

**Evaluation of the
Office of Education Innovation
Charter Schools**

**Kindezi Academy
6th Year Charter Review**

**Site Visit Performed
November 3 & 4, 2021**

Research & Evaluation Resources, LLC

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Rubric Summary

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

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.

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?	Exceeds Standard
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	Meets Standard
4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and preparation for post-secondary options? <i>Only applies to schools serving grades 9-12</i>	Not Applicable
4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	Exceeds Standard
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	Exceeds 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?	Exceeds 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?	Exceeds Standard
4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	Exceeds Standard

Kindezi Academy

School Background

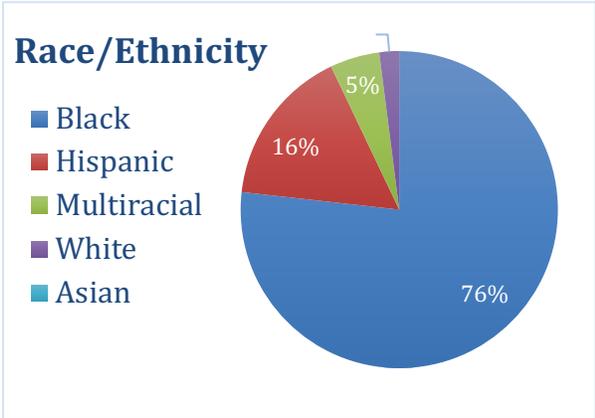
Kindezi Academy is an innovation charter school within the Neighborhood Charter Network family of schools. Opened in 2016, Kindezi Academy launched as a restart to Indianapolis Public Schools' Joyce Kilmer 69. The name Kindezi derives from the African philosophy in which all members of a community take collective responsibility for educating children, nurturing them with love, and preparing them to be future leaders of society. Kindezi Academy seeks to provide a holistic education by leading students with love, achieving high academic results, and providing leadership education.

Academic Program

Kindezi Academy utilizes a small group, rotation model led by two classroom teachers to ensure that every child achieves. During each instructional block, students rotate through teacher-led instruction, blended learning instruction using adaptive software on iPads, and project-based collaborative work. Through this model, teachers are consistently able to provide personalized and accountable learning experiences. Beginning in kindergarten, all students learn through a proven leadership development program, "The Leader in Me." Through "The Leader in Me" Kindezi Academy students learn and grow in the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Kids" while also exploring their own leadership interests through student leadership roles. This leadership education model has been proven to improve school culture, increase attendance, improve academic performance and reduce incidents of bullying in schools.

Kindezi Academy also employs experiential learning in the classroom, with students learning by doing in standards-based inquiry labs using exploratory learning techniques. Kindezi Academy also leverages community partnerships to provide students with the opportunity to participate in field experiences to deepen their understanding of STEM in the real world. Students explore career opportunities and put their knowledge to the test with experts in the field. Kindezi Academy employs a 1:1 technology model, with all students have access to iPads or Google Chromebooks for use in blended learning instruction and academic research.

Student Demographics

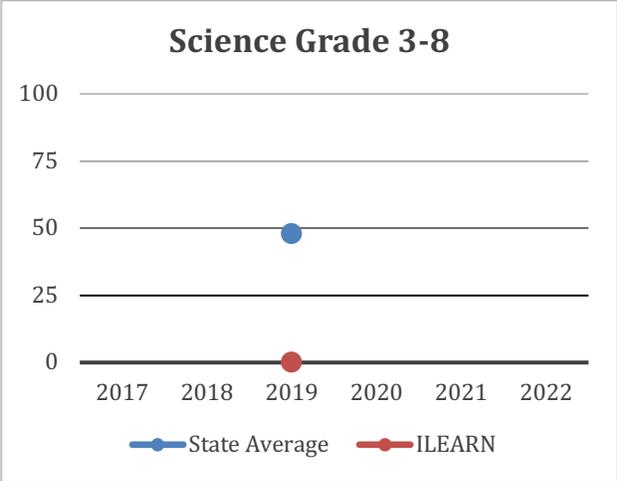
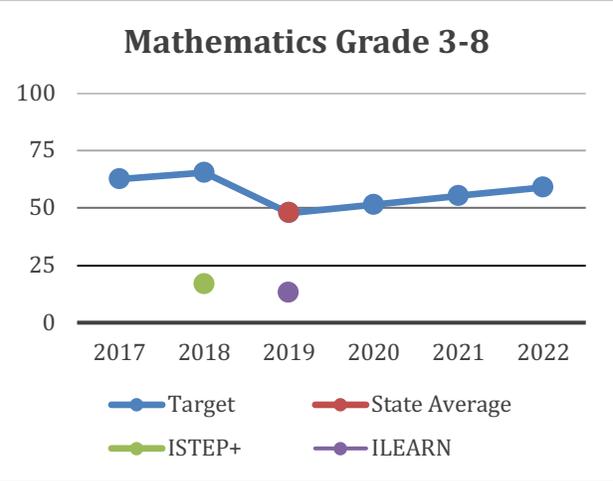
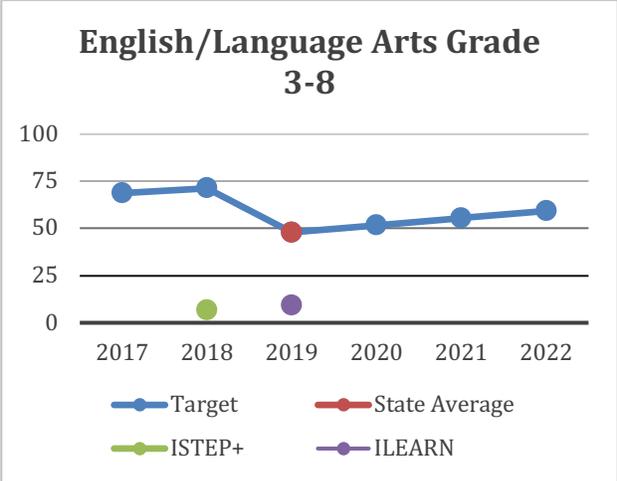


78% Economically Disadvantaged

12% English Learners

17% Students with Disabilities

Historical Academic Performance



4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
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.
Data/Artifacts Reviewed	
Curriculum Maps, Lesson Plans, Pacing Guides, Professional Development materials, Classroom Observations, Instructional Calendars, Staff handbook, Master Calendar, Leadership Interviews, Teacher Focus Group Data	
Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)	
Not Applicable	
Rubric Rating	
a) The curriculum used across all academic areas is rigorous, evidenced-based and aligned with state standards.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
b) Systematic reviews of curricula are conducted by administrators and school staff to identify gaps based on student performance across and within subgroups.	<i>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.</i>
c) The school regularly reviews instructional curriculum maps to ensure presentation of content is aligned with learning objectives.	<i>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.</i>
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.	<i>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.</i>
e) Instructional staff have access to provided materials to deliver the curriculum effectively.	<i>Implementing: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 50-89% of instructional staff.</i>

f) Instructional staff understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.</i>
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Strengths

- Kindezi Academy implements Eureka Math for Mathematics and Wit and Wisdom for English Language Arts. Both are aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards. The curriculum maps are designed by Kindezi leadership and are cross-discipline, with each tab on the spreadsheet one grade and the content of all subjects mapped out in each sheet. This organization is particularly effective for looking within grades for cross-disciplinary opportunities. However, the actual content of each lesson is not written out in English on all the maps (only unit/lesson numbers are referenced in some) making it harder to see how linkages could be made (indicator a).
- Kindezi Academy uses NWEA MAP data on a weekly basis during their data meetings to review student data across and within student subgroups. Student academic data is also used extensively during the summer professional development to review longitudinal trends in student performance. This longitudinal data review is particularly focused on reviewing student performance on standardized assessments for gaps in knowledge and skills that are aligned with specific Indiana Academic Standards (indicator b).
- During the weekly review of data meeting the IAS being covered in the classroom that week are compared to the planned assessments, which are then aligned using the “no show chart” that helps the classroom teacher ensure that lesson plans, academic standards and assessments all align (indicator c).
- Horizontal and vertical alignment is performed with the use of materials provided by the publishers of the Eureka Math and Wit and Wisdom materials. When asked about the alignment between and within grades the math instructors responded knowledgeably about the process and the usefulness of the documents provided by with the curriculum, while the ELA instructors were mostly unaware of the usefulness of the curricular documents provided with Wit and Wisdom for the kind of across grade alignment that would benefit smooth transitions across grades (indicator d).
- Overall, the classrooms are well-equipped and the instructional staff have access to provided materials to deliver the curriculum effectively. It was noted that while the middle school instructors are receiving new SmartBoards, theirs have already been moved to the lower grades for use there. Due to vendor delays they had been teaching without the benefit of SmartBoards for several weeks at the time of the site visit, but the new equipment has been arriving over time (indicator e).
- Kindezi Academy teaching staff take part in an extensive system of lesson internalization professional development to ensure that they understand the content of the curriculum and that they are fully fluent in the use of the documents that are provided with the curriculums being used in the school. The subset of the Kindezi Academy teachers observed during the classroom observations all effectively used the curricular documents and related program materials in their lessons. The lesson plans provided for review for Mathematics were from the Eureka Math curriculum and were heavily annotated by the staff as part of the lesson internalization process (indicator f).

Opportunities for Improvement

- Improved professional development opportunities around horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum for the teaching faculty, with a particular focus on English Language Arts.

Recommended Next Steps

- Fully written out content of the lessons/units on the curriculum maps and including the written out IAS will help with the focus on aligning the academic standards between and within grades and with noticing opportunities for cross-curricular teaching opportunities.
- Professional development on horizontal and vertical alignment for the teaching staff, particularly the English Language instructors.
- Put additional pressure on vendors to deliver and install the 3 SmartBoards in the remaining classrooms. While all the teachers have access to projectors, document cameras and 1:1 student computers, the addition of SmartBoards in the classrooms would be beneficial given the reliance on technology of most modern curriculums.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- None at this time.

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

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

List of school-wide curricula, Curriculum Maps, Pacing Guides, Professional Development materials, Classroom Observations, Instructional Calendars, Master Calendar, Staff Interviews, Focus Group Data

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)

Not Applicable

Rubric Rating

a) The curriculum is implemented in all classrooms with fidelity.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.</i>
b) A clearly documented lesson internalization process is used to explicitly target core learning objectives across all academic areas.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
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.	<i>Implementing: Evidence indicates practice is implemented in most but not all areas.</i>
d) Instruction is differentiated based on ongoing formative assessment of student learning needs, identified student interests, and preferred learning styles.	<i>Emerging: Evidence indicates individuals are starting to create systems to support this practice in some areas.</i>
e) Instructional strategies used are designed to promote authentic learning to impact levels of student engagement.	<i>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.</i>
f) Instructional practices are intentionally designed to validate and affirm the culture of students.	<i>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.</i>

<p>g) Staff receives explicit feedback instructional practices on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>
<p>Strengths</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observations revealed that the curriculum was being implemented in all classrooms observed with fidelity (indicator a). • Kindezi Academy teaching staff engage in the practice of lesson internalization using a set of materials developed by the Neighborhood Charter Network (NCN). The NCN “Daily Planning Sheet Template” includes naming the core learning objectives to be taught, defining critical vocabulary, and providing explicit connections between the content of the lesson and the larger goals of the unit. The classroom instructors work through these planning guides independently, however, if classroom observations by Kindezi Academy leadership suggests they need additional support they will be given the opportunity to attend lesson internalization meetings during which this process will be done with the help of a peer (indicator b). • The materials used for lesson internalization do not explicitly identify a wide range of learning strategies, however during focus group interviews the teaching staff noted that they are encouraged to differentiate their classroom practices and that they use a wide variety of instructional strategies in the learning stations and in supplemental resources (indicator c). • Kindezi Academy is working to affirm the culture of all students. They have gathered data using the Panorama assessment platform showing that 82% of the staff believe in the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Building on that commitment, Kindezi Academy leadership are first ensuring that network level structures are in place to provide students with culturally valid and affirming classroom practices. Professional development with Renee Azziz, has been completed, as well as professional development sessions during the summer institute have been provided to classroom instructors to provide them with the classroom practices to validate the cultures of their students (indicator f). • They are using the Whetstone system to provide feedback to the teaching staff. Teachers are given feedback on a weekly or biweekly basis, depending upon their need (indicator g). 	
<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little differentiation was noted during the classroom observations, and the Daily Planning Template does not include a variety of instructional strategies or places to note opportunities for differentiation (indicator d). • Based on the example lesson plans provided, there is a reliance on lesson plans provided by the publisher of the curriculum, particularly in Math. Following these scripted lesson plans is advisable as a classroom instructor is learning the curriculum but can hinder creating authentic learning experiences (indicator e). 	
<p>Recommended Next Steps</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly include a place in the Daily Planning Template for ways to include a variety of instructional strategies and ways to differentiate instruction in the classroom. • Encourage the teaching staff to move away from simply annotating the lesson plans provided by the publisher and instead rewrite them into the Daily Planning Template or some other template of their choosing. To fully internalize the information in the lesson plans they need to process it more deeply than reading and annotating will usually provide. • Possibly include more project-based, or cross-disciplinary opportunities for staff. 	

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- None at this time.

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

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Data Reports, Assessment Calendar, Assessment Materials, Professional Development Agendas, Master Calendar, Instructional Calendars, Focus Group Data, Staff Interviews, Staff Policy and Procedure Handbook

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)

Not Applicable

Rubric Rating

a) Assessments utilized are well aligned to learning standards.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
b) Assessments utilized are varied in order to support a wide range of student learning styles and abilities.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
c) Assessments utilized provide student level data focused on growth and proficiency.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
d) Assessments are administrated with sufficient frequency and results are provided in a timely manner.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
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.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>

Strengths

- The assessments used at Kindezi Academy are either aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards, as is the case of the NWEA MAP, or are from the curricular materials that are aligned to the IAS. Kindezi Academy is employing curriculum-embedded assessments (CEAs) using the Affirm platform and the Wit

& Wisdom curriculum. These assessments are aligned to the learning standards in each lesson and are designed to be less disruptive to the flow of instruction (indicator a).

- The teaching staff at Kindezi Academy have access to a wide variety of assessments, including growth data from Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) which is administered three times a year, CEAs using Affirm through the Wit & Wisdom ELA and Eureka math assessments found in that curriculum. The teaching staff also design and administer their own daily and weekly assessments in the form of “do-now,” exit tickets, topic quizzes and tests. Additional data is available if a student has been identified as needed the additional help of an interventionist, often in the form of NWEA subskill tests (indicator b).
- NWEA MAP is a growth assessment and the data is used for benchmarking. Further, there are student level data walls in each classroom focused on growth and proficiency (indicator c).
- The teaching staff reported that student assessment data is provided quickly and in a form that is useful. Kindezi Academy holds weekly data meetings during which student data is discussed, and student progress is monitored (indicator d).
- Kindezi Academy has an effective Multi-tiered System of Support for students that includes both academic and behavioral specialists. The flow of data to the MTSS team includes NWEA, Wilson phonics, HERO data and independent assessments of student progress. After each NWEA testing cycle, the Kindezi Academy leadership also engage in a “Data Checkpoint Stepback” which is a very deep dive into the most recent student testing data across all subgroups. They use this data to modify teaching practices, professional development and curricular decisions (indicator e).

Opportunities for Improvement

- None at this time.

Recommended Next Steps

- Kindezi Academy is effectively using student academic assessment data in their MTSS processes, in the future they should incorporate Panorama SEL assessment data into MTSS as well.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- None at this time.

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

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Hiring Policy and Procedure manual, Staff Deployment Plan, Organizational Chart, List of school staff and credentials, PD calendar, School Improvement Plan, Teacher evaluation summary data, Survey Data, Focus Group Data, Staff Interviews

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)

Not Applicable

Rubric Rating

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.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
b) Hiring processes are well organized and used to support the success of new staff members.	<i>Emerging: Evidence indicates individuals are starting to create systems to support this practice in some areas.</i>
c) Staffing levels adequately allow staff to maximize instructional time and capacity.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
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.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.</i>
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.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>

f) Professional learning opportunities are determined through analyses of student outcome data and clearly linked to strategic objectives and school improvement goals.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.</i>
g) The teacher evaluation process is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>

Strengths

- As part of the Neighborhood Charter Network, Kindezi Academy uses the policies and procedures developed by NCN. All of the hiring practices for NCN are well developed and well-documented (indicator a).
- Kindezi Academy was adequately staffed during the days of the site visit (indicator c).
- The majority of the Kindezi Academy teachers are licensed in the areas in which they teach. Of those teachers who are not, one application is in review and 2 others are on the pathway to their licensure (indicator d).
- Professional development opportunities in delivering culturally relevant instruction were provided for the Kindezi Academy staff during several sessions of the Summer Institute and is embedded in the Engagement by Design work that the teaching staff engaged with on a regular basis. Differentiated Instruction practices were also addressed during the Summer Institute as part of the Engaging Academics and ELL Supports PD offered. The teaching staff also reported during focus group interviews that using data to differentiate instruction was part of their regular data meetings (Indicator e).
- The professional development calendar is determined through an analysis of student outcome data yearly based on student assessment data. Further, the professional development offerings are modified based on the more frequent Data Checkpoint Stepbacks that are performed after standardized testing is completed (indicator f).
- Kindezi Academy uses the Whetstone platform for teacher evaluation. The teaching staff reported during focus group interviews that the process was transparent, easy to understand and that they received frequent and high-quality feedback (indicator g).

Opportunities for Improvement

- New staff members at Kindezi Academy are supported informally through the assignment of more experienced teacher to mentor new teachers. This mentorship does not appear to happen automatically, rather only when leadership feels the new teacher is struggling. Veteran teachers are asked to work with new teachers at the Summer Institute (indicator b).

Recommended Next Steps

- Consider a more formal mentorship program for teachers who are new to the field and for those who may be experienced teachers but are new to Kindezi Academy. A “New Teacher Academy” that formalizes this relationship and provides specific professional development for these staff members could be beneficial.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

None at this time.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
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.
Data/Artifacts Reviewed	
Student handbook, Staff Handbook, Family Engagement Plan, Survey Data, Focus Group Data	
Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)	
Not Applicable	
Rubric Rating	
a) Procedures are in place for assessing all stakeholder's perceptions, knowledge, and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
b) Procedures are in place for establishing meaningful partnerships with all families and community stakeholders to support the school's mission.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindezi Academy regularly assesses stakeholders perceptions, knowledge and satisfaction with the school using surveys from the Panorama assessment platform (indicator a). • Kindezi Academy employs a family engagement coordinator who establishes meaningful partnerships with the community (indicator b). 	
Opportunities for Improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time. 	
Recommended Next Steps	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time. 	
Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward	

- None at this time.

4.7. Is the school climate responsive to the needs of students, staff, and families?

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Discipline Handbook, List of available interventions, Discipline Data, Classroom Observations, Family Engagement Plan, Focus Group Data, Staff, Student, Family Interviews

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation (if applicable)

Not Applicable

Rubric Rating

a) A multi-tiered framework designed to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students is implemented with fidelity.	<i>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.</i>
b) Culturally responsive and evidenced based interventions are explicitly identified and implemented throughout the school to support the needs of students.	<i>Implementing: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 50-89% of instructional staff.</i>
c) Explicit procedures for facilitating the development of strong, positive relationships between adults and students are clearly communicated to and implemented by all staff.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.</i>
d) Procedures are in place for assessing staff, student, and family perspectives to ensure a sense of connectedness and engagement with the school.	<i>Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice is fully implemented across all areas.</i>

Strengths

- Kindezi uses Love and Logic and HeroK-12. Staff and students are all well-versed in both frameworks and understand how the two systems work together to provide a full multi-tiered system that supports positive behaviors and social and emotional development. HeroK-12 is used to track student

behaviors and award Hero points for positive behaviors, while the SEL skills that are the framework of Love and Logic are used when a student violates community norms. The system is designed around the 7 leadership habits of: 1. Be Proactive, 2. Begin With the End in Mind, 3. Put First Things First, 4. Think Win-Win, 5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood 6. Synergize, 7. Sharpen the Saw. Students gain Hero points for these behaviors. When all three systems—Love and Logic, HeroK12 and 7 Habits- are combined as they are at Kindezi, the result is a student-centered framework that allows a child friendly entry into the system (the awarding of points as in a PBIS based system through HeroK12), a set of cultural norms (the 7 habits) and a set of responses and interventions (Love and Logic) for when students violate the cultural norms (indicator a).

- The Love and Logic framework is designed to develop strong positive relationships between adults and students. The adults at Kindezi Academy are well versed in the Love and Logic system and implement it with fidelity (indicator c).
- Kindezi Academy regularly assesses staff, student and family perspectives on connectedness and engagement through surveys administered through the Panorama platform (indicator d).

Opportunities for Improvement

- The interventions used at Kindezi Academy are explicitly identified and implemented effectively throughout the school, with all students who participated in the focus groups able to articulate the behavior framework and how it impacts them. It is unclear, however, how these interventions are culturally responsive or how the culture of students has been considered in the design of the system (indicator b).

Recommended Next Steps

- Provide an opportunity for the Kindezi Academy staff to reflect on the knowledge gained during the culturally relevant teaching practices professional development and how it can be applied to the Kindezi Academy behavior framework.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- Consider bringing an expert in culturally responsive school climate to the next Summer Institute to provide professional development to Kindezi Academy staff.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and families clear and helpful?

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Student handbook, Staff Handbook, Family Engagement Plan, Family Interviews, Welcome Packet, School Newsletters, Parent Correspondence, Student progress report cards/forms, Focus Group Data

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation/Artifacts Reviewed on (if applicable)

Not Applicable

Rubric Rating

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 instructional staff.
b) Procedures for responding to concerns of families are clearly defined and implemented by all school staff and validated by families.	Implementing: Evidence indicates practice is implemented in most but not all areas.
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 across all areas.
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 occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.

Strengths

- Focus group interviews with family members of Kindezi Academy students, teaching staff and school leadership revealed that the staff and leadership communicate with Kindezi Academy families through a variety of channels, and that the type and frequency of communication is appropriate. Student academic and behavioral data are easily available through Parent Square and the PowerSchool parent portal (indicator a).

- Focus group interviews with family members of Kindezi Academy students revealed that weekly newsletters and other family communications are provided in the native home language of the student's family. Academic and behavioral information is also provided in the language of the home (indicator c).
- Kindezi Academy communicates with families using a variety of different methods including phone calls, emails, texts, as well as the school website, social media accounts, newsletters and packets sent home (indicator d).

Opportunities for Improvement

- Kindezi Academy has clearly defined procedures for responding to families, and their procedures were well articulated by the staff. Families who participated in the focus group were familiar with specific members of the leadership team that they would reach out to if their student violated school norms, or needed additional help, but they did not seem to know the actual policies and procedures. However, a search through the Family Handbook and the family section of the webpage did not reveal a written copy of these procedures for families to consult (indicator b).

Recommended Next Steps

- Add a section to the Parent Handbook that includes the procedures for responding to the concerns of families, who to speak to in school leadership for different issues, and what their role as a family is in maintaining the success of Kindezi Academy.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- None at this time.

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

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Interviews with general education staff, special education staff, leadership, students with IEPs, and families of students with IEPs, building wide walk thru, special education class observations, onsite special education file review, IIEP portal, IDOE INView portal, and IDOE RDA Data.

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation/Artifacts Reviewed on (if applicable)

Not Applicable: No Outstanding Litigation or Pending Mediations

Rubric Rating

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.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs for 90-100% of students with IEPs.
d) IEP goals are reviewed and revised annually as determined by present levels of student level of performance.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs for 90-100% of students with IEPs.
e) IEP plans explicitly identify requirements for specifically designed curriculum and instruction to align with student needs.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs for 90-100% of students with IEPs.

Strengths

- Kindezi has done a tremendous job growing their special education programs. They have made notable gains in the RDA process in the last several years.
- NCN has recently experienced a transition in their special education leadership team. The previous director was the first original employee of the NCN network and retired. She is to be commended for selecting her predecessor two year prior to her retirement and training her as part of this transitional time. A leadership change like this can be a make or break moment for a small charter network. The leadership team, both incoming and outgoing, should be commended on their approach and implementation of this leadership transition. It would be wise for OEI to use this transition as an example of best practice for other charter schools navigating a leadership shift of this nature.
- The staff at Kindezi are passionate and devoted to their mission, vision, students, school, and community. It is important to note that during staff interviews that numerous staff that have children with IEPs choose to send their own children to Kindezi. They all reported being very happy with the services. One mother of a student with an IEP, who is also a Kindezi teacher shared, "I wouldn't want my child in any other program than ours. She has grown so much."

Opportunities for Improvement

- DOE RDA Findings (See Attached): Kindezi had made monumental growth in the area of special education per the RDA system since 2018. At the time of this site visit Kindezi earned a score of 44.62 in the IDOE RDA process. In order to meet the standard schools must score 44.71. This means that Kindezi is .09 points away from meeting the state standard.
- Sensory Room: NCN schools are known for their sensory rooms. The sensory rooms are always a highlight of the special education services offered to NCN students. At the time of the site visit, the sensory had been removed due to facility and space issues.
- Kindezi special education staff are in need of special education specific professional development. They have engaged in all general education staff trainings, but have not received special education specific training in many years.

Recommended Next Steps

- Meeting the state standard in the upcoming year of RDA efforts is an attainable goal and should be a priority.
- To ensure the high quality special education services that Kindezi families of students with IEPs have growth accustomed, it's important that Kindezi solve their facilities issues and bring the sensory room and its programming back as soon as possible.
- Kindezi special education staff should engage with national special education professional development that leadership believes grows their skillset and furthers the mission of Kindezi.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

Kindezi has a strong founder and leadership team. They are encouraged to build partnerships with organizations they believe best support her school moving forward. This can include, but is not limited to: The Center for Learner Equity <https://www.centerforlearnerequity.org/>, The Council for Exceptional Children <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>, and Educating All Learners <https://educatingalllearners.org/>

Special Education site visit and audit performed by Dr. Addie Angelov

4.10. Is the school implementing best practice related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?

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.

Data/Artifacts Reviewed

Confidential Student File reviews, Focus Group Data, Reviews of ILPs, Review of ILP Conference Meeting notes

Corresponding Indiana Code or Law Violation/Artifacts Reviewed on (if applicable)

No Indiana Code or Law Violations were found

Rubric Rating

a) Staff have a clear understanding of legal obligations, current legislation, research, and effective practices relating to the provision of services for ELL students.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% 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.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% 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 across all areas.
d) ILP plans include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.
e) ILP plans explicitly identify needs for targeted instruction to align with student needs.	Sustaining: Evidence indicates practice occurs among 90-100% of instructional staff.

Strengths

- Kindezi Academy staff have a clear understanding of the legal obligations, research and effective practices relating to ELL services. Leadership at Kindezi are trained in sheltered instruction techniques, WIDA administration, and are also engaged in continued learning in EL best practices (indicator a).
- As part of the NCN, the staff at Kindezi have access to high quality professional development in the area of English language learning. The network coordinates and provides professional development for both Kindezi Academy and Enlace Academy and focuses on providing knowledge of best practices to all classroom instructors (indicator b).
- The procedures are in place to implement differentiated instructional strategies for ELL students. The ELL coordinator at Kindezi works with each grade level to ensure that student needs are being met, and the ELL team at Kindezi performs both push-in and pull-out instruction for ELL students (indicator c).
- Kindezi Academy uses the ELlevation online platform for ILP plans, and inspection of their use of that resource revealed that ILP plans included student specific goals, plans for ongoing assessments and targeted instruction plans (indicators d & e).

Opportunities for Improvement

- None at this time.

Recommended Next Steps

- None at this time.

Potential Partnerships/Organizations Moving Forward

- None at this time.

Closing and Recommendations

Kindezi Academy has put into place a strong leadership team and a dedicated teaching staff who are implementing a strong educational model. Having established a strong school culture and developed the skills of the academic staff, the school is in a strong position to show student growth over the next few years. Like other schools, Kindezi Academy has suffered some setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is overall in a good position moving forward.