

Annual IQS Review
Duluth Edison Charter Schools (DECS)
FY'18

To: DECS School Board
From: James Zacchini
Date: September 20, 2018

Section 5.1 of the contract between Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and DECS outlines the criteria for the annual school review. In part, it states that IQS will evaluate whether the:

- a) school has been faithful to the terms of the agreement regarding the implementation of the school's design and the learning standards of the Commissioner. (Mission/Program Model)
- b) Board is performing its governance responsibilities. (Governance)
- c) performance of the students and the school meet the expectations as provided in the contract. (Student and School Performance)
- d) school is using its resources in compliance with the law and is planning for the future. (Finance)
- e) School is meeting the administrative requirements of the law relating to charter schools. (Operations)

In carrying out our oversight responsibilities for the FY'18 school year, IQS Cadre members conducted seven (7) on-site observations of the DECS program and/or school board meetings. Four (4) virtual reviews of board activities were also conducted by members of the Cadre and the IQS Management Leadership team. IQS also sponsored three (3) teacher/leadership conferences, one (1) board training conference and one (1) professional development conference; all designed to provide DECS with opportunities to grow in their professionally in support of the DECS school program. Below is a summary of Cadre and MLT findings in each of the above noted performance areas based upon observations and direct interactions with DECS.

Mission/Program Model	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated and strong commitment to teacher Professional Development and Cultural Competency where Administration and senior staff have attended 12 hours of University of Chicago training related to Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS), racial equity and restorative justice. • Professional learning for all staff in areas including Response to Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS), Cultural Competency, Balanced Literacy, Guided Reading, Leveled Literacy, Technology Integration, and New Teacher Mentoring. • Fidelity to school mission of academic success and a safe and secure learning environment 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-cited in data or by observation.

<p>demonstrated by an extended school day and instruction tailored to each student’s specific needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative curriculum featuring: Journeys Reading Program, Everyday Math, Emergent Literature in Writing, and Heart of Dance programs. • Project Foundry used successfully to facilitate tracking student PBL progress and growth in all areas of the curriculum. • School mission of "Out of the classroom, into the world" supports five purposes of charter schools. 	
<p>Governance</p>	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All policies, minutes and board information are up to date and available on DECS website (http://www.duluthedison.org/district/dpsa-board/). • Strategic Plan is aligned with the vision and goals of the school. • All Board background checks and conflict of interest forms are in place. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board interaction and participation. • Signage for board meeting location and fidelity to Minnesota Open Meeting statutes.
<p>Performance</p>	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from the 2018 administration of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) indicate that 59.5% of students across DPSA met and/or exceeded proficiency standards in mathematics. 61.4% of the students met and/or exceeded proficiency standards in reading. • DPSA exceeded goals identified in School Improvement Plan (SIP) on the math MCA at both North Star (58.9%) and Raleigh (63.1%). • DPSA met goals identified in SIP on the reading MCA at Raleigh (61.1%). • Students in grades 2-8 at North Star Academy and Raleigh 2-5, met individual RIT Growth Projection on the NWEA MAP in reading from 68.0% to 84.4%, and 64.7% to 82.3% respectively. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although North Star exceeded the State average and showed growth with a score of 61.6% on the reading MCA, a goal of 63% was identified in its 2017-18 SIP. • MCA scoring suggests that the achievement gap for African American students remains a challenge with 50% math, and 48.6% reading not meeting State standards.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students at North Star 2-8 and Raleigh 2-5, met individual RIT Growth Projection on the NWEA MAP in math from 56.6% to 74.4%, and 55% to 65.8% respectively. 	
Finance	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active finance committee that is proactive and makes contingency plans regarding budget planning and passage. DECS has received MDE recognition for its financial management two consecutive years. 2017 audit featured no "significant deficiencies" or "significant deficiencies identified that were not considered to be material weaknesses" for the second consecutive year. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School fund balance.
Operations	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DECS has a comprehensive hiring and screening process, assuring that on boarding is consistent, and highly qualified faculty and staff are in place and supported. Student enrollment remains at capacity with monthly waitlist, and long-range plan for student numbers in place. Internal business management office provides responsiveness and flexibility as demonstrated by direct communication with no time lags. DECS has a student retention rate of 89.4%, and teacher retention of 86%. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variances for 6/51 of the School's special education employees and one physical education teacher.

ScoreCard Annual Composite Score(s)

Below are the ratings received in each of the performance categories. SIP opportunities identified through the oversight process are described below. The highest rating that can be achieved is a 4.0.

Section 1: School Model	3.3
School Improvement Opportunities: None cited.	

Section 2: Governance	3.7
School Improvement Opportunities: Board interaction and communication. Board meeting location signage.	
Section 3: Performance	3.5
School Improvement Opportunities: Continued growth in Reading and Math for African American students.	
Section 4: Finance	3.7
School Improvement Opportunities: No major weaknesses identified by data or observation. All categories met or exceeded benchmarks.	
Section 5: Operations	3.6
School Improvement Opportunities: Working through personnel variances.	
Composite Score	3.56

Performance Summary:

DECS is very transparent and forthcoming with board information and through their website and onsite interactions. Monthly information includes committee reports, full financial information and reports on items such as personnel changes, and waitlist numbers.

New this year and a positive is the DECS Hall of Fame. PURPOSE: The DECS Hall of Fame seeks to honor community members, retired staff members and/or former students who exemplify the standards of Duluth Edison Charter School and who have distinguished themselves in one or more of the following ways:

- Distinguished Service to DECS: An individual chosen in this category demonstrates loyalty to the mission of the School, continued interest and support of the goals of the School and reflects the School’s core values by his/her lifestyle.
- Distinguished Professional Achievement: An individual chosen for this award demonstrates leadership, competence, dedication to continuing education and integrity in his/her chosen profession.
- Distinguished Service to Humankind: An individual chosen for this award demonstrate leadership abilities in service to the community and/or society at large through notable contributions that reflect one or more our core values of respect, responsibility, compassion, justice, courage, integrity, hope and/or wisdom.

A main focus highlighted in DECS’s SIP for 2017-18 was in regard to overall MAP performance. DECS experienced significant growth in this targeted area exceeding expectations.

For the North Star Academy the benchmark established for reading was: “The percentage of all students in grades 2-8 at North Star Academy who come within the identified NWEA standard error of meeting or exceed individual RIT Growth Projection on the NWEA MAP in reading will increase from 68.0% in spring 2017 to 70.0% by spring 2018.” The spring scoring indicated 84.4% of students met this range in 2018.

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The results a Raleigh Academy were equally positive.

For Raleigh the benchmark established for reading was: “The percentage of all students in grades 2-5 at Raleigh Academy who come within the identified NWEA standard error of meeting or exceed individual RIT Growth Projection on the NWEA MAP in reading will increase from 64.7% in spring 2017 to 66.7% by spring 2018.” The spring scoring indicated that 82.3% met this goal in 2018.

For Raleigh the benchmark established for math was: “The percentage of all students in grades 2-5 at Raleigh Academy who come within the identified NWEA standard error of meeting or exceeding their individual RIT Growth Projection on the NWEA MAP in mathematics will increase from 55.0% in spring 2017 to 57.0% by spring 2018.” Spring scoring indicated that 65.8% of Raleigh students met this mark in 2018.