

**INDIANA MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY-WEST
SITE REVIEW**

Prepared For:

Office of Education Innovation
Office of the Mayor, City of Indianapolis

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¹Because Indiana Math and Science Academy-West does not serve high school students, Indicator 4.3 (i.e., supporting students for post-secondary options) is not addressed in this report.

Part I: Indiana Math and Science Academy Background Information

Indiana Math and Science Academy-West, a college preparatory charter school, opened in 2007 as the first Concept School in Indiana. Ball State University first authorized the school located on the West side of Indianapolis; however, in 2014, it sought and gained authorization to continue operation under the Mayor's Office of Education Innovation.

Mission and Impact: The mission of IMSA-West is to transform communities one mind at a time with real world engagement and continue to inspire generations through a STEM-focused education that successfully prepares students for tomorrow.

Vision: Indiana Math and Science Academy West's vision is that students will enter high school ready to tackle any academic challenge and will excel in the STEM subjects.

Core Values: IMSA-West promotes six Core Values to guide its interactions with all members of the school community

Respect – All members of the school community (students, parents, and staff) have equal worth and should be treated with respect.

Responsibility – All people have choices, and teachers, parents, and students should be responsible for their actions.

Integrity – Belonging to a community requires a commitment to the common good. The community is stronger when everyone can be counted upon to be honest and trustworthy.

Courage – Having the courage to try new things expands minds and causes students, parents, and staff to reach beyond their own expectations.

Curiosity – The ability to wonder and to create connections stimulates further learning. Inquiry will be fostered on the part of parents, staff, and students.

Effort – Success is accomplished when students, family, and staff are willing to do what it takes to accomplish their vision of the future.

Part II: Academic Program

Indiana Math and Science Academy-West is uniquely innovative in design and focuses on delivering a first-class, college-preparatory education to students in inner cities. The curriculum is delivered through small class sizes and a unique mix of direct teaching, projects based learning, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning. The curriculum brings together the best practices in math and science education, which helps to achieve the goal of empowering students with high intellectual standards as they prepare for college, careers and citizenship in the global economy.

With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive colleges. The administration and faculty understand that great schools require a high level of student and parent involvement. Parents and teachers are expected to partner in helping students learn through projects (e.g., science fair) and competitions (e.g., Olympiads), national and international trips, educational camps (e.g., SAT and ACT Saturday camps), and all other school related activities.

Part III: Student Demographics

At the time of the evaluation, Indiana Math and Science Academy-West's student population was 560. The racial and ethnic breakdown of the student population is as follows: Black=386 (68.60%); Multi-racial=11 (2.10%); White=9 (2%); Hispanic/Latino=155 (26.80%); Asian=0 (0%); Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander=1 (0.20%). Eighty-four percent of their students are on free lunch; 9.3% percent of their student population receives Special Education services, and 37.9 %t of their student population are English Language Learners.²

²Reported by IMSA-West

Part IV: Historical Academic Performance

The charts below describe Indiana Math and Science Academy-West's results on the state's ILEARN assessment. It should be noted that due to the widespread impact of COVID-19, the US Department of Education granted Indiana a waiver from annual assessment and accountability requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. Therefore, the performance results below are from the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 respectively. ³

ILEARN	Percent Passing – IMSA West	Percent Passing - Indiana	Percentage Points Below
2018-2019	31.1%	47.9%	16.8%
2020-2021	16.5%	40.5%	24%

Mandated during the 2017 legislative session, ILEARN was created to serve as a replacement for ISTEP+. This new online computer adaptive assessment is designed to measure a student's proficiency of the Indiana Academic Standards in Grades 3rd–8th (e.g., English/Language Arts 3rd–8th, Mathematics 3rd–8th, Science 4th and 6th, Social Studies 5th).

It is important to note that the 2018-19 school year was the first administration for this new assessment. Public and private schools of all sizes, in all parts of the state and on all achievement, levels saw test scores fall. Statewide, only 47.9 percent of students passed both the English Language Arts and math portions of ILEARN, compared to 51 percent who passed the old ISTEP+ test. Below are the 2020-2021 ILEARN results for IMSA-West by grade level.

³ Indiana Department of Education (2018-2019 and 2020-2021) ILEARN Assessment Results. IDOE: INview Retrieved October 2021, from <https://www.in.gov/doe/it/data-center-and-reports/>

ELA & Math

Grade	Total Proficient	Total Tested	Proficient %
Grade 3	9	64	13.8%
Grade 4	5	53	9.6%
Grade 5	11	51	21.6%
Grade 6	9	59	15.3%
Grade 7	8	65	12.3%
Grade 8	15	54	27.8%
Total	57	346	16.5%

Part V: Core Question Four Indicator Ratings

Core Question 4 is measured using a rubric for each sub-indicator. Each level of the rubric has an assigned point value such that each indicator has a maximum number of points possible. This maximum number is used to determine an overall rating on each indicator. Point values of sub-indicators and an indicator ratings summary can be found below.

Indicator Ratings Summary	
Does Not Meet Standard	Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored at 65% or less of the total overall points possible.
Approaching Standard	Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored between 79% and 66% for the total overall points possible.
Meets Standard	Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored between 80% and 89% of the total points possible.
Exceeds Standard	Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored at or above 90% of the total overall points possible.
Sub-Indicator Point Values	
Planning	1 point
Emerging	2 points
Implementing	3 points
Sustaining	4 points

The chart below summarizes the evaluation team's assessment of Indiana Math and Science Academy-West in a manner that is aligned to these indicators and ratings.

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?	Finding
4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	Meets Standard
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Meets Standard

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	Meets Standard
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	Meets Standard
4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	Exceeds Standard
4.7. Is the school climate responsive to the needs of students, staff, and families?	Approaching Standard
4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	Exceeds Standard
4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?	Approaching Standard
4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	Does Not Meet Standard

Evaluation Process

The school evaluation process involved three phases of data collection and synthesis:

1. Pre-site visit surveys of parents/families and teachers/staff

2. Document review
3. On-site observations and interviews

The evaluation team reviewed Indiana Math and Science Academy-West's mission and vision statements, original charter proposal, their student and staff handbooks, curriculum and instruction methods, Special Education and EL policy and procedures, performance evaluation plans (school leadership and teachers), personnel plan, professional development methods/plan, and school safety and emergency preparedness plan, and parent/family, and staff survey results.

In advance of the site visit, IMSA-West's parents/families and teachers completed sets of survey questions, geared to the particular audience, and prepared by the lead evaluator. In each case, the questions were based on Core Question 4's indicators (e.g., curriculum, school culture, professional development, family engagement). These guiding documents and parent/family and teacher survey results informed the questions asked during the focus groups and one-on-one interviews conducted during the site visit. The on-site visit consisted of the following components:

- Review of services and supports for Special Education students and English Learners which included interviews with both teams and document analysis (e.g., student IEPs, and ILPs).
- Classroom observations of teachers (all classrooms were visited by the team at least twice) and observation of shared spaces.
- One focus group with teachers: representing all grade levels.
- One focus group with students: representing a cross-section of grade levels
- Two parent/family focus groups
- Teacher and Parent surveys
- Interview with the senior leadership team

Part VI: Findings

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	Meets Standard
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Summary of Findings		
Review of evidence provided by Indiana Math and Science Academy-West, in addition, to focus group interviews with school leadership, teachers, and classroom observations, IMSA-West was able to demonstrate to the evaluation team that the school has a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade.		
Indiana Math and Science Academy-West’s instructional framework:		
Standards	Curriculum/Resources	Assessment
IMSA ensures resources and instruction aligns with Indiana Academic Standards (IAS) and are first “go to” sources for clarification and supplemental resources.	IMSA Pacing Guides	Assessment for learning is ongoing and data review occurs weekly in PLCs.
The IAS drive our learning targets and assessment of mastery.	Zearn Math (K-5; pilot in 6-8)	ClearSight Interim and Checkpoints
IN Math Framework	Wit & Wisdom (Greatminds)K-8	Resource Mid/End-of-Unit assessments
IN ELA Framework	FOSS/Purdue Science (3-8)PLTW Science (K-2)	ESGI (K-2)
IN Science Framework	Social Studies	NWEA (dyslexia, reading)
Indiana Academic Standards & Vertical Alignment (ELA)	IXL	ILEARN Released Items/Practice Tests
Indiana Academic Standards & Vertical Alignment (Math)	Reading Eggs	IRead
	Instructional Coaching and TLAC strategies	
	SEL - Panorama Education	

Indiana Math and Science Academy is equipped with a quality curriculum to aid in the learning goals and objectives of the school’s mission and vision. Supplemental materials used are appropriate for differentiated and or small group instructional needs. Within the last two years, the school has recently adopted a new curriculum. Initially, teachers struggled with implementing a new curriculum with fidelity in the midst of the COVID pandemic. In an effort to combat these struggles, the school leadership team hired two instructional coaches. Teachers stressed how support from instructional coaches has deepened

their knowledge of the curriculum. For now, teachers want to follow the curriculum with fidelity with no supplementation of materials. Teachers voiced how monumental it has been to have additional support in their teacher development and deepening their understanding of the new curriculum.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- Classroom observations: all classrooms were observed by the site team members two to three times throughout the day with site team members spending on average 20 minutes per visit.
- School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.
- List of school-wide curricula (e.g., instructional framework).
- School Improvement Plan.
- Professional development materials.
- Classroom instructional calendar.
- Staff handbook.

Summary of Elements

a) The curriculum used across all academic areas is rigorous, evidenced-based and aligned with state standards.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
b) Systematic reviews of curricula are conducted by administrators and school staff to identify gaps based on student performance across and within subgroups.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates some shared systems exist to support the implementation of the practice in most areas and/or evidence indicates that data obtained is not used by all instructional staff.
c) The school regularly reviews instructional curriculum maps to ensure presentation of content is aligned with learning objectives.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates shared systems to support the practice are embedded into the culture of the school, implemented with fidelity, and the impact of systems are monitored by school leaders at defined intervals.
d) The school has a well-defined horizontal and vertical alignment within and across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on core learning objectives	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates shared systems to support the practice are embedded into the culture of the school, implemented with fidelity, and the impact of systems are monitored by school leaders at defined intervals.

e) Instructional staff have access to provided materials to deliver the curriculum effectively.		Sustaining
		Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.
f) Instructional staff understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction.		Implementing
		Evidence indicates practice occurs among 50-89% of instructional staff.
Reinforcements	Refinements	
82% of teachers surveyed agree that they had all the materials to deliver the curriculum effectively. - Curriculum is fully aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards. - The addition of instructional coaches provide teachers support on the newly adopted curriculum. Teachers intentionally via the focus group and the survey noted their appreciation for the addition of instructional coaches (K-2 math/reading, 3-8 math, and at the time of the evaluation IMSA-West was still looking for and ELA instructional coach).	- Regularly assess how well the curriculum is working. For example, in PLC meetings ensure that mastery of standards is tracked weekly. - If standards are not being mastered, then supplemental materials that support the curriculum should be used.	
Recommended Next Steps		
Refer to refinement section for recommended next steps.		

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Meets Standard
Summary of Findings	
<u>Based on classroom observations</u> • Classroom instruction was mostly aligned with internalized lesson plans. • Standards and/or objectives were posted in all of the classrooms visited. • Instruction flows smoothly in mostly all classrooms observed; little to no interruptions occur throughout the lessons. • IXL data posted in all classrooms. Students were able to articulate their data and understood their areas of growth. IMSA is working towards becoming an Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) certified school. IMSA's school mission states, "We transform communities one mind at a time with real world engagement and continue to inspire generations through a STEM-focused education that successfully prepares students for tomorrow." There were many STEM initiatives highlighted during the school visit at IMSA-West. Instruction in the math classrooms was closely aligned to the Zearn and Glencoe math curriculums. In all classrooms visited, ClearSight and IXL data were posted for both Math and ELA. Through discussion with several students, it was evident that the school has emphasized data ownership as students could articulate areas of strength and areas of growth in their learning. It is quite evident that IMSA-West strives to indoctrinate all stakeholders in the school's mission. The school's leadership team communicates its STEM initiatives in community newsletters viewed by families, board members, staff, and other partners/stakeholders. Although this initiative was started just this year, over three hundred stakeholders review the newsletter each month. Additionally, the school uses PBL projects to push STEM initiatives across content areas. The school also promotes STEM in before and afterschool clubs, including but not limited to Rocketry and STEM club. Students have the opportunity to participate in several STEM-related extracurriculars such as Math competitions, Science fairs, Robicon (Robotics, Coding, STEM), and more!	
Data/Artifacts Reviewed	

- Classroom observations: all classrooms were observed by the site team members two to three times throughout the day with site team members spending on average 20 minutes per visit.
- Review of school's mission.
- School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.
- Parent surveys.
- Review of school-wide curricula.
- Professional development materials.
- Sample pacing guides.
- IMSA-STEM Newsletters.
- Supplemental programs document.
- Staff handbook.

Summary of Elements

a) The curriculum is implemented in all classrooms with fidelity.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 50-89% of instructional staff.
b) A clearly documented lesson internalization process is used to explicitly target core learning objectives across all academic areas.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice is implemented in most but not all areas.
c) A clearly documented lesson internalization process is used to explicitly identify a wide range of instructional strategies that target core learning objectives across all academic areas.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
d) Instruction is differentiated based on ongoing formative assessment of student learning needs, identified student interests, and preferred learning styles.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates some shared systems exist to support the implementation of the practice in most areas and/or evidence indicates that data obtained is not used by all instructional staff.

e) Instructional strategies used are designed to promote authentic learning to impact levels of student engagement.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates some shared systems exist to support the implementation of the practice in most areas and/or evidence indicates that data obtained is not used by all instructional staff.
f) Instructional practices are intentionally designed to validate and affirm the cultures of students.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates shared systems to support the practice are embedded into the culture of the school, implemented with fidelity, and the impact of systems are monitored by school leaders at defined intervals.
g) Staff receive explicit feedback on instructional practices on an ongoing basis.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates some shared systems exist to support the implementation of the practice in most areas and/or evidence indicates that data obtained is not used by all instructional staff.
Reinforcements	Refinements
94% of teachers surveyed agree that instructional activities contain a variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs. - In conjunction with formal evaluations, there has been an increase in informal walkthroughs to ensure consistent feedback needed for support and growth of teachers.	No refinements at this time.
Recommended Next Steps	
No recommendations at this time.	

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?

Meets Standard

Summary of Findings

- Assessments used to determine/analyze student learning are Cambium ClearSight, IXL diagnostic, NWEA Screener (K-2), ESGI (K-2).
- Formative assessments used at IMSA- West include exit tickets, unit assessments, as well as daily checks for understanding.
- Student achievement data submitted as artifacts/data include the 20-21 ILEARN results. IMSA-West had a math proficiency score of 24.5% and an ELA proficiency score of 25.2%. With a goal of 45% proficiency pass rate in both Math and ELA, IMSA- West did not meet their goal.
- Although their goal was not met, IMSA-West still outperformed many other OEI mayor sponsored charter schools in Center Township.
- According to school protocol, data is reviewed in weekly PLC's where teachers are given the opportunity to collaborate and assess student learning.
- Examples of formative assessments were directly aligned to Indiana State Standards.

Upon review of IMSA-West's academic data, it was found that the school has adequate protocols and procedures in reviewing data and creating action plans based on areas of need. Grade level/Content teams meet weekly in PLCs with instructional coaches and or administrators to review data from either summative or formative assessments. Teams collaborate to make reteach plans based on the needs that emerge from their weekly data review. The school utilizes formative assessments that directly align with the Indiana State Standards. Additionally, IMSA-West administers the ClearSight assessment three times throughout the school year.

Along with IXL, this data is displayed in each 3-8 classroom throughout the building. K-2 students are assessed using the ESGI assessment. Primary students are frequently monitored bi-weekly to determine if they are mastering foundational skills.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- Classroom observations: all classrooms were observed by the site team members two to three times throughout the day with site team members spending on average 20 minutes per visit.
- Assessment calendar.
- Instructional framework.
- Methods of Student Assessments and Assessment Data Document.
- School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.

- Review of curriculum learning platforms.
- Formative and Summative Assessment Data.

Summary of Elements

a) Assessments utilized are well aligned to learning standards.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
b) Assessments utilized are varied in order to support a wide range of student learning styles and abilities.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice is in most areas.
c) Assessments utilized provide student-level data focused on growth and proficiency.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
d) Assessments are administered with sufficient frequency and results are provided in a timely manner.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
e) A system is in place to ensure that assessment data is analyzed across and within subgroups and used to guide decision-making related to instruction and curriculum.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates shared systems to support the practice are embedded into the culture of the school, implemented with fidelity, and the impact of systems are monitored by school leaders at defined intervals.

Reinforcements

- Weekly Data Protocol for Analysis is in place.
- Assessments (Cambium) align to rigor of the ILEARN state assessment.
- The school is committed to continued growth and celebrates all wins!

Refinements

- The teachers survey and focus group results indicate a need for additional development in analyzing student data to better address students' individual needs. Especially, to inform instruction for students who are performing at a lower level.

Recommended Next Steps

- Provide professional development sessions on analyzing student data to better address students' individual needs, with a critical focus on using the data to inform instruction for students performing at a lower level.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?

Meets Standard

Summary of Findings

According to school leadership, IMSA-West teachers are certified/trained in areas they are assigned. Though 76% of teachers surveyed agree that the school employs a sufficient number of teachers and staff to maximize instruction time and capacity, teachers expressed a need for more support for students' social/emotional well-being. Several teachers either noted during the teacher focus group interview or survey the need for an additional "licensed school psychologist." Or school counselor."

IMSA-West has a clearly articulated system in place to onboard and support new teachers. Teacher Induction Framework is a two-year program that provides new teachers at IMSA with the assistance necessary to begin a successful teaching career through a mentoring relationship:

Year 1 — New teachers participate as learners in the framework

Year 2 — New teachers participate as agents to the new learners in the framework

According to the induction document reviewed by the stie team, the goals of the IMSA Teacher Induction Framework are to provide each inductee with a general orientation to IMSA and to grow and retain the new teacher's professional capacity.

The objectives of the framework are to:

1. Familiarize the inductee with school and charter policies and practices and to integrate them into the social system of the school and community.
2. To provide an opportunity for the inductee to analyze and reflect on their teaching.
3. To support the development of the inductee's professional knowledge and skills.
4. To provide continued assistance to face the challenges of the new teacher.
5. To cultivate a professional attitude toward teaching and learning, and working with others such as students, parents, and colleagues.

The IMSA Teacher Induction Framework consists of two key areas for building capacity of new teachers:

Collaboration & Support Meetings

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will facilitate monthly face-to-face meetings on the following components:

- Orientation to school culture

- Peer support and collaboration with others
- Integrating new teachers into the school community
- Professional development opportunities
- Celebration of successes

On-Going & Embedded Professional Development

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will facilitate as a part of the support meetings and/or on-going Coaching Framework the following components:

- Student Information System
- School Policies and Procedures
- Community and Culture
- Classroom Management
- Instructional Best Practices

This process was confirmed during the teacher focus group interview.

IMSA-West offers dedicated professional development to new teachers and joint sessions with the whole staff before the start of school. These sessions are designed to support teachers preparing for the school year. Furthermore, teachers at IMSA undergo regular professional development designed to help them improve instruction and meet their students' academic needs better. Teachers mentioned during the focus group interview that the professional development thus far has been beneficial. The leadership team developed this year's professional development plan around OEI's Core 4 question. Each PD connects to the sub-elements of the CORE 4 question (e.g., 4.5-Danielson Framework for Teacher Evaluation Model, Lesson Planning, Differentiation in instructions-).

School leadership shared that IMSA-West is rolling out the use of the Danielson framework as its new evaluation tool. This process they hope will be more "streamlined" and will be housed in PowerSchool. Teachers will write an individual professional growth plan. The system will alert the administration once the plan is complete. In addition, this new system will house pre and post-observation forms making it much easier for administration and instructional coaches to conduct walkthroughs, allowing for immediate feedback; accountability of what actions steps need to be taken next and by who.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.
- Staff handbook.
- Professional development materials.
- Review of hiring documents.

Summary of Elements

a) A standard recruitment/ hiring policy and procedure process is in place and is designed to ensure human resources are leveraged to reflect the needs of the school population.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
b) Hiring processes are well organized and used to support the success of new staff members.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates shared systems to support the practice are embedded into the culture of the school, implement with fidelity, and the impact of systems are monitored by school leaders at defined intervals.
c) Staffing levels adequately allow staff to maximize instructional time and capacity.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of staff.
d) Faculty and staff are appropriately certified/sufficiently trained in areas to which they are assigned and possess the instructional proficiencies needed for the school population served.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of staff.
e) Professional learning opportunities are offered regularly in order to support the staff in delivering culturally relevant and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
f) Professional learning opportunities are determined through analyses of student outcome data and clearly linked to strategic objectives and school improvement goals.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice is implemented in most but not all areas.
g) The teacher evaluation process is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.
Reinforcements	Refinements

- IMSA-West has created a defined system/process for hiring. It utilizes a process that includes competency-based interviews aligned to their model (e.g., plan, teach, and review). First, there is a resume screening and candidates complete an online application. The candidates participate in an initial phone interview. The final interview process includes on a campus visit where the candidate conducts a demo lesson, participates in a group interview, and a meeting with the school leader.
- The evaluation team reviewed notes from the 2019 evaluation, which expressed concern that a high number of teachers did not possess a valid Indiana teaching permit. According to the document, of the 40 instructional staff, only 29 (73%) possessed a valid teaching permit that made them eligible to teach in the area in which they were deployed at the time of the site visit. Seven positions (18%) were filled by teachers with a substitute permit only; two other teachers (5%) had expired teacher permits, and one did not have a teaching license. The State of Indiana law stipulates that at least 90% of teachers in a given school must have a valid teaching license. The Mayor's Office stipulates that all teachers in Mayor-sponsored charter schools be currently licensed or be in the process of obtaining a license, according to the Director of The Office of Education and Innovation.
- This evaluation team would like to highlight that IMSA-West' administration took to heart the concern and, upon analysis of its
- It should be noted that only 60% of its teaching staff stated via survey that professional development opportunities are determined through analyses of student achievement and improvement. This may connect back to their expressed which is indicated in 4.4 for further development in analyzing student data to better address students' individual needs. Especially, to inform instruction for students who are performing at a lower level.

teaching roster, found that 35 of their 37 teachers possess a valid teaching permit which puts their percentage (94%) above the State required 90%. The evaluation team commends IMSA for this improvement, and it was evident to the evaluation team when observing instruction.

Recommended Next Steps

- Survey teachers to ensure their professional development needs are differentiated based on their desired need for growth and development.
- The feedback provided by the teachers presents IMSA-West with an opportunity to re-think and re-visit their system for communicating how professional development opportunities are determined through analyses of student outcome data and clearly linked to strategic objectives and school improvement goals.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?

Exceeds Standard

Summary of Findings

It was evident from all stakeholders that they understood the school mission well at all levels. Ninety percent of the teaching staff and 100% of families surveyed believe that the school has a shared mission by all the stakeholders. All stakeholders could paraphrase the critical elements of the school's mission; the term STEM was consistently mentioned by students, parents, teachers, and school leaders. Students and parents praised the IMSA-West for the number of STEM activities (science labs, math competitions, robotics, Project Led the Way, etc.).

Parents noted via survey and the during the focus group interview that the implementation of the Parent University and the monthly STEM-focused newsletter as two things that help solidify their belief and understanding of the mission. Parent University provides various learning sessions/classes to appeal to all our parents. Some examples of the sessions include back-to-school orientations, sessions on Concept SIS (navigating our school's web pages); sessions on state assessments regarding standards & curriculum; Science Fair; Literacy Bingo Night. Additional sessions include homework using Technology and meet and greet teachers during the Ice cream social. There is also a plan to offer English Learner classes, Personal Growth classes; Health and Wellness classes; and Parenting Awareness Classes.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.
- Student focus group.
- Parent surveys.
- Staff handbook.
- Student handbook.

Summary of Elements

a) Procedures are in place for assessing all stakeholder's perceptions, knowledge, and commitment to the intentions of the school mission.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all key stakeholders.
b) Procedures are in place for establishing meaningful partnerships with all families and community stakeholders to support the school's mission.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all key families and stakeholders.

Reinforcements	Refinements
• Implementation of the Parent University. • Monthly STEM newsletter. • Priority goal this year is to obtain STEM certification from the Indiana Department of Education to allow the school to be able to obtain more resources in STEM education and to have authentic certification for their STEM-focused education.	No refinements at this time.

Recommended Next Steps

No recommendations at this time.

Summary of Findings

The culture at IMSA West feels caring and supportive of children. As the site team walked the hallways, they observed that the school has a very diverse population, with students representing multiple national, racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Leadership shared during the focus group interview that they have placed intentional focus on hiring teachers and staff that mirror the population it serves. It was evident as the site team also observed that many of IMSA West's teachers and staff mirror the students they serve.

During the parent focus group interview, all of the parents/guardians who participated stated that the school is responsive to their needs and praised the school officials for how welcoming they are to all families (new to the IMSA-West and veteran families who have multiple children attending the school). In fact, one parent noted when she and her children started at IMSA-West; she did not speak English. One staff member, in particular, made it "their mission" to teach her English. A new parent to the school noted that she was a bit concerned about how she would be received and how her children would be received. Especially since her student has a "learning disability." She added, "I didn't feel judged, which is how I felt at the previous school. Instead, everyone is supportive, and they even call and check to see how I am doing which is nice. Before I would worry when I see a call from the school but now I don't."

An examination of IMSA-West's student handbook clearly delineates high expectations for student behavior. In addition to the discipline code, there are also school-wide expectations (progressive discipline approach/multi-tiered approach) that are outlined in the handbook; in many classrooms, it was evident that a positive approach was generally used to change behavior (e.g., "I like the way.... is sitting at his desk."). In some classrooms, there was an attempt to change behavior by "threats." It should be noted that though 80% of teachers believe that the school holds high expectations for student behavior, when asked what area of the school is in most need of improvement, of the 30 comments, 17 focused on discipline. For example, one theme centered around a lack of "consistency" with some of its policies concerning student behavior. Some also noted the "approach" to discipline. One teacher shared, "The way it is now is overly militaristic and allows the student to be disengaged for their own outcomes." Another teacher commented, "Finding ways to discipline without yelling would be nice." However, the students interviewed did not state this concern. Overwhelmingly they believe that "teachers respect you and if you ask a question they answer in a nice way." These contrasting data points warrant further investigation by the leadership team, especially when a review of discipline data (as reported by IMSA-West and on the IDOE's INview site) notes an increase in out of school suspensions from 2018-2019 (16%) to 2019-2020 (18%).

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

• School leadership and Teacher focus group interviews. • Teacher surveys. • Parent surveys • Student focus group interviews. • Student handbook. • Responsive classroom materials. • Classroom culture materials. • Review of behavior and discipline data.		
a) A multi-tiered framework designed to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students is implemented with fidelity .	Emerging	
	Evidence indicates individuals are starting to create systems to support this practice in some areas.	
b) Culturally responsive and evidenced based interventions are explicitly identified and implemented throughout the school to support the needs of students.	Implementing	
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of staff	
c) Explicit procedures for facilitating the development of strong, positive relationships between adults and students are clearly communicated to and implemented by all staff.	Implementing	
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 50-89% of staff.	
d) Procedures are in place for assessing staff, student, and family perspectives to ensure a sense of connectedness and engagement	Sustaining	
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all key stakeholders.	
Reinforcements	Refinements	
• IMSA-West has emphasis on building community and has developed strong and lasting relationships with key community stakeholders. • The culture at IMSA-West feels caring and supportive of children. • Parents feel welcome and connected to the school on all levels.	• Contrasting data points (as noted above) warrant further investigation by the leadership team, especially when a review of discipline data (as reported by IMSA-West and on the IDOE’s INview site) notes an increase in out of school suspensions from 2018-2019 (16%) to 2019-2020 (18%).	
Recommended Next Steps		

- A reset or norming of discipline expectations with the teachers and staff is recommended upon return from the holiday break.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and families clear and helpful?	Exceeds Standard
Summary of Findings	
As noted in the previous site evaluation report, a major strength of the school is the variety of ways it uses to communicate with students and families. These include phone calls, texts, emails, class Dojo, newsletters, conversations at drop-offs and pick-ups, and quarterly parent/teacher conferences. In addition, through ConceptSIS which is the Concept Schools platform, messages to all parents, students and staff can be sent; parents can access their students' grades as well. IMSA West also use School Messenger to send out school messages. School leadership shared that Facebook and Twitter are also used to communicate information and celebrate happenings around the school. However, when the evaluation team viewed the school's Twitter site, it did not appear to be as up to date with information as its Facebook page. In the previous evaluation, parents expressed concern that information, especially related to events at the school were not always as timely as it should be. However, parents who attend the focus group and those who filled out the survey not only expressed that they were very satisfied with their children's education but that they greatly appreciate the amount of communication though it can be "overwhelming" at times. Thus, it is evident to the evaluation team that school leadership took to heart the previous concerns expressed regarding the type of information shared and the timeliness of the information shared. For example, one such addition to the stream of communication is the publication of a monthly STEM newsletter which provides parents and other stakeholders with information about STEM (what it is, why it's important, etc.), school related activities directly related to STEM/academics, informative links and videos, photos, and more. According to administration, since starting this newsletter (March 2021), each month averages approximately 397 views. The newsletter is shared with parents, Office of Education Innovation, IMSA board of directors, and community stakeholders/partners. To meet the needs of its parents who speak another language, the school has readily available translators, and much of the communication, including monthly newsletters, is translated into Spanish.	
Data/Artifacts Reviewed	

- School leadership, teacher, and student focus group interviews.
- Teacher surveys.
- Parent surveys.
- Student handbook.
- Newsletters.
- Social media sites.

Summary of Elements

a) An active and ongoing system of communication between the school and family members in place.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of staff.
b) Procedures for responding to concerns of families are clearly defined and implemented by all school staff and validated by families	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all stakeholders.
c) Families are regularly informed in their native or home language of their students' academic and behavioral strengths and areas of need.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all families.
d) The school's communication methods are designed to promote family- school partnerships in ways that meet the needs of a diverse set of families.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all families.

Reinforcements	Refinements
• IMSA West has numerous ways in which it communicates with its student, families, and community stakeholders. • Addition of the STEM newsletter.	• Social-media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, are helping schools keep parents and other community members informed. Therefore, should IMSA West decide to continue using Twitter as a mode of communication, it should make sure that it is kept up to date. The last Tweet was dated May 2021.

Recommended Next Steps

- Refer to the refinements section for recommended next steps.

4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practices?

Approaching Standard

Summary of Findings

This report compiles a review of all practices and procedures specific to special education services at Indiana Math and Science (IMSA) as of October 2021. The results of this evaluation are based on the following pieces of data collected on site: a review of internal processes and procedural documentation, focus groups with general education and special education staff, as well as interviews with the special education director and members of the school leadership team. Lastly, a review of the school website and a portion of the permanent files for students currently enrolled with IEPs were conducted. These permanent files are housed and managed within the Indiana Individualized Education Program (IIEP) secure online system.

IMSA currently has forty-nine (49) students K-8 who have individualized education plans. Three (3) students are currently getting evaluated. All three students are receiving services because of a suspected disability. Mr. Haring is the Special Education Coordinator, and there are two Teachers of Records (TOR) on staff, one SLP and one paraprofessional (Ms. Clark). The following is the breakdown of the Teacher of Record Responsibilities:

Mr. Kirby is the TOR for Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Resource Students: 7 students.

Mr. Haring is the TOR for 4th, 5th, 6th-grade Resource students: 9 students.

Mrs. Smock is the TOR for 7th & 8th-grade Resource students: 22 students.

Mrs. Fisher is the TOR for Speech Students: 11 students.

IMSA contracts with Easter Seals for speech and language services and occupational therapy. The OT is on-site Wednesdays, and the SLP is on-site Thursdays and Fridays. Eleven students are eligible for Speech as their primary disability. In addition, IMSA contracts with Hahn Psych Services for school psychologist services. At this time, an instructional assistant is providing special education services with support from the special education teachers. Additionally, most students in the upper grades are pulled out for services, although the teachers expressed that they prefer an inclusion model of service delivery. There are open periods for students to get additional support. Students are required to bring their assignments with them to the special education classroom. Teachers and students are aware of open periods and can use this time as needed. In K-2, there is a collaborative co-teaching model. Teachers feel accepted, have access to lesson plans, and collaborative planning happens during PLCs. The special education teachers and general education teachers talk each morning about the day's lessons for the upper grades. The special education teacher also attends 6, 7, & 8th-grade level meetings on Wednesday mornings. All students are in a 50 least restrictive setting and spend 80% or more of their time in the general education setting. However, there are middle school students who are significantly below.

At the time of this report, MTSS had just begun at IMSA. Before COVID-19 shut down, the school utilized an RTI model of support. Participation on the MTSS team is voluntary, and the special education coordinator is a part of this team. There is no formal procedure in place for recommending a student for special education testing, although the team believes teachers know to reach out to the special education team. We are not concerned about missing students who may need to be evaluated unless they are new to the school.

Professional development through the IDOE and IEPRC is encouraged. The principal is always supportive of additional professional development. Special education professional development to support teachers is generally provided by Concept Schools between all IMSA campuses. There is a district email for special education teachers that helps teachers to share resources and build camaraderie.

There is a room with a file cabinet with all IEPs. The room and the cabinet have lock capability. Teachers do not review IEPs, but at the beginning of the year, the IEP @ at a glance is shared with teachers. The team started to do a file review at least once a quarter to look at goals. In the event that a student has to be quarantined, the student is assigned a Chromebook and added into a google classroom. Go Guardian, computer software, allows teachers to monitor student work, interact, ask questions in real-time, lock the computer, annotate their screen, and see students' computer screen in real-time. Hot spots are given if needed for internet access. Paper copies are also provided if needed. Specially designed instruction is an area of growth for teachers.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- Teacher interview
- Leadership interviews
- Document Analysis
- Special Education File Review
 - Twelve Individualized Education Plans were reviewed using a four tiered rubric to determine the following five specific criteria:
 - Services outlined in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student.
 - IEP plans include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.
 - IEP goals are rigorous and based on state and national learning standards.
 - IEP goals are reviewed and revised annually as determined by present levels of student level of performance.
 - IEP plans explicitly identify requirements for specifically designed curriculum and instruction to align with student needs.

Each IEP reviewed from the sample collected contained goals and a statement for ongoing assessment of student progress. Although there was evidence in some cases, there was an apparent inconsistency with all reviewed IEPs that the services matched the exceptional needs of the student over time. IEP goals were based on national learning standards but inconsistent with rigor. Specifically, rigorous goals based on state standards that evolve each year and specifically designed instruction were areas of growth.

Summary of Elements

a) Services outlined in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 90- 100% of students with IEPs.
b) IEP plans include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 90- 100% of students with IEPs.

c) IEP goals are rigorous and based on state and national learning standards.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 50-89% of students with IEPs.
d) IEP goals are reviewed and revised annually as determined by present levels of student level of performance.	Implementing
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 50-89% of students with IEPs.
e) IEP plans explicitly identify requirements for specifically designed curriculum and instruction to align with student needs.	Emerging
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 26-49% of students with IEPs.
Reinforcements	Refinements
- Indiana Math and Science Academy has a special education team that communicates well and supports each other. The administration supports professional development opportunities, and as a network, there are learning opportunities offered to all special education staff. - The caseloads are small and allow for unique opportunities to co-teach and co-plan.	SDI The special education teacher, paraprofessional, and general education teachers could use more time learning about and practicing SDI. In practical terms, specially or specifically designed instruction (SDI) is instruction that is tailored to a specific student. It addresses their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, accounts for their disability, provides modifications or adaptations to content, and encourages access to the general education curriculum. This is specifically about what is uniquely being taught to the student. This deep thinking about student needs will make the IEP more of a teaching tool and less of a box to check for generic accommodations. Inclusion With all of the research and data supporting an inclusive education model, it would benefit IMSA to consider ways to support all students in their least restrictive environment as much as possible. This will involve coaching general education teachers in IEP accommodations and specially designed instruction. When students are pulled out of class, consideration should be given to ensure instruction aligns with their general education peers and avoid this time only being spent to remediate or "catch up." Process While the special education coordinator is available and responsive, this should not negate the development of solid special education practices that will ensure compliance to state and

federal mandates such as child find, evaluations, etc. All staff should know and or be able to reference all procedures that involve a student with a disability or a suspected disability.

Recommended Next Steps

The evaluation team recommends the following:

- Professional development opportunities and time for general education and special education to develop an understanding of SDI and how this instruction can be used in general education and special education settings to meet IEP goals and curricular objectives.
- Critical analysis of data to ensure all students who have IEPs are being served in their least restrictive environment as much as possible. Specifically, teachers are ‘pushing in’ more than they are ‘pulling out. In addition, defining what effective ‘push in’ services are to avoid the one teach/one assist model.
- Document in detail the processes for special education and develop staff to ensure compliant and quality individualized education plans.

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?

Does Not Meet Standard

Summary of Findings

The EL Team provides regular support to EL students and families (academic as well as social-emotional, etc.). EL Team knows their students and what they are working on within their content classes. Administration has identified the need for an EL certified teacher and posted the position prior to the evaluation review. An additional two team members will result in caseloads closer to the IDOE’s recommended 30 per EL TOR. Continuing to invest in the development and licensure of existing EL staff is recommended. Further recommendations include:

- Create ILP goals in collaboration with EL instructional staff and content/general education teacher(s).
- Provide time within the school schedule for the EL Team to meet and share strategies, problem-solve, attend virtual PD, etc.
- Involve EL team in determination of how Title III and NESP funds are utilized. The team would like some additional instructional materials such as manipulatives and realia.
- Consider piloting a co-teach model beginning with Mr. C and Ms. Erk and two general education teachers and build from there.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

- Confidential student file review.
- ILP review.
- Interviews with EL coordinator and team
- Observation of pull and push support.

Summary of Elements

a) Staff have a clear understanding of legal obligations, current legislation, research, and effective practices relating to the provision of services for ELL students.	Planning
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 0-25% of instructional staff.
b) Staff have a knowledge of the process of language acquisition and the skillsets needed to differentiate instructional strategies to meet the needs ELL students	Planning
	Evidence indicates practice occurs among 0-25% of instructional staff.
c) Procedures are in place to ensure relationships with ELL students, parents, and external providers are well-managed and in compliance with Indiana law and regulations.	Sustaining
	Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented for all ELL students.
d) ILP plans include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.	Planning
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 0- 25% of students with ILPs.
e) ILP plans explicitly identify needs for targeted instruction to align with student needs.	Planning
	Evidence indicates practice occurs for 0-25% of students with ILPs
Reinforcements	Refinements
• EL Team provides regular support to EL students and families (academic as well as social-emotional, etc.).	• Invest in and provide training on the legal and instructional aspects of language learning for all instructional staff. • Create ILP goals in collaboration with EL instructional staff and content/general education teacher(s).

- EL Team knows their students and what they are working on within their content classes.
- Administration has identified the need for an EL certified teacher and posted the position prior to the evaluation review. An additional two team members will result in caseloads closer to the IDOE's recommended 30 per EL TOR.
- EL students are receiving content-based ESL.
- All ILPs included the specified language program for each student.
- EL Team provides consistent support and communication with and for parents of ELs.

- Continue to leverage and build expertise of EL instructional staff by investing in their ENL licensure.
- Provide time within the school schedule for the EL Team to meet and share strategies, problem-solve, attend virtual PD, etc.
- Involve EL team in determination of how Title III and NESP funds are utilized. The team would like some additional instructional materials such as manipulatives and realia.
- Consider piloting a co-teach model beginning with Mr. C and Ms. Erk and two general education teachers and build from there.
- Hire a committed EL Director to oversee programming and compliance for both IMSA buildings, freeing current IMSA West EL Coordinator to develop a co-teaching model.
- ILPs
 1. All ILPs are up to date.
 2. ILPs include names of EL specific staff, but do not contain general education collaborators.
 3. ILPs must include goals and specific instruction that will be implemented to meet those goals.

*ILP guidance found on page 13 of IDOE EL Guidebook.

IDOE English Learner Guidebook: <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/elme/idoel-guidebook.pdf>

Recommended Next Steps

- Refer to the refinements section for next steps.

Closing

Indiana Math and Science Academy West is in its fifteenth year of operation. Like many schools across the city, state, and nation, the last two years have been spent facing significant challenges due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Overall, Indiana Math and Science Academy West is staffed with diverse and dedicated school administration, teachers, and staff who care deeply about their students. It is evident that IMSA-West recognizes that school is not solely an academic enterprise; communities rely on schools to do much more than that. After analyzing key artifacts and staff survey results, engaging in interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, and completing classroom observations, the evaluation team concluded that Indiana Math and Science Academy West is consistently and faithfully fulfilling its mission. Through extensive focus groups with students and teachers and numerous interviews with staff members and parents, the evaluation team developed a deep respect for IMSA-West's innovative

curriculum and its school culture. We witnessed a committed faculty and staff led by a dedicated leadership team.

As Indiana Math and Science Academy continues to develop and attempt to meet the vast needs of its students and community, there are opportunities for growth to not only strengthen instructional practices but culture as well. Below is a summary of **recommended next steps by indicator:**

- **4.1**
 - Regularly assess how well the curriculum is working. For example, in PLC meetings ensure that mastery of standards is tracked weekly.
 - If standards are not being mastered, then supplemental materials that support the curriculum should be used.
- **4.4**
 - Provide professional development sessions on analyzing student data to better address students' individual needs, with a critical focus on using the data to inform instruction for students performing at a lower level.
- **4.5**
 - Survey teachers to ensure their professional development needs are differentiated based on their desired need for growth and development.
 - The feedback provided by the teachers presents IMSA-West with an opportunity to re-think and re-visit their system for communicating how professional development opportunities are determined through analyses of student outcome data and clearly linked to strategic objectives and school improvement goals.
- **4.7**
 - A reset or norming of discipline expectations with the teachers and staff is recommended upon return from the holiday break.
- **4.8**
 - Social-media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, are helping schools keep parents and other community members informed. Therefore, should IMSA West decide to continue using Twitter as a mode of communication, it should make sure that it is kept up to date. The last Tweet was dated May 2021.
- **4.9**
 - Professional development opportunities and time for general education and special education to develop an understanding of SDI and how this instruction can be used in general education and special education settings to meet IEP goals and curricular objectives.
 - Critical analysis of data to ensure all students who have IEPs are being served in their least restrictive environment as much as possible. Specifically, teachers are 'pushing in' more than they are 'pulling out. In addition, defining what effective 'push in' services are to avoid the one teach/one assist model.

- Document in detail the processes for special education and develop staff to ensure compliant and quality individualized education plans.
- **4.10**
 - Invest in and provide training on the legal and instructional aspects of language learning for all instructional staff.
 - Create ILP goals in collaboration with EL instructional staff and content/general education teacher(s).
 - Continue to leverage and build expertise of EL instructional staff by investing in their ENL licensure.
 - Provide time within the school schedule for the EL Team to meet and share strategies, problem-solve, attend virtual PD, etc.
 - Involve EL team in determination of how Title III and NESP funds are utilized. The team would like some additional instructional materials such as manipulatives and realia.
 - Consider piloting a co-teach model beginning with Mr. C and Ms. Erk and two general education teachers and build from there.
 - Hire a committed EL Director to oversee programming and compliance for both IMSA buildings, freeing current IMSA West EL Coordinator to develop a co-teaching model.
 - ILPs
 - 4. Should include names of EL specific staff and general education collaborators.
 - 5. Should include goals and specific instruction that will be implemented to meet those goals.

The evaluation team would like to thank the IMSA-West community for the kindness shown by all during our visit. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve IMSA-West.