

Annual IQS Review
Duluth Edison Charter Schools (DECS)
FY'20

To: DECS School Board
From: Jim Zacchini, EdD, IQS Cadre Leadership Team Member
Date: July 27, 2020

Section 5.1 of the contract between Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and Duluth Edison Charter Schools 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 this responsibility, members of the IQS Management Leadership Team (MLT) held several meetings with members of the school leadership team to discuss issues and concerns related to school operations. Members of the IQS Cadre conducted **8 site visits (9/18/19, 9/25, 11/8, 12/13, 12/13, 2/11/20, 2/12, 4/20)** and several virtual reviews of school records. IQS also sponsored two (2) teacher/leadership conferences, one (1) board training conference and numerous professional development regarding best practice in a distance learning structure; all designed to provide the school with opportunities to grow professionally in support of the 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 the school.

Mission/Program Model	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DPSA 2019-20 Raleigh Schoolwide Title I and School Improvement Plan developed with the MDE sets measurable goals using MCA and MTAS through 2021. Specific strategies have been identified including data teams to evaluate student data, defining critical teaching and learning concepts, and working with a Regional Center for Excellence consultant. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ None cited.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Math curriculum coordinators work with teachers on framing instruction around essential standards at each grade level. ➤ DPSA has a K-5 literacy plan with specific goals and literacy coaching to achieve these goals. Goals include teacher PD, monitoring and coaching to improve instruction, and implementation of Guided Reading program. ➤ DPSA provides professional development for the K-5 literacy program. Coaches provide job-embedded teacher learning and monitoring of fidelity of implementation of the literacy program. 	
Governance	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Board is in full compliance with MN Open Meeting Law. ➤ Adapted quickly during health crises and conducted Board Retreat on May 16 via Zoom. ➤ A detailed strategic plan is posted on the school website. It is current and dated 2019-2024. Specific goals include increasing student achievement using MCA, NWEA MAP, DIBELS achievement, attendance and student, parent and staff satisfaction surveys. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ None cited.
Performance	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong online interaction for Primary grade students during Covid school closures utilizing SeeSaw, Google Classrooms, and Zoom. ➤ Grades 6-8 utilized Google Classroom and Schoology with support staff as co-teachers on these platforms. ➤ SPED team successful in communicating distance learning plans to students on IEPs. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ None cited.
Finance	
<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MDE UFARS Compliance Report the school fund balance for FY 19 (15.5%); FY18 Fund Balance (10.6%) . Reflecting a significant fund balance increase from FY 18 to FY 19. ➤ DPSA was a recipient of the 2019 School Finance Award for 2018 Financial Reporting. ➤ DPSA has a long range, 5 year "rolling" plan that is reviewed annually, with years added on an annual basis. The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan is on the website. The plan was updated in August of 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ None cited.
Operations	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The enrollment process is well spelled out on the website and is consistent with statute. ➤ Staff qualifications are all relevant to needed areas and fields. ➤ MN Division of Compliance and Assistance review for 2019-20 came back with a report of no findings of noncompliance in SPED program areas of Governance, Facilities, Child Find, and IEP process. 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy procedure and process manual needed for when and how Board policies are reviewed. ➤ It would be helpful/beneficial for DPSA to add a direct link to its website enrollment section, and feature the lottery policy so parents can see the process if their student(s) is not initially accepted.

ScoreCard Annual Composite Score(s)

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

Section 1: School Model	3.50
School Improvement Opportunities:	
Section 2: Governance	3.75
School Improvement Opportunities:	
Section 3: Performance	3.00
School Improvement Opportunities:	
Section 4: Finance	3.94
School Improvement Opportunities:	
Section 5: Operations	3.75
School Improvement Opportunities:	
See indicators "5.C Enrollment Planning," and "5.F School Board Policies Implementation" for more detail.	
Composite Score	3.59

Performance Summary:

Duluth has completed a yearlong review by the Minnesota Department of Education’s Division of Compliance and Assistance office. A highly complimentary report was issued citing DPSA’s cooperation and assistance and full compliance with all state and federal requirements, with no findings being issued, thus releasing DPSA from the associated individual correction process.

DPSA 2019-20 Raleigh Schoolwide Title I and School Improvement Plan has been developed with the Minnesota Department of Education to improve the school model. Measurable goals have been established using MCA and MTAS through 2021. Specific strategies have been identified including data teams to evaluate student data, defining critical teaching and learning concepts, and working with the Regional Center for Excellence consultant.

The Distance Learning Plan instituted during Covid school closures was well implemented during a difficult time for schools Minnesota wide. As programming evolved DPSA like all schools is seeking to

define measures of success and educational efficacy.