

School Organizational Solutions (SOS), LLC

**Evaluation of the
Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored
Charter Schools**

**Tindley Genesis Academy
Second Year Site Visit
12/07/2016**

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TINDLEY
GENESIS ACADEMY

INDIANAPOLIS MAYOR'S OFFICE SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

TINDLEY GENESIS ACADEMY

December 07, 2016

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

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

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

COMPLETION OF THE SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

In compliance with the Mayor's Office Accountability framework, Tindley Genesis Academy engaged School Organizational Solutions (SOS) to conduct the site visit in their second year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. The Second Year Charter Review site visit uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders.

Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the Second Year Charter Review Protocol: ***Core Question 4 and all of its sub-questions (4.1-4.10).***

Responses to Core Question 1 and all of its sub-questions (1.1-1.4), Core Question 2 and all of its sub-questions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 and Core Question 3 and all of its sub-questions (3.1-3.3), will be completed by the Mayor's Office.

The outcome of the Second Year Charter Review will provide the school with a written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators developed for the core question number four and its sub-questions as outlined in the *Performance Framework above*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

Introduction

On December 07, 2016 three site team members conducted the 2016 Second Year Review of the Tindley Genesis Academy.

Tindley Genesis is a music-focused elementary school currently serving students in grades K-4. It is in its fourth year of operation as a Mayor's Charter School in Indianapolis, Indiana. According to the School's website, "Students at Genesis will also engage in concentrated music instruction throughout the school day which includes classes in instrumental music, singing, piano, and general music. At Genesis, music is also infused into the general education classroom to make learning an engaging and exciting experience for our young scholars."

Tindley Genesis Academy is the one of six accelerated schools operating under the umbrella of the Tindley Accelerated Schools network. The network enforces relatively tight controls of its schools in order to ensure consistency and continuity of the Tindley culture. Many of the vital systems and services are centralized at the network level, including human resources and curriculum development.

Student enrollment at Tindley Genesis Academy was reported at 214 scholars. The enrollment at the end of the school year in 2016 was 143 scholars. 120 scholars returned to Tindley Genesis and 70 more scholars enrolled when the school added fourth grade this year, making a total of 11 general education classrooms at TGA and an addition of 94 scholars new to the school.

The strong Tindley culture has competently served to weed out ineffective teachers but has simultaneously made it challenging for the school to retain effective teachers. Consequently, the school continues to struggle with recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, which is a prioritized goal for the school. The school was not assigned an Accountability Grade yet by the IDOE since it is just in its second year of operation..

This report represents an evaluation about performance in each of the standards and indicators that are the responsibility of School Organizational Solutions (SOS) to evaluate for this particular school. These indicators: 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 are outlined in the Mayor's Performance Framework.

The School Organizational Solutions, LLC, site team engaged in a number of evidence-gathering activities. The focus of this site visit was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of this evaluation. The team conducted focus group discussions with students, teachers, parents, special education teachers, special education parents, special education students, and school administrators, as well as school board members. Site team members spent an additional day observing all classrooms and teachers prior to the site visit. A site team member with extensive special education experience spent a day reviewing special education files and ELL files prior to the official site visit also.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

TINDLEY GENESIS ACADEMY

<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>FINDING</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets standard
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets standard
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Approaching Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets standard
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Meets standard
<i>4.9 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?</i>	Approaching Standard
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</i>	Meets standard

FINDINGS, INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE

TINDLEY GENESIS ACADEMY

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

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

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?

MEETS Standard

Summary and Commendations:

The Tindley Genesis Academy is the newest school in the Tindley Accelerated Schools network, serving both girls and boys in grades K-4. Tindley Genesis provides scholars with an accelerated curriculum infused with concentrated music instruction throughout the school day. The six Tindley Network Schools share common curriculum core values which are managed at the network level for consistency among the schools.

The site team heard and saw evidence that Tindley Genesis Academy has a high quality curriculum that is developed at the network level and is uploaded and housed online via the Atlas Curriculum Management program by Rubicon.

Teachers praised the curriculum program saying “the whole year is planned out for you on Rubicon Atlas.” Teachers also said the curriculum is a standards-based curriculum aligned with the Indiana State Standards. They reported that the curriculum included a detailed scope and sequence plan and pacing guides that encompassed all grade levels and all content areas which teachers said were presented in bar graphs displaying “chunks of time” showing when to teach particular standards. Teachers upload their own prepared Unit plans to the online curriculum database. They also upload assessments and lesson plans two weeks in advance. They receive feedback on their curriculum documents from the Principal and the Assistant Principal. Teachers said they had received professional development with instruction on using the online curriculum during the Tindley Summer Institute prior to the beginning of school (Indicators a and e).

Teachers told site team members that they appreciated the fact that they had the ability to view scope and sequence across grade levels. One teacher said being able to see the vertical alignment of standards and content across grade levels was invaluable to him when he “looped” his first and second grade classes (Indicator d).

School leaders and teachers reported that the curriculum is reviewed on an annual basis at the network level, however, unlike previous years, they said they have some leverage in modifying scope and sequence with network approval. Teachers also said they re-teach standards in the Do Now and Exit ticket portions of their lesson plans as needed, to correct any gaps they experience in the curriculum (Indicators b and c).

All stakeholders said they had abundant programs and materials to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers expressed frustration though, that a basal reader had been presented to them as a part of the literacy curriculum without adequate training on how to implement it. They said the textbook did not align with the Tindley online curriculum pacing guides which meant teachers had to spend much extra time re-working the pacing between the two differing curriculums. They also said they had not been given any training or direction in how the basal reader was supposed to be used. The school leader said he had asked for, and had been granted, network approval to adjust and align the curriculum between the basal reader and the Tindley online curriculum (Indicator f).

Based on focus group interviews, classroom observations, and document evidence, the site team determined that Tindley Genesis Academy has a highly qualified curriculum and ample resources and supporting materials for each grade. The site team determined that Tindley Genesis Academy meets Standard 4.1

Strengths:

Additional strengths in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting Standard 4.1

- In addition to the Tindley online curriculum, teachers at Genesis report infusing music into the curriculum in support of the Tindley Genesis focus on music instruction.

- Teachers expressed gratitude for having access (via the online curriculum) to lesson plans, assessments, and unit plans, from previous years and also appreciated the lesson plan templates available to them.

Areas For Improvement:

- Teachers expressed a desire to have access to a budget or fund for special projects such as, science experiments, in-class libraries, etc.
- Teachers were disappointed that there was little or no training for a basal reader that had been added to the curriculum and were upset that the reading book did not align with the Tindley pacing guides in the online curriculum.

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

4.2 Are the teaching pedagogies consistent with the school’s mission?

MEETS Standard

Summary and Commendations:

The Tindley Genesis mission statement states that Tindley Genesis Academy...” *will empower its students – regardless of their past academic performance – to become successful scholars who graduate with the capacity for rigorous middle school, high school and college opportunities. Tindley Genesis will provide a powerful learning experience that intellectually engages, inspires, and spurs academic achievement through a challenging and interactive curriculum.*”

Two site team members spent a total of 8.5 hours at Tindley Genesis Academy observing 10 classrooms, 11 teachers, and 206 students. In addition to classroom observations, they attended the daily “Meeting of the Minds” and observed a rehearsal of the holiday musical. Through these observations, focus group interviews with teachers, students, and school leaders, and a review of documents, site team members saw positive evidence that the teaching pedagogies at Tindley Genesis are consistent with the school’s mission.

Site team members observed during classroom observations, that the curriculum was implemented in all classrooms according to its design, aligned with state standards, and infused with music and the arts (Indicator a).

Classroom observers noted that state standards were posted in a majority of the classrooms, many in the form of “I Can”... statements, followed by the objective being taught that day. All Tindley Genesis teachers were teaching lessons focused on core learning objectives (Indicator b).

High expectations and challenging content were observed in all classes by site team members. The pace of instruction in most classes was challenging and transitions were minimized, utilizing timed transitions, which allowed instruction to be maximized. The music classes were focused on rigorous standards, with scholars learning songs from many different cultures and singing in foreign languages. The music teachers focused instruction on the geography and culture of the songs, as well as providing music instruction (Indicator c).

A wide variety of teaching pedagogies was observed being implemented in Tindley Genesis classrooms, including cooperative learning, “turn and talk”, “think, pair, share”, whole brain strategies (chants, songs, gestures), choral response, direct questions, sign language, compare and contrast and independent work. Many classrooms were employing differentiated strategies to engage a wide variety of abilities and learners, including: small group instruction, independent reading, Moby Max individualized computer programs, and hand movements to music (Indicator d).

Teachers reported in focus groups that the school principal and assistant principal conduct weekly walk-throughs to observe and give feedback on their instruction. Feedback is delivered to the teachers during a face-to-face meeting within 24 hours, and includes positive growth areas and areas to improve (Glows & Grows) (Indicator e).

Based on the evidence collected through classroom observations and focus group interviews with teachers, students, and school leaders, the site team determined that Tindley Genesis Academy meets Standard 4.2.

Strengths

Additional strengths in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting Standard 4.2:

- Teachers reported, and site team members observed, that music is implemented in all classes and throughout much of the lesson content. Observers saw pianos in all classrooms and observed teachers directing students to use choral responses as rewards for correct answers and for positive behavior.
- Beginning teachers said that the school principal has been an excellent teaching mentor for them. They reported that he frequently sends links to websites that will enhance their instructional practices; He has also taken them to other schools to observe a particular teacher or skill, and he often asks, “What can I do to help you?”

Areas For Improvement:

- None noted

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

Does not apply since this is not a high school.

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

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

MEETS Standard

Summary and Commendations:

Tindley Genesis Academy utilizes a variety of external and internal assessments to measure students' knowledge of learning standards and core objectives with accuracy. According to teachers and school leaders, the following external assessments are administered at Tindley Genesis: The NWEA assessment is given three times per year to determine student growth and to predict student achievement. DIBELS, with TRC (text, reading, and comprehension assessments are used (3 times per year) to establish basic reading skills, as well as comprehension skills. Network interim assessments mapped out in the online network curriculum provide information on which skills need to be re-taught or reinforced. Indiana Science Initiative assessments are given at the end of science units. Internal assessments are given frequently and consist of: Unit assessments, weekly quizzes, and informal checks for understanding, such as Exit tickets (Indicators a, c, and d).

Teachers reported in focus groups that they conduct data dives once a month during grade level meetings. They analyze data to make determinations regarding which scholars need extra help, which scholars should attend the academic enhancement period (an extra class period at the end of each day to enhance the instruction), and trends showing which standards need to be re-taught during the “Do Now” portion of lessons. Regular instruction at Tindley Genesis ends at 3:00 PM, however the academic enhancement period follows the 3:00 dismissal time and lasts until 4:00 PM. Teachers also said that data is used to group students for leveled literacy blocks and it is also used to target and prioritize standards that students are not meeting (Indicators b and e).

Teachers also said they use the results from the NWEA to highlight strengths and weaknesses in student learning and to match needed instruction with specific groups of students during the Academic Enhancement period (Indicators b and e).

Based on the classroom observation data and stakeholder focus groups, the site team adjudged Tindley Genesis as meets in Standard 4.4

Strengths:

Additional strength in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting Standard 4.4:

- Teachers said the data collected from the variety of external and internal assessments at Tindley Genesis help them address the wide range of student abilities at the school. Teachers felt it was helpful in differentiating instruction to group students, depending on instructional needs, based on results from the NWEA, and the DIBELS assessments.

- **Areas for Improvement:**

None Noted

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

Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
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4.5 Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?

APPROACHING Standard

Summary and Specific Commendations

As noted in the introduction, Tindley Genesis Academy is part of the Tindley Accelerated Schools Network. As such, many of the school's human resource systems are centralized at the network level. These include coordinated hiring, curricular, assessment, and professional development systems.

Accountability and consistency are important values for the network so concerted efforts are made to tightly control practices at the school level. The network has a standardized hiring process. The school leader described and the site team members saw evidence of a comprehensive hiring process that is centrally coordinated through the Network. This process includes: reviewing staff needs, posting advertisements of open positions, reviewing applications, checking references, conducting interviews, teaching demonstrations, hiring, and a new teacher orientation to facilitate staff success. (Indicator a).

Stakeholders described, and the site team saw evidence, of professional development activities that are aligned with demonstrated needs related to instructional improvement. Teachers described the two-week summer institute, one week winter institute, half day PD on Fridays, and network PD once a month, as being extremely helpful. They felt supported by the growth opportunities. Constituents reported and the site team saw evidence that professional development topics are based on documented academic goals that emerge from the school's data (Indicators d and e).

The site team also saw evidence of a comprehensive teacher evaluation plan which included a teacher self-evaluation at the beginning of the year, followed by a meeting with the school leader to discuss goals for the year. The plan also included three formal observations as well as a final debrief meeting to discuss and agree on ratings. The detailed process occurs at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year.

The rigorous expectations for students and staff has had an impact on staffing trends in the school. Although the school leader reported that the all teachers are licensed and deployed in the areas in which they are certified to teach (Indicator c), and that the school

retained 75% (9/12) teachers from last year, the site team was concerned by the high level of teacher turnover, particularly mid-semester, when students need the guidance of full-time teachers. The site team learned that during its first year of operation, both second grade teachers at Tindley Genesis left in the middle of the school year. The following year, the same group of students (now in Third grade) experienced the same issue as both teachers again left the school for varying reasons. Students expressed frustration by this volatility. At the time of the site visit, the school had one teacher on an emergency permit, and three guest teachers serving in substitute roles (in 4 out of 11 classrooms). The site team was concerned that such high turnover adversely impacts the school's ability to deploy a sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity (Indicator b).

Based on the evidence provided and the concerns raised about staff turnover, especially during critical academic periods, the site team concluded the school is approaching this standard.

Strengths:

Other strengths in support of Tindley Genesis approaching this standard, include

- The school has one opening currently being filled by a long-term sub and two substitute teachers are filling in for teachers on maternity leave.
- Teachers offered a variety of complements regarding the professional development they received.
- The network has made some adjustments to the school, including a significantly shortened school day. The site team notes this change could have a positive impact on staff retention.

Areas For Improvement

- While the school should be lauded for its moderate retention efforts, the site team was concerned that extremely high mid-term teacher turnover, particularly in the 2nd grade (2015) and third grade (2016) limits instructional capacity. Second grade students in 2015 lost both teachers within one semester, and again in 2016, when they reached 3rd grade.

Recommendations:

- School should work to stabilize its staffing in order to maximize instructional capacity.
- Consider alternative hiring venues and prioritize candidates who also value stability and are seeking long term jobs.

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

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

MEETS Standard

Summary and Commendations:

The site team saw evidence that the mission of Tindley Genesis Academy is fully understood by all stakeholders, including the school leader, the teachers, parents, and students. The mission of the school is “to spark high levels of achievement in children early in their scholastic careers, putting them on track for college acceptance at the outset of their education.” Interviews with various constituents during the site visit clearly indicated a thorough understanding of the mission and strong support of the mission (Indicators a and b).

Infusion of music throughout the curriculum is also an important focus of the school. During the focus group interviews, teachers clearly articulate the mission. They said a love of music and a clear understanding of its role in buttressing student learning is what draws them to the school. .

The music focus is featured on the school’s website as visitors to the site are serenaded with pulsating rhythms and student vocals performed by students. The mission is also clearly depicted in the organization of the school and sounds of music can be heard echoing throughout the corridors of the school.

Based on the high visibility of the mission throughout the site visit process, the site visit team concludes that Tindley Summit Academy meets the standard in this area.

Strengths:

Other strengths in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting this standard, include:

- Teachers, students, parents and administrators noted the focus on music and rigorous academics, and said it is what brought them to Tindley Genesis Academy.
- Stakeholders all reported that they fully supported and bought in to the mission of the school.

Areas For Improvement

- None noted

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

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?

MEETS Standard

Summary and Commendations:

The site team determined that the climate of Tindley Genies Academy is conducive to student and staff success. The climate at the school is characterized by a culturally relevant and responsive environment, where students, staff and school leaders develop productive relationships.

Evidence provided by the school, coupled with that collected during site team observations and stakeholder interviews, reveal that the school has a comprehensive tiered behavioral plan. The plan is based a color-coded system. The school has a student handbook that outlines the behavioral plan and includes clearly stated rules for student conduct, dress, attendance homework, tardiness, cheating/plagiarism, and a specific list of other non-negotiable expectations for Tindley Genesis Scholars. Students were quick to describe the five classroom rules and could explain consequences for misbehavior (Indicators a and b).

The school follows a Tindley Network management system that is consistent throughout the building. Teachers and students learn strategies at the beginning of the year which are reinforced regularly at the school level. The school uses a variety of whole brain strategies, chants and gestures, as well as Teach Like A Champion strategies to manage and promote positive student behavior.

Like all Tindley Accelerated Network schools, Tindley Genesis is intentional about developing a strong scholar identity amongst students. The school employs a variety of rituals and practices to engender this process including a rigorous accelerated curriculum framework, and high behavioral expectations. The school has an explicit scholars' creed that students learn to recite "by heart." The creed includes phrases such as the following: "I am a Tindley Genesis Scholar who Achieves academic excellence through the arts. I am on the path to college and Tindley Genesis is where it starts." Positive student behavior was observed throughout the school. The site team observed a morning "Meeting of the Minds" and could identify this as one of the important rituals to build the school culture.

During classroom observations and the site visit, the site visit team observed interactions between faculty and students that were respectful and supportive (Indicators c and d). All students interviewed indicated they had positive relationships with the teachers and the school leaders. Students and parents noted that teachers are caring and have exceptionally high expectations. . Students and faculty are clear about resolutions for conflict. In summary, the site team found a preponderance of evidence to support that Tindley Genesis Academy have systems in place that produce a school climate conducive to student and staff success. Positive interactions between students, staff and leadership have been well documented; there is active communication and a strong disciplinary approach that students, teachers and parents participate in and understand. This led the team to determine that the school meets standard.

Strengths:

Other strengths in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting this standard, include:

- Students were quick to describe the 5 classroom rules and could explain consequences for misbehavior.
- All stakeholders, especially teachers, parents, and students, offered high praise for the principal, describing him as energetic, honest, hands-on, and always available and approachable.
- The school business manager said the principal is explicitly trained in conflict resolution and does an excellent job in that regard, in all interactions at the school.
- One parent, who claimed to have raised multiple children, said the principal is "by far "the best principal" she has ever encountered.
- Staff described the atmosphere at TGA as collegial and family-like.

Areas For Improvement

- The high use of substitutes poses a challenge to the preservation of the Tindley Genesis culture. Students described multiple distractions that occur when substitutes are leading the classes.

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

4.8 Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?

MEETS Standard

Summary and Specific Commendations:

Stakeholders reported, and site team members saw and heard ample evidence, that the Tindley Genesis Academy had multiple means of communicating with scholars and parents to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the school’s mission, policies, behavior expectations and consequences, student achievement, school events, schedules, and any other pertinent information, necessary to meeting the school’s requirements and achieving its mission.

Parents, teachers, and scholars all said that the school effectively communicated with them utilizing multiple modes of communication, including: emails, texts, phone calls, weekly progress reports, voicemail, and face-to-face encounters. Teachers reported to the site team members that they are required to make a minimum to ten calls per week to parents. (Indicators a and b)

Parents reported that they receive “daily trackers” updating them on their child’s academic progress, as well as their behavior in class. They also said they receive weekly progress reports that include pertinent information on grades and homework. They also praised the Power School program that allows them to access their child’s grades and homework assignment at any time, online. (Indicator c)

The site team saw significant strengths in the ongoing communication at Tindley Genesis and therefore determined that the school “meets” this standard.

The school has few ELL students but the principal and assistant principal reported to site team members that they make special phone calls to the parents and that they have personnel on the staff who are able to communicate in the ELL parents’ native language.. (Indicator d)

Strengths

Other strengths in support of Tindley Genesis Academy meeting this standard, include:

- When asked about the communication they received from the school, parents snickered and noted “they communicate with us in every means available”.
- Teachers noted they communicate with parents face-to-face daily as parents are required to drop off and pick up their students.
- Teachers are also required to make and log a minimum of 10 parent contacts weekly, which are reviewed biweekly by the assistant principal.
- Parents unanimously praised the business leader for her communication and encouragement and said it was the primary reason they enrolled their children at Tindley Genesis Academy. Since Board members commented to site team members that increased enrollment was a number one priority, the Tindley Network might heed advice of parents and capitalize on the communication skills and strategies utilized by the TGA business manager.

Areas For Improvement

- The site team saw no evidence that written communication is disseminated in any other language other than English even though close to 5% of the school’s enrolled students are ELL students.

4.9. Do the school’s special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and that it is moving toward best practice?	
Does not meet standard	Does not meet standard - The school’s special education files present concerns in two or more of the following areas: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; (d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; (e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	Approaching standard – The school’s special education files present concerns in one of the following areas: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; (d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; (e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Meets standard	All of the following are evident in the school’s special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined

4.9. Do the school’s special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and that it is moving toward best practice?

APPROACHING Standard

Summary and Specific Commendations:

At the time of the site review 31 files for students with disabilities (SWDs) were reviewed. This represents 14% of the total school enrollment. Of the thirty-one files for SWDs twenty-one were Speech/Language Impairments (SLI) only, which represents 68% (21/31) of the files of SWDs. A comprehensive review was conducted on all 31 of the special education files. This review provided critical information regarding the general trends in the documentation and delivery of special education services at the school. The educational benefit of each case conference report/Individual Education Plan (IEP) was noted. Tindley Genesis has policies and procedures in place that serve as guidelines regarding special education services from the Network. This school also implements an inclusive model with push-in and pull-out services (indicator e).

Tindley Genesis Academy was found to have instituted numerous systems in compliance with state and federal mandates regarding special education services. The files were neatly organized and in a locked file cabinet and room. The school participates in and utilizes the Indiana IEP

electronic program which ensures that the required topics are being addressed in each student's IEP (indicator a and b)

Tindley Genesis uses a common format for organizing special education across the network. As such a common area for improvement stems from the abstract nature of written goals. While the IEPs generally included goals that were based on identified needs(s) and state and national learning standards, some of the goals were not necessarily written in SMART goal format (Indicator c). Moreover, the IEPs at Tindley Genesis Academy show that the goals evolved each year in accordance with the student's development, although some of these goals lacked clarity and specificity (indicator d).

Based on the file review, it was noted:

- 84% of Notices of Case Conference were present.
- 90% of the Case Conference Report/IEP were present.
- 94% of the Educational Evaluations were present.
- 3% of the Progress Reports were present.
- 10% of the files lacked a Current IEP. (indicator a)
- 74% had LRE of 50
- 26% had LRE of 26

Based on the team's extensive review, there was concern that **10% of the files lacked a current IEP and the majority of these files were for students with Speech/Language Impairments(SLI) only**. (Indicator a) Therefore the site team gave an "approaching" standard to Standard 4.9.

Strengths:

Additional strengths in support of Tindley Genesis approaching this standard, include:

- Tindley Genesis uses an Inclusive model which implements push in/pull out services. 90+% of the students at Tindley Genesis have a LRE 50 which is a Federal Placement Code where 80% or more of the student's day is spent in general education classes.
- There was evidence of Policy/Procedure guidelines from the Tindley Network.

Areas of improvement:

- It is necessary that there is a record of a current IEP as a template to guide the education and instruction of SWDs.
- For next steps it is important to write SMART Goals that emphasize specificity, measurability, and high expectations. It is necessary to avoid amorphous goals such as "student will be reading at an end of year 1st grade level" and "comprehend story problems and recognize key word for specific operations within those problems." It is essential that goals: 1) reference State Standards, 2) utilize present levels of performance as a baseline for writing goals, 3) have a plan on how you will measure progress and

write goals accordingly, 4) include language which allows the reader to know what new skills the student needs, and 5) plan for 1.5 to 2.0 years of growth. (Be attentive to Learning Connection as professional development is being offered on writing appropriate goals based on state standards).

- The school needs to promote Results Driven Accountability (RDA) for high achievement. Results Driven Accountability is supported by the IDOE and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Professional development in this area is being provided through the Learning Connection at the IDOE. RDA continues to mandate compliance but schools must now have an increased emphasis on outcomes for exceptional learners. High expectations result in high/improved outcomes!

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

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

MEETS Standard

Summary and Specific Commendations:

At the time of the site review, the leadership team at Tindley Genesis Academy reported 11 English Language Learners. There was evidence of an English Language Guidebook for 2016/2017 from the IDOE. This Guidebook noted the necessary requirements for English Language Learners and provided Compliancy Checklists. The site team saw

evidence of the English Proficiency Test (WIDA), the Individual Language Plan (ILP), the home-language survey, and the Annual Parent Notification.

Strengths:

Additional strengths in support of Tindley Genesis meeting this standard, include:

- Tindley Genesis Academy uses the IDOE English Learner Guidebook 2016/2017.
- Site team saw evidence of English Proficiency Test (WIDA), the Individual Language Plan (ILP), the home language survey, and the Annual Parent Notification.

Areas For Improvement:

- For next steps Tindley Genesis Academy should check with the Network for notification documents to parents of ELL students to be sent in their native language. Tindley Genesis does have personnel on staff able to communicate in various languages.