

Memo

To: State Board of Education
From: Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, City of Indianapolis
Date: February 6, 2013
Re: Petition to oversee special management teams in Indianapolis

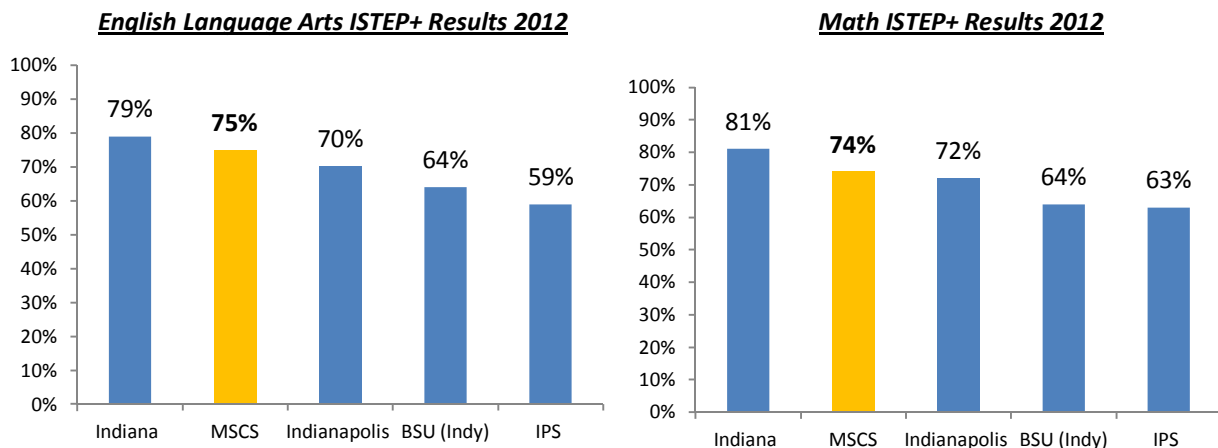
Overview

Pursuant to IC 20-31-9.5 and PL 229-2011, SEC. 190 and pending the amendment of existing contracts between the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and the special management teams, the Mayor of Indianapolis requests full oversight responsibility, under the direction of the State Board of Education (SBOE), of the special management teams that operate the four turnaround academies in Indianapolis. We request that the oversight begins no later than June 1, 2013 and that the granted authority includes monitoring of instructional quality, school safety, organizational issues, compliance, and improvement through ongoing site visits, as well as the authority to give updates and make recommendations to the SBOE regarding the turnaround academies. The schools include the EdPower-operated Arlington Community High School, as well as the Charter Schools USA-operated Thomas Carr Howe Community High School, Emmerich Manual High School, and Emma Donnan Middle School. This petition is contingent upon the Mayor’s Office receiving funding from the IDOE to execute the oversight.

The Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation (OEI) was established after the passage of the Indiana charter school law in 2001. As the only mayor’s office in the country with the ability to authorize charter schools, OEI currently oversees 20 charter schools on 23 campuses across Indianapolis. The Mayor’s Performance Framework ensures rigorous standards and accountability structures for all schools in the OEI portfolio. Existing systems and structures, which have been refined over the past 10 years, will enable OEI to provide effective oversight of the Turnaround School Operators (TSOs). With our track record of holding schools accountable for performance, we are confident in our capacity to oversee the TSOs and their management of the four turnaround academies in Indianapolis under the direction of the SBOE.

Results of Existing Schools

OEI has a proven track record of overseeing schools that consistently outperform neighboring schools with similar student demographics. Below is an overview of pass rates for Mayor-sponsored charter schools (MSCS) on the 2012 Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress – Plus (ISTEP+) compared to averages for all public schools in the state, all public schools in Indianapolis, Ball State University (BSU) charter schools in Indianapolis, and Indianapolis Public Schools.



Mayor's Performance Framework

The Mayor's Performance Framework is designed for OEI to provide direct oversight of schools in its portfolio. Monthly conversations between OEI staff and schools explicitly address performance relative to the framework. OEI publishes yearly reports that measure schools' performance against each standard in the framework. Schools that do not meet standards must create written plans that address how they intend to improve practices so that they meet standards within a reasonable timeframe. The framework will be used in addition to the existing turnaround academy benchmarks and will be adapted to match the unique context of the turnaround academies.

Oversight Plan

In March of 2012, Mayor Greg Ballard appointed Jason Kloth as the City's first Deputy Mayor of Education. Deputy Mayor Kloth is responsible for the overall vision and direction of OEI. As the number of schools and responsibilities within OEI's portfolio has increased, Deputy Mayor Kloth has increased staff capacity at a commensurate rate.

The Director of Charter Schools oversees the 20 MSCS and directly manages three performance analysts. Each performance analyst has a specific area of focus – one analyst oversees academics, one oversees finance, and one oversees governance and leadership. Performance analysts meet monthly with schools to engage in conversations around progress relative to the Mayor's Performance Framework in each of the three overarching areas. Schools receive comprehensive feedback on their performance and problem solve with OEI staff around identified gaps.

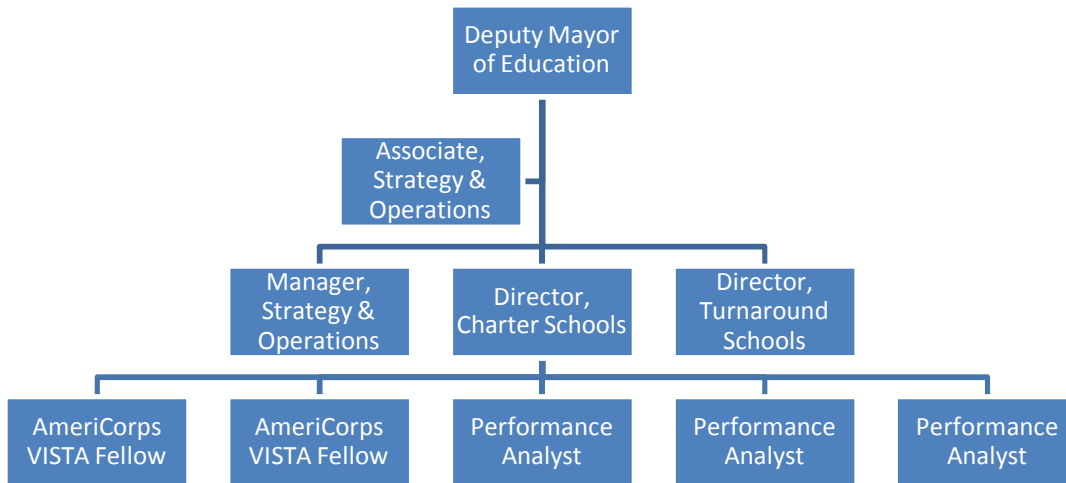
Once funding is secured from the IDOE, OEI will immediately begin the search for a Director of Turnaround Schools to work with the four turnaround academies in Indianapolis. The Director of Turnaround Schools will have experience in public education and will possess a wide-ranging skill set that includes strong analysis, communication, and problem solving skills. This person will also draw upon a variety of experts who have worked with OEI in the past in areas such as special education, law, and school administration.

The Director of Turnaround Schools will manage relationships at the four turnaround academies and will serve as a point-of-contact for the academies and TSOs. OEI understands that the turnaround academies are not charter schools and will tailor its approach accordingly. The Director of Turnaround Schools will engage in weekly site visits and remain in consistent communication with the four turnaround academies to monitor progress. The IDOE will continue to administer funds to the academies and will also provide special education technical assistance. Specific activities and interventions conducted by OEI will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Monitoring
 - Develop and refine protocols and metrics for conducting on-site monitoring that are aligned with leading indicators of school improvement
 - Conduct weekly site visits to assess leading indicators of school improvement
 - Analyze and track data collected during site visits to identify trends
 - Write and present actionable feedback with turnaround academy leadership and work with them to modify their school improvement plan accordingly
- Data collection and analysis
 - Identify leading and lagging indicators of school improvement to be tracked regularly
 - Develop data tracking and analysis systems for identified indicators of school improvement
 - Collect information from on-site monitoring, as well as student- and school-level data compiled by the IDOE (e.g., attendance, ISTEP+)
- Reporting
 - Develop reporting structures that enable data analysis results to be effectively communicated with turnaround academy leaders, SBOE members, and key stakeholder groups (e.g., family members, community members)
 - Disseminate regular, targeted updates to key stakeholder groups

- Communicate recommendations to the SBOE regarding turnaround academy performance
- Technical assistance
 - Based on findings from site visits, feedback from community stakeholders, and state and federal school law, provide ongoing technical assistance to the turnaround academies

Figure 1: Tentative Office of Education Innovation organizational chart



Statutory Responsibilities

Pursuant to IC 20-31-9.5 and PL 160-2012, SEC. 52, OEI will communicate to the special management teams the need to conduct a public meeting twice a year to provide a report concerning student achievement and the condition of school property. OEI will also monitor the teaching credentials of teachers employed by the special management teams as indicated by IC 20-28-5. Further, OEI will monitor the participation of staff employed by the special management teams in the state teachers’ retirement fund created by IC 5-10.4 or the public employees’ retirement fund created by IC 5-10.3. Finally, OEI notes that employees of a special management team are not required to organize and collectively bargain under IC 20-29-6.

Collaboration with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS)

In an effort to ensure we provide the best possible education for students in Indianapolis, OEI is committed to collaborating with the IPS Board of Commissioners. By granting oversight responsibility of the turnaround academies to the Mayor’s Office, IPS will be better positioned to work with a local entity to help ensure the success of the schools.

Conclusion

Given the Mayor’s vision that every child in Indianapolis will receive a high-quality education, OEI is focused on the success of the students in the four Indianapolis turnaround academies. Our track record of results, research-based Mayor’s Performance Framework, and ongoing support structures make our office an ideal entity to oversee the TSOs and their operations of the four schools. We are committed to working effectively with the SBOE and turnaround academies in an effort to provide students with the academic opportunities they deserve.