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The Best Academy Public Charter School  
District #4192

World's Best Workforce & Annual Report

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Unleashing Potential Transforming Community

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## Introduction

*From the dual visions of Dr. Ella Gates Mahmoud and Eric Mahmoud, in 1985 SEED Daycare, Inc. became a licensed, home-based childcare program emphasizing the children's culture through daily rituals, stories, field trips, and activities for children ages 3-5. Since 1985, SEED Daycare has helped to educate and instill a spirit of pride and desire for learning in over 750 children. After the success the Mahmoud's experienced with SEED Daycare, the logical progression was to establish an elementary school in order to harvest the seeds they planted.*

*In 1992 Harvest Preparatory School (Harvest Prep) was established for children in grades K-6. Harvest Prep, which was originally started as a private, nonprofit elementary school under the SEED Daycare, Inc. umbrella, became a public charter school in 1998 and established its own separate 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation.*

*Enrollment in Harvest Prep grew from 24 students in its first year of operation in 1992 to more than 400 students, with an annual waiting list. From their inception, the two organizations, SEED Daycare and Harvest Prep, focused on teaching fundamental skills in reading, math, and science and engaging parents in their children's learning, cultural knowledge, pride, and self-confidence.*

*In 2008, Best Academy was established to address the unique educational needs of African American boys. By separating the boys from the girls, the intent of Best Academy was to address the unique learning styles of boys. However, the same year that the Best boys program was created parents asked that a program for girls be developed as well. That same year Sister Academy was established. Sister Academy, which stands for Sisters in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Rx (medicine), is an all-girl, 5-8 program.*

*In 2009, members of the East African Somali community in Minneapolis approached the founders, Eric and Ella Mahmoud, and asked them if they would consider starting a program to meet the unique cultural and academic needs of their burgeoning English Language Learner (ELL) community. In 2010, Best Academy East was started to meet this need. Best Academy merged with Harvest Preparatory School on July 1, 2018.*

## School Information

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### Grades Served

Best Academy serves grades K-8.

Harvest Prep served grades K-4

### Year Opened

Best Academy was opened in 2008.

Harvest Prep was opened in 1998

### Mission and Vision:

At Best Academy, the mission and vision of the school are embedded into the day-to-day activities of the school curriculum.

Our mission is to instruct, empower, enable and guide Scholars to achieve superior academic, social and moral development. And our vision is to use education as a lever to change the socio-economic trajectory of north Minneapolis.

### **Program Description**

Best Academy uses an educational model patterned after high-performing public schools. It is built around five essential questions, taken from Richard Dufour's book, *Learning by Doing*. Schools that have answered these five essential questions have demonstrated success in serving children from low-income backgrounds.

1. What do my students need to know and be able to do?
2. What are the most effective ways to teach what they need to know?
3. How do I know that they got it?
4. If they didn't get it after I taught it, then what?
5. What if they have already mastered the material before I taught it?

To answer these five questions, Best Academy uses the Gap-Closing Framework. It is designed from the inside out and organized around a set of concentric rings. Because student achievement is the sine qua non of teaching, student achievement is found at the center of the ring. Because the greatest lever that influences student achievement is teaching, the teaching ring is placed in symbiotic relationship with the core of the framework, with student achievement. The teaching ring is composed of (a) Planning, (b) Teaching and Re-teaching, (c) Assessment, (d) Reflection and Student Support Systems (abbreviated as S3). Everything in the middle and outer rings supports teaching and learning. The middle ring of administration, supports teaching. The administrative ring is composed of Instructional Leadership, Formal and Informal Observations, Instructional Coaching, and Data Analysis and Coaching. The outer ring, which supports teaching and administration, consists of the academic and operational supports that ensure the most effective teaching and administration. It is composed of School Culture, Operations, Bell to Bell (class time), the Daily Schedule and the (yearly) Calendar.

### **Authorizer Information**

The authorizing mission of the Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) Charter School Division is to provide superior oversight, evaluation, feedback and strategic support to its authorized schools resulting in the increased academic, financial, operational and environmental education performance of each school.

The authorizing vision of ACNW is to authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school

communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

Best Academy, and the merged school of Harvest Preparatory, have been with Audubon since Best Academy first opened in 2008. And its current contract ends in 2019. Best Academy's contractual relationship with Audubon Center of the North Woods began with a common belief that focuses, on stewardship and promoting a connection and commitment to the natural environment. It is our goal that every student leaves Best Academy with a better understanding of the world around them and how they can have an impact on the environment.

**Erin Anderson, Director of Charter School Authorizing**

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**Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes**

The Best Academy's statutory purposes as identified in our school's contract with Audubon Center of the North Woods are as follows:

1. Our primary statutory purpose is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. And we are able to execute our purpose by implementing the following practices:
  - a. Determining what children need to know and be able to do at each grade level  
Provide the most effective teaching methods to teach what they need to know
  - b. Create robust and frequent assessments to determine if they got it after it's taught
  - c. Provide effective interventions if students didn't get it
  - d. Cultivate a growth mindset in students
  
2. The secondary purpose of Best Academy's educational program is to: Create new professional opportunities for teachers. Best fulfills its secondary purpose by, providing teachers with more professional development time than the typical MN school
  - a. There is 10 days of pre-service training for new teachers
  - b. There are weekly professional development opportunities
  - c. Every 6 weeks there are 2 days devoted to data analysis

## Student Enrollment & Demographics

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The student enrollment at Best Academy has been one of our many great successes. Enrollment declined slightly in the FY17 school year. And we estimate that the move back to the Olson building will also decrease enrollment. The table below shows Best’s enrollment trend data.

Number of Students Enrolled			
Grades	2017-2018	2018-2019 (est)	2019-2020
Kindergarten	43 (57 HP)	96	
1st Grade	53 (57 HP)	96	
2nd Grade	52 (58 HP)	96	
3rd Grade	65 (62 HP)	96	
4th Grade	62 (54 HP)	85	
5th Grade	99	85	
6th Grade	98	85	
7th Grade	86	75	
8th Grade	72	75	
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>800</b>	
<i>Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year</i>	550	800	

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Best Academy is a public charter school district that serves around 700 K-8 students. As a public charter we are open to all students regardless of ethnic background or economic status. Most scholars are African American and low-income; almost all will be the first in their families to attend college. The students who attend Best Academy come from the surrounding communities of Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, and parts of St. Paul.

Demographic Trends			
	2017-2018	2018-2019 (est)	2019-2020
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	632 (BA) 288 (HP)	800	
<b>Male</b>	360 (BA) 141 (HP)	400	
<b>Female</b>	272 (BA) 147 (HP)	400	
<b>Special Education</b>	96 (BA) 35 (HP)	115	
<b>English Learners</b>	254 (BA) 8 (HP)	270	
<b>Free/Reduced Priced Lunch</b>	89% (BA) 89% (HP)	89%	
<b>Black, not of Hispanic Origin</b>	628 (BA)	628	

	282 (HP)		
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	2 (BA) 4 (HP)	5	
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	0 (BA) 2 (HP)	0	
<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native</b>	0 (BA) 1 (HP)	1	
<b>White, not of Hispanic Origin</b>	1 (BA) 2 (HP)	2	

## Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Overall Student Attendance Rate	95%	95% (BA) 92% (HP)	

Overall, the data shows consistent performance in student attendance, averaging around 95% each year. Survey data shows that parents love the academic rigor and the culture at Best. In addition, we strongly believe that these two elements contributed significantly towards the success of student attendance.

### STUDENT ATTRITION

Historical data shows that Best has a relatively low student attrition rate. As noted above our families have stayed with us because they love the academic rigor and the culture at Best Academy. Our strong focus on academic excellence has proven to be the best strategy for keeping families at Best.

<b>Percentage of students who were continuously enrolled between October 1 of the 2017-2018 school year and October 1 of the 2018-2019 school year.</b>	<b>64% (BA) 54% (HP)</b>
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<b>Percentage of students who continued enrollment in the school from Spring 2018 to October 1, 2018.</b>	<b>72% (BA) 62% (HP)</b>
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### STUDENT MOBILITY

Best Academy also has a relatively low mobility index. Our data shows that the main reason behind students transferring out during the school year was relocation and or changes in family circumstances.

<b>Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2018-2019 school year.</b>	<b>70% (HP) 79% (BA)</b>
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Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2017- 2018 school year.	86% (BA) 80% (HP)
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Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2016-2017 school year.	73% (BA) 72% (HP)
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## Educational Approach & Curriculum

### OUR CURRICULUM AND APPROACH

As noted above, Best Academy’s educational approach and curriculum is to fulfill its primary statutory purpose; improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. All schools in the Harvest Network have an instructional program and curriculum designed to provide strong support to students to develop creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills. The comprehensive K-5 curriculum engages and motivates students and is strongly aligned to state standards and the HNS mission. We do this by implementing rigorous standards in core content; reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Best Academy, like all the schools in the Network use the 5 Gaps™ approach developed by Founder Eric Mahmoud to address the achievement gap. We also use an educational model patterned after high-performing public schools. It is built around the five essential questions taken from Richard Dufour’s book, *Learning by Doing*.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

A student that requires mental health services outside of the scope of the student support services is referred to outside resources by the School Social Worker and School Counselor with the assistance of the School Psychologist that provides on-site mental health services. The student is referred offsite once the student has completed 4-6 individual sessions with the onsite School Psychologist. For students with special needs the schools maintains weekly records for academic progression, weekly assignments and growth charts while using pacing charts for lesson presentations. Both schools will be engaging in partnerships with outside mental health agencies to increase students access to mental health supports. There are also data meetings to determine strategies and plans for continued academic growth and strategies.

### THE ENGLISH LEARNERS PROGRAM

Our goal for our English Language Learners is that they learn English language skills that will help them access general education lesson content and eventually test out of ESL services. The majority of our English Learners are Somali students attending Best Academy East. Our objective is to provide two-to-three hours per week of direct ESL services, supplementing the general education literacy curriculum with a separate literacy curriculum, *Avenues*. For students who

are new to the United States and have no English proficiency, we have a special Newcomer program where students receive 1-1.5 hours of services every day, more than double the services of other ELL students. The Newcomer program has its own curriculum, which focuses on communicative competence and literacy skills. Harvest Preparatory also has a small ELL Program, with 13 students enrolled and receiving services. The program works in collaboration with Best Academy.

### **Teacher supports**

In addition, the Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory have also addressed the challenges of raising student proficiency in Reading, Mathematics, and Science by offering more professional development opportunities for teachers. We recognize that while many of our teachers have passion and grit they might not all have many years of experience and for its particular reason we have broadened the professional development opportunities available to teachers. Teachers receive ongoing professional development in the following areas:

- Professional development is provided for all staff in data-driven decision making process and data coaching
- Professional development training and coaching is provided for all staff in Math, Science and Reading, social studies and student support areas (special education, academic and behavior interventionist etc.)

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Harvest Prep and Best Academy has partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Girls Scouts of America as well as Junior Achievement. It is our hope that these added supports will not only provide a greater support system to our students through mentorship and greater access to economic resources but also as a way to advance student achievement and close the achievement gap in Minnesota once and for all. Below are some more highlights from the school year.

**Boston Scientific:** Our partners at Boston Scientific sponsored two workshops from the Bakken Museum for our sixth grade class. It was hands on, and the scholars learned about static electricity by experiencing its effects, asking questions, and creating their own experiments to try.

**MacPhail:** Our Strings Scholars at Best Academy performed at Orchestra Hall prior to the main concert on Friday, March 3rd. In addition, on Sunday afternoon scholars performed at the School Partnership Recital at MacPhail Center for Music. Both performances were amazing! Our scholars practice for several hours a week in preparation for these performances. In addition to the practices during the week at school, some of the scholars participate in the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra (MNYO), where they practice with students from several other schools in the area on Saturdays.

**Loppet Foundation:** The Loppet Foundation is a new community partner. Their organization is focused on a passion for year-round outdoor adventure in the Minneapolis area. Starting in December, the 3rd and 4th grade boys at Best Academy got exposure to the techniques of cross country skiing. They had weekly lessons that started inside the gym, but eventually led to the playground outside. To conclude the program all scholars had the opportunity to participate in the annual Minne-Loppet--a cross country ski race that was held at Theodore Wirth Park. We had nearly 20 scholars that participated. Each scholar received a Best Academy hat, a medal cookie and hot chocolate upon completion of the race. The school was also provided a Best Academy banner!

## Innovative Practices & Implementation

The innovation and the uniqueness of our School is embedded within the HNS Aspirational & Cultural Values which also aligns with our school's mission.

### **Our Year at a Glance**

During the 2018-2019 school year there were many success, coupled with a few challenges. Our major successes from last year were that the school had a cohesive administration team and greater support was given to all staff, both professional and personal support, through more targeted professional development and weekly staff meetings.

Last year was also a year of growth and change for Best Academy, being that Best Academy merged with Harvest Prep at the beginning of the school year. There has been a great deal of focus on staff and student unification during this time, and engaging the staff and transforming the culture has been a major focus.

Some major challenges from last year centered on behavior, staff changes and transportation issues. There were also a number of inconsistencies with uniform enforcement. In FY 19 The school will continue to identify alternatives to suspension. For the next school year there will be increased communication between counselors, BIs, parents and the school principal in an attempt to hopefully alleviate the number of students visiting the B.I. office. With the merger of the two schools, Best Academy and Harvest Prep, more innovative practices will be used and the efficiencies of a larger staff recognized.

### **Extended Year Program**

There are 195 school days, constituting over 1,500 hours for the current school year. The exhibit in the attachments section contains the school calendar showing the monthly schedule and total number of instructional days. The "traditional" school year of 180 days, with a 6.5-hour school day, provides insufficient learning time to cover all of the benchmarks and standards that students are expected to learn. This ensures sufficient learning time and thus maximizes student achievement. It reflects an emphasis on the fundamental question, what do students need to maximize achievement.

## **School Calendar**

*As noted above our school year has 195 days of instruction, which is far more than traditional school districts. Attached to this report is a copy of the calendar.*

## **Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks**

### **Progress on ACNW Contractual Academic Goals & WBWF Alignment**

Over the course of its contract with ACNW the school's performance on its contractual goals has been mixed. The school has generally outperformed the local district as well as comparative schools. Since the FY17 school year we have hired a new Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Harvest Network of Schools.

For two years, Mr. Brett Fechner has served as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for both The Best Academy and the merged Harvest Preparatory School. Mr. Fechner has held many educational leadership roles over the past 20 years. From a teacher in south Minneapolis to Director of Mathematics and Director of Achievement for National Charter Management Organization to Executive Director of a Charter Network. Mr. Fechner is well qualified to fulfill this role as a Director of Curriculum & Instruction for our network. The addition of Mr. Fechner has helped improve instruction and as led to improved results for our scholars.

Below you will see the contractual indicators and measures as set forth in both the contract with ACNW and Harvest Preparatory and Best Academy. Attached to this document you will find the Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory Academic Performance Data Profile compiled on September 10, 2018. This data profile, that was submitted on behalf of all the schools, details how the school is doing towards contractual goals and also what some specific growth areas are.

### **Best Academy**

The overall performance of Best Academy over the term of the contract met the minimum standard for Best Academy contract with ACNW. Having stated that, Best Academy Management and board of directors believes that Best Academy must and will continue to improve to deliver the best outcomes for scholars.

### **Success**

- Best Academy decreased suspensions by almost 50% over a 4 year period.
- Best Academy exceeded the target of for Access Assessments for ELL students in two of two years. Best Academy actually exceeded the goal.

- Best Academy’s proficiency index score for 3rd-8th grade students that are FRL subgroup was greater than the MPS district.
- Best Academy ELL students exceeded the same subgroup in the state by more than 10 points in 3rd-8th grade reading.
- Best Academy ELL students exceeded the same subgroup in MPS by more than 15 points in 3rd-8th grade reading.
- Best Academy Black students outperformed the same subgroup in state in 3rd-8th grade reading.
- Best Academy Black students outperformed the same subgroup in MPS by more than 15 points in 3rd-8th grade reading.
- Best Academy ELL students outperformed the same subgroup in the state in 3rd-8th grade math.
- Best Academy ELL students outperformed the same subgroup in MPS by more than 15 points in 3rd-8th grade math.
- Best Academy Black students outperformed the same subgroup in MPS in 3rd-8th grade math.
- Best Academy met the annual attendance target over the 4 year period.

### **Challenges**

- Best Academy showed weak performance in both math growth and proficiency during the contract period
- Best Academy showed weak performance in science achievement

### **World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) Goal Areas:**

- **Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]:** All students are ready for kindergarten.
- **Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]:** All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.
- **Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]:** All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- **Career and College Ready [CCR]:** All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- **Graduate from High School [GRAD]:** All students graduate from high school.

<b>Indicator 1: Mission Related Goals</b>
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**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy will demonstrate increased ability to regulate social and emotional control.*

**Measure 1.1 (BA and HP):** From FY15 to FY19, the average of the annual percentage of students eligible for Fun Friday celebration, using the school wide behavior management system will be at least 70%.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: ACG**

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** Attending Fun Friday is an important mission related goal for the school, and scholars enjoy the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs. However, the consistency of Fun Friday was sporadic among classrooms, and data wasn't always recorded. So we are unable to report on this measure for the FY17 school year. Since FY17 the school has begun to consistently track this information and in the chart below you will see that the two schools together averaged 94.7% of students.

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
K	100%	98%	98%	94%	98%	97%	95%	95%	97%
1 <sup>st</sup>	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%	98%	97%	94%	98%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	98%	95%	95%	97%	98%	97%	96%	95%	96%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	96%	97%	96%	94%	98%	97%	96%	92%	94%
4 <sup>th</sup>	97%	95%	95%	97%	96%	97%	94%	94%	95%
5 <sup>th</sup>	91%	93%	95%	93%	88%	95%	85%	82%	80%
6 <sup>th</sup>	91%	86%	95%	93%	88%	95%	94%	92%	85%
7 <sup>th</sup>	95%	83%	92%	94%	95%	96%	97%	82%	86%
8 <sup>th</sup>	95%	91%	93%	91%	94%	95%	96%	96%	95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.5%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>95.1%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>91.7</b>

Average students having fun Friday in 2018-2019 was **94.7%**

**Measure 1.2:** From FY15 to FY19, the number of suspensions will decrease 10% each year or by 50% over 5 years from the baseline of 163 suspensions.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: ACG**

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** The majority of suspensions were due to severe defiance and aggressive behavior/fighting. For the coming school year we are trying to be more proactive when it comes to student discipline and student support. We are also increasing our number of positive phone calls home, and recognizing scholars' whose behavior is consistently positive. Additionally we are planning to reinstitute detention for the next school year rather than vs. suspension whenever possible. Below is a table chronicling the rate of suspensions over the course of the school's contract. As you will see, we are actively decreasing the number of out of school suspensions at Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory in FY18.

BA MDE Suspension Trend Report						
2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-2019
199	153	192	168	147	92	

HP MDE Suspension Trend Report						
2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-2019
100	64	63	113	124	101	NA

\*\*For purposes of this report, a disciplinary action is defined as an out of school suspension for one day or more, being removed from the learning environment for a day, expulsion or exclusion.

Note: A student will be counted multiple times if multiple disciplinary actions occurred. Students will not be counted multiple times in the same day.

**Indicator 2: English Language Learner**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, English Learners at Best will demonstrate adequate progress towards English language proficiency*

**BA Measure 2.1:** From FY15 to FY19, Best will meet the State Progress Target (AMAO 1) on the ACCESS assessment for English Language Learners in at least two of the two years. Targets= 46.39% in FY 15, 48.62% in FY 16 and 50.85% in FY17.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: AGC, CCR, GRAD**

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** *Best Academy has met this goal, as you will see in the chart below. During FY18, Best Academy achieved 53.3% on the State Progress Target (AMAO 1) on the ACCESS assessment for English Language Learners.*

**Indicator 3: Reading Growth**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best will demonstrate growth in reading as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.*

**Measure 3.1:** From FY15 to FY19, the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-8 who meet their fall to spring (except in FY19, fall to winter) NWEA RIT expected growth target will be at least 50%.

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:** *CCR*

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** *For Best Academy, the school had 129 students, K-8, meeting their growth targets. There were 285 students tested. This is 45.3% of students meeting their growth targets. As you will see in the chart below however, since FY15, Best Academy has been making progress but does not meet the aggregate goal of at least 50%. They are currently at an aggregate percentage of 48.4%*

<b>Best Academy</b>	<b>Number of Students Meeting Growth Target</b>	<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage of Students Meeting Growth Targets</b>
FY15	209	435	48.0%
FY16	256	555	46.1%
FY17	238	461	51.6%
FY18	129	285	45.3%
FY19			
<i>FY 20 (Fall to Winter) NO DATA AS OF DATE OF ANNUAL REPORT</i>			
<i>Aggregate</i>			

**Indicator 4: Math Growth**

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory School will demonstrate growth in math as measured by state accountability tests and nationally normed assessments.



**Measure 4.1:** From FY15 to FY19, the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-8 who meet their fall to spring (except in FY19, fall to winter) NWEA RIT expected growth target will be at least 50%.

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:**

**Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory School will demonstrate proficiency in reading as measured by state accountability tests.*

**Indicator 6: Math Proficiency**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory will demonstrate proficiency in math as measured by state accountability tests.*

**Indicator 7: Science Proficiency**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best will demonstrate proficiency in science as measured by state accountability tests.*

**Indicator 8: Kindergarten Readiness**

**Goal:** *Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy and Harvest Preparatory School will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured by student participation in kindergarten readiness activities sponsored by the school.*

**Measure 8.1:** From FY16 to FY19, the aggregate percentage of students who will be enrolling in the school's Kindergarten program and attend a Kindergarten Round Up prior to the start of the school year will be at least 75%

**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:**

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** *80% of students who enrolled in the schools kindergarten program and attended a kindergarten round up.*

**Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness**

The school does not have a contractual goal in this area as they do not serve high school students.

**Indicator 10: Attendance**

**Goal:** Over the period of the contract, students at Best Academy will attend the school at high rates

**Measure 10.1:** From FY15 to FY19,, the average of the school’s annual attendance rates will be at least 90.0%.

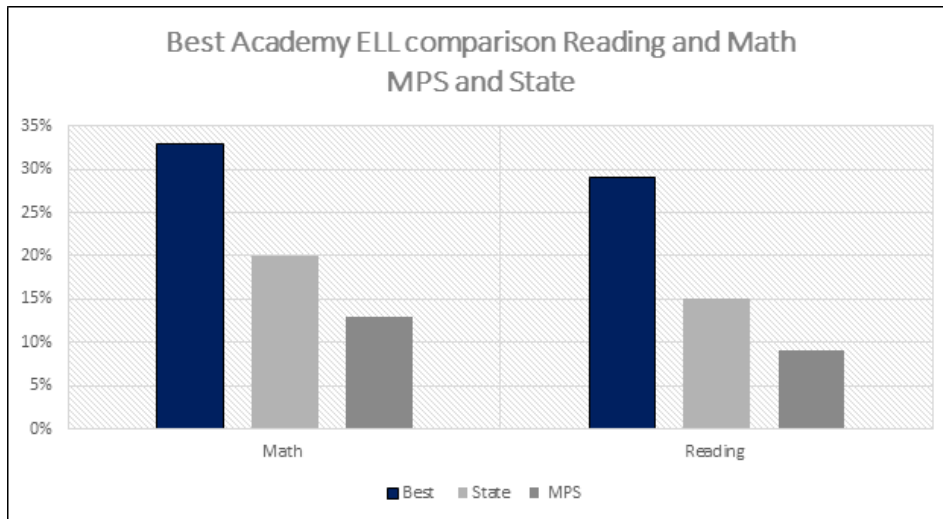
**WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:** N/A

**Key Measures & Results for this Goal:** Best Academy achieved this goal with a reported attendance rate of 95%.

**Indicator A: Federal and State Accountability**

With the transition to ESSA, Minnesota is longer using the MMR system for federal and state accountability. Below is a summary of Best Academy’s and Harvest Preparatory World’s Best Workforce Data Profile.

The Table below compares Best Academy students who either Met or Exceeded standards on the Math MCA compared to the state and local district schools.



Below is information regarding Student to Teacher Ratios

**Ratio of Licensed Teachers to Students**

Licensed Teacher Ratio	15 (BA)
October 1 Student Count	721 (BA)
<b>Total Licensed Teacher FTE Count</b>	<b>49.05 (BA)</b>

### Ratio of Licensed Teachers and Support Staff to Students

Licensed Teacher and Support Staff Ratio	13 (BA)
October 1 Student Count	721(BA)
<b>Total Licensed Teacher And Support Staff FTE Count</b>	<b>54.05 (BA)</b>

### Ratio of All Licensed Staff to Students

Total Licensed Staff Ratio	13 (BA)
October 1 Student Count	721( BA)
<b>Total Licensed Staff Count</b>	<b>54.05(BA)</b>

## Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation

### SCHOOL PRIORITIES

MCA, and NWEA data as well as priorities from the principal's, helped to lay out the 2018-2019 school priorities. The priorities from last year were

1. Response to Interventions- NWEA and MCA data
2. Student Culture- behavior and classroom expectations
3. Adult Culture-Increase positivity
4. Family retention and customer service

Our performance on these priorities were mixed, and they continue to be an area for growth for Harvest Preparatory School.

### THE GAP CLOSING FRAMEWORK

Best Academy uses the Gap Closing Framework illustrated below. It is designed from the inside out and organized around a set of concentric rings. Because student achievement is the sine qua non of teaching, student achievement is found at the center of the ring. Because the greatest lever that influences student achievement is teaching, the



teaching ring is placed in symbiotic relationship with the core of the framework, with student achievement

The teaching ring is composed of (a) Planning, (b) Teaching and Re-teaching, (c) Assessment, (d) Reflection and Student Support Systems (abbreviated as S<sup>3</sup>). Everything in the middle and outer rings supports teaching and learning. The middle ring of administration, supports teaching. The administrative ring is composed of Instructional Leadership, Formal and Informal Observations, Instructional Coaching, and Data Analysis and Coaching. The outer ring, which supports teaching and administration, consists of the academic and operational supports that ensure the most effective teaching and administration. It is composed of School Culture, Operations, Bell to Bell (class time), the Daily Schedule and the (yearly) Calendar.

Note that the Instructional Leadership model supports teaching, it does not drive the teaching model; similarly, the Calendar supports the teaching model, it does not drive it.

As previously discussed, the standard public school year of 180 days, with a 6.5-hour school day, provides insufficient learning time to cover all of the benchmarks and standards that students are expected to learn. Consequently, at Best Academy, both the school year and school day have been expanded. This ensures sufficient learning time and thus maximizes student achievement. It reflects an emphasis on the fundamental question, what do students need to maximize achievement. Best worked backwards to make sure that all of the supports, systems, and structures were in place to meet those needs.

By expanding the school year, another obstacle for low-income students was removed: the summertime learning gap. A 3-month vacation is appreciated by teachers, but it jeopardizes the progress of students, particularly those who are further behind and in the greatest need. No other profession commands the 4 months of vacation afforded to teachers (3 months of summer vacation, 2 weeks of winter/Christmas break, 1 week of spring/Easter break, and a week of other holidays interspersed throughout the year). While there has been union resistance to reducing the summer vacation for teachers, a compromise has been achieved by some high-performing schools: extend the school year, while interspersing vacation time more evenly throughout the year at 1–2-week intervals. This has proven effective in increasing student achievement and avoiding the summertime learning gap.

In many public school districts and schools, however, the educational framework operates in just the opposite manner. Administration starts with the school calendar, daily schedule, and operations, and then tries to figure out how to fit everything into those fixed structures. Instead of changing the size of the educational box by adding more learning time, administrators and teachers are forced to work within a time structure that has proven inadequate and ineffective. Harkening back to the words of former Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Carol

Johnson, “In our public education system, time is justice. What is enough time for some, is not enough time for others.”

In sum, these structures do not help solve the educational challenges that economically disadvantaged and minority children face—children who start kindergarten behind and fall further behind through the years. These children need more time to get caught up, not less time. Schools and school districts that have proven effective in closing the achievement gap design the structure around the vision, mission, and goals in order to optimize student achievement. To reiterate: Student achievement comes first and everything else revolves around that. Student achievement is at the core of the gap closing framework.

### **INNER RING ONE: THE TEACHING CYCLE**

The first ring around student achievement is the Teaching Ring. The cycle within this ring proceeds in the following order: Planning, Teaching & Re-teaching, Assessments, and Reflection

#### **PLANNING**

Planning addresses the first of the five essential questions set forth at the beginning of this chapter: What do my children need to know and be able to do? Planning comes first in the process, before teaching, assessment, reflection and student support systems. Actually, planning also includes each of these items.

State academic standards provide the guidelines for developing curriculum at Best Academy. In every subject area, teachers must ensure that all benchmarks in the state standards are met before year’s end. The link from the state standards to instruction is created by backwards planning. This means starting with the standards established by the state Department of Education for each subject area and then developing curriculum based on each benchmark that the student is expected to master at that grade level. For example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading standard might consist of a student being able to understand “Key Ideas and Details” of a short story. One of the benchmarks under this standard is, “Students will be able to ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of the text, referring explicitly to the text as basis for the answer.” An important distinction in the planning for teachers is that they must also determine the level of rigor required to master the standards that will be assessed.

### **THE YEARLY PACING GUIDE**

After a grade-level team of teachers has determined all of the benchmarks and standards that students will have to learn for the year, a pacing guide is established. The guide indicates when any given benchmark will be taught during the school year and how many academic days will be spent covering that benchmark. It can change and be updated throughout the year, but a working draft is available before the first day of school begins.

### **THE TERM PACING GUIDE**

After the yearlong pacing guide is established, the term guide is developed. It is a more detailed and comprehensive version of the Yearly Pacing Guide. Not only does it include when a benchmark will be taught in the course of the school year, it also what indicates the resources that will be used to teach the benchmark and how the benchmark will be assessed to ascertain if students have learned the information. The Term Pacing Guide focuses on one term's progress, highlights the standards or benchmarks to be taught during that term, lists the days they will be taught and the daily objectives of the lesson, and addresses any prerequisite skills or knowledge students need to have before they are able to master the benchmark at grade level.

### **WEEKLY LESSON PLANS**

As the teacher moves forward in the planning process, the planning becomes more detailed. Weekly Lesson Plans enable instructional leaders to develop their plans more thoroughly to deliver academic content that is rigorous and engaging. Grade-level teams divide up lesson planning responsibilities based on the individual strengths of the team members. Lesson planning spirals backward from interim formative assessments, which are created by grade-level teams prior to the beginning of each term. An interim formative assessment is a rigorous test given in class every 6-8 weeks to determine if students have retained the information from past and current benchmarks. In Minnesota, for example, all tested benchmarks for grades 3-8 must be covered by April 1st of each year, when statewide (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) testing occurs. For kindergarten through second grade, teachers have the full year to cover grade-level standards. Backwards planning answers the question, what do my students need to know and be able to do?

In planning lessons, Best Academy extensively use the book, *The Skillful Teacher*, by Jon Saphier, Mary Ann Haley-Speca, and Robert Grower. The authors outline 21 planning decisions involved in lesson planning that are highly recommended to all teachers and school leaders.

### **TEACHING AND RE-TEACHING**

Teaching and Re-teaching addresses the second of the five essential questions: What are the most effective ways to teach what they need to know? It's not uncommon to believe that we are successful in all things that cannot be measured. The same principle applies in teaching. Teachers tend to believe they are more successful in their teaching, when the results are not measured. At Best Academy, success is evaluated by how successful students are mastering the standards that are being measured. Thus, the goals of teaching and re-teaching are as follows:

- To cultivate a growth mindset in all students
- To have students master the benchmarks set by the Minnesota Department of Education as well as the national benchmarks in reading, writing, math, science and social studies at all grade levels
- To have students make a year or more of academic growth by the end of the school year

- To have all of students meet or exceed the standard on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments
- To have 100% of students make their target growth goals on the Northwest Education Assessment (NWEA)
- To prepare students for college
- Developing students to use good moral judgment and be positive contributors to society and have desire to give back to their community.

All of these goals are directly measurable. At each step along the way, a quantifiable answer can be given for each and every student. The period is longer, of course, for college bound students; it's also longer for determining whether students are showing good moral judgment and making positive contributions to society. But it is still quantifiable.

Teaching addresses the question, what are the most effective practices to teach whatever students need to know? This question is answered by using the best research on effective instruction available and by giving the teacher extensive professional development. Instructional leaders facilitate ongoing professional development on effective and engaging instructional strategies and by ongoing use of strategic data systems.

### **ASSESSMENTS**

Assessments addresses the third of the five essential questions: How do I know if they got it? At the classroom level, there are three time frames in which to implement re-teaching strategies based upon assessments: daily, weekly, and end-of-term.

### **DAILY EXIT SLIPS**

The teacher can use Exit Slips (a question or series of short questions to determine whether students understood the subject matter being taught) on a daily basis or at the end of a lesson to determine whether students have mastered the daily objective. This is the quickest way to find out whether an individual student or classroom of students would benefit from some type of re-teaching. A quick analysis of the exit slip can tell the teacher which skill the student is missing. The teacher is given time during their 70 minute preparation period to review Exit Slips and homework assignments, in order to adjust the next day's lesson. If more than one student has the same problem, the teacher can group the students together and offer a mini lesson covering the strategy or step that those students missed. If many students had the same problem, the mini lesson can be taught to the whole group. This skill can also be spiraled into the homework, and the Do Now for the following day. Once again, by planning how classroom time will be used, sufficient time can be set aside to allow for student grouping or differentiation

### **WEEKLY QUIZZES**

At the end of each week, the teacher gives a quiz. The quiz is aligned to the benchmarks covered during the week. The daily school schedule gives the teacher time to develop and grade the quizzes. At Best Academy, students leave school early every Friday to allow teachers time to analyze quiz and other testing data. After the quiz is given and graded, the teacher fills out a tracker that shows how each student performed on each question. This tracker is a systematic way to determine which skills need to be retaught and to which students. The re-teaching happens the following week using strategies like mini-lessons to small groups, differentiated independent work, homework, and Do Now's. If 80% of the class does not understand a particular benchmark as evidenced by exit slips, homework and weekly quizzes, then the benchmark must be retaught to the entire class. On the other hand, if only a few students that haven't mastered a particular benchmark, then the benchmark can be retaught during the intervention period mentioned earlier. Students who master the benchmarks on the weekly quizzes should be offered differentiated work that will push them further.

### **COMPREHENSIVE INTERIM ASSESSMENTS**

At the end of the term, which is usually every 6 to 8 weeks, the teacher will administer a Comprehensive Interim Assessment, also known as a COMP. The COMP covers all of the benchmarks taught during the 6–8-week term. Teachers in grades K-8 administer the COMP's and then fill out a tracker that shows student performances during that period. The weekly and COMP trackers let teachers and administrators know whether students are on track for meeting the state standards. The school then provides teachers with a Data Day at the end of each term to analyze the information and plan a reteach week. The Data Day is usually the Friday at the end of the week that students have taken their COMPS. On Data Days, the students are released from school, but the teachers come to school to analyze data from test results. In order to be more efficient and actually use the data being generated, Best uses an automated scanner that takes the test information from students' scores and provides a high-level analysis of the data. The scanner automates as many of the teacher functions as possible to create efficiencies. Time that teachers would otherwise use for grading and logging these interim assessments can now be used for analysis of the data.

The most important part of the Data Day is for teachers to develop re-teaching plans based on the data. The week following the Data Day is set aside to reteach skills that were not mastered. Depending on the number of students who did not master the subject matter, re-teaching will be done either in small groups or with the entire class. It is the job of the grade-level team to determine what activities and lessons will be covered to address the needs of all learners

With independent work, exit slips, and weekly quizzes, a teacher should know which students are proficient on the benchmarks, even before the COMP's are administered. These tests are collectively referred to as continuous formative assessments, and are critical in providing teachers and administrators with up-to-date data for grading and establishing a teaching and re-teaching roadmap for the teacher to follow.



## **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION/S3**

### *What If Students Didn't Learn the Material After I Taught It?*

Gap closing schools use a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to provide additional support to students who are behind. In the Gap-Closing Framework illustration, RTI is symbolized by S3 or Student Support System. RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions that match students' needs; and using students' learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions.

The theory of RTI is that 80% of students should be supported by the curriculum provided to all students. For the 20% of students who may not be successful with the standard curriculum (or Tier 1 program as it is called), a system of interventions are set up to address students that are right below grade level (i.e., at Tier 2) and students that are far below grade level (i.e., at Tier 3). A 50-minute intervention block for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students is built into the school schedule to address the students' individual needs. For students in elementary school, the intervention may occur during regularly scheduled class time, assuming there are teaching assistants or support in the classroom. For students in middle school, the intervention may be done by a different teaching intervention specialist and in a one-on-one or small group setting.

## **MIDDLE RING 2: ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO TEACHERS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The purpose of Instructional Leadership is to ensure that student learning time is maximized through teacher professional development. Professional development includes four major categories: data and assessment, planning, classroom management, and core instruction presentation. Instructional leadership is supported by building administrators, teacher leaders (coaches) and/or educational consultants.

Every teacher is assigned an instructional leader or coach to help develop and strengthen their instructional effectiveness. Administrators will track student performance results and then assign teachers to administrators, educational consultants, and teacher support based on grade level and subject expertise. Instructional leaders will provide a half hour of feedback based on a 20-30 minute informal observation, every other week, or on an as needed basis. Instructional leaders meet with teachers and complete a Teacher Learning Plan, which is revised every term (i.e. five times throughout the school year). This practice was adopted at Best Academy after school leaders attended a training conducted by Dacia Toll, co-founder of Achievement First charter school management organization.

## **FORMAL OBSERVATION**

The system for formal observations is derived from Achievement First,[i] *Driven by Data*, and the *System for Teacher and Student Advancement Program* (TAP).[ii] The lesson plan format is Madeline Hunter's framework.

Instructional leaders use formal observations to determine staff development needs and to determine additional incentive pay. Teacher performance is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5: 1 (poor), 2 (below average performance), 3 (proficient), 4 (above average), to 5 (exemplary).

Formal observations are conducted three times a year to evaluate a teacher's overall performance. In order to receive incentive pay, a teacher must have a 3.0 average on their formal observation. The formal observation process consists of...

1. A pre-meeting to discuss the teacher's lesson plan
2. A 45–60-minute observation
3. A post-observation meeting with the teacher
4. A follow-up in teacher learning plan

### **INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS**

Much in the same way a swimming coach improves a swimmer's technique by being at the pool to observe swimming during lessons, practice, and swim meets, *Driven by Data: A Practical Guide to Improve Instruction*, by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo,<sup>[i]</sup> has heavily influenced the notion of being "at the pool" to give teachers feedback on their teaching. You can't improve a swimmer's technique by reading about their performance in the newspaper the next day. The coach must be "at the pool" providing feedback to the swimmer minute by minute. This feedback might include form, stroke rate and efficiency of turns. Bambrick-Santoyo uses this as a metaphor to describe the school leader's role in improving instruction for students through the teachers. Instructional leaders can't improve student achievement by reading about the results of the state testing results in the newspaper. Instructional leaders can't change student outcomes just by reviewing internal testing data. They must be "at the pool" or in the classroom providing teachers valuable feedback during or immediately after a lesson.

The purpose of informal observations is to give teachers immediate and continuous written and verbal feedback on their instructional practices in specific areas. Informal observations focus intentionally on goals set in the Teaching Learning Plan and assume that the area of focus will change frequently as the teacher improves.

Informal observations are unannounced; they last for 20-30 minutes and occur frequently throughout the year. Feedback is emailed to the teacher and the teacher meets with the Instructional Leader bi weekly to discuss progress. The process goes as follows:

1. Conduct a 20–30 minute biweekly observation based on phase focus [define]
2. Inform the teacher immediately afterward via email (a teacher may respond and/or provide an explanation if needed)
3. Give informal verbal feedback biweekly for 20-30 minutes based on phase focus  
A copy of the informal observation document is included in the Appendix.

## **DATA ANALYSIS & COACHING**

The development of the data analysis and coaching used by Best Academy was highly influenced by two books: *Driven by Data* by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and *The Data Coach's Guide to Improving Learning for All Students: Unleashing the Power of Collaborative Inquiry*, by Nancy Love, Katherine Stiles, Susan Murphy, and Kathryn DiRana. Our data analysis model has also been shaped by visits to high-performing charter schools from around the country, such as Roxbury Prep in Massachusetts. Additionally, materials from Achievement First's instructional framework were incorporated into the design.

Teachers and administrators analyze data during three timeframes: daily, weekly, and every 6–8 weeks. Teachers meet with coaches weekly to review the data. Teachers have all three levels of assessment information available before they plan and teach lessons. Daily analysis of student performance is done through exit slips, where students are asked to produce a product that aligns with the day's objective for that subject. Information from exit slips is used to plan future whole- and small-group instruction. The intent is to grade the exit slips the same day or for the next day, in order to inform the next day's lesson and instruction.

Weekly quizzes are given on Fridays to determine how students are progressing on the benchmarks. In grades K-4, quizzes are written for both mathematics and reading. For grades 5-8, each subject area teacher (mathematics, reading, science, and social studies) quizzes students on the benchmarks taught that week. All of these quizzes are common among all classes at each grade level. That data is then analyzed the following Friday afternoon.

Finally, a cumulative and formative assessment is given every 6–8 weeks (COMP) to assess how students have progressed over several benchmarks. Staff in grades 3-8 use a Scantron machine and bubble sheets to collect testing information; they use software, called Prosper, which allows for multifaceted student-level reports aligned to the benchmarks. Full data days at the end of each COMP period are dedicated to data analysis, reteach week and unit planning, as well as individual data meetings with administration and coaches. Teachers use a Cause and Verification form for every COMP assessment to determine root causes of performance. Student interventions are then planned on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. A data manager works with teachers to (a) facilitate managing student-level data; (b) to create and maintain up-to-date student trackers; and (c) to use the Scantron machine. The data manager ensures that the technical pieces of the data process are in working order.

Coaching on data is done weekly during grade-level team meetings. Teaching and administrative staff analyze common quiz data using a tracker system that displays students' overall scores, student's individual scores, and scores by individual benchmark items. The tracker gives coaches information on how individual students are doing and what interventions they may need. It also gives teachers and administrators information on how any given class is doing on a given skill or concept. Individual data meetings occur every data day or five times a year. The

individual data meeting goes over the data for each teacher’s classroom. Teachers meet with their coach and go through an in-depth analysis of how their students are doing. They are expected to attend these weekly meetings and be prepared to discuss their quiz data. Such meetings provide an additional layer of accountability, as teachers meet one to one with administrators and teacher leaders (Instructional Coach) to ensure all students succeed in all areas assessed.

At the beginning of every school year, new staff is trained on the data analysis system. Modeling of individual data meetings and training on data management is demonstrated by experienced teachers, coaches and administrators to ensure that teachers understand what is expected of them and what the process looks like. All staff is required to read *Driven by Data* as part of their individual professional development.

**OUTER RING 3-SCHOOL STRUCTURAL, OPERATIONAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS  
SCHOOL CALENDAR, BELL TO BELL, NO DAILY SCHEDULE**

The school calendar sets forth the total number of days the school plans to be open, the total number of hours it is in operation, and the total number of instructional hours that are available. There are 195 school days, and 9 hours per school day. This equates to 1,755 total hours the school is open for business. School starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 4:45 p.m. The longer day and year provide students with over 35% more time in school than the typical public school district (172 days of school for students with a 6.5-hour school day for a total of 1,118 hours). The additional 35% more time each year has a positive and cumulative academic effect on students. It gives them the ability to catch up academically if they are behind, and reduces backslide that takes place for low-income children during the summertime learning gap. The longer school day and longer school year provide the school with the ability to individualize support using RTI to meet the needs of students and to give teachers more time to prepare lessons and analyze student data.

Given the additional amount of time that is available, Best Academy students have 1 additional year of educational advantage over the typical public school student for every 3 years that a student spends in this educational system. This means that a student who starts in kindergarten at Best and stays continuously enrolled through the 8th grade, will have a 3-year academic advantage over the typical public school

We believe that our Gap Closing Framework not only sets us apart from other charter schools it also is proven in getting great result for our scholars!

## Student & Parent Satisfaction

At Best Academy, we conducted a satisfaction survey to be completed by parents/families, as well as a survey to be answered by students. The results of the survey inform us that the majority of our families and students are satisfied with their schools academic program.

The survey measured parent/family/ student satisfaction in the following areas: ·

- Service Excellence (academics)
- Communication excellence
- Teacher and school leadership excellence

Our data showed that over 80% of our parents are satisfied with Best Academy. Over 75% of respondents also indicated that their child feels safe at school and has a positive relationship with their child’s teacher. Below are some results from the survey.

## Environmental Education

*Based on the strategies and evaluation methods identified in the school’s Environmental Literacy Plan, report on the school’s progress toward its goals in the Results section of each indicator area. Provide data that outlines how the school met its goal, and narrative, as needed, to contextualize or describe the results. The narrative should not only list activities, but also discuss the impact of the activities on students and/or the broader school community. If the school cannot report on a given evaluation method, explain why the school did not gather the required data, and what the school plans to do in the future to rectify this situation. **If the school gathered different or additional data related to a given indicator area, please provide those results as well.***

### Indicator Area 1: Awareness

**Goal:** Scholars and staff at Best Academy have the awareness, or are increasing their awareness, of the relationship between the environment and human life.

#### Strategy 1.1: Jay’s Tree (K-1)

Jay's Tree focuses on conserving trees and other resources. Students learn that trees provide us with many benefits and learn the importance of using only the paper, water, and electricity that they need.)

<https://thinkearth.org/curriculum/kindergarten> <https://thinkearth.org/curriculum/first-grade>

In the Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade unit, students are introduced to:

- what the natural environment is
- how we use trees from the natural environment
- why we shouldn't waste paper and litter the environment
- what we can do to conserve paper and keep the environment clean.

The nature walk, Think Earth Video, and discussion questions from the environment posters, are all parts of the unit.

#### **Evaluation Method 1.1**

- 80% of K-1 scholars will complete and turn in the family activity sheet. Classrooms will graph the family results and place in a K-1 hallway display. These results will be reported in the monthly board report. They will have them spend time with their families determining what ways they can:
  - conserve resources while at home
  - conserve paper
  - recycle products
  - dispose of trash properly

On the Jay's Tree sample PDF there are a number of skills and behaviors that kids should take away from this activity.

- **Results:**
  - § K-1 had 184 scholars at Best. Less than 50% of students returned their family activity sheet to school. Teachers made multiple attempts to have this activity completed at home and returned to school with little avail.

#### **Evaluation Method 1.2**

- 80% of Best K-1 students will complete an exit slip, identifying at least 3 products made from trees and other natural resources.
  - **Results:**
    - § 100% of K-1 scholars completed an exit slip identifying products made from natural resources. These exit slips were completed after the Jay's Trees curriculum had been completed for each grade.
      - 167 of 184 scholars were able to identify 3 different products made of natural resources. This equaled 90.7% of K-1 scholars meeting this goal!

## Indicator Area 2: Knowledge

**Goal:** Scholars and staff at Best Academy have the knowledge, or are increasing their knowledge, of human and natural systems and processes.

### Strategy 2.1: The Rascals (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)

In the Grade 2 unit, students are introduced to:

- the 3 R's
  - reduce how much they throw away
  - reuse as much as they can
  - recycle whenever possible
- the benefits of following the 3 Rs
  - creates less trash
  - conserves natural resources
  - reduces pollution

Students will participate in the pre-test/post-test, Think Earth video discussion, and determine a better way to recycle materials in the school building.

<https://thinkearth.org/curriculum/second-grade>

### Evaluation Method 2.1

- Average post-test scores will increase by at least 20% over average pre-test scores.
  - **Results:**
    - § There were about 72 second grade scholars at Best
      - Average pre-test scores for The Rascals curriculum was 7/10= 70%
      - Average post-test scores were 9.5/10= 95%
      - Through teaching of the curriculum students improved their scores by over 25!
    - §  
2<sup>nd</sup> graders participating in a presentation about recycling

### Indicator Area 3: Attitudes

**Goal:** Scholars and staff at Best Academy have an attitude, or are increasing their attitude of, appreciation and concern for the environment.

#### Strategy 3.1

Arbor Day: April 26, Arbor Month School-wide Participation: May 2019 (K-8)

[www.mndnr.gov/arbormonth](http://www.mndnr.gov/arbormonth) <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/arbormonth/teachersguide.html> - each grade level

Educational posters, activity guide, and tree seedlings available to schools, communities, and nonprofit civic organizations for Arbor Month celebrations.

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/arbormonth/teachersguide.html>

150 page teacher's manual (K-9) PDF Files containing literature, worksheets, and projects Grade-specific activities to be utilized by classroom teachers for use during Arbor Month. (May 2017)

#### Evaluation Method 3.1:

- 80% of Best classrooms grades K-8 will show a positive change from their Arbor Day Surveys. The survey will be given before and after Arbor Day activities.
  - **Results:**
    - § On Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup> all K-8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars were given the pre-survey for Arbor Day. 100% of scholars took the pre-survey
    - § Arbor month lessons were taught in all classrooms throughout the month of May. Some classes even participating in planting trees during Arbor Month.
    - § Classes were given the post survey the first week of June. 681 scholars took the post survey (100% of students) with 87% of the scholars showing a positive change in their attitudes from the survey. 8% of scholars showed a decrease in their attitudes from the pre-survey with only 5% of scholars overall showing no movement. 592 of 681 Best academy scholars showed a positive change in their attitudes from their pre to post-survey!
    - §



**\*Scholars planting trees at Barnes Park\***

**Strategy 3.2**

Students in Grade 5 will take a two-day trip to Eagle Bluff Learning Center. Students will learn and have the opportunity to experience their natural environment.

<http://www.eagle-bluff.org/top/programs/overnight/K-12/curriculum-resources>

The teachers in Grade 5 will participate in at least three pre- and post-visit activities from the Teaching W.E.B on the Eagle Bluff website. These activities should align with the experiences planned at Eagle Bluff.

There will be a pre-test and a post-test created to show growth both in knowledge and change in attitude.

[http://www.eagle-bluff.org/top/programs/overnight/K-12/curriculumresources/?cms\\_action=manage](http://www.eagle-bluff.org/top/programs/overnight/K-12/curriculumresources/?cms_action=manage)

**Evaluation Method 3.2**

- 80% of participating Best Academy fifth grade students will show a positive change on the Affinity for Nature Scale (below). The survey will be given before and after the trip to students who attend.

- The assignment will also include an open ended question related to their expectations of what they will experience at Eagle Bluff (What do you expect to learn/see/do? and What did you learn/see/do?).

- **Results:**

§ Due to financial reasons, scholars in 5<sup>th</sup> grade were not able to attend Eagle Bluff this school year. Families were unable to make the payments for many scholars so the trip was cancelled.

	False	Somewhat false	A little false	A little true	Somewhat true	True
I like being in nature.						
I want to spend time outdoors.						
I enjoy the freedom of being outside.						
I am comfortable in the outdoors.						
I feel connected to the natural environment.						

### Indicator Area 4: Skills

**Goal:** Scholars and staff at Best Academy have or are increasing their problem solving and critical thinking skills as it relates to the environment and human life.

**Strategy 4.1**

Students in grades 3-8 will work within their classrooms to come up with an action plan for combating an environmental problem in the community.

Students in Grade 3-8 will identify an environmental issue and develop a potential action plan to address the issue. Students will present their projects during an Environmental Fair to scholars in grades K-2. Projects should be presented in a way which will engage the learners in primary grades.

#### Evaluation Method 4.1

- 80% of Best students in grades 3-8 will average at least a 3 on a 4 point rubric based on the following criteria:
  - Identifying an environmental problem
  - Analyzing methods that have already been created to solve the problem
  - Developing an action plan
  - Presenting the plan to other classes during community meeting
- **Results:**
  - During the months of March-May scholars in grades 3-8 at Best did work focused on environmental issues. Students worked in small groups of 3-4 and identified an environmental issue, completed research on the issue, created a poster and presented in their classes or lower grade level classes.
  - 425 scholars in grades 3-8 had their projects assessed by the rubric. Of these scholars, 377 students averaged a 3 or higher on the rubric for their work on their environmental issues project. This totaled 88.75% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting this goal!  
**\*Scholars presenting their projects to younger students\***

## Indicator Area 5: Action

**Goal:** Scholars and staff at Best Academy demonstrate the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment.

#### Strategy 5.1

- Scholars in Grades K-8 will participate in a fall (October) and spring (May) cleanup of the school grounds and surrounding neighborhood.

#### Evaluation Method 5.1

- Identify at least three ways (in addition to picking up trash) that they can take care of the environment around their home, school or neighborhood.
  - **Results:**
    - § Fall Clean-Up

- In late October students in grades 5-8 participated in a neighborhood clean-up.
  - 200 of 269 students cleaned up the school grounds and surrounding areas. Seven bags of trash totaling 30lbs were collected by students.
  - 100% of these scholars completed an exit slip and identified three different ways they could help the environment.
- Students grade K-4 were not able to do a fall clean-up due to snow fall happening before their event was scheduled.

#### § Spring Clean-Up

- In late May all scholars grades K-8 participated in a spring clean-up of the school grounds and surrounding areas.
  - 657 of 681 Best Academy students participated in the pick-up. 39 bags of garbage was collected totaling 135.4lbs! 16 bags of recycling was sorted totaling 26lbs.
  - 93.7% of students were able to identify three different ways they could help the environment shown on their exit slips completed after this clean-up event. That is 615 scholars meeting this goal!

Best classrooms in K-8 will participate together in a fall and spring cleanup of school grounds and surrounding neighborhood. Scholars will complete the following:

- sort the waste collected during each cleanup for recycling and waste
- weigh and graph the amounts collected
- share the data with pictures displayed on the school bulletin board

This will be completed after each of the cleanup sessions.

The Environmental Education Coordinator will:

- Share data with families in the monthly newsletter.
- Report on data in monthly board meetings

## Additional Questions

- **Describe the school's approach to environmental education.**
  - Best Academy's approach to environmental education this year has been to integrate it into any and all areas. The EE Coordinator wanted to make sure that all teachers were comfortable with what EE is and what the school's goals were for the

year right away as the school year began. The more knowledge we possessed as a staff the more we were able to give to our scholars. The attempt was to not keep EE confined to the science classrooms or science blocks in the daily schedule. As all teachers and staff were aware of our goals and teachings of environmental education the more we saw informational texts on the environment being used during reading groups, social studies lessons, school-wide conversations on recycling, etc. The momentum around environmental education has definitely increased over the last few years!

· **What have been your success and challenges related to environmental education this year?**

○ **Successes:**

- § Coming together as one school to work on Environmental Education.
- § EE Coordinator being in this role for two consecutive years!
- § 100% of students in attendance for Spring Clean-Up event participating in the event and completing the exit slip!
- § Daily recycling and knowledge being shown across the school building among students and staff!

○ **Challenges:**

- § EE Coordinator (Ms. Olsen) being stretched at the beginning of the year with Ms. Larson being on maternity leave. Took focus off slightly of the EE Goals.
- § K-4 missing the fall clean-up due to snow fall and sticking snow!
- § 5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars not being able to attend Eagle Bluff due to financial reasons.
- § Making environmental education a cohesive part of pacing and teaching throughout the entire 18-19 school year.

· **Based on the results from this year, what are some of your plans for EE in the school next year?**

- The EE Goals have already been placed into the pacing plans for the entire 19-20 school year in the science plans.
- A Science Team has been developed for the school and have been meeting regularly with each other to look at curriculum and discuss best practices moving forward the next school year. Some members of this team are teachers who have attended the workshop/training at ACNW.

- New ideas for fundraising have been discussed to ensure that scholars will have the opportunity to attend Eagle Bluff.

## Governance & Management

Best Academy is managed by the Harvest Network of Schools (HNS). HNS provides oversight, finance and payroll, leadership, external relations and fundraising, human capital and employee recruitment as well as student recruitment to the member schools. The school board of each member school evaluates the performance of the Harvest Network of Schools on an annual basis. This evaluation is initiated by the school board and results shared with the CMO in order to improve and drive service delivery. In the Attachments section of this report you will find a copy of the school's contract with the CMO as well as a CMO organizational chart.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Best Academy's by-laws regarding the composition of the Board of Directors states, The Board shall consist of not less than five (5) and not more than nine (9) unrelated members, as changed from time to time by the Board. Directors must be residents of the State of Minnesota and must meet the qualification requirements of the Statute.

The Board shall include: (i) one licensed teacher employed by the Corporation (the "Teacher Member Board Seat"); (ii) the parent or legal guardian of a current student (the "Parent Member Board Seat"); and (iii) an interested community member who is not employed by the Corporation and does not have a child enrolled in the school operated by the Corporation (the "Community Member Board Seat")

If the child of the occupant of the Parent Member Board Seat is no longer enrolled at the school operated by the Corporation or if the teacher occupying the Teacher Member Board Seat leaves the employment of the Corporation then the Board shall have the right to require the resignation of such Board member.

### **Board Roster**

The Best Academy materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract and school bylaws relating to:

- school board composition, and the board demonstrates the capacity to govern an effective charter school;
- effectively and transparently conducting board meetings:
  - A discernible method for conducting meetings (i.e. Robert's Rules)
  - Complying with MN Open Meeting Law
  - Timely distribution of board materials prior to meetings to board members and authorizer
  - Appropriate documentation of board and committee meetings

- board decision-making and oversight, including but not limited to:
  - Establishing, reviewing and implementing policy
  - Establishing performance expectations that are in alignment with charter contract
  - Regularly reviewing academic, financial, and operational data
  - Overseeing school improvement plans as necessary
  - Conducting timely review and approval of key organizational documents including the budget, contracts for service, facility lease, annual reports and financial audits

### **BOARD MEMBER TRAINING**

For any school to succeed, it must have a board that is committed to the organization's mission, possesses substantial leadership skills and expertise, sets policy that guides the school's work, and evaluates both the nonprofit organization and itself with an eye toward continuous improvement. Below is information regarding board member initial and annual training.

#### **Initial Training**

Information regarding the initial training required by statute completed by each current board member.

#### **Annual Training**

Information regarding the ongoing annual training attended by each current board member in FY19, year-to-date.

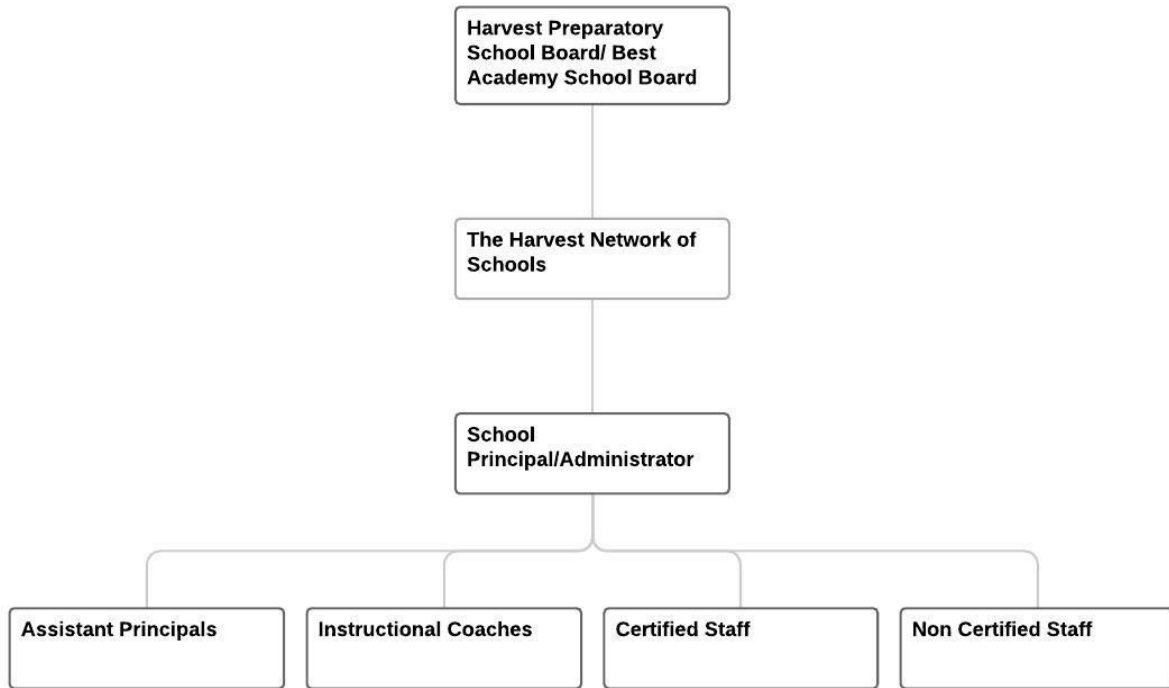
## Board Training

		Training 1: Board's Roles and Responsibilities	Training 2: Employment Policies and Practices	Training 3: Financial Management
Ezra	Hylan (Chair)	Not complete	Not complete	Completed
Louis	King (Vice Chair)	Not complete	Not complete	Completed
Idriss	Omar	Completed	Completed	Not complete
Nicolas	Styles	Not complete	Not complete	Not complete
Nick	Boettcher	Completed	Completed	Completed
Fowsiya	Dahir	Completed	Completed	Completed
Akil	Foluke	Completed	Completed	Completed
Rita	Gordon	Completed	Completed	Completed
Hailie	Johnson	Completed	Completed	Completed
DeAndra	Knighthen	Completed	Completed	Completed
LaQuita	Love-Limo	Completed	Completed	Completed
Meghan	Roegge	Completed	Completed	Completed
Bashir	Shafii	Completed	Completed	Completed
Anura	Si-Asar	Completed	Completed	Completed

## BEST ACADEMY AND HARVEST PREPARATORY SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## Best Academy/Harvest Prep Organizational Chart



### LIST OF ADMINISTRATORS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Fatou Diahame and Sylvia Beevas are the current school administrators of Best Academy, elementary and middle school and the Best Academy East.

Rochelle Larson is the principal at the Harvest Preparatory School and Keilly Olsen is the Assistant Principal. When the schools merged, these two administrators moved into leadership roles in the new merged school, The Best Harvest Academy.

Fatou Diahame is the current principal of Best Academy Elementary. She was born in Senegal, West Africa and moved to the United States in 1999 to teach French. After a year in a French program she sought employment at Harvest Prep in 2000 and has been in the network ever since. She has a Bachelor's degree in English and is finishing her Master of Arts in Instruction at Saint Mary's University. As a teacher for almost two decades her rigorous standards for quality instruction have set a high standard.

Sylvia Beevas came to the Best Academy midway through the FY18 school year.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FY17

Diahome Fatou and Rachelle Larson completed for following Professional Development experiences in FY19.

July 12, 2018 MDE Principal Workshop

July 14, 2018 Math Instructional Focus (Internal PD)

July 18, 2018- Responsive Classroom (Internal PD)

July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018- School Culture (Internal PD)

July 20<sup>th</sup> 2017- CPI (Internal PD)

June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019- Metro ECSU -Compassion and Self Care

## Staffing

### TEACHER RETENTION

<b>Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2017-18 returning in 2016-17</b>	53.7%
<b>Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2016-17 returning in 2015-16</b>	56%

### 2018-2019 BEST ACADEMY STAFF







### **TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

We offer our staff with job-embedded professional development. We have a number of instructional coaches available to support teachers on day-to-day basis. We also pride ourselves with providing teachers with more professional development time than the typical MN school. For example we provide 15 days of pre-service training for new teachers as well as weekly professional development opportunities. We train our staff as a whole and as individual. We believe our model will create confident and culturally competent high performing teachers. In the attachments section you will find a schedule of the pre-service training all of our teachers engaged in.

## **Operational Performance**

### **Finances**

Discussed in this section are Best Academy's audited financial results for school year 2018-2019.

#### **Revenues**

Best Academy receives the majority of its revenues from the State of Minnesota. The largest revenue streams are General Education Aid, which is based upon the number of students served by the school, Special Education Aid, which is available to cover the excess costs of educating

students with disabilities, and Lease Aid, which is available to help charter school cover the cost of their physical space.

**Expenditures**

Large budget line items for Best Academy include staff salaries and benefits, building lease costs, CMO fees, and student transportation costs. Variables such as class size are carefully monitored by the school in order to balance affordability and student achievement. During 2018-2019 Best Academy’s food service program was again run by Minneapolis Public Schools, which receives the revenue and incurs the expenditures relating to student meals.

**Net Surplus and Fund Balance**

Best Academy experienced a small net surplus of revenues over expenditures in FY2019. The school is planning for continued net surpluses over the next few years to continue to grow its fund balance.

<b>2018-2019 Audited Financial Results</b>			
	<b>Fund 1</b>	<b>Fund 2</b>	<b>Fund 4</b>
Total Revenues	12,975,752	N/A	N/A
Total Expenditures	12,950,258	N/A	N/A
Net Income	25,494	N/A	N/A
Total Fund Balance	1,065,723	N/A	N/A

The board and leadership at Best Academy have worked hard to put into place strong financial policies and procedures. The purposes of these policies and procedures are to safeguard assets, produce accurate accounting data, contribute to efficient operations, and promote compliance with state law, donor restrictions, and other regulations. To this end, Best Academy has enlisted the help of an experienced external financial services provider. Best Academy has also engaged an audit firm who is a committed partner to the school’s success, willing to answer questions and provide guidance beyond the scope of the annual audit.

The Best Academy board is engaged and involved with Best’s finances, particularly the Finance Committee. Best Academy is fortunate to have a strong, knowledgeable Finance Committee that

provides robust leadership. The Finance Committee has assumed responsibility for ensuring that all of the adopted policies and procedures are properly followed.

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2018-2019 and/or an organizational budget for 2019-2020, contact:

Name: Stacey Beethem

Position: Designs for Learning

Desk phone: 651-255-8827

Cell Phone: 612-978-7417

Email: [sbeethem@designlearn.net](mailto:sbeethem@designlearn.net)

### **World's Best Workforce Annual Budget**

*Everything we do is to support the WBWF. The entire budget is about making sure "all" of our students become compassion, competent, capable citizens to take on the future.*

## **Future Plans**



