

## Section 1: Performance Review

### Academic Success Performance Review

Steel City Academy was founded to redefine the expectations, results and the model for a K-12 education specifically for the high-needs student population in Gary who have had very limited options for a high quality education for decades. In our first charter term, we believe we have done just that by fulfilling our mission of preparing our students with the knowledge, purpose, power and transformative experiences to choose from boundless opportunities and earning an A Letter Grade from the state. At Steel City Academy, we are providing a radically different school experience than many of our surrounding schools as evidenced by our high levels of retention, academic growth and attainment results, A letter rating and positive school climate. We also recognize that we have areas of growth that we will prioritize in the next charter term to ensure we meet standards in all Academic Success indicators. Despite inconsistent academic assessments throughout the state of Indiana you will see that Steel City Academy went from meeting 0% of the applicable Academic Success indicators in SY17 to meeting standards in 67% of the SY20 applicable Academic Success indicators. Additionally, with Steel City Academy’s intense academic and data-driven model you will see below our accelerated academic growth and attainment rates that will certainly allow us to meet proficiency standards in the next charter term.

| ICSB Performance Dashboard Deficiency   | Rating                 | Root Cause   |
|---|------------------------|--|
| 1.1a (2019-2020): School’s Overall Attendance                                 | Does Not Meet Standard | Unsuccessful chronic absenteeism data monitoring and strategies to address chronically absent students, further affected in SY20 Quarter 4 due to COVID  |
| 1.2a-1.2e (2018-2019): Student Proficiency Data in Math/ELA state assessments | Does Not Meet Standard | Due to intentionally serving a high-need student population there are large academic proficiency gaps to close compounded by challenges measuring longitudinal data to track student attainment and growth due to three different Indiana state assessments with two different modes |
| 1.2f-1.2g (2018-2019): Student Subgroup Proficiency Data (FRL/SPED, Race)     | Does Not Meet Standard | Due to intentionally serving a high-need student population there are large academic proficiency gaps to close and all Steel City Academy students are categorized in a subgroup and lack of certified teacher candidates for Special Education services                             |
| 1.3b (2018-2019): Lowest Quartile Makes Expected Annual Growth in Math        | Does Not Meet Standard | Inconsistent fidelity to rigorous math curriculum and lack of certified teacher candidates for math positions  |

For each ICSB Indicator with a deficiency rating you will find an overview of each root cause identified, evidence of action taken to course correct and appropriate timeline for meeting standard.

#### ***1.1a: (2019-2020): School’s Overall Attendance: Does Not Meet Standard***

***Root Cause: Unsuccessful chronic absenteeism data monitoring and strategies to address chronically absent students, further affected in SY20 Quarter 4 due to COVID.***

Currently Steel City Academy is at 25.7% chronic absenteeism vs. 13.7% state average (Source: INView, 2018-2019). Research states that in communities with high levels of poverty there is a significant increase in the percentage of chronically absent students. In the community of Gary, our students face many of these challenges that contribute to chronic absenteeism such as caring for younger siblings, lack of transportation if the bus is missed, entering the workforce at a younger age, side effects from witnessing and experiencing violence and so much more. For the first three years as an organization the school did not intentionally address these factors or monitor this subgroup.

Additionally, Steel City Academy saw a decrease in our overall yearly attendance for the SY21 due to COVID. Due to the circumstances, Steel City Academy faced challenges effectively tracking attendance systems in Quarter 4 within our student information system: PowerSchool. We began tracking our student attendance using both a Google Form attendance sheet and student virtual “in person” attendance in Homeroom in a separate tracker. Below you will see our average attendance rate that was submitted in our ICSB End of Year report, however, we did not transfer this data over properly to PowerSchool which resulted in an improper Attendance (AT) Report that did not reflect our higher attendance rates.

| Grade Levels | Average Weekly Assignment Completion Rate (%) | Average Weekly Student Attendance Rate (%) | Average Weekly Communication with Students |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| K            | 68.55%  | 78.21%                                     | 92.14%                                     |
| 1            | 82.84%  | 88.32%                                     | 96.15%                                     |
| 2            | 69.41%  | 90.37%                                     | 94.81%                                     |
| 7            | 72.12%  | 88.59%                                     | 92.78%                                     |
| 8            | 68.07%  | 92.72%                                     | 96.57%                                     |
| 9            | 61.47%  | 86.56%                                     | 89.92%                                     |
| 10           | 72.30%  | 87.46%                                     | 92.45%                                     |
| 11           | 68.78%  | 80.16%                                     | 91.57%                                     |
| 12           | 88.84%  | 98.28%                                     | 98.28%                                     |

**Action Taken: FORMED ACADEMY ATTENDANCE TEAM AND IMPLEMENTED TARGETED INTERVENTIONS**

In SY19, we formed our Academy Attendance Team which began to create our systems, policies and tiered intervention systems as students worked their way towards chronic absenteeism. This team meets weekly to track daily and weekly attendance percentages by student, grade levels and school. This level of detailed data analysis allowed us to place students into particular tiers and ensure they were getting the necessary interventions, supports and accountability. The Academy Attendance Team works closely with the Homeroom Advisors, to execute interventions that reduce chronic absenteeism. We use the following tiered system to gauge student attendance patterns, provide intervention and assist before referring students to truancy court.

- **Tier 1 (1-3 Days Absent):** Homeroom Advisor makes contact with parent and student.
- **Yellow (4-6 Days Absent):** Social Worker calls parent and notifies the number of days missed and student participates in phone call if present at school.
- **Orange (7-9 Days Absent):** Parent meeting with Social Worker and Homeroom Advisor at 7 absences. A letter indicating a student has 7-9 unexcused absences is generated. This letter includes action steps for 10+ unexcused absences and is signed by the parent and student at the meeting.
- **Red (10+ Days Absent):** A DCS call/truancy letter is generated and the family and student is referred to truancy court. At ten days absent, all students are required by law to be referred to truancy court. We also established a partnership with a program called Project Rebuild led by City of Gary and Judge Inga Shannon. When students hit the ten day absent mark they get placed into this program with their parents to assess the root cause of their attendance issues and facilitate the necessary solution. For example, there are programs for mentorship, child care solutions, therapists and more. We have seen this as an incredible program that improves the attendance for our chronically absent students.

In response to the attendance challenges faced during COVID, we revised our attendance taking policies for Quarter 1 in SY21 to ensure we tracked attendance in PowerSchool in order to successfully submit accurate data via the Attendance (AT) Report submitted to the Indiana Department of Education. Every Homeroom Advisor across the Academy takes attendance in PowerSchool within the first ten minutes and for all subsequent classes for the remainder of the day. Below you will see the current PowerSchool attendance percentages by week for each of our grade bands.

|                         | Elementary | Middle School | High School |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Week of 9.7 Attendance  | 67%        | 73.3%         | 77.4%       |
| Week of 9.14 Attendance | 92%        | 77%           | 82%         |
| Week of 9.21 Attendance | 94%        | 88%           | 84.2%       |
| Week of 9.28 Attendance | 95%        | 91%           | 89.9%       |
| Week of 10.5 Attendance | 95%        | 92.5%         | 90.1%       |

If we stay on track with these attendance averages we will drastically improve our attendance as measured by the Attendance (AT) Report and be able to meet standard for this indicator by the end of this year. Meeting this attendance metric has been a much harder feat in the time of COVID and with a large percentage of our students learning virtually both in the Quarter 4 of SY20 and Quarter 1 of SY21. We needed to be incredibly innovative about our strategies to ensure that our families were safe with the resources they needed while keeping a huge focus on human connection and academic outcomes. Our school and its' comprehensive continual learning plan was recognized in a national case study by national Bellwether Education Partners entitled [“Promise in the Time of Quarantine: Exploring Schools’ Responses to COVID-19”](#) as one of 12 schools across the country with promising strategies in the time of COVID that other schools could learn from.

**1.2a-1.2e (2018-2019): Student Proficiency Data in Math/ELA state assessments: Does Not Meet Standard**

**Root Cause: Due to intentionally serving a high-need student population there are large academic proficiency gaps to close and compounded by challenges measuring longitudinal data to track student attainment and growth due to three different Indiana state assessments with two different modes.**

Research shows that it takes up to three years to catch a student up who is three or more years academically below grade level and the time it takes to close the academic gaps can take even longer the older the students are. Steel City Academy’s mission intentionally targets the highest needs population of students in Gary. Additionally, due to community demand, Steel City Academy pivoted from opening as an elementary school to opening with seventh and ninth grade students. Although this decision led to enrollment targets being met our first two years and increased community and parent buy-in, our Middle and High School students enter Steel City Academy multiple grade levels behind and in very low achievement percentiles on nationally normed assessments with less time to close the academic gaps.

For example, seventh grade is the entry level grade for our Middle School and High School. In SY19, as measured by the NWEA assessments, our students’ average RIT Math score of 211.6 placed them in the middle of fourth grade and their 205.1 RIT Reading score places them at the end of fourth grade using the

NWEA 2015 Student Status Norms graphs.

| 2018-2019 7th Grade Beginning of Year Average NWEA RIT Score and Aligned Grade Level |             |          |                           |
|--|-------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Grade  | Subject     | Fall RIT | Corresponding Grade Level |
| 7th  | Mathematics | 211.6    | Middle of 4th Grade       |
| 7th  | Reading     | 205.1    | End of 4th Grade          |

Once enrollment began in our elementary grades, we were surprised to confront the same challenge. In SY19, we opened our elementary school and our founding kindergarten class had only 24% of students on grade level at the beginning of the year and 0% of our founding first graders as measured by mCLASS DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment. In the beginning of SY20, an average kindergartener at Steel City Academy scored in the 4th achievement percentile on the NWEA MAP assessment in reading and the 5th achievement percentile in math.

The challenge of closing the large academic proficiency gaps were compounded by challenges measuring longitudinal data to track student attainment and growth due to three different Indiana state assessments with two different modes. We have not had a consistent target from the state of Indiana on how students' proficiency would be assessed. In our first charter term, we administered ISTEP and ILEARN for Middle School and ECAs and ISTEP 10 for High School. In addition, we went from paper and pencil to online which had a negative impact on our proficiency levels as we did not properly prepare our students with the technology skills or practice navigating similar platforms to be successful. However, we have not used this as an excuse to not track, monitor and meet ambitious academic growth and attainment results. Though our students are demonstrating significant growth, we are not yet meeting standards currently on many of the student proficiency indicators.

**Action Taken: FOCUS ON GROWTH TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

Despite the entry point and lack of consistent assessment, we have demonstrated annual student growth rates far above national averages. We also know that wherever our students start, we have an academic model that ensures they have accelerated academic growth. We have leveraged nationally normed assessments to track growth and proficiency but the assessment is only directional because it is not exactly aligned to the various assessment versions the state has implemented. We have implemented the NWEA MAP and SAT to gauge student academics, analyze data and respond to student needs on a consistent basis. We set ambitious yet feasible annual academic goals for students to achieve 1.25 years growth in the academic year and 70% of students at 75th percentile on the end of year benchmark. With our continual rigorous instruction, unwavering high expectations and belief in our students, we are closing that achievement gap and getting high percentages of students to grade level mastery within two years with us.

When there was a consistent Indiana assessment test you can see that we drastically improved our pass rate proficiency percentage in just one academic year. For example, after our first year we only had 8% of our students pass the 7th Grade ELA ISTEP and that pass rate percentage jumped to 31% pass rate in SY18. Our 8th grade pass rate percentage went from 31% in SY17 to 48% in SY18. 10th Grade ISTEP pass rate went from 11% in SY17 and 31% in SY18.

| ISTEP Pass Rate Increase from SY17 to SY18 in English Language Arts |                 |                 |         |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Test  | % Pass in 16-17 | % Pass in 17-18 | Growth% |
|   |                 |                 |         |

|        |     |     |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| 7ELA   | 8%  | 31% | 23% |
| 8ELA   | 31% | 48% | 17% |
| 10ELA* | 11% | 31% | 20% |

That same year, overall our elementary students grew over 1.37 years from Fall to Spring on the NWEA Math assessment and 1.29 years from Fall to Spring on the NWEA Reading Assessment with over 75% of all students meeting their 1.25 years of academic growth goal. We know that with our continued high levels of retention and this consistent level of accelerated academic growth, our students will be grade level proficient by the time they enter our third grade.

| NWEA 2018-2019                          | Years Growth |         |      | Percentage of Students Meeting Growth Projection |         |      | Projected Proficiency Rates on ISTEP |      |
|---|--------------|---------|------|--|---------|------|--------------------------------------|------|
|   | Overall      | Reading | Math | Overall  | Reading | Math | Reading                              | Math |
| Accelerate Institute Target             | 1.25         | 1.25    | 1.25 | 65%  | 65%     | 65%  | N/A                                  | N/A  |
| Steel City Elem. Fall to Winter 2018-19 | 1.09         | 1.08    | 1.09 | 52%  | 61%     | 43%  | N/A                                  | N/A  |
| Steel City Elem. Fall to Spring 2018-19 | 1.33         | 1.29    | 1.37 | 75%  | 70%     | 79%  | N/A                                  | N/A  |

In our Middle and High School in SY19 we set a goal that we would achieve 1.25 years growth in both Math and ELA as measured by the NWEA assessment from Fall to Spring and that 65% of our students met their individual growth goals. In just one academic year we grew 2.3 years in math putting us in the 93rd percentile for national growth with 72% of students meeting 1.25 years of growth. We grew over 2.5 years in Reading with 63% of students meeting 1.25 years of growth. All data was analyzed and computed through the Accelerate Institute.

| NWEA 2018-2019 Data MS/HS            | Schoolwide Data: Growth |           |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
|                                      | Math                    | Reading   |
| School Fall to Spring Years Growth   | 2.3 years               | 2.5 years |
| School Conditional Growth Percentile | 93                      | 86        |
| % Meeting Growth Goals               | 72%                     | 63%       |

| NWEA 2018-2019 Data MS/HS Broken Down by Grade Level<br>% of students meet 1.25 years growth |      |         |
|--|------|---------|
| Grade  | Math | Reading |
| 7  | 71%  | 60%     |
| 8  | 51%  | 65%     |
| 9  | 68%  | 58%     |
| 10   | 87%  | 64%     |

In SY20, we pivoted to all ninth through twelfth graders taking a beginning, middle and end of year PSAT/SAT with the goal of 65% of students growing 1.25 years in one academic school year. Although we were unfortunately not able to take our end of year assessment due to COVID, you can see that in just one semester we increased the percentage of students meeting the college ready benchmark by 19% with 71% of students growing more than .75 years in just one semester.

| Steel City Academy (2019-20) | Average Score   |                   | Percentage Meeting Grade-Level College Ready Benchmark |                   | Average Change in Score | Percentage Meeting Growth Goal |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                              | Fall 2019-20 SY | Winter 2019-20 SY | Fall 2019-20 SY  | Winter 2019-20 SY | Fall to Winter          | Fall to Winter                 |
| 9th Grade - COMPOSITE        | 677             | 755               | 4%   | 23%               | 75.3                    | 71%                            |
| 9th Grade - EBRW             | 337             | 382               | 20%  | 34%               | 42.9                    | 71%                            |
| 9th Grade - Math             | 339             | 376               | 2%   | 15%               | 34.8                    | 66%                            |

In just one academic year we also moved our kindergarten class from 24% on grade level to 66% on or above grade level benchmarks and moved our first grade students from 0% at or above the grade level benchmark to 69% at or above the benchmark in just one academic year. We know that with this accelerated academic growth our students will be grade level proficiency by the time they enter our third grade.

|     | Red - Well Below Benchmark |                |     |              | Yellow - Below Benchmark |               |     |               | Green - At Benchmark |              |     |                 | Blue - Above Benchmark |              |     |            | At or Above Benchmark |               |     |                 |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----|---------------|----------------------|--------------|-----|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|-----|------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----|-----------------|
|     | BOY                        | MOY            | EOY | BOYtoEOY     | BOY                      | MOY           | EOY | BOYtoEOY      | BOY                  | MOY          | EOY | BOYtoEOY        | BOY                    | MOY          | EOY | BOYtoEOY   | BOY                   | MOY           | EOY | BOYtoEOY        |
| Kdg | 62%                        | 19%            | 10% | -52%         | 14%                      | 14%           | 0%  | -14%          | 10%                  | 14%          | 14% | 4%              | 14%                    | 52%          | 79% | 65%        | 24%                   | 67%           | 90% | 66%             |
| 1st | 100%                       | 58%            | 15% | -85%         | 0%                       | 12%           | 15% | 15%           | 0%                   | 15%          | 30% | 30%             | 0%                     | 15%          | 38% | 38%        | 0%                    | 30%           | 69% | 69%             |
| K-1 | 83%                        | 40%            | 13% | -70%         | 6%                       | 13%           | 9%  | 3%            | 4%                   | 15%          | 23% | 19%             | 6%                     | 32%          | 55% | 49%        | 11%                   | 47%           | 79% | 68%             |
| TRC | 13/24<br>54.2%             | 14/24<br>58.3% |     | 1/24<br>4.2% | 4/24<br>16.7%            | 7/24<br>29.7% |     | 3/24<br>12.5% | 6/24<br>25%          | 2/24<br>8.3% |     | -4/24<br>-16.7% | 1/24<br>4.2%           | 1/24<br>4.2% |     | 0/24<br>0% | 7/24<br>29.7%         | 3/24<br>12.5% |     | -4/24<br>-16.7% |

In just one academic year, we moved them to the 33rd percentile in reading and 40th percentile in math. We will close the achievement gap with this continued acceleration of learning.

| NWEA Reading     | Percentage Meeting Growth Projection |                   | School Conditional Growth Percentile |                   | Percentage Meeting 50th Percentile Achievement |                   |                   | Achievement Percentile |                   |                   |       | Projected Percent Proficient | Years Growth   |                | NCE Growth     |                |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | Winter 2018-19 SY                    | Spring 2018-19 SY | Winter 2018-19 SY                    | Spring 2018-19 SY | Fall 2018-19 SY                                | Winter 2018-19 SY | Spring 2018-19 SY | Fall 2018-19 SY        | Winter 2018-19 SY | Spring 2018-19 SY | ISTEP |                              | Fall to Winter | Fall to Spring | Fall to Winter | Fall to Spring |
| Schoolwide (K-1) | 61%                                  | 70%               | 71                                   | 94                | 24%  | 25%               | 38%               | 9                      | 13                | 33                | N/A   | 1.08                         | 1.29           | 4.8            | 19.1           |                |
| Kindergarten     | 61%                                  | 52%               | 68                                   | 75                | 26%  | 30%               | 52%               | 20                     | 25                | 39                | N/A   |                              |                |                |                |                |
| 1st Grade        | 61%                                  | 85%               | 74                                   | 99                | 21%  | 21%               | 27%               | 4                      | 7                 | 28                | N/A   |                              |                |                |                |                |

| NWEA Math        | Percentage Meeting Growth Projection |                   | School Conditional Growth Percentile |                   | Percentage Meeting 50th Percentile Achievement |                   |                   | Achievement Percentile |                   |                   |       | Projected Percent Proficient | Years Growth   |                | NCE Growth     |                |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | Winter 2018-19 SY                    | Spring 2018-19 SY | Winter 2018-19 SY                    | Spring 2018-19 SY | Fall 2018-19 SY                                | Winter 2018-19 SY | Spring 2018-19 SY | Fall 2018-19 SY        | Winter 2018-19 SY | Spring 2018-19 SY | ISTEP |                              | Fall to Winter | Fall to Spring | Fall to Winter | Fall to Spring |
| Schoolwide (K-1) | 43%                                  | 79%               | 74                                   | 99                | 22%  | 25%               | 43%               | 5                      | 8                 | 40                | N/A   | 1.09                         | 1.37           | 5.1            | 26.7           |                |
| Kindergarten     | 39%                                  | 76%               | 60                                   | 98                | 13%  | 26%               | 43%               | 5                      | 6                 | 32                | N/A   |                              |                |                |                |                |
| 1st Grade        | 46%                                  | 81%               | 83                                   | 99                | 29%  | 25%               | 42%               | 5                      | 10                | 47                | N/A   |                              |                |                |                |                |

With our high levels of student retention rates as outlined in 1.1c/1.1d, we know that with this continual, accelerated academic growth will continue and ultimately increase student proficiency results which will be reflected in indicators 1.4a-1.4g on the new accountability dashboard. For example, our founding ninth

grade classes' ISTEP 10 pass rate data is an example of the increased proficiency levels over time. In three academic years we went from a 12% ISTEP pass rate to a 70% ISTEP pass rate in mathematics and a 22% ISTEP pass rate to a 76% ISTEP pass rate in ELA.

| Overall ISTEP 10 Pass Rate for Math SY18-SY20 for Class of 2020 |                             |                             |                             |                       |                         |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Class of  | SY18 EOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY19 EOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY20 MOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY20 EOY Total Pass % | EOY Total Pass % Gen Ed |
| 2020  | 12%                         | 21.10%                      | 34.04%                      | 70.21%                | 82.50%                  |

| Overall ISTEP 10 Pass Rate for ELA SY18-SY20 for Class of 2020 |                             |                             |                             |                       |                         |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Class of   | SY18 EOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY19 EOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY20 MOY ISTEP 10 Pass Rate | SY20 EOY Total Pass % | EOY Total Pass % Gen Ed |
| 2020   | 22%                         | 57.50%                      | 68.09%                      | 76.60%                | 90.00%                  |

Despite the fact that Steel City Academy is not meeting standards on these proficiency academic indicators, in just its second year, Steel City Academy students were outperforming all local traditional district and charter schools in Gary in English proficiency levels.

| Overall MS/HS ELA ISTEP Pass Rate |                 |                        |           |              |                 |                        |                             |             |                            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Schools                           |                 | Gary Community Schools | Roosevelt | 21st Century | Gary Lighthouse | Aspire Charter Academy | Charter School of the Dunes | Thea Bowman | SY17-18 Steel City Academy |
| Year                              | Grade Level     | 23.40%                 | 19.67%    | 36.00%       | 30.50%          | 35.00%                 | 30.05%                      | 18.50%      | 37.90%                     |
| SY18                              | 7th ISTEP Pass  | 29.30%                 | 19.00%    | 50.00%       | 34.00%          | 33.00%                 | 29.10%                      | 19.00%      | 33.00%                     |
| SY18                              | 8th ISTEP Pass  | 23.90%                 | 21.00%    | 22.00%       | 27.90%          | 37.00%                 | 31.00%                      | 18.00%      | 49.00%                     |
| SY18                              | 10th ISTEP Pass | 17.00%                 | 19.00%    | 36.00%       | 29.60%          | N/A                    | N/A                         | N/A         | 31.70%                     |

Moving forward, we will continue to leverage growth assessments and Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) to continue our trajectory in closing the achievement gap for our high-need student population. In August each year, Steel City Academy administers a universal screener for all students so that we have national normed data to properly schedule students and identify our tier two and tier three students in our MTSS. Steel City Academy then administers the same assessment in the winter and spring to track growth and ultimately attainment. We have uniquely created our school master schedule to ensure additional, targeted remediation for these student subgroups in order to accelerate their academic progress. Any student that is more than one grade level behind receives a minimum of 160 minutes of additional instruction each week in our "Gear Groups".

In addition to the targeted instruction, we want to ensure that 100% of our students receive instruction, assessment and feedback on grade level standards. Steel City Academy implemented academy wide weekly "Did We Win the Week" formative assessments aligned to grade level standards in Math and ELA for all grade levels. On Fridays we then facilitate a Data Power Hour with our staff to analyze mastery data in order to create our reteach and reassessment plan for the upcoming week. In our weekly academic formative assessment tracker every teacher across our organization enters mastery data on the

weekly formative for each student. Our data tracker than provides specific subgroup analysis of the percentage of students at 70% or higher mastery for our Special Education and Lowest Quartile students in order to provide intentional academic remediation the following week.

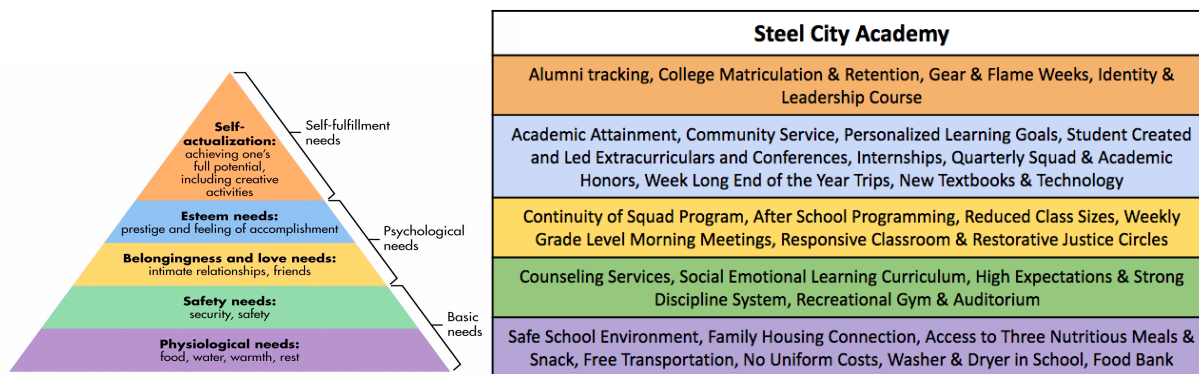
**1.2f-1.2g (2018-2019): Student Subgroup Proficiency Data (FRL/SPED, Race): Did Not Meet Standard**

**Root Cause: Due to intentionally serving a high-need student population there are large academic proficiency gaps to close and all Steel City Academy students are categorized in a subgroup and lack certified teacher candidates for Special Education services.**

We intentionally serve a high need, under-resourced community and believe we have a moral imperative to provide additional support and resources to ensure our families have all of the resources they need in order to be successful. The majority of our students are in a subgroup: 92% Black; 2.3% Hispanic; 3.2% multi-racial; 75.4% F/RL; 13.1% SPED. Therefore, if we are not meeting 1.2a-1.2e we will not meet this indicator. Because we serve a high-need population, we have high and increasing numbers of students that identify with special needs. In our founding year we began with one certified Special Education teacher, however, as our Special Education student population continued to grow we were not able to scale our Special Education staff due to a lack of certified Special Education teachers to be able to effectively execute our model.

**Action Taken: LEVERAGE MASLOW’S HIERARCHY AND ALIGN STAFFING MODEL**

In its design, Steel City Academy created a school model aligned to a Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. It will take us time to show the ultimate reversal of the achievement gap and closing the opportunity gap, which is our goal. Below you will find some of the unique elements of Steel City Academy’s model.



Additionally, in SY20, Steel City Academy revised our Special Education instructional vision to provide students opportunities to pull out Math and ELA resource room instruction with a Special Education teacher and push in Math and ELA support in General Education classrooms with a Special Education paraprofessional. This model ensures that students are still getting grade level content coupled with the additional time and accommodations.

**1.3b (2018-2019): Lowest Quartile Makes Expected Annual Growth in Math: Did Not Meet Standard**

**Root Cause: Inconsistent fidelity to rigorous math curriculum and lack of certified teacher candidates for math position.**

Although we saw academic growth as measured by NWEA for our lowest quartile we did not see that data transfer to ISTEP growth. One reason for that was that our master schedule had our Tier 3 students



missing the grade level content lesson practice time to do their pull out math MTSS block. Without the independent practice time of the grade level content they certainly would not have increased levels of mastery. Additionally, there was limited oversight to a consistent use of the rigorous Eureka curriculum across the Academy. Instead teachers were often supplementing their own materials which inevitably would decrease the level of rigor. Many questions were right with simply math computation or multiple choice rather than aligned to the rigor or format of ISTEP assessments.

We have struggled to find highly effective math teachers in our recruitment process which ultimately leads to us making an inadequate hire. With the lower content knowledge we did not properly supplement the professional development experiences and content and knowledge building strategies to account for this gap. Additionally, our Director of Instruction for STEM had limited math knowledge and a lack of buy in from her team which did not support our improvements in our math data.

**Action Taken: IMPLEMENT RIGOROUS MATH CURRICULUM WITH FIDELITY AND SHIFT STEM STAFFING STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT**

For SY20, we made an organizational decision that all K-12 students would use the Eureka curriculum. We invested in all math teachers attending Eureka led professional development and required teachers to use the curriculum with fidelity. Additionally, we created assessment calendars that principals held teachers accountable to following.

For SY21, we revised our instructional leadership structure to have a STEM Content Mentor Teacher to provide additional content building professional development sessions, co planning sessions for both unit plans and lesson plans for all math teachers and more time collaborating on the unpacking of standards and internalization of the rigorous material. Our math teachers also get more observations and shorter cycles of feedback to ensure we are accelerating our math teacher effectiveness which will ultimately increase student academic results.

**Action Taken for All Academic Indicators: INCREASED LEVEL OF BOARD OVERSIGHT**

In order to support the school team and ensure increased level of board oversight on the Academic Success of the organization Steel City Academy formed the Academic Working Group (subgroup of the board) in July of 2020. The Academic Working Group meets monthly to monitor academic data and strategies to move the needle on our academic data aligned to these indicators. As each working group did for SY21, the Academic Working Group created a strategic plan with priority key results aligned to the indicators, important milestones to monitor and clarity of roles and responsibilities. You can see a portion of that strategic plan below.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Owners: Academic Working Group</b>  |  |
| <b>Leader: Angel Turner</b>  | <b>Other Members: Catherine Burns and Katie Kirley</b> |
| <b>Key Result 1.1</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet Standard: 85% or more students on track for graduation for each cohort grade at beginning of grade level</li> <li>● Exceed Standard: 95% or more students on track for graduation for each cohort grade at beginning of grade level</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Key Result 1.2</b>  |  |

- 1.6.a/b The proficiency on the state assessment in English Language Arts/Math for each subgroup compared with traditional public schools with the same tested grades located within the same school corporation. (Special Education and Bottom Quartile of Students)
  - Meet Standard: 2.0 or higher than traditional public schools
  - Exceed Standard: 10% or higher than traditional public schools

**Key Result 1.3**

- 1.4.e/f The percentage of students who have been enrolled for at least two (2) full school years achieving proficiency on the state assessment in English Language Arts/Math.

Exceeds the Standard:

- More than 80%. Meets the Standard:
- Between 70% - 79.9%. Approaches the Standard:

**Milestones:** <Milestones include key strategies as well as actions added as course correction. They address roll out, staff training and quality. New milestones are added out of WTMG Meetings. Include those action steps here and color code as completed.>

**July/August/September (months in between meetings)**

- Change the ELA Curriculum
- Facilitation of ELA Curriculum professional development for staff
- Revised the Special Education team structure
- Identified Key Results for all staff members
- Identified Success Team students
- Created Success Team staff plans and schedules communicated with students
- Finalize data comprehensive tracker
- Plan and facilitate three Special Education PDs for staff
- Audit of all IEPs to ensure annual goals and plans are updated
- Lead all move in and CCC meetings virtually for students with IEPs
- Write Virtual Instructional Vision
- Meet with Anna regarding data tracking needs at Steel City Academy across the Academy
- Identify and purchase academic assessments for all grade levels
- Plan and facilitate Gear Up weeks for new students which include Fall Diagnostic Assessment
- Finalize Virtual Assessment Strategy and Schedule to ensure 100% of students receive valid and reliable fall academic diagnostic assessment
- Plan and facilitate monthly WTM meetings
- Lead monthly Academy Leadership Team WTM meetings
- Angel meets with Pratt monthly
- Velia meets with Krambeck monthly
- Academic Working group meeting monthly
- Kirley meets with Velia and Angel monthly
- Kirley and Angel meet as needed for support

**Timeline for Meeting Academic Success Standards:**

Shifting our entry grades (see Section 3: Proposed Changes to the Charter Agreement) will allow us to be best positioned to address the academic gaps for our high-needs students as they enter our program. We will be incrementally increasing the number of kindergarten students entering Steel City Academy

beginning in SY22 and decreasing the new students entering in middle and high school. If we continue on this accelerated academic growth trajectory with our Elementary students they will be at grade level proficiencies at a much earlier grade level which will only increase proficiency level standards.

We believe that if we stay on track for meeting our 20% pass rate increase goal for the next three academic years we will meet standards for all academic proficiency indicators (1.2a-1.2g) by Year 2 of our next charter term. We will have a hyper focus on monitoring the data of our lowest quartile and Special Education students which will allow us to meet standard for 1.3b by Year 1 of our next charter term. If we meet our annual goal of the 5% decrease in chronic absenteeism we will meet standard on 1.1a by the end of Year 1 of our next charter term.

### Organizational Compliance Performance Review

Steel City Academy has grown significantly in this area throughout our first charter term. Following the loss of two key founding team members, Steel City Academy has made swift course corrections which have resulted in the school meeting standard in 90% of Organizational Compliance in SY20. In our next charter term our priority will be Indicator 3.7.a: School meeting financial and compliance requirements.

| ICSB Performance Dashboard Deficiency                                   | Rating                 | Root Cause  |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 3.7.a The school meets financial reporting and compliance requirements. | Does Not Meet Standard | Founding Executive Director and Director of Operations resigned at the start of SY18 and insufficient staffing model was in place for 2 years |

For each ICSB Indicator with a deficiency rating you will find an overview of each root cause identified, evidence of action taken to course correct and appropriate timeline for meeting standard.

***Root Cause: Founding Executive Director and Director of Operations resigned at the start of SY18 and insufficient staffing model was in place for 2 years.***

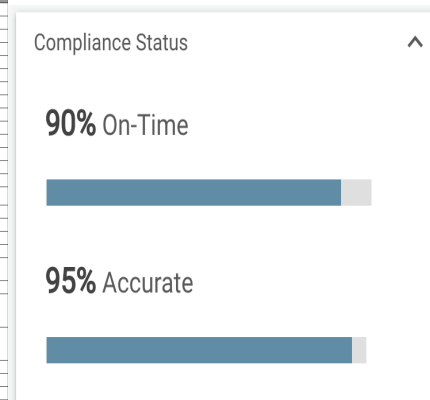
At the start of SY18, the founding Executive Director and Director of Operations resigned. This left a large knowledge and experience gap for the school team. The exiting Executive Director, in conjunction with the Board, did not ensure a strong transition plan to close the staffing gap. For two years following the transition, a staffing model did not exist that ensured ownership, prioritization and clarity of the financial and compliance reporting tasks. Additionally institutional knowledge, particularly around reporting requirements, was not transferred over and multiple reporting requirements fell through the cracks. In our first three years our compliance did not meet standard due to this transition and a lack of an internal tracking system that outlined deadlines, owner of input of knowledge and owner of submission.

***Action Taken: CHANGED STAFFING MODEL AND IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY***

In June of 2018, we hired a Director of Finance who took over all of the financial and compliance reporting. In 2019, we also hired a Compliance and Accounting Assistant who owns all submission of IDOE reporting. In order to support her workstreams and the timely submission, we transitioned our student information system to PowerSchool. Finally, July 1st, 2020 our founding Principal transitioned fully in the Executive Director role rather than the dual Executive Director/Principal role. This transition will ensure that the Executive Director is able to spend increased time of oversight and accountability for both organizational compliance and financial health.

In the fall of 2019 our Executive Director/Principal created a Compliance Reporting Tracker with all IDOE, ICSB and other financial reporting and compliance requirements with their external deadlines, internal deadlines, owner of submission, owner in PowerSchool data input. The Executive Director uses this tracker in her check ins with both our Director of Finance and Compliance and Accounting Assistant. The Executive Director also shares this information with both the Governance Working Group and the Board Chair in every monthly check in for an additional level of accountability and oversight. With these intentional course corrections of clarity and accountability we have seen our timely compliance submission increase drastically. At this moment in time we are now historically at a 90% on time submission rate as evidenced in Epicenter.

| Status             | Entity                | Report Name                                     | Due Date State | Due Date Internal | Owner Submission | State/Province/State in PS | Owner of Input |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Fall Education Plan (Re Opening guidance)       | 07/01/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | School reading Plan (Grades K-3) Only           | 07/28/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | School Safety and Emergency Plan                | 07/28/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Annual Budget                                   | 7/30/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | IDOE                  | Form 9  | 7/30/2020      |                   | Mack             |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Statement of Assurances                         | 7/31/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Updated School Calendar                         | 08/03/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Updated Staff/Student Handbook                  | 08/03/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Updated Continuous Learning Plan                | 08/03/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | 2021 Org Chart                                  | 08/03/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Calendar of Board Meetings                      | 08/03/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Charter School Changes Report                   | 8/14/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Website Compliance Report                       | 8/14/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Board of Directors Roster                       | 8/14/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Q4 Financial Report                             | 8/14/2020      |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | Finance Working Group | July Financial Package                          | 8/31/2020      |                   | Kirley/Mack      |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Board meeting Minutes June, July and August     | 09/01/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Economic Interest & Conflict of Interest Report | 09/09/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Staff Roster Report                             | 09/09/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | IDOE                  | Evaluation Plan Submission                      | 9/15/2020      | 9/10/2020         | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Insurance Policies                              | 09/18/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time |                       | Dual Credit/DT report                           | 9/25/2020      |                   |                  |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | IDOE                  | Membership Period 1                             | 9/29/2020      | 9/18/2020         | Moffett          | ME                         | Moffett        |
| Submitted: On Time | Finance Working Group | August Financial Package                        | 9/30/2020      |                   | Kirley/Mack      |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Seclusion & Restraint Report                    | 09/30/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |
| Submitted: On Time | ICSB                  | Interim/BOY Assessment Data                     | 09/30/2020     |                   | Kirley           |                            |                |



**Action Taken for All Governance Indicators: INCREASED LEVEL OF BOARD OVERSIGHT**

In order to support the school team and ensure increased level of board oversight and accountability, the Governance Working Group meets monthly to monitor organizational compliance and aligned strategies to ensure we are meeting standards on all indicators. As each working group did for SY21, the Governance Working Group created a strategic plan with priority key results aligned to the indicators, important milestones to monitor and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

**Financial Health Performance Review**

The Steel City Academy school team and Board know that Financial Health is and will be Steel City Academy’s number one priority for the next charter term. Although we are currently Not Meeting Standard in many Near and Long Term Financial Indicators, we are aware of the deficiencies, root causes and mistakes which has already resulted in a complete overhaul in our financial monitoring systems, drastic expense cuts and a clear plan to ensure we are financially sustainable in the immediate future and financially healthy within the next charter term. In fact, with our estimated cash surplus in FY21 and the likely forgiveness of our PPP loan, we will be meeting standard on several indicators and seeing improvements on all standards by the end of FY21.

| ICSB Performance Dashboard Deficiency                | Rating                 | Root Cause |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.2.a Current Ratio | Does Not Meet Standard |            |

|  |                        |   |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.2.b Days Cash on Hand             | Does Not Meet Standard | Founding Executive Director and Director of Operations resigned at the start of SY18 and insufficient staffing model was in place for two years causing a lack of effective internal accounting, finance and monitoring systems by the school team and Board. |
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.2.d Education Fund Sustainability | Does Not Meet Standard |   |
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.3.a Aggregated Three Year Margin  | Does Not Meet Standard |   |
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.3.b Debt to Asset Ratio           | Does Not Meet Standard |   |
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.3.c Operating Cash Flow           | Does Not Meet Standard |   |
| Near Term Financial Indicator<br>2.3.d Debt Service Coverage Ratio   | Does Not Meet Standard |   |

All of the financial indicators are interconnected with key financial inputs such as cash, current/total assets and liabilities and net asset position. You will see details regarding the impact of the root cause and actions that have been taken to course correct, setting us on a short-term improvement with a long-term plan to meet standards within the next charter term.

***Root Cause: Founding Executive Director and Director of Operations resigned at the start of SY18 and insufficient staffing model was in place for two years causing a lack of effective internal accounting, finance and monitoring systems by the school team and Board.***

In Steel City Academy’s original organizational chart for SY17 the founding leadership team included an Executive Director, Principal and Director of Operations. The Executive Director was to oversee enrollment and organizational compliance and work in partnership with the Director of Operations on accounting and finance work streams. At the beginning of SY18 both of these founders resigned leaving Steel City Academy organizationally in quite a predicament. The founding Principal took on a dual role of Executive Director/Principal and the Director of Operations role was replaced with an Operations Manager role focused on facilities, vendor management and technology, leaving limited time dedicated for enrollment, accounting and finance work. It cannot be understated the negative impact this has had on our organization.

After a short, unsuccessful talent search, Steel City Academy contracted with Lazarian Financial Corp. (Lazarian) to work in conjunction with the Office Assistant, who was responsible for the day to day activities such as payment of invoices and processing of payroll. Lazarian was engaged to perform month-end closing procedures including ensuring the accuracy of financial records in Quickbooks through the bank reconciliation process, preparation and filing of quarterly 941 reports, and preparation and filing of year-end Form 990.

The Board Treasurer assisted the new Executive Director/Principal in creating budget scenarios and budget to actual forecasts as well as overseeing the work of Lazarian and the Office Assistant. This was a temporary solution and it was quickly realized that although the school team was able to perform some of the day to day tasks, there was a significant hole in the internal expertise and bandwidth to effectively create the necessary budgeting and financial systems to effectively run the organization.

As a result of this root cause, there were multiple negative consequences that impacted our overall financial health.

In the early years, Steel City Academy’s budgeting process was a singular event, created without historical context, in which the original enrollment vision was a driver of revenue and estimates for expenses were based on number of students, staffing headcount and square footage. The budget and staffing model were not revisited or revised once final enrollment numbers were available.

With the loss of the founding Executive Director who owned enrollment, we also did not properly reallocate the responsibilities to develop or execute an effective comprehensive enrollment strategy which had a negative impact on our revenue. This was only exacerbated by unique community level factors. In our first charter term, the city of Gary decreased population and Gary Community Schools reconfigured grade levels which resulted in Steel City Academy not meeting its enrollment targets for Year 3, 4 and 5. Steel City Academy opened its doors in 2016 to three cohorts in seventh and ninth grade. The decision for seventh and ninth grade as the entry grade levels was due to the fact that all Gary Community Schools at that time followed the grade configuration of Elementary Schools (K-6), Junior Highs (7-8) and High Schools (9-12) (see below). We believed that this would allow students to enroll in Steel City Academy at the natural transition grade levels. However, in the winter of 2016 the state made an announcement to take over the Gary Community Schools which resulted in many schools closing. When they closed schools they reconfigured all remaining Gary Community Schools to Elementary Schools (K-5), Middle Schools (6-8) and High Schools (9-12) effective for the fall of 2017.

We did not revise our grade level entry point based upon this community level change which has resulted in a significant decrease of seventh graders and missing our enrollment targets for the past three years.

|                                | Year 1:<br>2016-2017 | Year 2:<br>2017-2018 | Year 3:<br>2018-2019 | Year 4:<br>2019-2020 | Year 5: 2020-<br>2021 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Number of Enrolled 7th Graders | 79                   | 79                   | 53                   | 33                   | 21                    |

Additionally, you will see that the city of Gary has seen a decrease of over 2,062 K-12 school aged children attending Gary Schools within the last five years. However, as this student population decreased in our city we did not decrease our yearly targets which is another factor in not meeting our targets.

Here is additional data that can be used to better understand the direct impact the decrease in student population and reconfiguration had on Steel City Academy.

| Overview of Changes in Gary Enrollment Numbers and Configurations<br>*Source: IN View* |                    |                       |            |              |                       |            |              |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| School Name  | Type               | 2013-2014 School Year |            |              | 2018-2019 School Year |            |              |
|  |                    | Grades Served         | Enrollment | Letter Grade | Grades Served         | Enrollment | Letter Grade |
| Bailly Preparatory Academy   | Traditional Public | KG-06                 | 371        | B            | 06-08                 | 467        | D            |
| Beveridge Elementary School  | Traditional Public | KG-06                 | 675        | F            | KG-05                 | 35         | F            |
| Dr. Bernard Watson Academy for Boys  | Traditional Public | KG-06                 | 137        | C            | KG-05                 | CLOSED     | N/A          |

|  |                    |       |     |   |       |        |     |
|--|--------------------|-------|-----|---|-------|--------|-----|
| Glen Park Academy for Excellence in Learning | Traditional Public | KG-06 | 790 | D | KG-05 | 542    | F   |
| Jefferson Elementary School                  | Traditional Public | KG-06 | 482 | F | KG-06 | CLOSED | N/A |
| Daniel Hale Williams Elementary School       | Traditional Public | KG-06 | 512 | A | KG-05 | 508    | F   |
| Frankie McCullough Academy for Girls         | Traditional Public | KG-07 | 429 | A | KG-08 | 613    | F   |
| Benjamin Banneker Achievement Center         | Traditional Public | KG-08 | 518 | A | KG-08 | 470    | F   |
| Dunbar-Pulaski Academic & Career Academy     | Traditional Public | 07-08 | 774 | F | 06-08 | 444    | N/A |
| Westside                                     | Traditional Public | 9-12  | 750 | F | 9-12  | 911    | F   |
| Roosevelt                                    | Traditional Public | 9-12  | 511 | F | 9-12  | CLOSED | N/A |
| Wirt Emerson                                 | Traditional Public | 9-12  | 525 | F | 9-12  | CLOSED | N/A |

With the reduced school team devoted to financial work, there was also a lack of focus on increasing cash on hand and revenue particularly for competitive grants and non restrictive revenue. In its founding years, Steel City Academy received additional funds outside of the traditional state and federal funds such as Public Charter School Program grant for \$193K in FY16, \$220K in FY17 and \$220K in FY18, as well as a Project Lead the Way grant for \$35K for both Year 1 and 2. These grants were not replaced after Year 3 and cash flow had not previously been an issue due to an influx of cash from a \$1 million loan from the State Board of Education received in FY16. As a result, Steel City Academy developed unsustainable spending habits without replacing those revenue streams in the subsequent years. This resulted in an increase in aging of accounts and our continuing negative net asset position.

Without the people and processes in place to revisit the budget, Steel City Academy did not make the personnel and other expense cuts as needed to reflect the decrease in enrollment resulting in a negative net asset position for several years. As years went on our salaries and benefits expense line as a percentage of our total expense and of our total revenue continued to rise with a record high in FY20 of 75.96% of our expense and 82.67% of our total revenue. You will see in our actions taken the drastic and necessary decrease for FY21 and the impact on our cash surplus.

| Steel City Academy Salaries & Benefits as a % of Total Revenue Expense |        |        |        |        |        |  |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|
|  | FY17   | FY18   | FY19   | FY20   | FY21   |  |
| Personnel Percentage of Expense  | 58.94% | 61.64% | 63.89% | 75.95% | 72.48% |  |
| Personnel Percentage of Revenue  | 66.80% | 60.95% | 68.83% | 82.67% | 68.29% |  |

In addition to a lack of a continuous budgeting process, the internal financial systems were not fully developed to have timely financial reports for both the school team and Board to review. The Finance Working Group would meet on a bi-monthly basis, however, financial information was not up to date in order to conduct a proper review which resulted in insufficient oversight and a lack of accountability in place for the school team. Additionally, this resulted in the school team not making any timely operational adjustments that would have avoided the end of year negative financial position. As a result, the budget to actual variances would be significant upon end of year review. Without the accurate and timely

financial reports from the school team, there was also inconsistent Finance Working Group reports to share with the overall Board. These factors resulted in a lack of oversight and accountability from the Board on our financial position.

**Action Taken:**

- 1. CHANGED STAFFING MODEL AND IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY**
- 2. IMPLEMENTED AN INDUSTRY STANDARD BUDGETING PROCESS**
- 3. PRIORITIZED FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT**
- 4. REVISED THE ENROLLMENT PLAN**

**CHANGED STAFFING MODEL AND IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Midway through SY18, Steel City Academy decided that the contract with Lazarian, Office Assistant and limited time from the new Executive Director/Principal and Board Treasurer was not sufficient for executing the full accounting and finance systems of the school. Beginning in February of 2018, Steel City Academy engaged in an extensive interview process to hire an internal Director of Finance. A key element in the search for this role was to find a candidate who had extensive accounting and finance experience at a charter school in the state of Indiana. On June 27th, 2018 the Director of Finance was hired which allowed Steel City Academy to end the bookkeeping contract with Lazarian. This internal role also allowed Steel City Academy to finally improve our existing internal financial systems and create the necessary systems moving forward. In her first year, The Director of Finance cleaned up the chart of accounts, began addressing aging issues over 90 days in accounts payable, secured an arrangement with the IRS for past due payroll taxes and led the work for the first financial statement audit of the school. Additionally, in August 2019 the school hired a Compliance and Accounting Assistant to support the Director of Finance, allowing the Office Assistant to move back to the academic side of the school. Although this significantly improved our accounting systems, we still had a school team staffing gap and deficiency as it related to higher level budgeting, forecasting and facilities planning. We knew we needed an additional staffing modeling shift in order to accommodate that.

The dual Executive Director/Principal role was not in the best interest of the organization meeting standard in all components of Academic Success, Organizational Compliance and Financial Health. At the beginning of SY20, the new Board Chair informed the Executive Director/ Principal (Ms. Kirley) that a successor for the MS/HS Principal must be identified. As a result, the Executive Director/Principal began building that transition plan. Effective July 1st, 2020, the Executive Director/Principal transitioned into the full Executive Director (Ms. Kirley) and promoted the founding Humanities Director of Instruction (Ms. Pratt) to the MS/HS Principal. This transition has allowed the full time Executive Director to ensure key results are met across all components of the ICSB Framework rather than skewed time allocated to Academic Success. In this short time as full time Executive Director, Ms. Kirley has not only successfully led our organization in this pandemic, she has created organizational key results and role specific key results aligned to the ICSB framework. As she hones in on one role, she has been able to shift her time already to increase support and management over the financial team as well as ensure time for competitive grant writing, budgeting, forecasting and facilities planning.

**IMPLEMENTED AN INDUSTRY STANDARD BUDGETING PROCESS**

This year we drastically shifted our budgeting approach and strategy. First, we began our FY21 budgeting process significantly earlier than prior years. In March of 2020, the school team and finance working group began completing an analysis of past actuals to more accurately forecast both revenue and expenses for the upcoming year. In the FY21 budget creation we also included fund allocation and a spread of both revenue and expense over month to month to ensure even more intense monitoring of



variances of our budget to actual analysis in order to course correct on a monthly basis. With so many variables in the wake of COVID related to enrollment, ADM revenue and expenses related to staffing, technology, transportation and more, we created five different contingency plan budgets to allow us to quickly pivot as needed. Our board approved an initial budget in June 2020 based upon a forecasted enrollment and staffing model that included the following intentional expense reductions:

- Staff FTE cuts from 71 to 69 with two leadership positions being cut
- 0% cost of living pay increase for all staff for FY21
- Medical insurance savings of 14% by switching to United Health Care as we are now eligible for their mid market group rates; cost savings for employer and better insurance coverage for employee
- Transportation
  - Eliminated buses for FY21 due to CDC reopen guidelines and uncertainty of return reality
  - Plan to purchase 2 vans and do targeted transportation route based upon need (27 students in survey) and IEP (5 students)
- Renegotiated agreement with the Arc of Northwest Indiana to push the principal balloon payment of \$440k 5 years with similar interest rate terms

Our budgeting processes, revisions and partnership between the school team and finance working group continued. The school team continued to monitor enrollment as well as creating staff reduction plans for across the Academy. With this decrease in anticipated enrollment coupled with our intense and frequent monitoring systems in place, we were able to revise our original budget to reflect our updated enrollment and make the necessary staffing and expense cuts. This revised budget was then able to be approved by our board on September 28th.

See below for the changes from original budget to current revised.

#### Revenue Changes

- Adjusted enrollment
- Added carry over funds from previous year grants that allow reimbursements into FY21
- Made conservative assumption on Charter Innovation Grant to reflect \$500 per student rather than \$750
- Added in competitive grants that have officially been awarded
- Did not include any non guaranteed/competitive grants revenue streams that have not officially been obtained/awarded

Expense Changes (resulted in a decrease of \$1.2M from original submitted budget)

- Salaries and benefits decrease \$1.076M
  - Decrease of 16 FTE (69 to 53 headcount)
    - Uncertified teachers
    - Admin assistant
    - Middle School teachers based upon enrollment
    - Custodian
    - School Resource Officer
    - Leadership role
  - In FY21 we have additional FTEs than future year FTEs to operate our dual learning pathways of Virtual Learning and in the building Success Teams. All of these positions are funded through CARES Act and are positions that will be eliminated for the FY22 staffing

- plan.
- o Reduction of salary for forecast for staff members not employed or reduction of hours for Quarter 1- food service and school resource officer

| Steel City Academy Salaries & Benefits as a % of Total Revenue Expense |        |        |
|--|--------|--------|
|  | FY20   | FY21   |
| Personnel Percentage of Expense  | 75.95% | 71.98% |
| Personnel Percentage of Revenue  | 82.67% | 64.50% |

- Removed vehicle/vans
- Ensured that all grants were properly budgeted to be spent down and any left over money that will carry forward to the following year is not inflating the surplus

|                                   | Current As of 10/9 Forecasted | Revised Board Approved | Original Board Approved | \$ Change Current vs Original | % Change Current vs Original |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Total Revenue                     | 4,988,768                     | 5,511,612              | 5,891,574               | -768,580                      | -13.05%                      |
| EXPENSES                          |                               |                        |                         |                               |                              |
| Salary, Wages, & Benefits         | 3,406,940                     | 3,404,983              | 4,398,450               | -991,510                      | -22.54%                      |
| Contracted Services               | 159,969                       | 157,313                | 199,821                 | -39,958                       | -20.00%                      |
| Public or Private Utility Service | 82,844                        | 82,844                 | 88,344                  | -5,500                        | -6.23%                       |
| Other Purchased Services          | 89,900                        | 89,900                 | 89,900                  | 0                             | 0.00%                        |
| General Supplies                  | 464,704                       | 470,958                | 470,932                 | -6,228                        | -1.32%                       |
| Property                          | 119,746                       | 119,746                | 264,746                 | -145,000                      | -54.77%                      |
| Misc Items                        | 275,025                       | 275,583                | 270,583                 | 4,442                         | 1.64%                        |
| CARRY OVER TO NEXT YEAR           | 104,887                       | 330,743                | 59,662                  | 45,225                        | 75.80%                       |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>             | <b>4,704,015</b>              | <b>4,932,071</b>       | <b>5,842,438</b>        | <b>-1,138,529</b>             | <b>-19.5%</b>                |
| <b>Net Change in Asset</b>        | <b>284,753</b>                | <b>579,541</b>         | <b>49,136</b>           | <b>369,949</b>                | <b>752.9%</b>                |
| Depreciation Estimate             | -134,333                      | -134,333               | -149,600                | 283,933                       | -10.2%                       |
| Principal Payment                 | 135,075                       | 135,075                | 135,075                 | 0                             | 0.0%                         |
| Capital Expenses                  | 103,000                       | 103,000                | 248,000                 | -145,000                      | -58.5%                       |
| Past Payroll Taxes                | 30,000                        | 30,000                 | 30,000                  | 0                             | 0.0%                         |
| <b>GAAP</b>                       | <b>418,495</b>                | <b>713,283</b>         | <b>312,611</b>          | <b>508,882</b>                | <b>162.8%</b>                |

With the changes in our budgeting process, we now anticipate having a cash surplus of \$284k and with our expected forgiveness of the PPP loan, we will end this year in a significantly different financial position than we started. Based upon the formulas for the ICSB Near and Long Term Financial Indicators, by the end of FY21 we are projected to increase our current ratio to 0.65 (increase from 0.28 in FY20) and increase our Unrestricted Days Cash to 29 (increase from 5 in FY20). By the end of FY21, we are expected to meet standard in Primary Reserve Ratio (0.08 for FY21), Change in Net Assets Margin (0.04 for FY21), One Year Cash Flow \$(284,753 for FY21) and Debt Service Coverage Ratio (3.02 for FY21).

|  | Year 0     |
|--|------------|
| As of 6/30   | 2021       |
| Expected cash surplus based on 5 ear - if adjusted | \$284,753  |
| Accumulated cash                                   | \$359,908  |
| Estimated net asset position                       | \$193,623  |
| Current ratio                                      | 0.65       |
| Unrestricted days cash                             | 29         |
| Annual enrollment change                           | 2%         |
| Primary reserve ratio                              | 0.08       |
| Change in net assets margin                        | 0.04       |
| Aggregated three-year margin                       | -0.08      |
| Debt to asset ratio                                | 1.32       |
| One year cash flow                                 | \$284,753  |
| Multi year cash flow                               | -\$267,774 |
| Debt service coverage ratio                        | 3.02       |

**PRIORITIZED FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT**

In addition to the implementation of a continuous and responsive budgeting process, the number one priority of the new Board Chair who began in November of 2018 was to manage and hold accountable both the school and finance working group teams to create and implement frequent financial monitoring systems. In 2019 our Finance Working Group began meeting monthly. In the spring of 2020 we created our year long calendar of financial reporting, finance working group meetings and more. Below you will find a snapshot of that calendar of our financial reporting cadence to ensure tighter cycles of monitoring and course correcting.

With the full time Executive Director in her role she now owns ensuring all of the financial reporting to all stakeholders is both accurate and timely. We began by identifying the frequency and recipients of all financial reporting from a monthly to quarterly to annual basis.

Below you will find our overview of reporting deliverables, deadlines, ownership and the stakeholder we share it with.

| School Team Finance Reporting Calendar for 2020-2021                                      |   |                     |                             |                   |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Item  | Due Date                                  | By Whom             | Owner of Ensuring Completed | Shared With       |
| Monthly Financial Reports (Including Balance Sheet, Income Statement, AP Aging, AR Aging) | The 30th of the following month           | Director of Finance | ED                          | N/A               |
| Monthly Financial Dashboard   | By the 30th of every month (with previous | Executive Director  | Finance Chair               | Finance Committee |

|  |   |                     |               |                                |
|--|---|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
|  | months' data)   |                     |               |                                |
| Quarterly ICSB Financial Reports                                   | August 15th, 2020<br>November 15th, 2020<br>February 15th, 2021<br>May 15th, 2021 | Director of Finance | ED            | Finance Committee, Board, ICSB |
| Update Financial Dashboard w/Quarterly Financial Data for Accuracy | August 20th, 2020<br>November 20th, 2020<br>February 20th, 2021<br>May 20th, 2021 | ED                  | Finance Chair | N/A                            |
| Bi Annual Form 9 State Financial Report                            | July 30th, 2020<br>January 30th, 2021   | Director of Finance | ED            | DOE, Board Chair, Treasurer    |
| Yearly Audit   | January 15th, 2021  | Director of Finance | ED            | Board, ICSB, IFF, 5th Third    |

We also created a calendar to provide transparency and clarity to our board of important financial milestones and reporting to ensure they both held the school team accountable and provided the necessary oversight to meet our needed financial indicators.

| Proposed Board Meeting Calendar Date and Time                  | Proposed Finance Topics, Deliverables and Resources   |
|--|---|
| June 9th, 2020<br>6:00-7:30 pm<br>Virtual Zoom Meeting         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the finalized SY21 budget for approval to the board</li> </ul>   |
| Saturday July 18th, 2020<br>Board Retreat<br>9:00 am - 1:00 pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring SY20 financial dashboard metrics to create SY21 financial health goals</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, September 28th, 2020<br>6:00-8:00 pm                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year end unaudited financial statements with updated key metrics</li> <li>Updated SY21 Budget</li> <li>Present Financial Report w/update on enrollment numbers and impact on budget, variance in expense &amp; revenue budgeted for and request approval for any expenditures not forecasted over material amount</li> </ul> |
| Tuesday, October 13th,<br>6:00 pm                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of Charter Renewal</li> </ul>   |
| Monday, November 30th,<br>2020                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SY21 Financial Dashboard with Q1 Metrics including July, August and September Financials</li> </ul>  |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 6:00-8:00 pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present Financial Report w/update on enrollment numbers and impact on budget, variance in expense &amp; revenue budgeted for, request approval for any expenditures not forecasted over material amount and request approval for any new expense over \$10K</li> </ul> |
|--------------|---|

The most frequent financial reporting cadence and monitoring occurs on a monthly basis with the school team and the finance working group. Every month the school team closes the prior months' financials by the 30th day to send to the finance working group. Below you will find a calendar of our deliverables and meeting cadence.

| Months Financials | Due Date             | Dashboard Updated    | Finance Committee Call AND One Academy Meetings (DO, Principals) | Complete Materials for Board Meeting | Board Meeting to Discuss |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| July 2020         | August 30th, 2020    | August 31th, 2020    | September 8th, 2020  | September 21st, 2020                 | September 28th, 2020     |
| August 2020       | September 30th, 2020 | September 30th, 2020 | October 13th, 2020   | N/A                                  | N/A                      |
| September 2020    | October 30th, 2020   | October 31th, 2020   | November 10th, 2020  | November 23rd, 2020                  | November 30th, 2020      |
| October 2020      | November 30th, 2020  | November 30th, 2020  | December 8th, 2020   | N/A                                  | N/A                      |
| November 2020     | December 30th, 2020  | December 31st, 2020  | January 12th, 2021   | N/A                                  | N/A                      |
| December 2020     | January 30th, 2021   | January 31th, 2021   | February 9th, 2021<br>*Form 990 Approval*                        | February 22nd, 2021                  | March 1st, 2021          |

Upon completion of the reporting, the Executive Director then updates the Steel City Academy internal financial dashboard which includes a monthly balance sheet, monthly income statement and monthly budget to actuals. The Executive Director shares this with the Finance Working Group at the monthly meeting which allows for open dialogue between parties about course corrections and strategies to improve on metrics.

In addition to the financial dashboard including the internal financial statements and budget to actual analysis, the Finance Chair created an ICSB indicator tab for us to view the ICSB priority indicators (current ratio and unrestricted days of cash and operating cash flow) on a monthly basis. Monitoring these indicators monthly allows us to see our trends and make course corrections before year end. These indicators are then shared out with the Board on a quarterly basis. Reviewing metrics monthly as well as at year end will allow for better understanding of the ebb and flow during the year.

**ICSB FINANCIAL INDICATORS****2.2a: Current Ratio (Current Assets/Current Liabilities)**

| 6/30/2017 | 6/30/2018 | 6/30/2019 | 9/30/2019 | 12/31/2019 | 3/31/2020 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 1.96      | 0.35      | 0.15      | 0.41      | 0.41       | 0.22      |

**2.2b: Days Cash on Hand (Unrestricted Cash) / (Total Expenses - Depreciation Expense/365)**

| 6/30/2017 | 6/30/2018 | 6/30/2019 | 9/30/2019 | 12/31/2019 | 3/31/2020 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 124.44    | 3.34      | 5.95      | 83.17     | 87.96      | 6.60      |
|           |           |           | 56.46     | 68.54      | 52.80     |

**2.3c: Operating Cash Flow (Current Year Cash- Prior Year Cash)/(Current Year Cash-2nd Year Prior Cash)**

| 6/30/2017 | 6/30/2018 | 6/30/2019 | 9/30/2019 | 12/31/2019 | 3/31/2020 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| n/a       | n/a       | -0.09     | 0.36      | 0.26       | 2.98      |

In the last year, we have set an organizational priority to increase our revenue/cash flow outside of our state and federal dollars. For the FY21 school year, the Executive Director focused on taking advantage of all additional funding opportunities related to unique COVID expenses and organizational health through this global pandemic.

On May 1, 2020 we successfully received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan for \$805,400. Within the twenty four week period allotted, 100% of the funds were used for payroll expenses of our staff. We have submitted all of our PPP forgiveness paperwork and application to illustrate both our proper use of the funds and our financial hardship. If this gets forgiven this will significantly improve our net asset position and have a positive impact on both our Near and Long Term Financial Indicators. Based on the significant changes in our FY21 budget as well as the PPP loan we are expecting a positive net asset position for FY21. With the additional cash from the PPP loan we were able to successfully pay down our mounting accounts payable balance. Total accounts payable was \$17k and \$320k as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

We applied for and received \$351,802 for the CARES Act that allows us to fund co teachers to lead Success Team pods for students, additional janitorial supplies and PPE equipment. We also applied for and received the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund for \$103,635 to support with necessary expenses for computers and technology for our community. Lastly, we applied for the FEMA Assistance grant for schools to support with the additional expenses for PPE and other health and safety equipment.

As a Does Not Meet Standard based on the Federal Accountability grade, we are eligible for the \$50,000 School Improvement Planning Grant for FY21 and to apply for the \$200,000 for the School Improvement Implementation Grant for FY22. As our Executive Director moves into her first full year, the board has also outlined additional development goals for the first time including corporate sponsorships, individual giving campaigns and fundraising event contributions.

**REVISED THE ENROLLMENT PLAN**

With the transition of our Executive Director/Principal into the full time Executive Director role, she will be charged with creating our comprehensive enrollment strategy. This summer she began this process by enrolling in the Enrollment Academy led by Nick LeRoy at Bright Mind Marketing. Through this extensive eight week course there have already been milestones met and strategies put in place to set us

up for a successful enrollment for SY22. You will see our priority strategies of implementation in the Improvement section of this charter application as well as in Section 3: Proposed Changes to Charter Agreement. With the revision of the enrollment strategy, there will also be a focus this school year on ensuring we continue to recruit and enroll students to have the highest possible count for the second count day.

**Action Taken for All Financial Indicators: *INCREASED LEVEL OF BOARD OVERSIGHT***

In order to support the school team and ensure increased level of board oversight and accountability on these systems, the Finance Working Group meets monthly to monitor the financial dashboard and aligned strategies to ensure we are meeting standards on all indicators. As each working group did for SY21, the Finance Working Group created a strategic plan with priority key results aligned to the indicators, important milestones to monitor and clarity of roles and responsibilities. You can see a portion of that strategic plan below.

|   |
|---|
| <b>ICSB Objective: Financial Health</b>   |
| <b>Owners: Finance Working Group</b><br><b>Finance Working Group Chair: Katherine Pohlkamp</b><br><b>Treasurer: Walter Landrum</b><br><b>Other Members: Catherine Burns, Katie Kirley</b>   |
| <b>Key Result 1.1: 2.1.a The school effectively established and monitored budgets.</b>  |
| <b>Key Result 1.2: 2.1.b The school implemented appropriate financial policies and practices.</b>   |
| <b>Key Result 1.3: 2.1.d The school complied with state audit requirements.</b>   |
| <b>Key Result 1.4: 2.4 Use of Short-Term Financing for Cash Flow Purposes</b>   |
| <b>Milestones:</b> <Milestones include key strategies as well as actions added as course correction. They address roll out, staff training and quality. New milestones are added out of WTMG Meetings. Include those action steps here and color code as completed.>  |
| <p><b>July/August/September (months in between meetings)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schedule the audit for the 2019-2020 meeting</li> <li>● Review the findings from last years audit and ensure we do not repeat for the audit- September Working Group Call <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Going Concern Response</u></li> <li>○ <u>Audit Finding Responses</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Submit all PPP loan forgiveness paperwork by end of September (want to include as subsequent events in audit report)</li> <li>● Reengage Stephanie on the line of credit conversation</li> <li>● Get Arc renegotiated loans in legal binding documents and signed by necessary parties</li> <li>● Finalizing our year end numbers and ensuring everything is properly recorded</li> </ul> |

- Kirley & Walter: Reread the [Financial Policies and Procedures](#) and understand our roles; determine the roles & responsibility for the board, the treasurer, the finance committee and be ready to share out at September meeting in this document
  - Update the Board/Treasurer/Director of Finance Roles & Responsibilities from [Financial Policies and Procedures document](#)
- Update the [SY21 Compliance/Reporting Tracker](#) to include internal and external deadlines for the 2020-2021 school year
- Facilitate all enrollment meetings and recruitment/application/enrollment strategy to meet minimum of 550 student enrollment
- Build out contingency plans for budgeting based upon enrollment, state ADM 85/15 decision etc.
- Progress Monitoring: Tracking Near Term Financial Indicators on a monthly basis with Finance Committee
  - 2.2.a: Current Ratio (Current Assets/Current Liabilities)
  - 2.2.b: Days Cash on Hand (Unrestricted Cash) / (Total Expenses - Depreciation Expense/365)
  - 2.2.d Education Fund Sustainability Calculation: (State Tuition Support) / (Fund Total Expenses)
  - 2.3.c. Operating Cash Flow Calculation: (Current Year Cash – Prior Year Cash) / (Current Year Cash – 2nd Year Prior Cash)
- Progress Monitoring: Tracking and sharing out Near Term Financial Indicators on a quarterly basis with Board
- Progress Monitor and track the internal/external Financial Reporting to ensure timeliness and deadlines met for monthly and quarterly financial reports

## Section 2: Improvement

**Academic Success Improvement:** We must focus on increasing instructional leadership and teacher effectiveness with a hyper focus on building our strong Elementary instructional model, data systems to monitor our subgroup data and chronically absent students.

**Steel City Academy will create an organizational leadership team model that ensures Principals are the instructional leaders of their school focused on building content teacher leadership, increased teacher effectiveness and a prioritization of Math and Special Education with coaching, accountability and oversight from the Executive Director and Board.**

Our Steel City Principals are responsible for our Academic results and therefore must have job descriptions and aligned roles and responsibilities that ensure that is where their time is being spent. Our Principals will participate in both external professional development experiences (i.e. Accelerator program, IUN Masters of School Administration Program) and receive continual feedback from the Executive Director on their team management, facilitation of professional development, data driven culture and individual teacher coaching. The Board Academic Working Group will continue to meet monthly with the Executive Director in order to monitor and have oversight on key academic metrics.

Principals will increase the teacher professional development time and effectiveness in our master schedule with a special focus on math instruction as well as best practices for our lowest quartile and Special Education students. We know our academic results will improve when our teachers are more effective through intensive coaching and support.



The Executive Director will reimagine our recruitment and development pathways for Math and Special Education teachers including creating our own Steel City Academy Legacy Educator Fellowship that focuses on recruiting and training our former students and partnering with our local university teaching programs for certification programs.

**Steel City Academy will focus on ensuring we implement a rigorous Elementary instructional vision with fidelity to ensure our students are on grade level by the time they finish 3rd grade.** With our enrollment model shifting to building from the ground up with our kindergarten classes, we have a unique opportunity to close the achievement gap in the earliest of grades and ensure our students are on grade level much earlier.

In SY21, we pivoted to a more rigorous curriculum including the Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) Curriculum for reading and Eureka Curriculum for math. The CKLA curriculum built on the science of reading and top rated by the EdReports includes a sequence of deep content knowledge with research based foundational skills. Additionally, the curriculum includes explicit, easy to use lessons for all teachers that will ensure quality control for all grade levels and every student set up to succeed. The Eureka Curriculum provides students a deep understanding and fluency in math with an intentional focus on coherence from K-12 and strong alignment with both Common Core Standards and Indiana Academic Standards.

In the upcoming years, the Elementary Principal must ensure fidelity to both curriculums across all grades and increase teacher professional development for effective internalization and execution of this rigorous curriculum. We will leverage professional development funds to contract with Amplify and Great Minds to deliver annual professional development for our teachers. With fidelity and systems of monitoring student academic achievement beginning in kindergarten, we will ensure they are on grade level by the end of the third grade as measured on the IREAD and ILearn.

**Steel City Academy will build and implement regular data monitoring systems to focus on our Special Education subgroup, our lowest quartile subgroup and chronically absent students.**

At the beginning of each year after move-ins and an administration of a universal screener, Principals will create a comprehensive tracker that identifies our Special Education and lowest quartile of students in both Math and English Language Arts. Teachers will continue administering weekly assessments and analyzing the results in our data power hours with special attention to these two subgroups to ensure we provide targeted instruction in our academic remediation blocks for the following weeks.

Steel City Academy will decrease our percentage of students chronically absent by a minimum of 5% per year. Students are not learning if they are not in the building. Our Attendance Team, led by our Directors of Instruction and monitored by our Principals, will lead attendance workshops for parents and students in order to set clarity of our attendance expectations and invest them in the importance of high attendance and the connection to academic results and graduation. We will also share community resources to support any underlying reasons they may traditionally miss school. After the first day of school, our Attendance Team will begin meeting weekly to monitor data and create early intervention plans before a student becomes chronically absent.

### **Organizational Compliance Improvement**

**Steel City Academy will create a more comprehensive reporting compliance tracker that includes all IDOE, ICSB and other state deadlines to ensure that no reports are being missed.** The Executive Director is responsible for our organizational compliance. The tracking system we have put in place for the past few two academic years has drastically increased our compliance and we plan to improve this system by adding more deadlines outside of the ICSB reporting calendar, setting a goal to submit earlier in the window to ensure nothing is missed and increasing our frequency of monitoring in weekly check ins. The Executive Director will share this tracker with the Governance Working Group monthly for additional monitoring and oversight from the Board.

**Financial Health Improvement**

As an organization, the most critical area of improvement is around our financial health. We have taken important steps in FY21 to improve our financial position and will continue to prioritize this in the next charter renewal by utilizing the following strategies.

**Steel City Academy will create clarity and aligned accountability for the responsibility of each member of the school leadership team and board to ensure our cash surplus and other strategies are implemented.** We believe we finally have the right people in the right place for our financial health. We all have a critical role to play in improving our financial health although the ultimate accountability of the school team will come down to the Executive Director. In Year 9 (FY24) we will add an additional staff accounting role. The school team must continue to develop the comprehensive budgeting process and meet these other financial milestones for reporting and implementation in order to ensure we meet standard in indicators. If we receive additional revenue that increases our anticipated cash surplus, we will also consider bringing on a Chief Financial Officer to oversee the Director of Finance and Operations Manager in order to elevate our financial position through additional analysis, acquisition of funds and oversight.

Our Board Chair, Finance Chair and Finance Working Group will continue to highly monitor and hold the school team accountable through reviewing monthly reports, monthly meetings for analysis and course correction and oversight over our status on near and long term financial indicators. It will be essential that we maintain fidelity to these systems of budgeting and reporting in the next charter term.

| <b>Roles and Responsibilities</b> <Outline the key roles and responsibilities aligned with each Strategic Plan objective>   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Principals</b>   | <b>Director of Finance</b>   | <b>Executive Director</b>  | <b>Board</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make staffing decisions aligned to 5 year budget</li> <li>● Revise master schedule and roles and responsibilities to meet</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete all monthly financial reporting and meet deadlines</li> <li>● Complete all grant reimbursements</li> <li>● Work with ED</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with Principals monthly for budget meetings to provide updates on Budget to Actuals and spending</li> <li>● Meet with DF weekly</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finance Working group meets monthly to analyze budget to actuals, variance</li> </ul> |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| staffing model projections<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure stay within allocated amount for instructional supplies, assessments, instructional software</li> </ul> | on proper fund allocation for each grant beginning with most restrictive<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with ED monthly</li> <li>• Completes budgets for all grants</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with DF monthly to update internal financial dashboard and analyze any variance from projections in order to make course corrections</li> <li>• Update financial dashboard and indicators to share with finance working group monthly and board quarterly</li> <li>• Acquire additional non restrictive grants, write competitive grants</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds ED accountable to stay on budget and ensure cash surplus</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|--|

**Steel City Academy will create, implement and review our internal financial dashboard with all ICSB Near and Long Term Financial Indicators to ensure we are meeting standard on all indicators within the next charter term. We are confident that based upon our current projections we will be meeting standard in all financial health indicators within the next charter term.**

Below you will find our projections for all ICSB Near and Long Term Financial Indicators based upon our projected cash surplus in the 5 Year Budget Projections.

All indicators are captured in the graph below with actuals from our 5 Year Budget Projections. Cells are highlighted in green for meeting standard and red for not meeting standard.

|  | Year 5    | Year 6    | Year 7      | Year 8      | Year 9      | Year 10     |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| As of 6/30   | 2021      | 2022      | 2023        | 2024        | 2025        | 2026        |
| <b>Expected cash surplus based on 5 Year - if adjusted</b> | \$284,753 | \$511,192 | \$661,690   | \$706,804   | \$984,153   | \$1,080,685 |
| <b>Accumulated cash</b>                                    | \$359,908 | \$871,100 | \$1,532,790 | \$2,239,594 | \$3,223,747 | \$4,304,432 |
| <b>Estimated net asset position</b>                        | \$193,623 | \$704,815 | \$1,366,505 | \$2,073,309 | \$3,057,462 | \$4,138,147 |
| <b>Current ratio</b>                                       | 0.65      | 2.80      | 4.67        | 6.43        | 8.53        | 12.08       |
| <b>Unrestricted days cash</b>                              | 29        | 72        | 122         | 166         | 216         | 264         |
| <b>Annual enrollment change</b>                            | 2%        | 10%       | 5%          | 11%         | 11%         | 7%          |
| <b>Primary reserve ratio</b>                               | 0.08      | 0.19      | 0.32        | 0.44        | 0.58        | 0.70        |
| <b>Change in net assets margin</b>                         | 0.04      | 0.15      | 0.28        | 0.37        | 0.49        | 0.61        |

|                              |           |           |           |             |             |             |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Aggregated three-year margin | -0.08     | 0.00      | 0.15      | 0.27        | 0.39        | 0.50        |
| Debt to asset ratio          | 1.32      | 0.85      | 0.79      | 0.69        | 0.62        | 0.51        |
| One year cash flow           | \$284,753 | \$511,192 | \$661,690 | \$706,804   | \$984,153   | \$1,080,685 |
| Multi year cash flow         | \$267,774 | \$243,418 | \$905,108 | \$2,239,594 | \$3,223,747 | \$4,304,432 |
| Debt service coverage ratio  | 3.02      | 3.20      | 10.44     | 15.66       | 22.16       | 29.80       |

Upon conclusion of Year 6, we will be meeting standard in all financial indicators except aggregated three year margin. At the conclusion of Year 7, we will also begin meeting standard in Aggregated Three- Year Margin. Based upon our projections, we will be meeting standards in all Near and Long Term Financial Indicators beginning in Year 7 and moving forward.

Moving forward our internal financial dashboard will include all of the ICSB financial Near and Long Term Financial indicators. The school team will continue to update the internal financial dashboard monthly to be reported to the Finance Working Group monthly and entire Board quarterly.

**Steel City Academy will budget for and ensure every year there is an increased cash surplus in order to meet the current ratio and days cash on hand near term financial indicators within the next charter term.** When the school team creates the budget for the upcoming years this cash surplus must be taken into account and the board will only approve the budget if the cash surplus exists at a minimum.

|         | Year 6    | Year 7    | Year 8    | Year 9      | Year 10     |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
|         | 2022      | 2023      | 2024      | 2025        | 2026        |
| Surplus | \$541,192 | \$691,690 | \$736,804 | \$1,014,153 | \$1,080,685 |

**Steel City Academy will follow industry standard benchmarks for Student to Teacher Ratio (20:1) and personnel cost as a percentage of total budget between 60-65%.** Historically at Steel City Academy personnel expenses have been an area where we have significantly overspent as compared to these industry benchmarks. In our five year projections you will see below we reach the 20:1 Student to Teacher Ratio and a personnel cost as a percentage of our total budget between 60-65% for all five years. During our continuous yearly budgeting process we will continue to use and ensure we meet these industry standard benchmarks moving forward.

| Year 6                |      | Year 7                |      | Year 8                |      |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| Student/teacher ratio | 20:1 | Student/teacher ratio | 20:1 | Student/teacher ratio | 20:1 |
| Student/staff ratio   | 11:1 | Student/staff ratio   | 11:1 | Student/staff ratio   | 12:1 |

| Year 9                |      | Year 10               |      |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| Student/teacher ratio | 20:1 | Student/teacher ratio | 20:1 |
| Student/staff ratio   | 12:1 | Student/staff ratio   | 12:1 |

|                                  | Year 6                 | Year 7                 | Year 8                 | Year 9                 | Year 10                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                                  | 2022                   | 2023                   | 2024                   | 2025                   | 2026                   |
| <b>Total Personnel Expenses:</b> | <b>\$ 2,922,728.66</b> | <b>\$ 3,137,775.97</b> | <b>\$ 3,419,804.07</b> | <b>\$ 3,815,571.40</b> | <b>\$ 4,248,493.23</b> |
| <b>% of revenue</b>              | <b>60.21%</b>          | <b>59.84%</b>          | <b>60.56%</b>          | <b>59.44%</b>          | <b>60.59%</b>          |
| <b>% of expense</b>              | <b>67.76%</b>          | <b>68.93%</b>          | <b>69.65%</b>          | <b>70.60%</b>          | <b>71.63%</b>          |

**Steel City Academy will create and implement a comprehensive enrollment strategy to increase our revenue and ensure we build our enrollment from the ground up in order to be the only K-12 single site school in Gary.** The Executive Director is responsible for meeting the enrollment targets. This revised enrollment strategy with increasing our elementary enrollment will also positively impact our academic indicators, especially our proficiency level percentages. We have successfully completed a SWOT analysis to understand the unique competitive advantage of Steel City Academy as well as the enrollments, grade level configurations and unique attributes of all Pre K and K-12 schools in the area.

We will begin by creating intentional school feeder partnerships with Pre K, K-6 and K-8 schools throughout the city of Gary. There are over 30 Pre Ks in the city of Gary- only one of which we have created a partnership with prior to this year. As we prioritize our Kindergarten enrollment, these relationships will be critical for meeting our enrollment targets. There are four K-8 public charter/choice schools in Gary (Charter School of the Dunes, Ambassador, Aspire Academy and Ascensions Lutheran Academy). We will then intentionally focus on our digital and in person marketing strategy rather than relying upon word of mouth. We need to increase the SSO of our website in order to ensure we are searchable via the Internet, increase the storytelling of Steel City and systemize the way we gather leads via our website and community events. Starting in 2022-2023 we will have a full K-12 model which will be a huge asset for our families looking to enroll all of their children in one school, as Steel City will be the ONLY single site K-12 school in all of Gary.

See Section 3: Proposed Changes to Charter Agreement for more details on the revised enrollment targets.

**Steel City Academy will prioritize raising additional revenue through capital campaigns, acquiring additional competitive grants and other non restrictive revenue.** As you can see in our budget projections, currently we are being conservative and assuming there is no additional revenue under these categories. However, with the full time Executive Director in place this will be an essential part of her workstreams and the board will hold her accountable to meeting additional revenue metrics. With the CNA/SIP already submitted for our Federal Comprehensive Support designation, we will apply for the \$200,000 for the School Improvement Implementation Grant for FY22. The Executive Director will continue to devote time to applying for additional competitive grants including State Innovation, Professional Development Grants and more. As our Executive Director moves into her first full year, the board has also outlined additional development goals for the first time including corporate sponsorships, individual giving campaigns and fundraising event contributions.

**Steel City Academy must identify and fund additional facility space in order to accommodate our increased enrollment.** We have begun this process by identifying both rental and purchase spaces available throughout the city that could accommodate our additional square footage needs while continuing to serve our community and families. We can remain in our current facility through FY22,

however, we have formed a Facility Committee composed of school team, board members and other community leaders to build and execute a strategic plan to ensure we have additional space ready for the FY23 school year.

### Section 3: Proposed Changes to Charter Agreement

The only proposed change to our charter agreement that we are requesting is an adjustment to our enrollment vision of growth as seen below. This change will be highly impactful on our budget and academic indicators and crucial in supporting the school in meeting the standards in all key areas over the next charter term. You can reference specific impacts in the previous sections of the application. These numbers were updated to reflect the decrease in student population in Gary as well as a revision of our entry grade levels. Additionally, we have a much more conservative approach to enrollment growth that we believe is more realistic and feasible to reach.

| Enrollment                     | Year 6       | Year 7       | Year 8       | Year 9       | Year 10      |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                | 2021 - 22 SY | 2022 - 23 SY | 2023 - 24 SY | 2024 - 25 SY | 2025 - 26 SY |
| Kindergarten                   | 50           | 50           | 75           | 75           | 75           |
| Grade 1                        | 35           | 50           | 50           | 75           | 75           |
| Grade 2                        | 35           | 30           | 50           | 50           | 75           |
| Grade 3                        | 30           | 30           | 30           | 50           | 50           |
| Grade 4                        | 30           | 30           | 30           | 30           | 50           |
| Grade 5                        | 0            | 30           | 30           | 30           | 30           |
| Grade 6                        | 25           | 30           | 30           | 50           | 50           |
| Grade 7                        | 25           | 25           | 30           | 50           | 50           |
| Grade 8                        | 25           | 25           | 25           | 25           | 50           |
| Grade 9                        | 50           | 50           | 50           | 50           | 50           |
| Grade 10                       | 60           | 50           | 60           | 50           | 50           |
| Grade 11                       | 60           | 60           | 50           | 55           | 50           |
| Grade 12                       | 60           | 60           | 55           | 50           | 50           |
| Adult                          | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| <b>Total Adult Enrollment:</b> | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| <b>Total K-12 Enrollment:</b>  | 485          | 520          | 565          | 640          | 705          |
| <b>Special Education #</b>     | 73           | 78           | 85           | 96           | 106          |
| <b>English Learners #</b>      | 2            | 2            | 3            | 3            | 3            |
| <b>FRL #</b>                   | 388          | 416          | 452          | 512          | 564          |