



Charter School Application  
Grace College  
Office of Charter Schools  
Fall, 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PROPOSAL OVERVIEW AND ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

#### PROPOSED SCHOOL NARRATIVE

Mission and Vision.....	2
Educational Need and Target Population.....	3
Community Engagement.....	5
Education Plan/School Design.....	7
Vision for Growth.....	24
Leadership and Governance.....	25
Performance Management.....	26
Staffing Plans.....	31
Parent and Community Involvement.....	34
Start-Up and Operations.....	34
Budget and Finance.....	35

#### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Founding Group Resumes and Bios
Attachment 2	Head of School/Principal candidate Information
Attachment 3	School Administrator Information
Attachment 4	Course Scope and Sequence
Attachment 5	Curriculum Development Timeline
Attachment 6	Academic and Exit Standards
Attachment 7	School Calendar and Schedule
Attachment 8	Enrollment Policy
Attachment 9	Student Discipline Policy
Attachment 10	Staffing Chart
Attachment 11	Personnel Policy
Attachment 12	Head of School/Principal and Faculty Evaluation Tools
Attachment 13	Articles of Incorporation, Board Bylaws, 501(c)3 letter, and Policies
Attachment 14	Statement of Assurances
Attachment 15	Organization Charts
Attachment 16	Board Member Information
Attachment 17	Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest
Attachment 18	Education Service Provider (ESP) Documentation
Attachment 19	Evidence of Support from Community Partners
Attachment 20	Start-Up Plan
Attachment 21	Insurance Coverage
Attachment 22	Detailed Budget Forms
Attachment 23	Budget Narrative
Attachment 24	<b>BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION FORMS</b>

## SCHOOL PROPOSAL OVERVIEW & ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

Please provide information for the **designated representative** for the applicant group. This individual will serve as the contact for all communications, interviews, and notices regarding the submitted proposal. *Note: Names and contact information may be shared with external groups by Grace College.*

**Name of proposed charter school:**

Otwell Miller Academy

**Proposed charter school location:**

\*Please indicate the city/town and, if known, potential address or neighborhood of location. Virtual operators should indicate the geographies The school intends to serve.

Otwell, Indiana

**School district(s) of proposed school location:**

Pike County Indiana

**Legal name of group applying for charter:**

Friends of Otwell Elementary, Ltd.

**Names, roles, and current employment for all persons on applicant team:**

Mike Houtsch, President, Vincennes University professor

Bob Rhodes, Vice-President, USAF Retired Colonel

Emily Willis, Secretary, Pike County Librarian

Michelle Durcholz, Treasurer, Kimball Electronics

**Designated applicant representative:**

Elisabeth I. Luff, attorney at law

**Address:**

3084 S. State Rd. 257

Velpen, IN 47590

(812) 582-0342

**Office and cell phone:**

**Email address:**

LuffLaw@Live.com

**Fax:**

N/A

**Model or focus of proposed school:**

(e.g., arts, college prep, dual language, etc.)

Project Based: Elementary only

**Proposed Grade Levels and Student Enrollment**

Specify the planned year of opening for the charter school, and indicate both the planned and maximum number of enrolled students by grade level for each year.

Academic Year	Grade Levels	Student Enrollment (Planned/Maximum)
Year 1 (specify) 2017-18	Pre-K - 5	130/150
Year 2 2018-19	Pre-K - 5	130/150
Year 3 2019-20	Pre-K - 5	130/150
Year 4 2020-21	Pre-K - 5	130/150
Year 5 2021-2022	Pre-K - 5	
At Capacity		

**Does the school expect to contract or partner with an Education Service Provider (ESP) or other organization for school management/operation?\*** ☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, identify the ESP or other partner organization:

*\*Note: If the applicant intends to partner with a service provider or partner that has previous experience in operating a school, the applicant should use the RFP for Experienced Operators.*

**Proposed Head of School/Principal Information (If Known)**

Name of proposed candidate:

Unknown

Current employment:

Daytime phone:

Cell phone:

Email address:

**Will a proposal for the same charter school be submitted to another authorizer in the near future?** Yes ☒ No ☐

**If yes, identify the authorizer(s):** Ball State University

**Planned submission date(s):** Spring, 2017

**Please list the number of previous submissions for request to authorize this charter school over the past five years, as required under IC § 20-24-3-4. Include the following information:**

**Authorizer(s):** Ball State University

**Submission date(s):** May, 2016



## PROPOSED SCHOOL NARRATIVE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community to be Served: Pike County is steeped in a unique Indiana history.

Founded on December 21, 1816, Pike County was the first county formed after Indiana became a state. It was named for Zebulon Pike, famous for his Pike Expedition of 1806 – 1807, exploring the southwest portion of the Louisiana Purchase. Pike commanded the 4th Infantry Regiment at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. He was killed as a brigadier general during the War of 1812 after his men had captured York (now Toronto), Canada. From 1959 to 1963 Vance Hartke and Homer E. Capehart were the U.S. Senators for Indiana, both from Pike County.

*"Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him." ~Dwight D. Eisenhower, quoted in Time, 6 Oct 1952*

Otwell is a small unincorporated community in the northeast corner of Pike County. It serves as a crossroads between Daviess County to the north and Dubois County to the east.

It is the desire of the Friends of Otwell Elementary LTD that Grace College grant them a charter so that they may reopen their school and educate their youth thus increasing the probability of community stability and future growth as students return to attend in the school in the county and then, upon graduation, return to the area to give back.

Like most small farming communities in Indiana, Otwell would seem to fall into the quiet, sleepy town profile with a population just a bit over 400 residents. Quite the contrary, this little town, located in Jefferson Township in Pike County has a robust business directory comparative to its size (see below). There is tremendous support from the residents and the businesses of Otwell to reopen their school, as they strive to maintain their strong rural presence.

### Otwell IN (Indiana) Business Directory

Ackerman Oil Co. DBA Circle A  
2141 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-6078

Buchta Elmer Heavy Machinery Movers  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-3131

Buchta Elmer Trucking Inc  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-6300

D & B Auto  
9993 E State Road 56  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2322

Dutchtown Homes Inc  
1011 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2197

Elmer Buchta Trucking LLC  
1665 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-1020

Hart Ken Photography  
2202 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-6692

Hill's Auto & Truck Sales  
2573 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2419

Jefferson Township Community Center  
2301 N Spring St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2878

Jefferson Township Fire Department  
9975 E Jefferson St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-3806

Jefferson Township Trustees  
6291 E County Road 450 N  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2406

Mangin Engineering PC  
4004 N County Road 625 E  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-3524

Myers Heating & Cooling  
1011 N County Road 825 E  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-4273

Otwell Mercantile  
2230 N Spring St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-9841

Otwell Ruritan Senior Housing Inc  
9821 E Jefferson St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-9117

Otwell United Methodist Church  
10055 E Washington St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2426

Otwell Water Department  
2201 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2256

Pike Co. Schools  
1869 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2600

Ripco LTD  
7702 E State Road 356  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2496

Royster Clark Inc  
10237 E County Road 200 N  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2404

St John's Lutheran Church  
6483 W 580n  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-482-7623

Trenchless Innovation Inc  
7814 E County Road 550 N  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-3670

Tri-County Paving  
882 N County Road 800 E  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-1281

United States Postal Service  
2171 N State Road 257  
Otwell, IN 47564  
800-275-8777

Wehr Welding & Machine Shop  
2250 N Spring St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2876

Wehr's Welding Service Inc  
2250 N Spring St  
Otwell, IN 47564  
812-354-2876

**Otwell, IN Data & Demographics (As of July 1, 2015)**

POPULATION		HOUSING	
Total Population	414	Total Housing Units	238 (100%)
Population in Households	414	Owner Occupied HU	174 (73.1%)
Population in Families	339	Renter Occupied HU	35 (14.7%)
Population in Group Qtrs	0	Vacant Housing Units	28 (11.8%)
Population Density <sup>1</sup>	232	Median Home Value	\$128,061
Diversity Index <sup>2</sup>	7	Average Home Value	\$144,509
HOUSEHOLDS		INCOME	
Total Households	210	Median Household Income	\$44,010
Average Household Size	1.97	Average Household Income	\$51,939
Family Households	144	Per Capita Income	\$21,788
Average Family Size	2		

The Pike County School Board voted to close Otwell Elementary School on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The Corporation was four million dollars in deficit and, with a failed referendum in 2015 (which would have generated 2.3 million annually), further cuts were inevitable. The people of Otwell wanted to see the school board find alternative ways of cutting costs so that schools were not shuttered and jobs lost. They contend that without a school, residents and businesses leave and without homeowners and businesses, tax dollars are lost, thus perpetuating a downward economic spiral. Additionally, they believe strongly, that this rural school is the hub of the community providing employment, serving as a social, recreational, and a cultural foundation. At a school board meeting Michael Houtsch (president of Friends of Otwell Elementary LTD.) cited the number of businesses that left Otwell and the neighboring town of Velpen when they lost their respective high schools. Therefore, reinforcing the belief that to maintain a strong vibrant community a strong central gathering point, such as a school, is needed.

When the closure of Otwell Elementary was announced, the people of the town came together and developed Friends of Otwell Elementary LTD (FoOE), a non-for-profit entity to support the effort to reclaim the school as a charter. The FoOE submitted a charter application to Ball State University in the Spring, 2016. The application was denied citing the need for additional time to prepare for a charter school opening.

Otwell Elementary was a 4Star, Blue Ribbon School, consistently achieving an A rating. When Otwell was closed some students (approximately 1/3 of the school's population) choose to attend school outside the county instead of being bussed to the other two elementary schools in the county. The next closest school to Otwell is in Dubois County (Ireland); also an A rated school.

It is their continued intention to not only maintain the small country school that focuses on strong values and high academic standards, but to assist in helping the greater whole of Pike County. Essentially, their desire is to work together toward a common goal; to fiscally strengthen the county through unique, enterprising efforts such as school choice. FoOE hopes that by submitting its application in the Fall to Grace College (Grace), that Grace and FoOE will have substantial time to prepare for the opening of the Otwell Miller Academy, Fall 2017.

### **1. Mission and Vision:**

The Founding Board of FoOE feels strongly that their school's Mission and Vision reflect Indiana Code-Title 20, Article 24 – Charter Schools IC 20-24-2-1 Purposes of Charter Schools.

**Mission:** To develop alternative educational opportunities, improve existing educational structures and build a brighter pathway to success for our children.

**Vision:** At Otwell Miller Academy, we believe that the life-long educational journey begins with a love of learning. However, our academy's mission extends beyond book learning to encouraging our students to embrace service above self, becoming active citizens and leading others to excellence.

By providing an environment where our students are not afraid to fail, our students are prepared for success in higher learning, serving their community and leading their peers.



## 2. Educational Need and Target Population:

### Section 1: Educational Need:

#### Rural Schools - Why authorize a rural school?

Not surprisingly, traditional public schools and public charter schools are often not philosophically aligned. However, in the case of rural schools, educators are united:

The National Education Association actively supports the development of programs that recognize and deal with the particular needs of students, educators, school employees and communities in the nation's vast rural areas.

#### RURAL SCHOOLS DO MORE WITH LESS

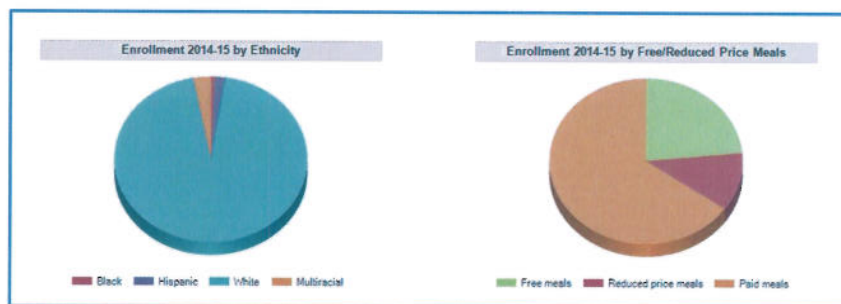
Rural communities depend on their schools to serve many functions beyond their primary mission of educating children. Rural school districts are often the largest single employer in their area and rural schools serve as the social, recreational and cultural foundation of their communities. But many rural school districts are underfunded and some lack a steady revenue stream. Moreover, they are disadvantaged by size as well as geography. For example, when rural districts apply for grants, the resulting funds based on number of students are often too small to accomplish the purpose of the award. One rural district received a technology grant of \$800—scarcely enough to buy a single computer.

Rural education employees also serve many roles in their communities and they, too, face many unique challenges:

- Lower salaries and benefits
- Lack of access to professional development opportunities
- Professional isolation
- Preparation for multiple subjects and grade levels
- Multiple extracurricular duties

### Section 2: Target Population:

Given the current demographic data the organizing board does not feel that the student profile of Otwell Elementary will change considerably after it reopens as a Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade charter school. As one can see from the charts below the school academic outcomes are positive. Otwell Elementary School has consistently trended upward in the percent of students passing (with the exception of 2013-14) even with a 18.2 % special education population. They have achieved an "A" rating under IDOE's A – F Accountability system for the last five years and before that were in the exemplary category under NCLB/PL221. Otwell Elementary School was an Indiana 4-Star School in 2009 & 2011. They were the only school in Indiana to record a perfect, 100% passing in ISTEP+ math in the spring of 2010. They were a National Blue Ribbon School (2011). It is the desire of the community to **preserve and enrich** the quality rural education previously offered at Otwell Elementary School.



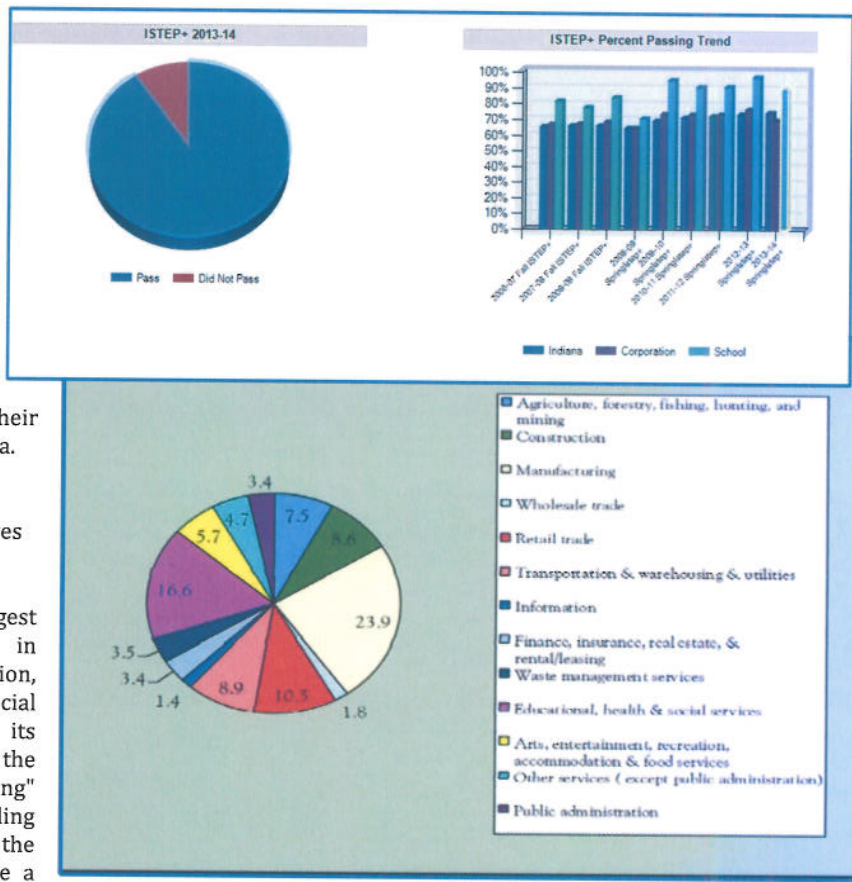
The other elementary schools in Pike County are Winslow and Petersburg. Otwell Elementary School far exceeded the other schools on ISTEP, for the 2013-14 school year although the demographics are almost identical. Further, they have outperformed the other schools for at least the last ten years. One may deduce the school has and will continue to be a top performer. It is the hope of the organizing board that the families in Pike County and the nearby communities may want to choose which elementary school their children attend based on academic data.

#### The Geographic and Population Considerations: Challenges / Advantages



##### Advantages:

The second largest employment category in Pike County is "Education, Health and Social Services." Most of its population leave the county for employment ("Manufacturing" and "Retail Sales" in the surrounding counties). If this area is depleted or the school choice damaged, there will be a negative impact on the population as they move to be closer to employment opportunities with better school choices.



#### Industrial Employment - US Census Bureau

##### Challenges:

The major challenge the organizing group anticipates is the possibility that it will not be able to entice students to return to Otwell nor encourage students to continue to the Middle and High School run by the local school corporation. The FoOE and local school corporation have a common goal – **success and retention of students**. It is the goal of the organizing group to develop ways that it will be mutually beneficial in order to facilitate an effective working relationship with the current administration so that the county's students will continue within the county rather than seeking educational opportunities outside the county and to entice surrounding students to an attractive alternative; the charter school.

#### Age and Grade Range of Students to be Enrolled: Number of Students

Grade Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	At Capacity Year 4
Pre-K	20	22	22	22	22	22
K	20	20	22	22	22	22
1	22	24	24	26	26	26
2	22	24	26	28	28	28
3	22	24	26	28	28	28
4	22	24	26	28	28	28
5	22	24	26	28	28	28
<b>Total*</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>

\*Total does not include Pre-K

OMA will maintain a small school enrollment. The desired maximum capacity will be reached in year four with no more than 160 students. The founding board feels that this is a realistic and attainable number given the geographic area of Pike County. More importantly the small hometown environment is more conducive to achieving a warm nurturing school



climate and culture. Additionally, controlled growth will help the teachers concentrate on curriculum and instruction rather than acclimating and acculturating many new students per year.

OMA understands the importance of keeping the teacher/student ratio at a level conducive to continued positive outcomes. It is most important in the lower grades as children are developing essential academic and social skills to ready them for the rigors of upper levels. OMA will have one class per grade level. As the number of students increase in year two, an additional classroom assistant and community volunteers will support the class.

### 3. Community Engagement – See Attachment 19

Immediately after it was announced that Otwell Elementary would close, the community packed the local community center to address the crisis. A group of community leaders formed the Friends of Otwell Elementary, Ltd (FoOE) in early Fall 2015. Community outreach began immediately. Board meetings are held weekly and Public meetings are held monthly. Since the announcement of closure of Otwell Elementary School, these meetings have produced multiple committees and research groups all coming together to complete this application for charter. Monthly fundraising efforts continue with no decrease in revenue despite the delay in opening the charter school.

The primary non-educational challenge last year was the aggressive timeline for opening Otwell Miller Academy ("OMA"). Given the inconvenient timing of the closure announcement, the board took accelerated actions to pursue facility options, prepare the educational program, and begin operations. The community has rallied to meet this challenge, but Ball State University doubted the community's ability to achieve its agenda.

Part of the delay in applying for a charter rests with FoOE' desire to make every effort to keep Otwell Elementary open under the public school system. The FoOE presented various options to the school corporation in an effort to keep Otwell Elementary open. Unfortunately, it became evident that no proposal would satisfy the school corporation when it was told during a school board meeting in November that the only way to keep the school open would be for Otwell to completely repay the entire deficit, then estimated to be \$2.5million. At this point, the FoOE board realized that they need to begin start-up procedures immediately – even prior to obtaining a charter contract. The school board's announcement provided the momentum it needed to carry its plan forward to a 2016-2017 opening. Unfortunately, that was not to happen.

The school board enacted a Reduction in Force (RIF), terminated all support staff of Otwell Elementary and vacated the school, leaving most of the equipment intact (two small outdoor playground pieces were removed). Families were assigned to either Petersburg or Winslow and told that the bus route would not exceed one hour to the new elementary school. The first day of school was Friday, August 5. During the public school board meeting last week, the board addressed a teacher shortages and a general lack of preparation by the corporation as the consolidation becomes a reality.

When the closure of Otwell Elementary was announced, the corporation reported an estimated \$700,000 savings by closing the school. This savings was attributed to staff cut-backs and selling or leasing the building. However, this savings cannot be largely realized as the corporation hires back as many teachers as it RIFd and is unable to sell or utilize the empty Otwell Elementary building. Additionally, the extended bus routes and loss of students to the surrounding areas have cut into the anticipated savings. In June, the Superintendent, Ms. Suzanne Blake estimated that the corporation would *lose* \$800,000 from a decrease in enrollment created by the closing of Otwell Elementary. The ripple effect of the loss of elementary students will be felt at the Middle and High school in the years to come unless these students return.

The FoOE has continued its efforts despite its application setback and has approached the corporation on how to create a symbiotic relationship. It will open a Pre-School for an estimated 20 children in September, 2016.

#### Section 1: Business Outreach

Business	Location	Established Support/Partnership
Buchta Elmer Heavy Machine Mover	Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-6078	Affirmative
Buchta Elmer Trucking Inc.	Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-3131	Affirmative
Jefferson Township Community Center	2301 Spring St. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-2878	Affirmative
Jefferson Township Fire Dept.	9975 E. Jefferson St. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-2878	Affirmative

Jefferson Township Trustees	6291 E. Cty. Rd. 450 N. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-2406	Affirmative
Otwell Mercantile	2230 N. Spring St. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-9841	Affirmative
Otwell Ruritan Senior Housing	9821 E. Jefferson St. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-9117	Affirmative
Tri-County Paving	882 N. Cty. Rd. 800 E. Otwell, IN. 47564 812-354-1281	Affirmative
Wehr Welding and Machine Shop	2250 North Spring St. Otwell, IN 47564 812-354-2876	Affirmative

### Section 2: Preliminary Student Enrollment

The FoOE asked parents to complete a preliminary enrollment form to gauge interest and needed facility size February 1 2016. See the chart, below. A second request for interest was conducted in the end of May, after Ball State announced they would deny the charter application. The interest had not changed despite the setback.

GRADE	Pre-Enrollment
K	25
1	21
2	9
3	15
4	18
5	15

### Section 3: Continued Parent and Community Involvement

- True to the definition, from the very onset, OMA has epitomized a strong rural school. It was parents and the Otwell community who raised awareness and strong opposition to closing their beloved school. Parents are actively involved, assisting the organizing group, getting accurate information to the community at large and gathering ideas for the OMA proposal document. There are committees of people looking at academics, governance and financial issues that need to be addressed. Additionally, several local teachers have expressed interest in helping to bring the charter to fruition. To date this initiative has been solely parent and community driven.
- There is no doubt that community and parent groups will stay involved in the school through its inception and beyond. However, the organizing group has plans to assure continued support.
  - Continued communications through various modalities
  - Weekly parent information meetings at various community locations in and out of the county
  - Summer activities are planned to bring families and teachers together (picnics, ice cream social, curriculum information meetings, team building etc.)
  - Contact with community members in organizing their involvement in planning curriculum and field activities
  - Contact with parents in organizing volunteer opportunities
- At OMA parents will be an integral part of a classical education for their child. There will be many opportunities for parents to assist as part of the school community. The door will always be open to those who wish to help.
  - Parent Teacher Organization
  - Required Volunteer Hours: All parents and/or guardians will be asked to volunteer twenty hours per year. Volunteering may include; field trips, clubs, cafeteria or playground assistance, activities coordinator, classroom assistance, sharing their vocation, etc. Anything a parent would like to do to help out will be considered a volunteer hour.
  - Communication: Teachers will have daily/weekly communication with parents through their classroom web-page, e-mail, phone messages, student folders and newsletters. The school will communicate with parents via all school phone / text messages, web-site, structured social media, signage, calendars, newsletters



- Coffee with the principal – Each month the principal will invite parents to school for a casual, yet structured conversation about ideas, policy, procedures, etc.
  - Parents will be celebrated through functions such as, “Donuts for Dads” and “Muffins for Moms”.
  - School improvement efforts will be accomplished with the help from parents. There will always be parents on various school committees. Forums with various topics will be conducted on a monthly basis. Surveys and informal discussions will be a part of the school culture.
4. In a small rural area community involvement is an essential piece of daily instruction. Community involvement will include, but not be limited to:
- Career Day – Community members will be asked to speak to student groups regarding their vocation and what educational components are necessary to obtain employment in their profession.
  - Guest Speakers – locals, foundation representatives, civic club members, politicians, historians, etc. will be utilized in teaching the history of Pike and surrounding counties.
  - Field trips to museums, cemeteries, local municipalities, parks, and historic sites, will give students’ unique insight into the places and things that surround them.
  - Community professionals will lead students in various studies such as water and soil testing, crop growth, identification of local plants, trees, animals and fish.
  - Community members will teach local folklore and customs, share artifacts, etc.
  - Community liaisons will financially support summer initiatives.

Parent involvement and community collaboration are critical to student growth and will provide the educational investment necessary to develop students into a skilled workforce and responsible citizenry. To this end, OMA will expect parents to support the mission and vision of the school. OMA hopes parents will set good examples for their children, encourage them in critical thinking skills, provide them quiet study space at home, teach them effective study skills, and limit the time the children participate in activities such as watching television or playing video games.

#### **4. Education Plan/ School Design**

##### **Section 1: Framework**

After a study of innovative educational models, discussion with educational leaders, and a visit to many schools, the founding group has decided to embrace a project based model of educating their youth using our Indiana State Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence. It is their belief that by using resources available to them in the community and creating opportunity for learning to come to life, they will best prepare students educationally, socially, and emotionally at levels that the students will truly internalize and ultimately be able to teach others what they have learned. It is the founding board’s belief that their students will continue to gain skills and knowledge in post-secondary education and will, in due course, give back to their community.

OMA will build its education on a robust curriculum with rigorous academics and high expectations. The curricular design and instructional strategies are rooted in scientifically based research and best practice. Using the Indiana Academic Standards adopted in April of 2015 by the State Board of Education, and enhancing them with supplemental materials, students will be provided a college preparatory education beginning in pre-kindergarten. OMA will align standards vertically to ensure students do not miss skills necessary for success in the following grade, and horizontally to make connections across content areas. This means, for example, that as students learn about incorporating strong voice into their writing, they are focused on identifying a character’s voice in a fictional text or analyzing historical perspective in social studies. To develop our curriculum, each summer teachers will work in grade level teams with their academic standards to plan for the year’s curriculum by analyzing standards-based assessments aligned to the OMA’s scope and sequence to divide the year into units of study. Teachers begin each school year with a detailed roadmap of instructional topics and clear benchmarks to hit for mastery along the way. This detailed roadmap will be developed jointly with the administration and all teachers to ensure a seamless transition throughout the student’s career at OMA.



To provide the quality and depth of instruction that will best prepare students with the academic foundation necessary for success in middle school, achievement in high school, graduation from college, and success in life, the leadership team reviews and vets curricular materials for each subject and grade level to determine which are most developmentally

appropriate, academically rigorous, and highly engaging. In reviewing textbooks and other curricular resources, OMA considers the following factors: **(a)** alignment to the Indiana Academic Standards; **(b)** enhanced cohesion to the State Standards; **(c)** basis in scientific research; **(d)** degree of use in high performing urban schools; and **(e)** proven effectiveness with special populations of students. Because OMA stands firm on the belief that literacy is the best lever for future academic success, the team reviews content area materials for inclusion of grade-level appropriate reading and writing skills and analyzes the level of vocabulary throughout the text. Understanding of Indiana's expectations for students in K-5 and in-depth knowledge of the Indiana Academic Standards, led OMA to the selection of the following curricular materials as outlined in **Figure 7**. Each year OMA will evaluate the success of curricular models and materials and make adjustments to better meet the needs of the students.

**Figure 7: Proposed Core Academic Curricular Materials Grades K-5**

Grade Level	Literacy	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
<b>K</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Phonemic Awareness:</b> Orion Gillingham <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman
<b>1</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Phonics:</b> Orion Gillingham <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman
<b>2</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Phonics:</b> Orion Gillingham <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman
<b>3</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Vocabulary:</b> Words Their Way <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman
<b>4</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Vocabulary:</b> Words Their Way <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman
<b>5</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Core Knowledge, Literacy Centers & Guided Reading (internally developed) <b>Vocabulary:</b> Words Their Way <b>Writing:</b> Six Traits of Writing <b>Online Learning:</b> Istation	enVision Math	FOSS Science Kits	Scott Foresman

OMA will give students the opportunity to:

- Develop deep understanding of content and skills through interdisciplinary studies;
- Acquire higher-level problem solving skills through real-world problem solving;
- Explore and understand the world around them through hands-on and minds-on experiences;
- Discover the complex interactions among natural and social systems;
- Build the teamwork skills needed to succeed in adulthood;
- Capitalize on diverse learning styles using individualized approaches to learning; and
- Learn to live in harmony with the world around them.

The founding group views an educational program to be the sum of an effective curricular content, aligned in a planned sequence, delivered in high-interest instructional methods and evaluated with summative and formative measures. All selected materials listed in Figure 7 (above) are well-aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards, aligned sequentially to Core Knowledge, and designed to be used in a project based environment with technology as an important tool. OMA integrates these simple principles in its educational program design.

### Why Core Knowledge?

"The Core Knowledge Sequence is predicated on the realization that what children are able to learn at any given moment depends on what they already know—and, equally important, that what they know is a function of previous experience and teaching (Datnow, 2000, p. 22). The Core Knowledge sequence aligns content-specific curriculum to provide a cumulative education building from week-to-week and year-to-year.

Core Knowledge has been highly studied since the late 1990s. A national study conducted over a six-year period through the University of Missouri found, "The Core Knowledge schools performed well above the national average, with their collective performance increasingly higher than the norm ("Core Knowledge Curriculum and School Performance", p. 2).

### Why Project Based? ("PBL")

While OMA is not an "immersive" project based education model, the leadership team knows that students learn best when actively engaged in real world, high-interest projects. PBL makes school more engaging for students, and it prepares them for the real-life working situations they will encounter as adults.



According to information from the Buck Institute for Education ([http://bie.org/about/why\\_pbl](http://bie.org/about/why_pbl))

- PBL makes school more engaging for students. Today's students, more than ever, often find school to be boring and meaningless. In PBL, students are active, not passive; a project engages their hearts and minds, and provides real-world relevance for learning.
- PBL improves learning. After completing a project, students understand content more deeply, remember what they learn and retain it longer than is often the case with traditional instruction. Because of this, students who gain content knowledge with PBL are better able to apply what they know and can do to new situations.
- PBL builds success skills for college, career, and life. In the 21st century workplace and in college, success requires more than basic knowledge and skills. In a project, students learn how to take initiative and responsibility, build their confidence, solve problems, work in teams, communicate ideas, and manage themselves more effectively.
- PBL helps address standards. Present-day standards emphasize real-world application of knowledge and skills, and the development of success skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, communication in a variety of media, and speaking and presentation skills. PBL is an effective way to meet these goals.
- PBL provides opportunities for students to use technology. Students are familiar with and enjoy using a variety of tech tools that are a perfect fit with PBL. With technology, teachers and students can not only find resources and information and create products, but also collaborate more effectively, and connect with experts, partners, and audiences around the world.
- PBL makes teaching more enjoyable and rewarding. Projects allow teachers to work more closely with active, engaged students doing high-quality, meaningful work, and in many cases to rediscover the joy of learning alongside their students.
- PBL connects students and schools with communities and the real world. Projects provide students with empowering opportunities to make a difference, by solving real problems and addressing real issues. Students learn how to interact with adults and organizations, are exposed to workplaces and adult jobs, and can develop career interests. Parents and community members can be involved in projects.
- PBL is an important component in working with Core Knowledge.

**A. Technology and Delivery of Instruction:** Technology will be embedded into all areas of the curriculum (reading, writing, math, science, social studies). Technology will be a fact of life in the classroom and the school—as it is in the real world. We will have computers and an interactive display in every classroom. OMA will employ an individual to troubleshoot and assist teachers in the use of technology. Teachers will maintain achievement and growth records that are technology-based. The school will also make use of computer software that differentiates instruction. Students will use technology to publish reports, presentations, and published writing. Students will be taught word processing and spreadsheets. Many assessments may be technology-based (e.g., Acuity, Dibels). Technology can also be used in PBL activities and other student collaboration projects. In a word, technology will be leveraged to support and enhance student learning—in the classroom and through assessment.

Even though OMA will not be a blended learning or virtual school, OMA will develop a technology plan each year. It will have four primary components: annual technology trends survey; three measureable goals; three-year projected budget; and plans for technology use. The use of technology will also be a part of Professional Development opportunities.

**B. Instructional Strategies.** Based on best practices from rural schools eliminating the achievement gap nationwide, teachers will be taught the practices below during summer professional development so they can execute from day one. Additional support and individualized feedback from the school's principal will be shared weekly.

Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction. Curriculum is designed upon Indiana's Academic Standards and aligns to the Indiana State Standards (ISS). Teachers are trained in analyzing standards and unpacking them to uncover their primary objective and build their daily lesson plans and longer units of study in a manner best suited for achieving the desired student outcome.

Use Data Every Day. Sequential instruction leads students to a standard and a goal, not just to the next topic. We use data daily to guarantee students make progress towards end-of-year goals and long term targets. Although a significant amount of data is generated by school-wide assessments, each teacher uses data to inform instruction for each objective. The frequent use of standards-driven assessment data notifies teachers if mastery is occurring at the appropriate pace or if more intensive instruction is required.



Systematic Checks for Understanding. Assessing students' learning on an ongoing basis is pivotal to tracking progress aligned to grade-level and individual goals. Effective checks for understanding are intentional and purposeful. Methods to ensure effective checks include: direct questioning and paraphrasing, written response, think-pair-share, small group or partner discussion, use of signs or cues, or choral response.

Strong emphasis on differentiated instruction. Our small class size and co-teaching model in key subjects ensures we are proactively reaching all learners in a manner that individualizes instruction based on recent data, teacher observations, and overall class performance. Using data during literacy rotations allows teachers to differentiate instruction in small groups, working with groups of six for 30 minutes at a time.

Taxonomy of Teaching. We use a variety of academic, behavioral and advanced instructional techniques that reinforce student expectations and build high levels of student engagement. We provide training on selected techniques throughout the year.

Small group and one-on-one tutoring. Targeted interventions throughout the day allow for opportunities to deliver focused instruction in precise areas of concern and to reteach concepts not mastered. Assessment data is used to inform our tutoring practices, which occur at the end of every day.

Individualized Computer-based Learning. Students spend 30 minutes on the computer daily as a key component of our literacy rotations. Reading software specifically designed to supplement core reading instruction, such as Istation for K-5, will be computer adaptive, allowing for individualized and targeted instruction derived from scientifically-based reading research. Assessment data on phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension gathered from the software provides teachers with another indicator of a student's progress, as well as targeted interventions, specific tools, and interactive literature designed to elevate students to on-grade level reading and beyond.

**C. Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence.** Attachment 8 provides scope and sequence document(s) illustrating how curriculum is integrated across subjects and K-5. For curriculum not yet fully developed, a timeline for creation of these materials is provided.

## **Section 2. Major Instructional Methods:**

Curriculum and Instructional Design: *The basic learning environment, including class size and structure.*

The learning environment at OMA will resemble a traditional classroom in some ways, but be quite unique in other ways. Classrooms for primary grades will have a minimum of 750 square feet for 20-25 students. We believe grade level enrollment will mirror that of Otwell Elementary allowing us, in years one and two to have one teacher per grade level. Three aides, one designated as a special education aide, will assist teachers in the areas most needed. The special education teacher will spend significant time in each classroom as part of an inclusion and differentiated instruction model to address students' specific learning needs.

The physical classrooms will be warm and inviting. The classrooms will be learner friendly but uncluttered and non-allergenic. Teachers will design their rooms in a manner that is conducive to learning. Plants, learning centers, aquariums, terrariums, and natural lighting will be encouraged. Anything that brings learning alive is considered important.

Finally, our outdoor spaces will be a major part of the children's learning environment. The gardens, meadows, woodland, towns, and city areas will serve as classrooms for our children. Using the project-based education model, our students will learn about the environment where they live. American novelist and avid environmental activist, Wendell Berry believes that "we are involved in a profound failure of imagination... Most people cannot imagine the forest and the forest economy that produced their house, their furniture, and their paper..." (Berry).

*An overview of the planned curriculum is attached as **Attachment 4: a sample course scope and sequence for one subject.** However, OMA would like their new school leader and staff to fully develop this during the upcoming year as articulated in the "Start Up Plan" **Attachment 20.***

### **Language Arts Curriculum:**

OMA believes learning to read well is the cornerstone of creating equitable outcomes for the students. While listening, reading, and writing are integrated into every aspect of the curriculum, they are highlighted in this document to show how OMA will develop students' literacy skills through an integration of Readers and Writers Workshop and other best practice approaches. Teachers also draw upon the well-researched methods of teaching language arts, including the Whole Language method and the Five Block method.

OMA will utilize a literature-based approach to teaching language arts. Using genres as a springboard, teachers will incorporate age appropriate reading materials to facilitate reading. Reading materials will include, fictional and nonfictional text with a variety of applications from entertainment to technical. Reading assessments will take place across the curriculum. OMA feels that in order to instill a lifelong love of reading one must acquire that love at a young age.

Literature based education will compliment project based teaching. At OMA we will utilize literature (reading, writing, spelling, language) in the following project based manner:

- Learn about local history and lore
- Read maps, ledgers, courthouse data and statistics
- Research factual information about people, places, and things
- Read fictional literature that may apply to Indiana
- Read the local newspaper
- Read flyers and promotional information from local business, and politicians

Definitions of literature-based instruction emphasize the use of high-quality literary works as the core instructional materials used to support literacy development. A guiding principle of the literature-based perspective is that literacy acquisition occurs in a book-rich context where there is an abundance of purposeful communication and meaning is socially constructed. Literary works in such contexts include a wide range of materials: picture books, big books, predictable books, folk tales, fables, myths, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction informational books, and biographies (Scharer, 1996).

In a literature based classroom:

- Literature is used as an important vehicle for language arts instruction.
- The students with special needs are accommodated in an inclusive atmosphere.
- High-quality narrative and informational literature provides the basis for a consistent read-aloud program in which children are read to daily.
- Literature is the sole or primary basis for initial reading instruction, or it is a significant supplement to a basal program.
- Opportunities are provided for students to listen to and read books of their own choosing.
- Students are provided with sustained time for both independent and collaborative book sharing, reading, and writing activities.

Literature will be selected based on a wide array of genres and in relationship to all curricular areas.

- a. The curriculum development timeline is provided as **Attachment 5**, including who will be responsible and when key stages will be completed.

**Readers and Writers Workshop:** Students at OMA experience Readers and Writers Workshop during the 45 minute skill classes in the afternoons. Workshops are highly structured, predictable, purposeful, and well planned. The Writers Workshop approach is the result of more than 30 years of work by the leaders of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and thousands of affiliated schools across the country. Kelley (2002) conducted a large-scale study that compared the writing process approach to the lecture, teacher-only approach. The study revealed that the quality of writing from students who participated in Writers Workshop was 22 times greater in a pretest/posttest assessment. Other studies have found the Readers Workshop approach to be similarly effective. Debbie Miller, Detroit teacher for thirty years, author and lecturer, (2002) describes strategies that proficient readers use to make meaning out of a text and these strategies are ones taught during the Readers Workshop class time.

**Project Based Learning:** Teachers at OMA will challenge and motivate students to learn by providing them with real life problems to solve. Students will learn to better communicate, collaborate, and think critically and creatively. PBL is an inclusive approach to education, which involves a participatory community of learners in the process of solving academic and real world problems. It is based on a number of research-based assumptions:

- Human beings are driven to solve problems.
- We are challenged and motivated when confronted with problems that need solutions.
- The current generation of students is technologically sophisticated.



- The work world in which students will participate is increasingly characterized by critical thinking, analysis of evidence and data, and a team approach to getting work done.

Students are presented with a problem that they must research and attempt to solve. They work in groups or teams, with the teacher acting as a coach giving students guidance as to how to ultimately solve the problem. Students must do research, weigh evidence and think critically and analytically about the problems they are examining. This experiential approach to learning will take different forms (problem-based learning, project-based learning and design-based learning) as we differentiate instruction based upon the age and grade level of the students. The problems solved and the inquiry that the students will engage, will increase in complexity and be of a longer duration spanning numerous academic threads and multiple weeks. Generally, in the primary grades (K-2) students will use problem-based learning that starts with an ill-structured problem or case study for students to research. As students move towards the intermediate grades (3-5) they will use project-based learning where students create a project or presentation as a demonstration of their understanding of a problem. In the sixth grade the students participate in design-based learning where they create a working design of a solution to a complex problem. Students will participate in grade level and community presentations showing their learning as a culminating activity.

**Differentiated Instruction:** At OMA, teachers will be taught to use various teaching methods to differentiate the curriculum for all learners. Differentiating the curriculum for students is natural in teaching a project based curriculum. Students are given choices and will gravitate to “how they learn”. Differentiation is a way of teaching; it’s not a program or package of worksheets. It asks teachers to know their students well so they can provide each one with experiences and tasks that will improve learning. As educator, author and speaker Carol Ann Tomlinson has said, differentiation means giving students multiple options for taking in information (1999). Differentiating instruction means that you observe and understand the differences and similarities among students and use this information to plan instruction. Below is a list of some key principles, the teachers will use, to form the foundation of differentiating instruction in their classroom.

- **Ongoing, formative assessment:** Teachers continually assess to identify students’ strengths and areas of need so they can meet students where they are and help them move forward.
- **Recognition of diverse learners:** The students we teach have diverse levels of expertise and experience with reading, writing, thinking, problem solving, and speaking. Ongoing assessments enable teachers to develop differentiated lessons that meet every student’s needs.
- **Group Work:** Students collaborate in pairs and small groups whose membership changes as needed. Learning in groups enables students to engage in meaningful discussions and to observe and learn from one another.
- **Problem Solving:** The focus in classrooms that differentiate instruction is on issues and concepts rather than “the book” or the chapter. This encourages all students to explore big ideas and expand their understanding of key concepts.
- **Choice:** Teachers offer students choice in their reading and writing experiences and in the tasks and projects they complete. By negotiating with students, teachers can create motivating assignments that meet students’ diverse needs and varied interests. From this list you can see that differentiating instruction asks teachers to continually strive to know and to respond to each students’ needs to maximize learning.

**Service Learning.** Service learning that involves community projects will be an integral part of OMA. Service Learning uses many or all disciplines in completing a project. Students at all grade levels will be involved in giving back to the community.

Proven Study of Success in Service Learning Initiatives:

At Spring Valley School in Columbia, South Carolina, more than 1,200 Spanish-language students engaged in service learning projects. In one project, they distributed 20 tons of food, clothing, medicine, and household products to needy new arrivals in the area with the fastest-growing Hispanic population. At Topa Topa Elementary School at Ojai, California, 5th and 6th grade students created pamphlets on the pros and cons of pesticides to explain how crop pickers can protect themselves against the substances. Students passed out the brochure, written in Spanish and English, to workers and consumers throughout the Ojai Valley. Through the project, students fulfilled state-required standards for language arts, science, and social studies (Ragland, 2002).

Glenn (2001) found that more than 80 percent of the schools that integrate service learning into the classroom report an improvement in grade point averages of participating students. For example, when teachers integrated service learning into the curriculum in a Springfield, Massachusetts, high school, the dropout rate dropped from 12 percent to 1 percent, the number of students going to college increased by 22 percent,



and those achieving a grade point average of 3.0 or higher increased from 12 percent to 40 percent. According to Glenn, such programs foster a lifelong commitment to civic participation, sharpen "people skills," and prepare students for the work force.

### Section 3: Assessment Strategies

Otwell Miller Academy's assessment strategies will be consistent with the Indiana Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards. OMA's educational program will integrate creative teaching methodologies consistent with the Indiana Academic Standards to provide a learning environment that assures each student meets or exceeds State standards for achievement. One of the primary goals of OMA is that all of its students score in the proficient or superior ranges on state exams. OMA's educational approach will provide students with the necessary skills and tools to achieve high performance levels, and will promote cooperation and community based learning, inspire and provide the tools for complex thinking and problem solving, enhance effective communication, and, perhaps most importantly, instill a lifelong love of learning and a sense of personal and community responsibility.

Because of the importance placed on rural life, the sustainability of our rural communities, and the realization that our students may not frequently be exposed to a diverse student population, OMA will develop additional standards in the following content areas:

- Diversity and Cultural Understanding
- Local (SW Indiana) History
- Rural Economy

The principal-led teaching staff will be involved in developing these local standards and adding them to the school curriculum both horizontally and vertically. The development process will begin with the staff pre-service training and continue through curriculum committee meetings that are on-going (every two weeks) throughout the school year. It is the founding board's belief that the development of these additional standards is an ideal foundation and springboard for an effective and active curriculum committee. The development and implementation of these local standards will build ownership, underscore the importance of the standards-based curriculum, and help make the important transition from a founding board (creating and determining curriculum) to an operational school staff implementing and managing the curriculum.

These additional local standards are placed alongside the Indiana Academic Standards. Local standards will not replace or cause omission of any of the statewide standards. Additional standards in these content areas enhance the education of our local student population by paying specific attention to the needs of the southwest Indiana rural student.

**Exit Standards.** In order to set students up for future school success we have adopted rigorous exit and promotion standards that can be found in **Attachment 6**.

**Promotion Policies.** OMA's promotion policy is rooted in a balance of understanding that while students learn at different rates, and may experience plateaus at different times as they grow, mastery of grade level academic standards is the best measure for promotion to the next grade level. Such a policy ensures that a student can be successful in the academic opportunities and challenges of then next grade level. We anticipate that our school design and its multi-tiered support system will allow students to earn promotion each year. If a student does not demonstrate readiness for the next grade even with such supports, s/he will be retained and we will develop an individualized plan with teachers and the family to support student success the next year.

Three factors will be considered for promotion: attendance, overall reading level, and grade-level standard mastery, as specified on the report card. In all grades, students who accumulate more than 15 absences during the school year will be considered for retention in their current grade level. Absences resulting from out-of-school suspensions will not be excused. All promotion requirements will be communicated to families upon enrollment. **Figure 8** communicates grade level promotion requirements at OMA.

Figure 8: Promotion Criteria				
Grade Level	Attendance Requirement	Grade Component	STEP Level Requirement	Final Exam Requirement
K-2	Absent ≤ 15 days	Math interim tests average ≥ 70%	K= STEP 3 or higher 1= STEP 6 or higher 2=STEP 9 or higher	NA
3	Absent ≤ 15 days	Math interim tests average ≥ 70%	3= STEP 12 or higher OR 5 STEP levels of growth	Must pass IREAD-3 per all state guidelines <sup>16</sup>
4-5	Absent ≤ 15 days	All interim tests average ≥ 75% (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)	NA	All final exam scores average ≥ 75% (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)

**School Culture:** From the experience of its Board members, Otwell Miller Academy ("OMA") believes that a combination of competition and collaboration result in a culture of increased expectations for student achievement within a school. OMA will implement a Building Leadership Team ("BLT") to assist the principal and enhance the ability of teacher-leaders to advise in the school's instructional operations, share in professional development, and establish rules and routines to improve the school culture. But OMA will also establish teacher teams to create processes to implement joint lesson plans, share teaching strategies, create formative unit tests before student instruction, and observe each other's classes to enhance student learning.

OMA will be a "Learning Organization", with an environment revolving around concepts such as: intentionality, goal-driven, data-driven, student-centered, continuous learning and improvement, accountability, fun, trust, collegiality, hard work, proactive thinking, empowerment, risk-taking, loyalty to purpose, and collaboration.

A culture of collaboration will be the norm with shared responsibility to improve student achievement. Such a culture results in shared vision for outcomes. Education is improved with good relationships and effective communication among staff, between staff and students, among students, and between school staff, parents and community. OMA will engage parents as much as possible; they can make it much easier for us to have success with their children.

Dr. Steve Daeschner, Superintendent of Jefferson County, Kentucky public schools, shares some other thoughts:

**Small Steps.** Making changes too fast can be overwhelming and can often create a negative culture. In developing our literacy framework, we will move forward by taking small steps. After each Professional Development session, we will agree on the strategy we would be accountable for before the next session. For example, one time it might be creating and displaying anchor charts, and the next time we would add creating accountability pieces for students as they read. These short-term goals will seem "doable" to the Staff and create a positive building climate.

**Setting Goals.** Setting goals for student achievement during that initial year and subsequent years will be crucial. All students will be assessed at the beginning of the year to determine their guided reading levels, based on the framework developed by Fountas and Pinnell. From this baseline measure, teachers will map out monthly benchmarks that, if achieved, will result in all students making at least one year's growth. Students with a below-grade-level baseline score will be expected to make at least a year and a half of growth. This goal-setting process will make teachers aware of the incremental student achievement needed throughout the year and minimize slippage.

**Progress Monitoring.** Once we set goals for students, teachers will monitor their progress on a consistent basis to see if students are on track to meet their end-of-year goal. If students are below grade level, their progress will be monitored every two weeks, while students at or above grade level will be assessed every month. When students are not making the desired improvements, we will intervene and respond to their needs.

**Response to Intervention (RTI).** If students are not achieving an adequate rate of progress in our Tier I balanced literacy block, we will immediately intervene. These students will receive 30-45 more minutes of literacy instruction from a reading expert. Being responsible for knowing at all times how well our students are achieving, and for intervening when they are not improving, will make our staff accountable for ALL students.



**Accountability.** As teachers, we want our students to be accountable for their behavior, getting homework finished and turned in on time, and studying for tests. With a balanced literacy framework, we will be more accountable as teachers in many ways. First and foremost, we are accountable for our students' achievement. We are also accountable to each other because it won't be fair if one person is doing all the work. The School Leader and the CAPPD Coordinator are constantly following up with us about our goals. They are also conducting walk-throughs to see if we are being accountable in tackling our small steps.

**Walk-throughs.** Not only are the School Leader and the CAPPD Coordinator taking walk-throughs in our classrooms looking for implementation of strategies, teachers are also doing walk-throughs of each other's classrooms. These walks are not evaluative, but allow us to get ideas from others and to reflect on our own instructional practices. Teachers do not always relish the walk-throughs at first, but later see value in them—especially when they themselves took a turn walking through another teacher's classroom and discovered how much they could learn from such an experience.

**Celebrations.** We will celebrate our successes frequently. Waiting until the end of the year to see if our scores improve is not wise. At meetings, we will bring samples of student work and share success stories. Celebrating our small improvements along the way will keep us hungry for more. Our collective achievements will spur us to keep our sights on the larger goal.

**Engagement and Rigor:** In many classrooms, teachers do most of the work. The students are treated as passive listeners. Successful teachers and schools have changed this model so that students become active engagers of learning and the teacher serves as the facilitator of the learning. Generally, the students begin to work in smaller groups and become self-assessors of their own learning.

To help us define different types of engagement, our staff will rely in part on the approach presented in Schlechty's *Engaging Students: The Next Level of Working on the Work* and Himmele's *Total Participation Techniques*. We will focus on the gradual release of responsibility to students, determining when active vs. compliant engagement is appropriate. Our goal will be to increase active engagement.

Posing more rigorous tasks and taking students to a Level-4 depth of knowledge require teachers to move from being imparters of knowledge to facilitators of learning. Just as our Professional Development will be more powerful when driven by teachers, our student learning will be deeper when driven by students. We must ask: "Who's doing the work?" When students question themselves about the instruction and the teacher steps (partially) out of the way, great things happen and learning flourishes.

**Goal Clarity Windows ('GCW')** is a proven, collaborative strategy to enhance student learning. (See: Dr. Daeschner's *And They Said It Couldn't Be Done*, p. 43-53 for a thorough discussion.) GCW incorporates the following components:

- Standards to be taught for the unit of instruction, usually one or two weeks --Learning rubrics that outline objectives/stages to be taught—from simple to complex

- Assessment rubrics measure the success of the students at each stage of the learning. The teacher teams develop these formative test items before the unit is taught. The test items reflect the Depth of Knowledge ('DOK') usually Level 1-4, with emphasis on higher-order Level 3-4.

- Vocabulary lists that reflect new words for the unit

- Cognitive question stems that students use with each other to become self-assessors. These higher-order questioning stems are used by teachers and students so that students learn to be reflective and apply the learning to multiple settings.

- Classroom teams collaborate to establish the GCW before the lesson is delivered. The formative assessment measures assist teachers in teaching to student mastery and identifying students who may need additional intervention strategies to reach mastery.

The lack of rigor (higher-order thinking skills) in today's classroom has been well-documented. We define rigor as students using higher order DOK in their learning interactions with each other and with teachers. These pedagogies can be learned by teachers through professional development and reinforced by teacher teams and walk-throughs.

Otwell Miller Academy will become one of the top schools in the state by using the following principles:

--Create an academic culture that requires students to think critically□--Create an academic culture that requires students to give a good-faith effort each day□--Create a culture of high expectations and success□--Create a culture where core academic goals apply to all students□--Provide skills necessary to achieve mastery on common core standards in each grade level --Build thinkers who have the skills needed to solve real world problems□--Assess student learning in ways that challenge students to demonstrate mastery in many forms --Create an environment of positive relationships (students, families, staff) --Hold an Orientation to assist new families in understanding policies/procedures

#### **Section 4: Supplemental Programming:**

Otwell Miller Academy ("OMA") is open to various clubs, organizations, and activities. OMA will also offer summer remediation for students in need—and enrichment for other students desiring summer stimulation. Summer school will be *strongly* encouraged for students scoring at or below grade level, helping them to achieve mastery. Summer school will be staffed by the principal, at least one teacher and community partners. We will provide half-day instruction for the month of June. If successful, the half-day instruction will be extended into July.

Some of the activities/clubs we are considering include:

- Elective classes (remediation and enrichment)
- Academic Team,
- Acapella Club,
- Cooking Club,
- Creative Writing Club,
- Dance Initiative,
- Entomology Club,
- Ethics Bowl,
- Film Club,
- French Club,
- Gaming Club,
- Gardening Club,
- German Club,
- Hiking Club,
- International Club,
- IT Club,
- Japanese Club,
- Model UN,
- Photograph Club
- Robotics Club,
- Spanish Club,
- Yoga Club

Many of these will be sponsored by our Partners in Education and Industry.

An initiative that will help to support the school, as well as serve as a student feeder system, is the pre-school being developed by the Friends of Otwell Elementary LTD. The school will allow OMA students to be dropped off as early as 5:30 AM, providing breakfast and tutoring and will be available for after school care until 6:30 PM. This partnership will be of great benefit to the school and the community and will aid in attracting and retaining students and teachers with young children.

#### **Special Populations and At-Risk Students:**

Otwell Miller Academy is committed to providing high-quality instruction and appropriate supplemental services to students with Individualized Education Programs, students with Section 504 plans, English Language Learners, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Accordingly, OMA will implement a comprehensive assessment to identify any students with these needs and serve them appropriately.

**Special Needs:** OMA's commitment to students with special needs will accordingly be addressed by the implementation of a comprehensive assessment to identify any students with disabilities. For those identified for additional intervention, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed to oversee services. The IEP (34 CFR §300.320-300-324) will include the following:

- i. A statement of the child's present levels of educational performance and how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum;
- ii. A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives;
- iii. A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child;
- iv. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and in other activities;
- v. A statement of any individual modifications in the administrations of State or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment;



- vi. The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications identified and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications; and
- vii. A statement of how progress toward annual goals will be measured and how the parents will be regularly informed, at least as often as parents of the non-disabled students, of their child's progress toward the annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

OMA will provide special education and related services to any child with a disability in accordance with the child's IEP and will make a good-faith effort to assist the child to achieve the goals and objectives or benchmarks listed in the IEP. Review of the IEP will occur annually or more frequently if the student is not succeeding. In addition, Extended School Year services (ESY) (34 CFR §300.106) will be provided to the child with a disability beyond the regular school year, as necessary in order to provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as determined by a child's IEP.

*a. Identifying students with special education needs.*

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.301-300.311, the referral of students for a full and individual initial evaluation for possible special education services will be a component of OMA's overall general education Response to Intervention (RTI) system. Prior to referral, students experiencing difficulty in the general classroom are considered for all support services available to all students, such as tutorial, remedial, compensatory, and other services. If the student continues to experience difficulty in the general classroom after the provision of interventions, school personnel will document the provision of interventions and refer the student for a full and individual initial evaluation.

OMA will ensure that a full and individual evaluation is conducted for each student being considered for special education and related services. The evaluation will be completed before the initial provision of special education and related services will be provided and will address whether the student is a "student with a disability" in accordance with federal and state requirements and the educational needs of the student.

Based on the requirements of 34 CFR §300.232, OMA will have an IEP in effect for each identified student with a disability. OMA will ensure that the IEP is in effect before special education and related services are provided to an eligible child and that the IEP will be implemented as soon as possible following the IEP committee meeting.

For a student who is new to OMA, a Transfer IEP committee will meet prior to or upon the student's enrollment. In this case, the parents must verify that the student was receiving special education services in the previous school district or the previous school district must verify in writing or by telephone that the student was receiving special education services. A second IEP committee meeting must be held within 30 school days from the date of the first IEP committee meeting to finalize or develop an IEP based on current information.

*b. Programs, practices, and strategies.*

Inclusion, differentiated instruction, and interactive technology strategies will be implemented as appropriate for students identified with disabilities. Differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning that gives students multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas. This can be done for the special needs learner with or without technology. Differentiated instruction lends itself to the inclusion of all students into the general education classroom, allowing teachers to meet students where they are in order to help them achieve the highest possible standards.

OMA will assure that students with disabilities are educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to meet the student's IEP and overall educational needs (34 CFR §300.114- 330.116). In providing programs, services, and activities for students with disabilities, OMA shall first consider the least restrictive environment of the general education program. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the general education environment will occur only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in general classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. OMA will provide a FAPE for students with disabilities in order to meet the need for special education and related services (34 CFR §300.115). This includes a variety of placements and will make provision for supplementary services to be provided in conjunction with general education classroom placement.

Students with disabilities will have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to students without disabilities, accessible facilities, and the same instructional regular school day as is provided to all other students. In addition, OMA will ensure that each child with a disability participates with non-disabled students in non-academic and

extracurricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods, and the services and activities set forth in 34 CFR §300.320.

*c. Evaluation, monitoring progress and achieving successful attainment for goals set for each special needs student as set forth in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).*

In both the development and review (and revision as appropriate) of a child's IEP, the IEP team will consider the strengths of the student and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child, and, if appropriate, the results of the student's performance on any state or district-wide assessment that has been administered. In addition, the IEP team will also consider special factors such as:

- whether a child's behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others,
- whether a student is limited English proficient and the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child's IEP, and
- what the communication needs of the student are and whether the child needs assistive technology devices/services.

Review of the IEP will occur annually or more frequently if the student is not being successful.

*d. Providing qualified staffing for students with special education needs.*

All special education personnel shall be certified, endorsed, or licensed in the area or areas of assignment in accordance with 34 CFR §300.156 or appropriate state agency credentials. OMA will employ, minimally, one certified special education teacher. Additional special education personnel (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers) will either be employed or contracted with depending on students' needs at the school. Using a multi-certified and multi-strength staff will provide students at OMA with tailor-made support services to meet each individual need. An experienced director of special education services will be contracted through our ESP to ensure compliance with IDEA, Article 7 and all applicable laws and requirements.

#### **English Language Learner (ELL) students:**

*a. Identifying ELL students.*

The School will administer a home language survey to identify the first/native language(s) of all students enrolled in the school. This home language survey will be administered to ALL students enrolled in the school, and the survey will be used during the enrollment process to identify the native language of each new student at the time of enrollment into the school. Documentation of a student's native language will be recorded in the permanent record. OMA will implement an identification procedure to survey all students in the school with the following three questions:

- i. What is the native language of the student?
- ii. What language(s) is (are) spoken most often by the student?
- iii. What language(s) is (are) spoken by the student in the home?

*b. Programs, practices and strategies.*

OMA will provide equal educational opportunity to language minority students with the appropriate level of English language development to allow for meaningful participation of language minority students in the school's educational programs. Such instruction will take place during the regular school day. A minimum of one (1) hour daily will be appropriate for LEP students at English proficiency levels 1-4.

After a determination of needs based on the student population, one or more of the following approaches to instruction may be used:

- i. **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE):** TBE is an instructional program in which subjects are taught through two languages—English and the native language of the English language learners—and English is taught as a second language. English language skills, grade promotion, and graduation requirements will be emphasized,



and the student's native language will be used as a tool to learn content. The primary purpose of these programs is to facilitate the LEP student's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary. As proficiency in English increases, instruction through the student's native language decreases. Transitional bilingual education programs vary in the amount of native language instruction provided and in the duration of the program. TBE programs may be early-exit or late-exit, depending on the amount of time a child may spend in the program.

- ii. English as a Second Language (ESL): ESL is an educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content), and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. Every bilingual education program has an ESL component. Pull-Out ESL: A program in which LEP students are "pulled out" of the regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language.
- iii. Content-Based ESL: This approach to teaching ESL makes use of instructional materials, learning tasks, and classroom techniques from academic content areas as the vehicle for developing language, content, cognitive, and study skills. English will be used as the medium of instruction.
- iv. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): English language development (ELD) means instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as ESL, "teaching English to speakers of other languages" (TESOL), ESOL, ELD, ESL, TESOL, or ESOL standards are a version of English language arts standards that have been crafted to address the specific developmental stages of students learning English.
- v. Sheltered English: An instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to English language learners to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Sheltered English instruction differs from ESL in that English is not taught as a language with a focus on learning the language. Rather, content knowledge and skills are the goals. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to teach vocabulary for concept development in mathematics, science, social studies, and other subjects.
- vi. Structured Immersion: In this program, language minority students receive all of their subject matter instruction in their second language. The teacher uses a simplified form of the second language. Students may use their native language in class; however, the teacher uses only the second language. The goal is to help minority language students acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas.

*e. Evaluation, monitoring progress and achieving successful attainment for goals set for each ELL students.*

As required by the "No Child Left Behind Act," OMA will assess all students whose first language is other than English to determine whether a student is Fluent English Proficient (FEP, see level 5) or Limited-English Proficient (LEP, see levels 1-4). Each spring, all LEP students must participate in the WIDA proficiency assessment. Newly enrolling students must be assessed for identification as LEP using the WIDA within thirty calendar days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year or within two weeks during the school year.

Assessment shall, to the extent possible, include listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, as well as academic achievement. Language proficiency levels are described below:

- i. Beginner (Level 1): Students performing at this level of English language proficiency begin to demonstrate receptive or productive English skills. They are able to respond to some simple communication tasks.
- ii. Early Intermediate (Level 2): Students performing at this level of English language proficiency respond with increasing ease to more varied communication tasks.
- iii. Intermediate (Level 3): Students performing at this level of English language proficiency tailor the English language skills they have been taught to meet their immediate communication and learning needs. They are able to understand and be understood in many basic social situations (while exhibiting many errors of convention) and need support in academic language.



- iv. Advanced (Level 4): Students performing at this level of English language proficiency combine the elements of the English language in complex, cognitively demanding situations and are able to use English as a means for learning in other academic areas, although some minor errors of convention are still evident.
- v. Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Students performing at this level of English language proficiency communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and academic demands. Students speak, understand, read, write, and comprehend in English without difficulty and display academic achievement comparable to native English-speaking peers. In order to attain the English proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are necessary.

*NOTE:* Oral language skills will not be the sole criterion for determining language proficiency. Academic achievement and writing and reading abilities in English must also be considered as assessed with the WIDA proficiency assessment.

OMA will have specific criteria established to ensure appropriate placement and subsequent delivery of services to exceptional language-minority students. The Pre-Referral process to Special Education should include an assessment in the native language and in English to provide evidence that difficulty exists in both languages. A referral should be made only after all other avenues have been explored and it has been determined that the child's needs cannot be met by the regular education program.

Retention of language minority students will not be based solely upon English language proficiency. Appropriate classroom modifications should be made for each language-minority student to ensure meaningful participation in the educational program.

OMA will continue to provide English language development services to LEP students until they attain an Overall/Composite score of Level 5 on the summative WIDA proficiency assessment. Services for Level 4 students may be modified based on the students' needs.

Upon the first Overall/Composite score of Level 5, students are exited from daily English language development services and reclassified as FEP for reporting purposes and they begin informal monitoring. At this point students no longer generate funding. The following Spring, upon the attainment of the second Overall/Composite score of Level 5 on WIDA, students enter the formal two-year monitoring period required by Title III to ensure continued academic success. After the second score of Level 5, students will no longer participate in WIDA.

OMA will provide evidence that communication between the school and the home, whether about language-minority student progress or school activities, is conducted, to the extent possible, in the native/preferred language of the home. OMA will maintain records that indicate the following:

- i. The native language of the student,
- ii. The English language proficiency level of the student,
- iii. The type and frequency of English language development services offered,
- iv. The instructional and assessment adaptations made based on level of English proficiency, and
- v. Other intervention strategies employed.

The method of maintaining this information for each language-minority student is the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). ILPs are developed for each student and updated annually based on their Overall/Composite of English proficiency on WIDA. ILPs are developed by the ESL teacher in collaboration with the classroom teacher. Accommodations used on ISTEP+ must be those already in place for regular classroom instruction that are outlined on each ILP.

#### *d. Qualified staffing for ELL students.*

If OMA identifies ELL students in its population, OMA will ensure that all English Language Learners (ELL) personnel will be certified, endorsed, or licensed in the area of assignment. Additional ELL personnel will either be employed or contracted with depending on the students' needs at the school. OMA will participate in training programs designed to help the development and implementation of these guidelines offered; these will be facilitated by the Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education, including in-service and technical assistance. Other resources for staff development may include courses available through the Regional Educational Service Centers, various university-level courses, annual conferences held by the Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education, Indiana Teachers of English to Speakers



of Other Languages (INTESOL) and the national Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) conferences.

### **Below Grade Level**

*Identifying students who are performing below grade level and monitoring their progress.* OMA believes that there will be interventions embedded into the daily life of the school to address students who are functioning below grade level. School academic operations will include an established strategy of increasingly intensive steps when a student is not learning or progressing at an effective pace. The following measures will be implemented to monitor and ensure that students are making adequate academic progress as part of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process:

1. Team Meetings: A collaborative team composed of educators and administration will be established to address the following tasks:
  - i. Identify and map objectives.
  - ii. Create schedules for learning.
  - iii. Develop formative assessments.
  - iv. Establish criteria for success.
  - v. Assess student progress.
  - vi. Assign interventions.
2. Formative Assessments: OMA will conduct periodic assessments to gather data. Educators will utilize the results to monitor student progress. Intervention strategies will be assigned for students not making adequate growth.
3. Intervention Strategies: Under RTI, students identified as needing additional assistance to ensure adequate academic performance will be engaged in intervention strategies that will focus on the individual needs of the student. Intervention strategies will include, but not be limited to:
  - i. Student Centered: Two co-curricular activities, peer tutoring, student council monitoring, privilege system
  - ii. Faculty Centered: Faculty advisors, team attendance meetings, guided study, tutoring
  - iii. Parent Centered: Parent monitoring, parent communications, mid-marking period progress reports, daily progress reports

### **Gifted and Talented**

*a. Identifying intellectually gifted students and monitoring progress.* OMA will provide students with a rigorous educational program. For those students who are academically advanced, additional opportunities will be provided to enhance their education, e.g., additional electives. OMA understands that students can be gifted in one area or another and these gifts are not necessarily tied to their cognitive scores.

Additionally Project based education lends itself well to meeting the needs of intellectually gifted students. PBL is based on student empowerment. Gifted students can pace themselves, spending less time on easier tasks, but more time on complex and intellectually stimulating ones. Gifted students often excel in projects using authentic assessment. Demonstrations of learning can take many shapes and forms, and students will always be encouraged to show their very best work. As mentioned earlier, the key to many educational challenges is differentiated instruction. OMA will prioritize this in an effort to help all students reach their potential.

*b. Providing qualified staffing.* All personnel will be certified, endorsed, or licensed in the area or areas of assignment in accordance with 34 CFR §300.156 or appropriate state agency credentials. Additionally, OMA will seek professional development opportunities for better preparing staff to meet the needs of these students.

*c. Assess and monitor the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.* Any student with an ILP, this would include students in the gifted program, shall have his or her program reviewed annually or more frequently should the student not be making adequate progress towards his or her goals stated within the ILP.

### **Student Discipline:**

Otwell Miller Academy (OMA) holds high expectations for student behavior and places a high priority on maintaining an atmosphere of respect that is conducive to learning and is safe for all. We focus on making available engaging academic pursuits for all students. Students focusing on these pursuits will have little time or interest in being disruptive. In the event students make poor choices in their behavior or self-control, every effort is made to keep students working to overcome the obstacles holding them back. We ask that all parents, guardians and adults responsible for the student's behavior, encourage and assist in the enforcement of these rules and policies.

Students who engage in disruptive behavior will be informed of the disruptive behavior and called upon to correct that behavior. If a student cannot correct the behavior, he or she will be sent to meet with a school administrator. He parent/guardian will be notified by the school administrator of this meeting and be able to follow up with the administrator on ways to encourage improvement. Students consistently failing to show improvement, identified as three visits during a school year to an administrator, or who demonstrate such behavior as to endanger themselves or others, will be suspended. OMA students cannot succeed academically when distracted by the behavior of others.

When a student is suspended, he or she will receive a Notice of Suspension from the superintendent or designee. This Notice of Suspension will contain a time and day for the parent or guardian to meet with the school administrator to discuss the events leading up to the Notice of Suspension. The meeting will review the method in which the student can achieve re-admittance to the school and set up how the student can continue his/her school while suspended.

(See DRAFT Code of Conduct Policy **Attachment: 17**)

#### Exit Standards:

**1. Exit Standards.** In order to set students up for future school success we have adopted rigorous exit and promotion standards that can be found in **Attachment 6**.

**2. Promotion Policies.** OMA's promotion policy is rooted in a balance of understanding that while students learn at different rates, and may experience plateaus at different times as they grow, mastery of grade level academic standards is the best measure for promotion to the next grade level. Such a policy ensures that a student can be successful in the academic opportunities and challenges of the next grade level. We anticipate that our school design and its multi-tiered support system will allow students to earn promotion each year. If a student does not demonstrate readiness for the next grade even with such supports, she/he will be retained and we will develop an individualized plan with teachers and the family to support student success the next year.

Three factors will be considered for promotion: attendance, overall reading level, and grade-level standard mastery, as specified on the report card. In all grades, students who accumulate more than 15 absences during the school year will be considered for retention in their current grade level. Absences resulting from out-of-school suspensions will not be excused. All promotion requirements will be communicated to families upon enrollment. **Figure 8** communicates grade level promotion requirements at OMA.

Figure 8: Promotion Criteria				
Grade Level	Attendance Requirement	Grade Component	STEP Level Requirement	Final Exam Requirement
K-2	Absent ≤ 15 days	Math interim tests average ≥ 70%	K= STEP 3 or higher 1= STEP 6 or higher 2=STEP 9 or higher	NA
3	Absent ≤ 15 days	Math interim tests average ≥ 70%	3= STEP 12 or higher OR 5 STEP levels of growth	Must pass IREAD-3 per all state guidelines <sup>16</sup>
4-5	Absent ≤ 15 days	All interim tests average ≥ 75% (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)	NA	All final exam scores average ≥ 75% (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)

Our grading policy is based on demonstration of mastery of foundational skills, particularly reading, and the Indiana Academic Standards. Teachers will be trained on our grading policy and methodology during summer professional development and work throughout the year with the principal to ensure grades are calibrated and assigned in a fair and consistent manner that corresponds with mastery of rigorous, college preparatory standards.

Daily attendance is vital to student success, allowing the school to support students as they pursue academic success and simultaneously teaching students to take responsibility for their educational futures. Students who miss more than 15 days of school may be retained. We adhere to all regulations regarding extended illness during which we provide school support and tutoring and which does not impact attendance averages. We communicate regularly with families to ensure



that every student is able to meet our attendance requirements, including daily/weekly progress reports, four formal report cards, and the requirement that all classroom teachers speak with all families a minimum of one time monthly. The school's front office closely monitors attendance day-to-day. Families must meet with the principal once a student has accumulated over five absences and we will work to create and support attendance action plans.

In the rare occurrence of a student repeating a grade, the principal will meet with the student and family to discuss an action plan for the coming year. Interventions may include increased in-class support or mandatory tutoring instead of enrichment. OMA will work with families to determine the best course of action on an individual basis. Every attempt will be made to ensure the success of all students.

**1. Calendar and Schedule. Attachment: 7** *(The calendar attached is Pike County Community Schools Calendar for 2016-2017. When the calendar for the 2017-2018 school year is approved in March OMA will build their calendar)*

Like many high performing rural charter schools effectively closing the academic gaps of incoming student populations, our students and teachers will benefit from an extended school day and school year. We will adopt a calendar of 181 instructional days divided into four quarters and closely aligned to the Pike County Community School Corporation's proposed calendar for 2017-2018. For example, our first day of school had OMA opened this year would have been August 5, 2016; the last day is May 31, 2017. We provide 35 days of professional development, 18 before the school year, 15 during the year, and 2 at the end of the school year.

Each school day begins at 7:00. Staff will arrive by 7:25 AM and we will open our doors at 7:40 AM for breakfast. Class will begin at 8:00 AM and end at 3:45. This schedule allows us to provide additional instructional minutes per week. There will be after school care and clubs.

Students in K-3 receive 195 minutes of daily literacy and 120 minutes of math instruction with a focus on problem solving for a full 60 minutes. Social studies and science instruction do not occur on the same day. Instead, curricular units lasting three weeks at a time will be internally designed and 30 minutes per day will be devoted to either social studies or science instruction. To balance learning over the four quarters, K-3 teachers will teach one complete unit of social studies and transition into one unit of science.

Students in grades 4 and 5 receive 175 minutes of literacy instruction daily, allowing for in-depth literature analysis in small group Book Clubs or Literature Circles for 30 minutes. Math instruction remains two hours. Social studies and science continue to be taught in units, with themes weaving into literacy instruction for interconnected units of study.

#### **Tentative Daily Schedule**

8:10 – 9:10	Math Meeting and Focus Lesson
9:10 – 10:10	Math Rotations and Problem Solving
10:10- 10:15	Transition
10:15-10:45	Literacy Rotation 1 (Mini – Lesson & Students "Do")
10:45 – 11:15	Literacy Rotation 2 (Reading Groups)
11:15 – 11:35	Snack and Restroom
11:35 – 12:05	Literacy Rotation 3 (Literacy Circle – Interactive)
12:05 – 12:35	Literacy Rotation 4 (Students Independent or Partner Activity)
12:35 – 1:10	Lunch and Recess
1:10 – 1:40	Guided Reading Read Aloud
1:40 – 2:10	Writers Workshop

2:10 – 2:40	Enrichment
2:40 – 3:10	Science Social Studies Informational Writing
3:10 – 3:40	LEAP Learn, Enrich and Practice
3:40 – 3:45	Pack Up / Dismissal

#### Enrollment Policy and Criteria – Attachment: 8

Otwell Miller Academy has designed a comprehensive recruitment plan to attract a sufficient pool of applicants to meet their enrollment projections. They will prioritize diversity (as much as their demographics will dictate) in their recruitment practices. They have ensured an expansive and extensive strategy to build awareness throughout the southwestern counties in Indiana. As their immediate community holds the greatest need, they will prioritize early outreach to target families who were forced out of the school at the close of the 2015-2016 school year and enrolled in out of county schools. They will recruit neighborhoods regardless of race, disability, ethnicity, or gender, and will continue outreach efforts within the surrounding counties. The Founding Board feels confident that they will meet or exceed desired enrollment given the tremendous support already received from the community.

#### To Date:

- Exposure through WWBL Radio
- Exposure through WITZ Radio
- Local News Paper coverage
- Letters of Support from Businesses and Politicians
- Town Hall Meetings
- Social Network – Face Book, Twitter,
- Website – [www.friendsoftwell.org](http://www.friendsoftwell.org)
- Channel 14 television
- Channel 18 television Expose

#### Planned:

- Yard Signs
- Monthly Community Fund Raising Efforts
- Flyers
- Mailings
- Door to Door
- Family Information Sessions
- Continued Consistent, Positive Messages to Local Media Outlets

#### 5. Vision for Growth

There are many local and regional initiatives to facilitate growth and stability of Pike County. As mentioned above, the population of Pike County has grown over the past decade. The I-69 expansion has increased traffic through the county exponentially. Interstate 64 is just south of Pike County. Numerous county highways crisscross the county; and Interstate 69, with interchanges in Petersburg to the west and Washington (Daviess County) to the north, provides even quicker access to the northern and southern markets within hours of Pike County. This growth will be impeded by a lack of school choice within the county.

**Pike County** has 336.2 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 38.2 per square mile. In the last three decades its **population grew by 4.5%**. On the most recent census form, 99.2% of the population reported only one race. The average household size is 2.40 persons compared to an average family size of 2.90 persons.

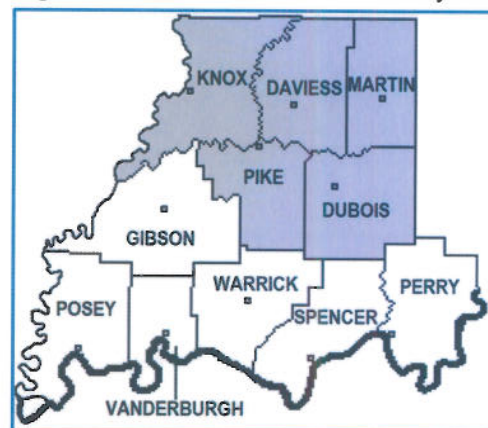
In an effort to improve water, preserve habitats and promote the area, The Pike County Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program was developed. In its first five years, it has awarded over \$350,000 to Pike County municipalities for planning projects. Pike County Economic Development Corporation has created an aggressive strategic plan to promote growth and development in the area. Some of these

initiatives include: Davis Property light Industrial Site – 151.7 acres complete with utilities Adjacent to I-69; Local Incentives including Tax Abatement, Business Personal Property Taxes, Tax Incremental Financing (TIF); Local Investors – IPL, Win Energy, Midwest Engineering, and Sisson Steel. If the local economic efforts are realized, Otwell Miller Academy may exceed its desired classroom size and have a waiting list before it is awarded a charter. Website: <http://www.pikecogrowth.org/incentives.html>



Pike County Economic Development Corporation through its' 501 (c) (3), Pike County Progress Partners, have announced plans to build the Elmer Buchta Entrepreneur and Technology Center near the Petersburg interchange on I-69. The new center will be targeting the graduates of Pike Central High School's award winning [Project Lead the Way](#) program. Their graduates are populating engineering programs at colleges across the state, with many of those students expressing a desire to return to Pike County to launch small businesses. While targeting these recent graduates, the center will also serve any entrepreneurs from the region looking for a business incubator.

In a local news article, Scott Willis, a retired electronics engineer with the Department of Defense and adjunct instructor at Vincennes University Jasper Center said, "Many of the former Pike Central PLTW students have already started forming business ventures while they are freshman and sophomores in college and would like to bring them back to Pike County in the near future. To not get a small business incubator in Pike County established in the next 12-18 months will most likely result in further opportunities lost for the area as these students will go elsewhere to establish their businesses." This "Center" may be the catalyst of future growth and development in Pike County.



Another viable option to increase enrollment is from the neighboring schools in Dubois, Daviess and/or Martin Counties. Dubois Elementary School (Dubois County), currently under review for closure, achieved an ISTEP passing score of 79.2% in 2013-14 and North Daviess Elementary School (Daviess County) has hovered in the low 80's for the last several years. Additionally, Shoals Elementary from the neighbor county of Martin has slowly increased the percent of passing but remained in the 70's for their 2013-14 results.

Nearby Ireland Elementary consistently achieves high ISTEP rating but enrollment demand exceeds capacity and it has begun to develop a capital building project to meet the anticipated need created by the closing of Otwell Elementary and new housing developments in the area.

## 6. Leadership and Governance:

**Team Capacity:** The Friends of Otwell Elementary LTD leadership team possesses the diverse skills needed to lead this strong community initiative. Each member of the FoOE has a vested interest in maintaining a school in the community and has strong ties to the community. The Officers will be tasked with the selection and approval of the Principal once a charter has been granted.

Officers:	Current Job Title and Employer:	Role with Friends of Otwell Elementary, Ltd. and Expertise
Michael Houtsch	<b>Vincennes University</b> Assoc. Professor Architectural Studies BS Industrial Tech from ISU	President and Chair of Building Committee Expertise: Facilities, Business Knowledge
Robert Rhodes	Retired Air Force Colonel and pilot, Elementary teacher	Vice-President and Chair of Chartering Committee Expertise: Leadership, Business Knowledge, Focus
Michelle Durcholz	<b>Kimball Electronics, Inc.</b> , Decision Support Analyst	Treasurer Expertise: Accounting, Finance
Emily Willis	<b>Pike County Library</b> Specialization - Technology Vincennes University	Secretary and Chair of Publicity and Communications Committee Expertise: Communications and Public Relations
<b>Additional Board:</b>		
Richard Padgett	<b>Union County High School</b> , Assistant Principal	Expertise: Leadership, Educational
Elisabeth Luff	<b>Luff Law</b> - Independent Practice - Specializing in Civil Matters <b>Kimball Electronics</b> - Independent Legal Counsel <b>Kimball International</b> - Independent Legal Counsel	Chair of Legal Committee Expertise: Legal

Rose Rhodes	Retired Registered Nurse with 28 year of working experience in Intensive Care Unit, Dialysis Unit, Home Health, and Mental Health. Eight years retail store manager	Chair of the Pre-school Committee Expertise: Management, Organization, Planning
Chris Hallett	<b>Masterbrand Cabinets:</b> Manager Finance and Pricing Administration Masters in Business Administration	Chair of Budget and Finance Committee: Expertise: Financial
Josh Byrd	<b>Pike County Highway Dept.</b> Foreman Skills – Construction, Paving, Painting and Equipment Operator	Chairman of the Political Interface Committee Expertise: Political Outreach

Additional Support: Friends of Otwell Elementary, Ltd ("FoOE") has chosen to consult with a unique educational service provider, Indiana Charters LLC, to provide assistance in drafting its application and a potential for future office and support services as well as operational knowledge, experience, and expertise. Indiana Charters does not "manage" or "operate" the school on any level. The Indiana Charters team are being considered to provide services and support through the first years of operation. These services transition gradually through a teaching and mentoring phase preparing the charter school's staff to operate independently after the third year of operation.

Five Year Plan: The combined expertise of the founding board and resources available from the Indiana Charters LLC should allow OMA to successfully navigate the crucial first five years of operations. It is the goal of the FoOE to establish a separate board of trustees for OMA. Initially, FoOE Officers will fulfill the role of the OMA board with a goal to establish an OMA board after the first year of operation. This multilayered oversight structure provides for succession planning and creates a diverse administration.

#### **Performance Management:**

Grace College will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually and for renewal purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on federal, state, and school-specific measures. The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sound financial operation. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

#### **Applicants may propose to supplement Grace's performance standards with school-specific academic or organizational goals.**

1. *Describe any mission-specific educational goals and targets that the school will have. State goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments you plan to use.*

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.  
Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.  
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The student to whom we will be entrusted will:

- care and want to give back to their community
- persevere
- have integrity and self-respect
- have moral courage
- be able to use the world around them well
- speak well, write well, read well, and work well with numbers
- truly enjoy their life and their work
- be lifelong learners
- be passionate
- be ready to take risks
- be able to problem-solve and think critically
- be able to look at things differently



- be able to work independently and with others
- be creative

#### SMART Goals:

**All** students will achieve 80% mastery in **all** disciplines before moving on to the next grade level.

**All** students will develop the character to become productive, giving, caring members of society.

#### Measures and Assessments:

The relationship between a teacher and a student is a very strong one, partially because of the school will remain small, but also because of our mission, vision, and core values. As a result, our teachers are able to assess the day-to-day growth and achievements of each student in a deep, and comprehensive manner. Every year teachers have conferences with parents in the spring and the fall, and compose extensive written reports that discuss not only the student's academic progress, but their social and emotional wellbeing. The third written report is an even more conclusive year-end evaluation. In accord with the federally mandated RtI program, OMA will use Tier 1 school-wide screenings to assess the progress of our students, and identify students at risk for school failure, both academically and socially/emotionally. The screening will also be helpful to teachers in identifying the possible areas of improvement for the general classroom. Those students needing extra attention will work in small groups with the classroom teacher or highly qualified assistant. Students who have additional social/emotional needs will have the opportunity to meet as a group with the counselor. In Tier 3, after a full evaluation, students receive the most intensive intervention by a Special Education professional. All sixth grade students will participate and complete a service learning project, centered on a subject of their choosing. The project, which will require substantial research and writing, will involve a hands-on component and will be guided by an outside mentor who is experienced in the field of study. Each student will produce a project implementation plan or portfolio and be required to present to the student body.

2. *Describe any mission-specific organizational goals and targets that the school will have. State goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments you plan to use.*

#### **It is the goal of OMA that:**

- All teachers are proficient in project based instruction and highly qualified educators.
- We give back to the community through service learning projects and community service.
- We offer the community artistic performances, including plays, concerts and examples of student accomplishments.
- We grow enough food in our school garden to give back to ourselves and to community organizations, such as the local food pantry
- Our students move to the next level of learning with the will, skill, capacity and knowledge to bring about positive change to themselves, others, and their community.
- We create an environment of respect, where everyone is valued and each voice is heard.
- We are transparent and are communicative with students and the families we serve.
- We create a community of teachers where everyone is supported and encouraged to teach with freedom and creativity.
- Each child leaves fifth grade as fully prepared to succeed in a rigorous high school program.
- Our budget will continue to have increased income over expenses from year to year.
- We have 60 days cash surplus in reserve by our fifth year.
- We retain 90% of our students from year to year.

#### Measures and Assessments for Above Goals:

Teachers will compile an annual self-evaluation that includes teaching goals they met, administrative feedback, and an overall school assessment. After fall conferences, parents will be asked to complete a survey that measures parent satisfaction and solicits ideas for change and improvement. A second parent survey will be distributed and collected at the end of every school year to measure continued parent satisfaction. OMA will collate the information gathered from the

teacher self-evaluations and parent surveys and evaluate the results for improvement in the coming year. Charter schools are schools of choice; their success is reflected in the retention of students. As a measure of accountability, OMA will strive for a 90% student retention rate (excluding exiting graduates and families relocating out of area). Parents of both returning and exiting students will be asked to indicate how the OMA program has met or not met their student's expectations and/or needs. This information will be analyzed and reviewed by the Governing Board. OMA will make every effort to provide all stakeholders, especially parents, with the progress and development of the school. We will also ask that graduating students (and their parents) complete exit interviews so that we may continually improve the quality of our school. Finally, we will ask that the Governing Board provide an end-of-year evaluation that looks not only at school achievement, but at our fiscal accountability and our service to the community.

3. *In addition to the mandatory state assessment and testing requirements (i.e. ISTEP+, IREAD-3, and ECA, as applicable), identify the primary interim assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.*

**Assessment System:** The assessment system plays an important role in changing the culture of a school to one that focuses on student outcomes and accepting rigorous accountability. This focus is driven by "assessment for learning," which serves to help students improve. The key is not merely to determine the current status of learning but also to promote greater learning. This important difference includes teaching students to understand what the assessment means to them. The key is for students to become self-assessors.

After data-driven instruction, formative assessments will be given to determine areas of growth and will be used to continue to identify instructional priorities. Assessments are an integral part of the education model because they measure instructional effectiveness and student achievement. In particular, formative assessments are the processes used to drive instructional practice since they provide a systematic and regular measurement of students' progress in the classroom. Further, timely and specific feedback based upon formative assessments of student performance on grade level standards establishes individualized goals for all students (Marzano).

#### Focus Beyond Mandatory State Assessments:

- Redesigning and then implementing the formative achievement tests in a teacher-designed format before the lesson is delivered using Goal Clarity Window (GCW) design.
- Pre & Post tests will be utilized to assess knowledge.
- Training teachers to utilize depth of knowledge (DOK) questions (Level 1 to Level 4) to design these formative tests.
- Using frequent formative and benchmark testing to continuously adjust instruction based on results.
- Using data and data walls with all teachers for continuous monitoring of students and frequent adjustment to student instruction, especially for intervention students.
- Developing formative tests matched to specific standards or clusters of standards drawn from the Indiana State Standards.
- Using grade-level teams and vertical teams to dialogue about results—with colleagues, parents, and the BLT.
- Continually providing PD regarding formative and summative assessment and how to apply the results to improve student achievement. The assessments we plan to use include:
- Acuity: summative benchmarks three times per year—to determine what standards students have mastered (mid-year assessment will be optional for teachers)
- Goal Clarity Window: formative assessment as determined by standards and grade-level teams, usually administered every one to three weeks
- Additionally, Dibels will be used for all students k-3.

4. *Academic progress, measurement and evaluation:*

OMA students will be assessed using formative and summative assessments, a variety of alternative assessments, and the required assessments, such as ISTEP+, IREAD-3, NWEA, and ECA. Both formative and summative assessments are imbedded in our project based activities. For example, teachers observe students daily in the morning circle and when appropriate, take anecdotal notes regarding any notable needs a child might have or significant gains/improvements. Formative assessments will be taken on students' daily work in mathematics and language arts.



OMA will hold parent/teacher conferences in both the fall and spring, where anecdotal evidence will be presented, student portfolios, and student performance on end-of-unit exams explained. Four progress reports in narrative form with notations will be disseminated to parents/guardians during the course of the school year. These reports will document student progress in relation to the specific State Standards as they align to the curriculum. At the end of each year, teachers will provide parents with an extensive, criterion-based written report detailing the student's level of success. These reports will be accompanied by assessment rubrics so parents receive both a quantitative and qualitative measure of their child's development.

The principal will be responsible for collecting and analyzing student achievement data. The state mandated tests in language arts, mathematics, and other mandated subjects will be administered annually, in compliance with federal and state requirements. Since individual results on this assessment will be reported back as student performance levels, OMA will use this data to identify students' proficiency on grade-level standards.

OMA teachers and instructional leaders will then be better equipped to make key decisions regarding individual students, as well as school-wide programs and courses. The data will be used in tandem with other evidence from our multiple assessment program to design appropriate support systems for students who need supportive instruction, remediation, or enrichment. Results from state achievement tests will also be used to set individual student goals as well as school-wide goals.

At this learning institution, academic progress is implemented within a framework of continuous improvement to ensure its validity and the development of supporting tools to meet the needs of each individual student. The development of the education model was based on Robert J. Marzano's 35 years of research. Its structure enables administrators and teachers to better understand, explain, and predict the elements needed to facilitate each student's mastery of the Indiana Academic Standards. Educational best practices, technology, communication, and documentation tools are created and revised to support the implementation of the model and ensure that teachers have the support necessary to meet the needs of each student. The components below create a cycle that teachers follow to ensure students are mastering all of their grade level standards in the curriculum.

#### ***Component 1: Baseline Assessment and Data***

Baseline assessment provides all stakeholders with the information needed to identify students' strengths and weaknesses; effectively target instruction; and set school-level, classroom-level, and individual student-level goals. This starts at the beginning of the school year with the review of students' scores from the state-mandated assessment of the previous school year. Baseline data is obtained throughout the year with standards-aligned pretests that are utilized prior to each new unit of instruction.

#### ***Component 2: Data-Driven Instruction***

The schools' leaders and teachers will analyze baseline data from the school's student information system and then provide targeted professional development to equip teachers with the instructional strategies that best meet the needs of each student. Teachers then have the information needed to effectively adjust instructional focus through spiral teaching and employ regrouping and other differentiation techniques to ensure that each student is making progress towards mastery of specific skills and content. By using this innovative approach of data-driven instruction and basing teacher support around meeting the needs of each student, the schools will ensure a culture of continuous improvement and increased student achievement.

#### ***Component 3: Assessment***

After data-driven instruction, formative assessments will be given to determine areas of growth and will be used to continue to identify instructional priorities. Assessments are an integral part of the education model because they measure instructional effectiveness and student achievement. In particular, formative assessments are the processes used to drive instructional practice since they provide a systematic and regular measurement of students' progress in the classroom. Further, timely and specific feedback based upon formative assessments of student performance on grade level standards establishes individualized goals for all students (Marzano).

#### ***Component 4: Grading***

Academic grades will only reflect the standards taught. Grading a student's work solely on standards allows the schools to have a true indicator of the proficiency level of students since non-academically related aspects such as neatness and timeliness will not skew grades. Students will be given enough opportunity to practice what is taught and multiple opportunities to master a concept.

#### ***Component 5: Reporting***

Formative assessments will be graded at the most specific level of the Indiana Academic Standards to facilitate data collection. As the data is collected, it is reported within the electronic grade book in various formats for straightforward data analysis. The data is then reviewed according to the specified standard for targeting individual student needs on specific skill expectations. It will also give teachers, parents, and students access to online student data. Student achievement data will be included in each student's file and will make year-to-year evaluation and tracking of benchmarks more efficient. It will also provide students, parents, teachers, and administrators with information to make decisions about differentiating instruction for each student.

#### ***Component 6: Decision***

Decision is the final action. Based on the data, teachers and administrators will make the decision to either move on to a new standard and begin with a baseline assessment, or revisit the same standard through data-driven instruction. This allows teachers to reach students who need remediation or acceleration through differentiated instruction. A unique and innovative aspect of this education model is the fact that the schools do not simply move on to the next standard after assessment, but may continue re-teaching based on students' needs. The teacher will re-teach, either by whole-class or small-group instruction until all students have mastered the standard.

5. *Who will be responsible for managing the data, interpreting it for classroom teachers, and leading or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement?*

The principal or designee will be responsible for managing the data, interpreting it for classroom teachers, and or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement. Experienced administrative mentor(s) provided through our arrangement with the ESP will assist school staff with these tasks.

6. *Explain the training and support that school leadership and teachers will receive in analyzing, interpreting, and using performance data to improve student learning.*

Teachers will receive training in the following areas:

- Administration and Data Analysis of Dibels Data
- Marzano's Essential Instructional Strategies
- **High-quality teacher training** developed by Marzano Center practitioner experts on topics such as
  - Facilitating complex learning;
  - Helping students engage in cognitively complex tasks;
  - Instructional decision-making;
  - Standards-based planning on measurement topics;
  - Reflection on lesson outcomes, with action plans for intervention and enrichment.
- **Integrated monitoring tools**, to help teachers transition their instructional practice in profound ways.
- **Parallel training for teacher-coaches** to ensure fidelity within professional learning communities and in one-on-one mentoring.
- **Student feedback components** to help teachers monitor the success of their strategies, provide differentiated instruction, and recalibrate their practice as necessary.
- Brain Compatibility and its use in the Elementary Classroom
- Using Data to Drive Instruction
  - Interpreting NWEA reports



Teacher Support:

- The principal will be in the classrooms observing almost daily to give constructive feedback.
- Teachers will be given time for collaboration.
- Administration and the board will have an open door policy for staff.

7. *Corrective Action:*

The founding members of OMA came together because they feel that they can create a great school. OMA fully expect the curriculum and instructional strategies to produce great results. However, if at any time the data supports evidence that the proposed curriculum or instruction is not effective, OMA will take immediate action to correct it. Potential actions include:

While the nature of the question of **corrective action** implies "reaction," OMA believes these processes are on-going and provide a "proactive" method to make corrections on route to high academic achievement.

**School-wide level:**

If OMA is not successful on a school-wide level, the school would look to determine if it is our curriculum or our instructional strategies that are falling short. OMA would continue to research the most current best practices in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies and modify our curriculum and/or instructional strategies to ensure students are successful.

**Classroom level:**

If not successful on a classroom level, then the school would first look at the practices taking place in that classroom (i.e., the teacher). If it appears a teacher is not effective, the Educational Director will implement an improvement plan. The teacher will be observed, given feedback, and supported to the fullest extent to ensure steady improvement. The amount of time that a teacher is given to improve will depend on the initial struggles. If at the end of the improvement plan timeline the teacher is still not making gains, the teacher will be removed from the position.

**Individual student level:**

When an individual student is not successful, the Response to Intervention (RTI) team will convene to identify the struggles and name the interventions necessary. The interventions will depend on the student's needs. The interventions could be behavioral, academic, or social. If, after the interventions are in place, the student continues to struggle academically or behaviorally, the RTI team will reconvene to evaluate the current interventions and identify next steps. The team may propose additional interventions or they may refer a student for an educational evaluation. Corrective actions could be triggered many ways. If a student, or group of students, is not performing well on an assessment we would assess necessary actions to improve results. If multiple students in one class are not performing well, we would investigate if it is related to teacher effectiveness or if it is an anomaly with that particular group. The Principal is ultimately responsible for overseeing that the necessary changes take place either school-wide, in a classroom, or on an individual level.

Staffing Structure: **Attachment 10** contains the proposed staffing chart. The Personnel Policy (Attachment 11) and Employee handbook is under consideration by the FoOE. Final versions of the Personnel Policy and Employee Handbook will comply with Indiana and Federal law.

**Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation**

**1. Development of Personnel Policy**

The Governing Board will delegate operational responsibilities primarily to the principal. The principal will report directly to the Governing Board. He/she will supervise the school staff and will be the point of leadership for day-to-day delivery of the educational program, for school operations, and follow through on Board policy directives and budgetary decisions regarding the operations of the school. The principal will make recommendations to the Board regarding personnel and policy issues, be responsible for supervision and training of teachers and for directing the program of instruction.

The principal, in conjunction with any resources OMA elects to contract from Indiana Charters, will also be charged with developing a school-wide system for continuous improvement in the educators and the educational program and will be responsible

for ensuring that all teachers have adequate resources available to allow students meet or exceed the expected school-wide learning results.

The ideal teacher to student ratio will be no more than 1 to 20.

## **2. Employee Handbook**

Our employees will be given an at-will employment agreement, as outlined in charter school law, and an employee handbook. They will receive an updated agreement at the beginning of each school year. They will clearly understand the difference between contract and at-will employment. At OMA the intention is to hire and maintain highly qualified individuals with the passion and compassion to effectively execute our vision and mission.

## **3. Recruitment**

Using such resources as Teach For America and the wide teaching network of the proposed principal, we will access multiple effective pipelines in scouting talent. Other organizations such as the New Teacher Project, Teach Plus, and education students at Indiana University, University of Southern Indiana, Hanover College, University of Evansville will be accessed on behalf of OMA. OMA will not discriminate in regard to race or ethnicity during our search. OMA will prioritize any individual who best fits our school model and we recognize the importance of recruitment from a diverse pool of talent. Moving forward, we will continue to consult practitioners and experts who have a clear sense of the school we are establishing, including our wide network of Building Excellent Schools and, in turn, talent that aligns with our philosophy and are representative of the community. Recruitment for Y1 will begin immediately following authorization.

A rigorous interview process, including resume screening, phone interview, demonstration lesson with feedback, re-teaching based upon feedback, and in-person interview will be utilized to ensure the quality of candidates prior to offering a position. The hiring process is designed to ensure we are inviting candidates to join our organization who match the following criteria: **Alignment** – believes in mission and our core values; **Intelligence** - demonstrates capacity to learn and achieve; **Coachability** - takes and implements feedback; **Initiative** - is action-oriented, exudes a sense of energy/urgency; **Strong communication** – has strong verbal/written skills; **Mission alignment** – keeps highest expectations, relentlessness/grit, no excuses; **Content knowledge** – develops literacy skills in lower grades, content in upper grades; **Classroom skill** – has strong behavior management and delivers strong instruction (rigorous lesson plans/assessments); and **Team orientation** – works well with others, with mindset that team trumps individual. Ironically, we are fortunate that the closing of Otwell Elementary has created a pool of available teachers familiar with both the students and the area.

## **4. Staffing Model.**

OMA will: meet all federal requirements of “highly qualified” for each position; verify transcripts, test scores, and other data related to “highly qualified” status; complete a criminal background check before finalizing employment contracts; and maintain files with up-to date documentation for each teacher.

## **5. Teacher Evaluation.**

Evaluation criteria are aligned to the school’s core values and to the actions and habits demonstrated by effective leaders. By providing clear measures, staff members know what is expected of them, and the specificity of the performance measures ensure accurate self-assessment of leadership development. The **principal** will be evaluated by the board prior to the end of each year’s contract, based on criteria set forth by job responsibilities and all elements of the school’s Accountability Plan. The evaluation form for the principal outlines specific measures around the following school leadership competencies: **(a)** instructional expertise and leadership; **(b)** people management and development; **(c)** school culture and character development; **(d)** communication; **(e)** strategic thinking and planning; **(f)** building teams and working organizationally; **(g)** self-management and organization; **(h)** professionalism and character; and **(i)** budget, enrollment, and compliance. Results will be in writing and include in the employee’s personnel file. Decisions to renew the principal’s contract will be based on the evaluation, which will incorporate the following: Mid-Year Self-Evaluation & Board Mid-Year Evaluation of the Principal; End-of-Year Self- Evaluation & Board End-of-Year Evaluation of Principal; and External School Audit

6. The **Operations Manager (if/when we hire one)** will be evaluated by the Principal prior to the end of each year, based on criteria set forth by job responsibilities. Results will be in writing and included in the employee’s personnel file. Decisions to renew individuals will be based on the evaluation, which will incorporate: Mid-Year Self-Evaluation and Principal Mid-Year Evaluation; End-of-Year Self Evaluation and Head of School End-of- Year Evaluation. There are no plans to hire an Operations Manager at this time.



7. **Unsatisfactory Leadership and Staff Performance.** In the event that a teacher or school administrator is not performing to standard, s/he will be placed on an improvement plan that outlines the specific timeline necessary to make improvement if employment at OMA is to continue. While all OMA employees are at will, the evaluation cycle creates a fair, transparent process wherein teachers have regular updates on their progress and their standing with regards to continued employment. In cases where an instructional concern may lead to termination, employees will have received frequent observations, feedback, and opportunities to improve.
8. **Compensation System.** When it comes to student achievement across all socioeconomic levels, talented teachers are the critical factor. Research shows that having high-quality teachers in the classroom is the single most important factor driving increased student achievement. OMA will work diligently to recognize teachers for their continued efforts to lean along with their students and close achievement gaps. The compensation afforded OMA staff will be in alignment with the local market trends and neighboring school districts.
9. **Employee insurance and benefits.** Insurance and benefits will be provided to full-time salaried positions and are calculated at 33% of salary amounts. The average teacher salary of \$42,500 is based on the Pike County salary schedule for a teacher with a Master's Degree and five years' experience. All listed salary positions and hourly positions will ideally receive a 3% raise each year.
10. Evaluation Tools: **Attachment 12**

### **Professional Development**

*Describe the school's professional development expectations and opportunities, including the following:*

1. *Identify the person or position responsible for professional development.*

**Professional Development:** The principal will ensure that professional development is aligned with the evaluation standards of teachers, educational philosophy of the school, and the required measures necessary to elevate student achievement. OMA will strategically rely on internal and external professional development to ensure a full, seamless, and highly successful implementation of our rigorous academic program. OMA will budget \$6,000 per year for ongoing professional development purposes, including July Professional Development (PD) and May end-of-year PD, and we will provide PD devoted solely to professional development of staff every other week. The staff will have access to approximately 40 hours of internal professional development over the course of the school year.

**2. Professional Development Before School Opening.** Prior to the start of each school year, teachers will participate in a series of professional development sessions. In the school's first year of operations and ongoing thereafter, teachers will attend 18 after school sessions of professional development throughout the school year, with 5 full eight-hour days before the start of school. This professional development is designed to ensure teachers will be able to: (a) Internalize our structured, supportive, and achievement-oriented school culture and produce strong academic gains for all students; (b) Establish and maintain a structured, disciplined, achievement-focused school and classroom environment that upholds high academic and behavioral expectations for every student and embodies the school's college-preparatory mission; (c) Hold each student accountable to behavioral and learning expectations, including following and implementing policies for such things as uniforms, homework, and academic support; (d) Analyze assessment data and use it to craft strategic instructional action plans to close skill gaps and accelerate academic achievement; (e) Use Indiana Academic Standards, and standards-based and internal standards to develop unit assessments, unit plans, and lesson plans that allow students to access and master grade-level skills and content each year; (f) Craft project-based lesson plans that are rigorous for the grade level and that include sufficient time for independent practice and concrete checks for understanding to assess to what degree each student met the lesson objective; (g) Serve special needs students appropriately and effectively to ensure they reach ambitious academic goals in accordance with their Individualized Education Plans; (h) Participate in a professional learning community in which each educator is responsible for seeking and accepting critical feedback and support and committed to improving professional practices in order to advance student achievement; and (i) Commit to upholding the school-family-student commitment and expectations defined in the staff handbook and Family and Staff Accountability Contract.

**3. Professional Development During the Year.** During the week following administration of interim assessments throughout the year, the principal and teachers will participate in a professional development session targeted at analysis of interim results. The principal will facilitate analysis of assessment results, identification of trends in student progress and gaps in skills and proficiency levels, and creation of instructional action plans for individual students, sub-groups, classes, and grade levels. At least once a week, the teachers and principal will devote an hour to working in professional learning communities, preparing for instruction and assessments. During professional development, teachers, led by the principal, teacher leaders and/or outside consultants, will: (a) examine research, observation data, lesson plans, assessments, videos of instruction, and student outcomes in a strategic focus area for improvement (i.e. phonemic awareness, making inferences); (b) model and practice instructional strategies; (c) identify concrete short-term action items to improve their practice; and (d) norm lesson plans and execution. In addition to formal annual observations and evaluations, the principal will observe all teachers a minimum of once per week throughout the academic year and provide



targeted feedback to reinforce effective practices and facilitate improvement.

**4. Professional Development Evaluation.** As a 100% results-oriented school, professional development is evaluated for its effectiveness based on student achievement data. The principal ensures the efficacy of teacher support systems and implements modifications when satisfactory results are not being achieved. OMA's commitment to professional development is demonstrated by our use, prioritization, and quantity of dedicated time. Over the course of each year, OMA will spend 400+ hours improving the impact of our craft on student achievement. At two points each year, OMA will provide staff with a survey on the quality of professional development and ask staff to identify two things they find successful about professional development and two things they wish they could change. Data points are used to improve effectiveness. As the principal plans for the next year, this feedback informs any changes.

**Parent & Community Involvement:**

1. OMA is completely grass-root organization. Parents and community members form the entire board.
2. Parents and community members are kept informed during monthly General meetings, Facebook and website updates and the community events board. The FoOE board meets weekly.
3. Parents will play a key role in the school both through an active Parent Teacher Organization and through community service projects at the school.
4. The Otwell Ruritan and Community Center have both offered use of their grounds and facility as a temporary school ground, if needed. Additionally, for the coming Pre-school, the United Methodist Church has offered their facility for the Lil Hoosier Pre-school.

**Start-Up & Ongoing Operations:**

1. See **Attachment 22** for a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.
2. **Transportation:**  
Otwell is the crossroads between Dubois and Davies counties. While many parents may elect to provide their own transportation, OMA will seek alternative bussing solutions. OMA will contact the School Board of Pike County Community School Corporation for a strategic location to arrange bussing, as bus routes both run by the school on a regular basis and all Otwell-area busses transverse the two main roads in the county. OMA will explore recent legislative changes that allow charter schools and school corporations to contract for services.

A contracted provider that has not been selected at this point will provide transportation for field trips and/or athletic events. Research has shown that these providers are available in this area. OMA will seek transportation services from a provider that participates in all state and federal school bus safety regulations.

3. **Safety and security:**  
Establishing and maintaining a teaching and learning environment that promotes wellness, health, and safety is a primary responsibility of the board. Policies will be developed in accordance with all applicable health and safety laws and regulations of federal and state government as they pertain to public school operation. The principal is responsible for seeing that day-to-day practice of safety is a part of the school, including the instructional program. Policies will address the following: **(a)** Fire protection, **(b)** Accident prevention and reporting procedures, **(c)** Indoor air quality plan and asbestos inspections, **(d)** Multi-hazard plan, **(e)** Warning systems, **(f)** Emergency drills (local and community wide including fire, severe weather, earthquake and bomb threats), **(g)** Emergency closings, **(h)** Traffic safety, **(i)** Traffic and parking controls, **(j)** Safety inspections, **(k)** First aid, emergency medical care, infection control, **(l)** Student/employee provision of required health records and required immunizations, **(m)** Staff TB clearance and background checks, **(n)** Reporting of suspected child abuse/neglect, **(o)** Sexual harassment, and **(p)** Establishment of alcohol / drug / tobacco / violence free environment. Other topics for policy establishment will be determined via review and compliance with Indiana state policies and procedures.

Procedures to adequately protect school property shall include, but not be limited to: Controlling the issuance of building keys and master keys and access cards and security cards; Permitting access to classrooms, gymnasiums or other school facilities or equipment only to times when there is appropriate faculty supervision; and Procedure for securing teacher work areas when being left unattended or at the end of the day. All visitors must sign in at the main office and wear identification prior to admission to the general school building. The principal will secure assistance from law enforcement officials when deemed necessary to maintain order or security during the school day or during extracurricular activities. The principal shall call the local police in cases involving illegal entry, theft or vandalism. The principal will notify the board within 24 hours after each case of vandalism, theft, building damage and illegal entry. The board is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and press charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property.



4. *Technology*

OMA's budget includes an allowance to purchase smartboards for the classrooms and Chromebooks. All equipment will be inventory controlled with appropriate asset tagging. This equipment will be for in class work only and provided at no cost to the student.

5. *Insurance*

Attachment 21 contains a letter of intent to offer insurance coverage to OMA. Additionally, FoOE will have insurance for the Lil Hoosiers, LLC pre-school. Grace College will be named as an additional insured.

### **Facilities**

Mike Houtsch, FoOE board president, is highly qualified to oversee facilities acquisition, completion of project, inspection and permitting. He has sought and received assurances that a temporary building can be set up within weeks of OMA receiving its charter. A lease for land and use of the adjacent cafeteria and gym has been obtained during the application cycle with Ball State University. FoOE relies heavily on Mr. Houtsch's extensive architectural design, construction and carpentry knowledge as the Associate Professor of Architectural Studies at Vincennes University. Please see Mr. Houtsch's resume for full information.

A floor plan of the two possible facilities and an aerial view of the Community Center location are included in **Attachment 20, Start-Up Plan**.

OMA has two potential sites for the school both within the Pike County School Corporation. The first choice, on the Jefferson Township Community Center site, 2301 N. Spring Street, will become the location of the Scotsman modular school building unless site 2 become available in the very near future. Site 2 is the current Otwell Elementary building located at 1011 N. State Rd. 257.

Our comparison and analysis of the two site options concludes that the costs of operating the school are relatively the same at each site. If site 1, with the modular unit construction, is chosen then there is a preparation fee and monthly lease; but the unit is efficient and cost effective on energy costs. If site 2 is chosen, the building could become available for a fixed cost, but utility fees are very high – offsetting the savings.

Our primary site choice is to construct a 17 unit modular building on the site of the Jefferson Township Community Center. The site is pictured in this attachment. This option affords OMA to share a kitchen, cafeteria and gymnasium facility located at the Community Center. A branch of the Pike County Public Library is attached to the Community Center. This also allows OMA and the Community Center to share services such as cleaning and maintenance. The Ruritan owns the land and has offered to lease the property to FoOE rent-free

Should the Pike County School Corporation place the Otwell Elementary School building on the Indiana Department of Education's *Unused Facility list*, OMA will consider the use of this site. OMA's choice of portable classrooms allow the school to move into the Otwell Facility at a date later than its original opening – if so desired. This building is located at 1869 N SR 257, Otwell, IN 47564. The school corporation has been approached for a potential leasing option.

### **Budget and Financial Plans**

1. *The systems and processes for accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits.*

OMA may contract with Indiana Charters to assist the governing board's Chris Hallett and Michelle Houtsch (see respective resumes for qualifications) establish accounting, purchasing, and payroll processes. The governing board's approach is to assist the school in finding the best possible administrative staff prior to startup while continuing to provide detailed oversight. Depending on the skills of the individuals the school hires, accounting processes will be customized to take best advantage of the on-site staff. Regardless, all processes will require at least three different individuals to be involved from the beginning to the end of each business transaction. Indiana Charters may be contracted to provide qualified individuals to either carry out all accounting functions, to provide training, or periodic third party oversight to school staff.

Software, forms, and all components of the accounting system will be State Board of Accounts (SBOA) compliant and, more importantly, will be property of OMA. Monthly management reports, including a statement of net assets, statement of revenue and expenditures, actual vs. budget analysis, and cash flow projections, will be provided to school leadership and the board. Indiana Charters may be contracted to assist OMA in the selection of a qualified CPA firm to conduct the annual audit and prepare appropriate non-profit informational tax returns. Please see **Attachment 23 Budget Narrative** for additional information.

2. *Assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs, are included in the detailed budget form in **Attachment 22**. Attachment 22 includes the following information:*
  - a. *Per-Pupil Revenue.*
  - b. *Anticipated Funding Sources.*
  - c. *Contingency plan to meet financial needs*
  - d. *Year 1 cash flow contingency, in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening.*
3. *The annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school. Including evidence that the school will adhere to the accounting, auditing, and reporting procedures and requirements that apply to public schools operating in Indiana.*

The State Board of Accounts is the state agency, designated by legislation, with responsibility for the audit of public funds received and disbursed by public offices and officers, state offices, state institutions, and any other entities receiving or disbursing public funds. As part of the annual audit OMA will contract with a private examiner to conduct an annual/biennial audit. The auditor selected to perform the annual audit shall be required to complete the financial audit, the compliance audit and, if applicable, the OMB circular A-133 audit.

We understand that the board and the Educational Service Provider must be especially prudent with financial controls. All processes will require at least three different individuals to be involved from the beginning to the end of each business transaction. While we have not committed to a longer term working relationship with Indiana Charters, they provide qualified individuals to carry out all accounting functions and provide training and oversight to school staff. If we engage in this service, all transactions will require the approval of the Indiana Charters' bookkeeper and business manager. In addition, the school's designee must approve all transactions. Finally, the OMA's board of directors will approve all transactions through public meeting on a monthly basis.

If the OMA elects to use credit accounts for travel and emergency situations, statements will be examined and verified monthly by both the Organizer's designee and the FoOE Board. Credit card transactions expected to be above \$250.00 must be pre-approved by the business manager, and Organizer's designee must review the log monthly.

An independent accounting firm will be engaged to conduct an annual review of our financial procedures, reporting and record keeping. All academic and financial records will be maintained in electronic and paper files. Grace College personnel will also be invited to review the monthly or annual financial reports as required by their governance policies.

OMA has not selected a firm to perform its annual audit.



## References

- Berry, W. (1999, June). In Distrust of Movement [Editorial]. *Orion*.
- Chu, S. K., Tse, S., & Chow, K. (2011). Using collaborative teaching and inquiry project-based learning to help primary school students develop information literacy and information skills. *Library; Information Science Research*, 33(2), 132-143.
- Daeschner, S. (n.d.). *And they said it couldn't be done: Transforming a school district into a learning organization*.
- Datnow, A. Borman, G., & Stringfield, S. (2000). School Reform Through a Highly Specified Curriculum: Implementation and Effects of the Core Knowledge Sequence. *The Elementary School Journal*, 101(2), 167-191.
- ERIC – A Guide for Developing a Business Plan for Charter Schools., 1998-Feb. (n.d.) Retrieved February 6, 2016 from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED426134>.
- Himmele, P. & Himmele, W. (2011). *Total participation techniques: Making every student an active learner*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- IDOE: Compass. (n.d.). Retrieved December 6, 2015, from <http://compass/doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx>
- Indiana Code. (n.d.). Indiana Code 20-27-11-1 Retrieved January 8, 2016, from <http://indianacode.info/index.html>
- Marzano, R. J. (2006). *Classroom assessment; grading that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Miller, D. (n.d.). Reading with Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades. Retrieved December 9, 2015, from [http://fg.ed.pacificu.edu/sweb/gettling/web-content/Researchpaper.cwk \(WP\).pdf](http://fg.ed.pacificu.edu/sweb/gettling/web-content/Researchpaper.cwk (WP).pdf)
- Ragland, J. (2002). Kids Project Learning into Community. Retrieved January 2, 2016, from <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/mar/13/local/me-classroom13>.
- Rural Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2016, from <http://www.nea.org/home/16358.htm>
- Scharer, P.L., & Peters, D. (1996). An exploration of literature discussions conducted by two teachers moving toward literature-based reading instruction. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 36(1), 33-50.
- Schlechty, P.C. (n.d.) Engaging Students: *The Next Level of Working on the Work*.
- Wedman, J., Ph.D., & Waigant, A., Ph.D. (n.d.). *Core Knowledge Curriculum and School Performance: (Rep.)*. Retrieved December 23, 2015, from [http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik\\_uploads/documents/31/CK\\_National\\_Study\\_2004.pdf](http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/documents/31/CK_National_Study_2004.pdf).
- Why Project Based Learning (PBL)? (n.d.). Retrieved December 26, 2015, from [http://bie.org/about/why\\_pbl](http://bie.org/about/why_pbl)