	62%	82%	73%
5	38%	54%	71%	46%	67%	68%
6	48%	64%	67%	43%	60%	61%
7	49%	57%	59%	52%	63%	69%
8	28%	41%	50%	39%	47%	62%

Scantron Reading 2010-11 and 2011-12

Grade	2010-11			2011-12		
	Median Reading SIP Pretest Score	Median Reading SIP Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress	Median Reading SIP Pretest Score	Median Reading SIP Posttest Score	% with Satisfactory Progress
2	91%	95%	91%	86%	95%	81%
3	88%	91%	72%	86%	94%	78%
4	91%	93%	93%	88%	94%	85%
5	86%	89%	70%	86%	89%	64%
6	83%	88%	71%	85%	92%	90%
7	84%	86%	62%	80%	85%	75%
8	77%	76%	61%	79%	87%	87%

FAM Academy of Detroit’s Baseline Data in Math (grades 9-12 only)

9th grade FAM EXPLORE Math: 8% Met or Exceeded College Ready Benchmark

10th grade FAM PLAN Math: 23% Met or Exceeded College Ready Benchmark

11th grade FAM ACT Math: 0% Met or Exceeded College Ready Benchmark

11th grade FAM MME Math: Proficient or Advanced = 0%; Partially Proficient = 9%; Not Proficient = 91%

FAM PLAN/EXPLORE/ACT Math Data – FAM’s composite score on the EXPLORE Test was 13.3 (below the national average of 16.2). Our composite score on the PLAN Test was 13.6 (below the national average of 17.5). Our composite score on the ACT Test was 13.3 (below the national average of 19.5). Our data indicates that across our grade levels, socio-economic levels, gender differences and ethnic levels, we are performing significantly below expected levels in math.

FAM BASI Math Data - Our students at FAM participate in the Basic Academic Skills Inventory as pre-and post-testing upon entering the school and upon exit or at the end of the academic year. Our BASI results indicate that the average math score at pre-testing for all grades (9-12) was in the 5th grade range. After taking the post-test, the aggregate math grade level was in the 7th grade range (of all students who attended 70% or more of the school year). FAM students therefore showed two full years' learning gains in one year in the school's first year of operation.

FAM Academy of Detroit's baseline data in Reading/English Language Arts

9th Grade FAM EXPLORE Reading/ELA:

35% of our students scored at or above the College Ready Benchmark in Reading
38% of our students scored at or above the College Ready Benchmark in English

10th FAM PLAN Reading/ELA:

12% of our students scored at or above the College Ready Benchmark in Reading
23% of our students scored at or above the College Ready Benchmark in English

11th & 12th FAM Grade Reading MME: (12 students participated)

Proficient or Advanced = 0%; Partially Proficient = 33%; Not Proficient = 67%

Demographics: (the only demographic large enough to be reported was Economically Disadvantaged)

Economically Disadvantaged: Proficient or Advanced = 0%; Partially Proficient = 27%; Not Proficient = 73%

FAM BASI Reading Data – Our students at FAM participate in the Basic Academic Skills Inventory as pre-and post-testing upon entering the school and upon exit or at the end of the academic year. Our BASI results indicate that the average Reading score at pre-testing was in the 8th grade range. After taking the post-test, the aggregate reading grade level was in the 9th grade range (of all students who attended 70% or more of the school year). FAM students therefore showed one full year's gain in Reading over one year during the school's first year in operation.

As the BASI test is a pre- and post-test, these scores are considered a fair representation of our students' growth as a result of our influence and educational program. The significant academic growth and achievement shown by students as demonstrated by these assessments is a strong indicator of the success of the program. Although overall FAM students are not yet at the proficiency levels we would like to see them performing, we are very pleased with the significant academic gains students showed over the course of one year. We look forward to continued student growth in all academic areas and improving the proficiency levels on state testing.

Academy Mission (5 Points)

MICA and FAM share the same mission: *to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.* Our mission has not changed since we began as a school, and will not change, as we strive to meet this ideal in every way every day. This vision is embraced by all faculty and staff and is simply “the way we do things” at MICA and FAM.

The implementation of “a uniquely individualized learning program” is completely integrated into everything we do at MICA, as has been documented in other sections of this report. MICA is confident that the school’s achieving AYP in 2011-12, the “A” on the state report card, and the satisfactory progress shown on pre- and post-tests are strong evidence that the school is indeed meeting its mission to “help each student maximize his or her potential.”

There are many individual student success stories which could be used along with our data to identify the progress being made towards meeting the Academy’s mission, however, one child’s story we believe hits squarely the purpose and mission of our district. This is from the school principal, Bryan Klochak.

“In attending the graduation ceremony for FAM this past Spring, I had the opportunity to speak with a number of the graduates. However, the conversation I had with one student about his story was so awe-inspiring and in keeping with our mission at FAM and MICA that I wanted to share it. This story is a great example of how a student’s perseverance and dedication, when given the right supports, made it possible for him to graduate from high school despite very difficult circumstances. I had asked this student what his story was, why he decided to come back to school, and how he ended up at FAM, and this is what he told me.

In the winter of 2011, he was informed by his guardian that if he did not graduate from high school that fall, he would no longer be welcomed in that house. This student didn’t put much stock into this statement and looking back, wished he had paid more attention and gave it more credence, for in the Spring when it was clear he was not going to graduate, he gave up and dropped out of school, and was indeed not welcomed back into his guardian’s house.

As the year carried on and the months moved from the spring to the summer, this student was experiencing tough times, moving from place to place, living with friends and family who would let him stay for a while. He was not happy with his situation and said to me that he needed some type of sign, some inspiration for a direction. One afternoon he was riding on a bus in the city of Detroit and as he was reading the advertisements in the bus, he came across the one for FAM - and that was the sign he was looking for, his message to carry on. He contacted the number and enrolled in the program. He stated it was the single best decision he had made in his life to this point.

He then told me that while at FAM he was able to find success through the individual teaching and learning environment and the personal relationships that he, as well as the other students who attend FAM, were able to cultivate and nurture with both teachers and students. He noted that this was the overwhelming new-found commitment to education that he needed to keep his work ethic and attitude moving in a positive direction. The best part is that this story has a truly happy ending - not only did this student receive his high school diploma, but he was also rewarded with an academic scholarship to a local university in the Metro Detroit area. I can’t think of a better story to show how we truly strive every day to fulfill our mission: to help each

student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. Clearly this student had potential, he just needed the right learning environment to realize that potential and get his life moving forward again. We are very proud – but also truly grateful – to have been a part of this student’s success story.”

This is just one of many success stories that our academies can point towards to highlight student success through the individualization of our programs and curriculum. We have seen tremendous individual student progress in our MICA District. We have students who had previously not been successful in more traditional schools excel in our program, as evidenced by our attendance rates, the number of students enrolling in our school, our high retention rates, our graduates at both MICA and FAM, our *Education YES!* grade (A), and our AYP state (Achieved). Additionally, as reported through the GlobalScholar College Readiness Benchmarks, as our students completed their post-tests, our average scores in all but two areas were at or above College Readiness Standards, and all areas demonstrated some growth from pre- to post-testing. These areas of high achievement indicate that students at MICA are learning and achieving.

We strive to individualize our educational programs without compromising the integrity of quality curriculum, to encourage all students to achieve to high levels. We are confident that as we continue to educate students in our learning model and as a part of our “MICA/FAM Family”, we will continue to see student achievement in state and GlobalScholar Performance testing at high levels.

Changes to Mission/Vision

As our School and District Improvement Plans identify, our Mission, Vision and Beliefs remain constant and are as follows:

Vision Statement

At Michigan Connections Academy (MICA), our vision is focused on parents, teachers and students working together to further improve and ensure student learning. We strive to provide each student with individualized instruction, including lessons tailored to that student's academic strengths and weaknesses. At MICA, we make every effort to form equal partnerships with parents to promote the highest levels of student learning and accountability. Included in that partnership is our desire to have all of our students prepared for post secondary endeavors and living productive, successful lives as participating members of their communities.

Mission Statement

The mission of Michigan Connections Academy is *to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards*. Connections Academy is a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch "school without walls" that brings out the best in every student.

Beliefs Statement

We believe that all students can learn and must learn at relatively high levels of achievement. It is our job to create an environment in our classrooms that result in this high level of performance. We are confident that, with our support and help, students can master challenging academic material, and we expect them to do so. We are prepared to work collaboratively with colleagues, students, and parents to achieve this shared educational purpose.

Sustainability and Viability (5 points)

The Board is committed to providing the financial oversight necessary to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the School. The School's financial position and its ability to carry out its continuing mission are discussed by the Board during their regularly scheduled board meetings. Board members are provided with monthly financial statements along with revised forecasted information to support the ongoing decision-making process set by the governing body. Additionally, the Board engages a third party accounting firm to perform an annual audit which includes a review of the School's internal controls and provides assurance that the financial statements are materially accurate. There have been no findings reported in the yearly financial audit of the School.

The Board has contracted with Connections Academy of Michigan, LLC ("Connections") to provide educational products, technology, and school services, both instructional and administrative. This partnership includes access to a team of experienced and talented curriculum development specialists, curriculum project managers, content and copy editors, and multimedia designers, all available to school staff on a daily basis. These individuals apply their deep expertise in online instruction and academic disciplines to the development of curriculum that supports 21st century readiness for every student. The Board has included the expenditures for these services in its annual budget.

The School is committed to providing the best in teacher development by encouraging them to attend industry conferences and training. Additionally, teachers are provided access to Connections educational specialists, who assist with their mastery of subjects as well as problem-solving and resource identification for individual students. Again, these expenditures are included in the annual budget.

During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, the School furthered its mission by establishing its Fusion program (now FAM), a center-based program geared toward assisting drop out students to achieve academic success. The School has successfully managed the costs of implementing this program by leveraging its existing staff and resources to operate this program. As the School continues to grow, the Board anticipates further leveraging administrative costs by scaling these functions across the school at large. The Board and Connections work together to ensure the School ends each fiscal year with an adequate fund balance while still pursuing the School's mission.

MICA Enrollment Summary

Demand for enrollment at MICA is strong, with approximately 2,000 students currently either enrolled or in the enrollment process for the 2012-13 SY. As our legislative cap will lift after the spring count day for the 2012-2013 school year, we will continue to operate under the 1:1 match system with FAM enrollment through the 2012-13 school year, during which we anticipate enrolling up to the allowed 1,000 students. Given the strong demand for MICA, we expect to enroll considerably more students for the 13-14 SY, once the enrollment cap is lifted. The school leadership and school board will work cooperatively to ensure smart, planned growth so that the school can maintain its personalized approach to instruction as it increases enrollment.

Because of the enrollment cap and demand for enrollment at MICA, the school MICA implemented a lottery policy for the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years. The lottery policies are available as **Attachment 9 – MICA Lottery Policies**.

Full details on MICA enrollment are provided below, in the Enrollment Details section.

FAM Enrollment Summary

Due to the nature of the student population, demographics, and systematic challenges beyond our control, enrollment is, and will likely continue to be, a challenge at FAM. Outreach efforts for the 2011-2012 school year provided over 1,000 potential interested students for FAM academy. However, when efforts were made to enroll many of those students who self-identified as previously dropping out of school, we discovered that their public school and/or district had not reported them as dropouts. Therefore a majority of those students were ineligible for enrollment at FAM due to local districts not reporting them as drop-out students. (Students had to be confirmed as dropout in the state system before MICA could enroll them, and if the district had not reported them, they were ineligible to be enrolled in MICA.)

Of those students who were able to enroll, nearly half of them continued to have life difficulties that prevented them from attending regularly and by the end of the year, they had dropped again. We finished with nearly 80 students at FAM – all of whom were making progress toward graduation and attending as regularly as possible. We continue to work toward solutions to the challenges that prevent potential and current FAM students from being successful in our school.

As of August 17, 2012, FAM has 157 students in some stage of the enrollment process, with 5 students fully enrolled.

Full details on MICA enrollment are provided below, in the Enrollment Details section.

Enrollment Projections for MICA District (MICA and FAM)

- 2012-2013 – 950
- 2013-2014 – 2,000
- 2014-2015 – 2,500
- 2015-2016 – 3,000

2010-2011 MICA Enrollment Details (FAM opened for SY 2011-12)

There have been enrollment caps on MICA each year. In **2010-11**, the enrollment cap was set at 400. On Sept. 30, 2010 enrollment was at the maximum capacity of 400, and an additional 388 students were on the wait list. As students withdrew, students were taken off the waitlist and enrolled as appropriate grade level spots became available. Therefore, enrollment was at or close to 400 all year, with end-of-year enrollment at 377. Enrollment officially closed for the year on February 8, 2011. The remaining students on the waitlist were withdrawn from the enrollment process.

The enrollment and wait list numbers by month for 2010-11 are represented below, as is the overall data on student withdrawals. Note that to be included on the waitlist, students must have submitted all required documentation for enrollment. Other students who may have started the process but did not submit all required documentation are NOT included in the waitlist data.

Date	MICA Enrollments	MICA Wait List
September 30, 2010	400	388

October 31, 2010	379	379
November 30, 2010	395	249
December 31, 2010	396	259
January 31, 2011	392	206
February 28, 2011	393	214
March 31, 2011	389	NA
April 30, 2011	387	NA
May 31, 2011	377	NA
June 30, 2011	377	NA

Students withdrew throughout the year. A summary of reasons for withdrawal is presented below.

Reason	Number of MICA students
Applying for next school year	1
Different/Better Schooling Option	87
Life Change	64
Mismatch Academic	87
Next Grade Not Offered	1
Regulation	1
Grand Total	253

2011-2012 Enrollment Details (MICA and FAM)

For the 2011-12 school year, MICA was allowed to expand to a maximum of 700 students, although to expand beyond 400 MICA enrollments, the school also had to enroll students in the new dropout recovery program, FAM, in a 1-to-1 match with enrollments over 400 at MICA. High school grades 9 – 12 at MICA were at capacity with returning students, so no lottery was conducted for high school. All new high school students who had qualified for the MICA lottery were waitlisted. A lottery for MICA grades K-8 was held on May 4, 2011, and 436 students were selected. On October 5, 2011, 45 students were on the wait list; by January 9, 2012, 146 students were on the wait list. Enrollment closed for the year on February 9, 2012 and no additional students were enrolled. The 53 students on the MICA wait list were withdrawn from the enrollment process. As is noted in the chart below, at its peak MICA had 617 students enrolled, and FAM’s top end-of-month enrollment was 147.

While neither FAM nor MICA enrolled the maximum allowed students, MICA showed significant enrollment growth and would likely have been able to enroll 700+/- students if continued enrollment beyond 400 had not been tied to FAM enrollment numbers. FAM enrollment was strong for a first-year program just being established, particularly for a non-traditional high-school dropout recovery program, thanks to intensive grass-roots efforts and innovative marketing and advertising channels. An additional challenge for meeting the FAM enrollment cap of 300 students was the requirement that students complete the majority of their schooling in a face-to-face environment, therefore limiting enrollment to the Detroit metro area in which the two FAM campuses were located.

Date	MICA Enrollments	MICA Wait List	FAM Enrollments
September 30, 2011	499	75	45
October 31, 2011	510	146	62
November 30, 2011	490	100	147
December 31, 2011	471	130	100
January 31, 2012	602	39	108
February 28, 2012	617	53	115
March 31, 2012	591	NA	82
April 30, 2012	569	NA	76
May 31, 2012	553	NA	81
June 30, 2012	547	NA	79

Students withdrew throughout the year. A summary of reasons for withdrawal for 2011-12 is presented below.

FAM

Reason	Number
Deceased	1
Different/Better Schooling Option	16
Life Change	76
Mismatch Academic	2
No Reason Given (EOY Import)	1

Regulation	87
Grand Total	183

MICA

Reason	Number
Another Reason (EOY Import)	20
Different/Better Schooling Option	52
Life Change	101
Mismatch Academic	97
No Reason Given (EOY Import)	31
Regulation	29
Grand Total	330

2012-13 Enrollment Details 2012-2013:

For the 2012-13 school year, MICA enrollment is tied to FAM enrollments as noted above.

FAM enrollments as of August 17, 2012: 5 enrolled, 157 in some stage of the enrollment process.

MICA enrollments as of August 17, 2012: 664 enrolled.

The MICA District has an enrollment cap of 1000 students for the 2012-13 school year. After accounting for returning high school students, grades 9 – 12 were full so no lottery was conducted for new high school students. A lottery was held on May 11, 2012, to fill 180 spaces in K – 8 up to the enrollment cap. All students who were not selected or who were enrolling for high school were waitlisted based on the date they completed all enrollment tasks and are being released to enroll if space becomes available in their grade due to returning students not returning. As of August 20, 2012 there were 1786 students (grades K-12) in some stage of the enrollment process; these students are all considered waitlisted. New applicants continue to enter the process for enrollment daily.

Decision Making (5 points)

Connections Education provides MICA District with many powerful tools for using data to make decisions. Connections' instructional model is known as **SSTAIR** (Essential Skills and Standards, Assessment, Intervention, Response), and is the instructional foundation for all student learning at MICA. Essential skills and standards in Language Arts and Math, based on national and state standards, are identified for each grade level (K-12). These essential skills, along with each student's assessment data, are documented in the student's Personal Learning Plan (PLP). (See below for more information on the PLP.) Interventions or other needs related to the student's mastery of those essential skills are also documented in the student's PLP. Four conferences are conducted yearly in which the teacher, Learning Coach, and student discuss and document student progress toward mastering all identified skills.

Using data to inform instruction is central to SSTAIR, and the school's PLCs are developing as the central vehicle for that work. State test results, LEAP and Scantron data, and other important course performance information are available in the PLP. These data points give teachers a baseline snapshot of student performance, which teachers use to begin to individualize the student learning experience. In addition, all assessments in each Language Arts and Math course have been aligned to the essential skills and standards. Teachers and administrators are able to run a very powerful and informative report, the **Assessment Objective Performance Report**, which reflects student performance in specific objectives and skill areas. The Assessment Objective Performance Report also shows how many assessment items the student has completed, and shows which items the student has answered correctly. This report can be run as needed, so it provides real-time, up-to-the-minute information for teachers on each student's progress. This information is then translated into instructional plans tailored to the student's specific needs. Teachers work together in PLCs to understand all of this data and its implications, then plan both small group and individual activities based on student need.

The online **Grade Book**, embedded in MICA's Education Management System (or EMS, known as Connexus®), is a powerful tool available to every student, Learning Coach¹, teacher, and PLC. It provides comprehensive, contemporaneous information on student performance and assignment completion. It reflects the courses in which the student is enrolled, the student's current grade, ungraded assessments, and the percentage of lessons completed for that course. Teachers can use the Grade Book to review an individual student's grades and academic performance, or can view a section, or class, of students at one time. Students can click on any course title and see a complete list of all assignments for the course, their type (test, written assignment, quick check, etc.), their weight towards the overall grade, the score earned on each assignment and common assessment, and teacher feedback.

In addition to providing comprehensive information on each student's academic progress, Connexus® has a system to rate students' level of participation and achievement. Students who are performing well and are meeting academic and attendance requirements are considered to be "On Track." Students who may be falling behind in attendance, lesson completion, or contact with their teachers, may be assigned "Approaching Alarm" or "Alarm" status. The student's status is reflected in Connexus® and can be viewed 24/7 by teachers, Learning Coaches, and students.

¹ **Learning Coach:** A parent, extended family member, or other caring adult designated by the parent/guardian, who works in person with the Michigan Connections Academy student under the guidance of a licensed professional teacher. The Learning Coach and student interact with the teacher via telephone, WebMail message (MICA's internal, secure email system), LiveLesson sessions (real-time web conferencing tool that allows teachers to work synchronously with groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing), and in person.

Connexus® also allows principals and other administrators up-to-the-minute access to a vast amount of information about teachers, students, families, courses, enrollment, special education, state test participation rates, pre- and post-test completion rates, teachers, etc. Information is generally available within seconds. For example, every principal has access to a report called ***Students Flagged for Principal Attention***, and the ***Accountability Report*** shows the principal which students are on track for lesson completion, attendance, and performance, and allows the principal and teachers to immediately see which students may be dropping off academically and require intervention. Additionally, principals can easily monitor teacher performance, noting how long teachers are taking to grade student work and reading about teacher/student interaction in the Student Log which captures every single interaction between a MICA staff member and a student.

Students are evaluated based on a variety of elements provided within the curriculum: quizzes, unit tests, final exams, portfolio assignments, skills checks, audio/visual assessments, and online discussions. Some of these are delivered and submitted electronically, and some are paper-and-pencil-based projects that are mailed in to the school in pre-paid envelopes. Teachers can create custom assignments for additional challenge, or modify assignments for remediation. Teachers also conduct **curriculum-based assessments**, which are phone conversations with the student in which the teacher asks questions about recently completed assignments to verify that the student has indeed done the work herself, and that she has grasped the key components of the lesson. The content to be covered is not specified ahead of time, other than being part of “recently completed assignments” such as a reading passage or a set of mathematics problems.

MICA’s expectation is that teachers will grade online assessments within two business days of student completion of the assessment, and portfolio assignments will be graded within one week of being received by the teacher. Through this process, teachers provide timely feedback to students and monitor summative and formative assessment to determine areas of re-teaching and content for future lessons. These lessons can be delivered in one-on-one, small group, and large group settings. Teachers can also create custom assessments as needed to address specific learning needs.

At the beginning of each year, the student’s teacher, in conjunction with the student and Learning Coach, develops a **Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)**, which is designed to maximize the pupil’s potential by ensuring that academic strengths are challenged and that any academic weaknesses are diagnosed and addressed. The PLP is continually monitored throughout the year to ensure that students maintain focus and attain their educational goals, and is formally reviewed a minimum of 4 times throughout the school year. During this time the teacher, Learning Coach, and student discuss progress, goals, and academic needs. High school students complete their own PLP and it is finalized after discussions with their teachers and counselors.

The PLP is a powerful tool that contains all of the instructional information teachers need to personalize the student’s learning experience – and therefore allows teachers to collaborate with one another, the student, and the student’s parents/Learning Coaches to help the student achieve his/her academic and personal goals. The PLP includes:

- Student information, including Learning Coach contact information
- Student strengths, weaknesses, and interests
- Assessment data including state test data, LEAP and Scantron data, IEP and 504 information
- Learning style preference from online VARK
- Performance data against the Essential Skills and Standards for Language Arts and Math
- Interventions assigned with student response noted in PLP log

- Response: Log Data
 - Instructional PLP Log Data
 - Advising PLP Log Data
 - Total Number of PLP Log Data
- Uploaded documents that document student learning, including report summaries from interventions and student work samples.

Student Support Teams

Student Support Teams (SST) at MICA are comprised of staff and administrators who meet to discuss the progress of the student. Beyond the normal discussion of student progress that takes place in the teachers' PLCs, students are referred to SST due to a lack of academic success after need-based "Tier I and/or Tier II" interventions have been applied with fidelity and have proven unsuccessful. Appropriate interventions are applied based on the student's challenges and always include parental input and conversations. Examples of interventions include: additional time working individually with a teacher, repeated practice skill building via one of many Supplemental Instructional Support Programs (SISPs) available through Connections Education, and regular conferences with parents and student. The SST determines which other available supports (Tier II or Tier III) would improve the student's ability to demonstrate academic success. All interventions are documented and tracked in Connexus® by teachers and administrators. If a student continues to demonstrate academic difficulties, the student is referred either to Direct Title I services or to Special Education as needed.

At public monthly Board meetings, the school Administration advises the Board of progress MICA is making towards meeting goals. The **Monthly School Report** is a summary document that is reviewed by the principal with the board at monthly board meetings. This document is used to analyze key issues such as the demographic makeup of the school, student progress, how many students have withdrawn and why, and other critical information about the success of the school in relation to its goals. The Monthly Report shows the following by month:

- Enrollment
- Withdrawals
- Demographics
- Student Performance
- Teachers
- Field Trips

The most current three months of data are shown, and are compared to a baseline of the previous year's data, if available.

Prior to the start of the students' school year, all MICA teachers participate in staff development sessions. During these sessions teachers review the previous year's data including retention rates, state assessment scores, student achievement rates, and parent satisfaction surveys. Based on the information in these reports, the MICA staff sets goals for the upcoming school year. Teachers collaborate with one another through their PLCs and other formats on strategies that will increase student performance and enhance their experience with the program. In addition, MICA teachers and staff meet on a weekly basis for regular staff meetings. During this time, teachers discuss current issues affecting the school. The staff also receives progress updates relating to school goals and current student progress. MICA grade level teachers also meet on a regular basis to discuss topics relevant to their particular subject areas.

MICA's **weekly staff meetings, PLCs, monthly accountability meetings for individual employees, weekly training sessions, weekly leadership team meetings, and weekly administrator data training meetings** all direct MICA staff back to the data collected by Connexus and other sources. Frequent (intense) scrutiny of data in these settings drives MICA staff to continually analyze interactions with various school stakeholders. This data helps the school plan and develop teacher training sessions. It also helps determine what training workshops MICA teachers and staff attend in addition to the Connections Academy trainings. The Connections Academy school support staff utilizes multiple strategies within training sessions to appeal to the different learning styles of those being trained.

FAM students and teachers all access curriculum through Pearson's NovaNET® Courseware, which has been integrated into [Connexus®](#). For the 2012-13 school year, FAM students will use Connections Academy's proven curriculum, used at MICA, also accessed via Connexus.

NovaNET offers core courses in math, science, social studies, and language arts that are aligned to state and national standards. The NovaNET courses are designed to help students achieve the content mastery needed to graduate from high school. Also embedded into this platform is the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) pre and posttest assessment which is used to measure student progress in reading and math. NovaNET also assists teachers in customizing lessons and instruction in ways that meet a student's abilities and needs.

FAM aimed to establish, amongst teachers and students, a strong culture of using data to make consistent, frequent and appropriate decisions relating to individualized student instruction. Because we wanted data to serve as the basis for on-going instructional modification and adaptations, a data leadership team was created. Not only did this team safeguard data entry, but also maximized the quality of the data used which guided our teachers' decisions. An additional responsibility of our data leadership team was to provide weekly professional development and training opportunities specifically tailored to fit our staff's needs. Consideration was placed on each staff member's technological skills, center responsibilities, and content areas. Essentially we created a consistent cycle of inquiry and a process where teachers analyze various forms of data (demographic, school process & student achievement) to help clarify how these elements are connected and what it suggests about the learning needs of our students.

In addition to using assessment results to gauge knowledge transfer, NovaNET provides an assortment of options to aggregate data at the school, class, and student level. Because NovaNET provides such a wealth of information we were able to implement multiple strategies to maximize student learning. Literature suggests that teachers providing feedback in a timely, specific, well-formatted and constructive manner improves academic achievement. During our teacher collaboratives, research literature and NovaNET data, FAM implements multiple daily routines:

First group: large group instruction room- direct instruction helping them with difficult areas within the curriculum.

Second group: Lexia, Reading Plus, NovaNET content, and / or Live Lesson for content review, enrichment and or assessment.

Students were pulled individually for weekly academic profile performance meetings. Once these protocols were established, we began to see results consistent with the literature that says statistically significant gains in student achievement result from curriculum- based measurement interventions

combined with student analysis of their own assessment data during teacher-student collaboration. During these weekly meetings, teachers provided students with explicit instruction, using achievement data, on how to monitor their own performance and to establish weekly goals for their learning.

In summary, data aggregated within NovaNET, and used by teachers and students to guide learning, lead to student improvement. Students who were struggling with topics were allocated more time, and all students received additional help with particular skills through grouping & regrouping and new ways of teaching complex concepts, based on best practices identified by peer. Both practices led to significant advancements in student learning. These have become the foundation of our data culture that we continue to enhance in order to address each student's individual learning needs.

Improvement planning for the new school year for both FAM and MICA, focusing primarily on student achievement, begins with a needs analysis and identification of specific improvement goals. These goals result from careful review of the previous year's improvement plan and the school's previous year's performance. The school improvement plan sets out specific goals and indicates their specific measurement criteria. MICA then develops its own school improvement plan that can be revised as needed throughout the school year.

Our School Improvement Teams are made up of staff, administration and parents working together to look at data to make informed and honest decisions about student progress, areas of strength and weakness and collaborating to discover interventions for our areas of weakness. The plans are presented and revisited regularly with all stakeholders to ensure that we are continuing to reach the goals we have set. In the 2011-2012 school year, the MICA school improvement team successfully examined the data and created a School Improvement Plan to achieve "Title I School-wide" status. This achievement indicates that we have solid building blocks of data interpretation and application to be allowed to utilize Title I spending in more global ways. Our charter educational goals are a significant part of that process, as they are designed to promote high levels of achievement and learning for all students.

We have such a wealth of data available to us via Connexus that we are striving to become proficient at disaggregating and using data accurately and efficiently to avoid being "Data Rich, Information Poor". A primary focus and initiative of our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as they continue to develop will be to use the data we have to provide accurate and appropriate interventions to struggling students to reach our goal and our vision of ALL students achieving at high levels. We have sent teachers and administrators to PLC conferences to learn to create systems within our school to use data accurately and informatively to guide our decision making processes.

Our Board is also in its infancy with using data to make decisions. Part of the challenge in this area has been the high turnover rate of board members in the last two years. As we are working to fill our board with invested members, we will continue to share information and support for disaggregation of data with our board members to encourage their use of data to accurately and informatively make decisions that impact the learning in our school.

Challenges and Opportunities (5 points)

MICA sees two main challenges as we look to the long term. Perhaps the biggest area of challenge over the course of this new reauthorization will revolve around our sustaining high levels of achievement and cohesiveness. We are very proud of the successes we have had in the first year of FAM and the first two years of MICA, but realize that maintaining or improving on this success will be a challenge - particularly as we anticipate our student body may well double in size for the 2013-2014 school year. It is our highest priority that we continue to maintain our educational integrity, personalized instruction, and vision of providing all students with the best possible education as we experience such significant growth.

To do this, we will continue to refine and improve our use of data to make appropriate, targeted instructional decisions on a daily, weekly, and annual basis, as well as to develop strong school and district improvement plans. MICA leadership are attending Professional Learning Community (PLC) professional development trainings, and the implementation of effective PLCs will be a critical part of ensuring that teachers work together as a community to help students succeed. Hiring the best teachers we can find, combined with ongoing training and professional development for teachers in best practices in online learning, will also ensure that we continue to provide the personalized instruction that is so integral to MICA's mission. Our Board is in the process of creating a shared long-range plan that continues to provide a solid learning environment for our students as we continue to grow and impact education across the state.

The next big challenge is the continued struggle to fill all seven board seats. Our first board meeting consisted of a core of four people who were committed to the concept of virtual learning. However, between the time of submittal and acceptance by FSU of our charter application, two of these board members were relocated outside the state. Although they lived outside the state, they flew in and continued to attend MICA board meetings each month during that first year (2010-11). Additionally, one of our board members, a faculty member at a state university, had a resident address in Canada but had dual citizenship. Our fourth member was a resident of the city of Detroit.

Upon the completion of year one, three of our board members (two out of state, one out of country) were removed from the board, by FSU, due to their being non-residents of the state of MI. The fourth left a short time later due to family issues. We were able to fill board slots with replacements and were able to have a short period of time during year two (2011-12) with a complete seven member board. However, upon the completion of year two, one member of the board was not renewed by FSU and another, a parent in our district, resigned. Therefore, as of August 2012, the MICA board has only 5 members.

MICA will continue to try to fill the seven member board and once this occurs, develop continuity with the full seven member board. The current and sitting five members of the MICA board are committed to the school and the belief in virtual learning; however, they are relatively new in this position. Board training for all board members is scheduled for October 2012; this training is optional but strongly recommended for all new board members and available to long-term board members as well as a refresher. The Board Training Invitation that was sent to MICA board members is available as **Attachment 10, Board Academy 2012 Invitation**.

