



**CSP Improvement Plan - Response to the Ohio Department of Education
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“On the most recently released report card, Citizens Academy Southeast received an overall grade of a D, which does not meet the performance measurements to align to Ohio’s high-quality community school definition. As a result, a corrective action plan is required outlining the steps the school will take to ensure its performance on the 2019-2020 report card will produce performance measures demonstrating that Citizens Academy Southeast meets the high-quality definition.

In addition, the Department will review the submitted corrective action plan evidence for the following eligibility requirements:

- *The factors that contributed to the overall grade of D and the steps the school will take to ensure performance by the school that meets the high-quality definition for expansion outlined in the CSP Request for Application; and*
- *The factors that contributed to a D on subgroup performance measures for value-added.*

The Department will also review the steps the school will take to ensure performance in for all subgroups in the value-added progress dimension will meet the high-quality definition for expansion outlined the CSP Request for Application.” – ODE

Response from Citizens Academy Southeast:

As indicated by CSP grant criteria, Citizens Academy Southeast (CAS) failed to meet expectations as it relates to economically disadvantaged value-add and African American value-add data. However, as African American students and economically disadvantaged students comprise significant majorities of our student populations, the results point to larger concerns about falling short of growing our student population as a whole.

The table below illustrates value-added and proficiency data across grades at CAS for SY19. Specifically, our 5th grade results point to an especially challenging year, particularly in Math and Science. Value-added scores are drastically different than the growth achieved by 4th graders in Math. Within the 4th grade, they exhibited less growth in ELA than Math, pointing to an opportunity to look at ELA in that grade as well. However, strong proficiency rates in 3rd grade ELA and 4th grade Math in SY19 point to rising cohorts with opportunity to continue growth being addressed in this year's 4th and 5th grade classrooms. Addressing these challenges schoolwide will support the growth and achievement of specific populations of students, including African American and Economically disadvantaged populations.

Table 1: Proficiency and VA Scores for SY19		
	Proficiency Rate	Value-Add
ELA		-0.03
3 rd	60.5	
4 th	53.5	0.66
5 th	41.5	-0.71
Math		-0.47
3 rd	42.1	
4 th	65.1	2.56
5 th	17.1	-3.5
Science		-3.39
5 th	29.3	-3.39
Overall		-1.02
4 th		2.02
5 th		-3.73

Within Citizens Academy Southeast, there are a number of underlying internal and external factors that we feel contributed to underachievement in grades 3 - 5.

- **Chronic absenteeism:** for students in grade 5, the chronic absenteeism rate at CAS has steadily increased over time, and in SY19 held at a range of 22% to 24%. Absenteeism is considered a critical factor contributing to students' achievement and performance in both mathematics and literacy.
- **Student mobility:** in SY18, CAS lost 24% of our fourth graders, meaning 24% of students did not return as fifth graders for SY19. We had to replace ¼ of our student population, in which 100% of those new students were below grade level based upon NWEA Fall Mathematics data.
- **Teacher attrition:** teacher turnover has resulted in less experienced teachers and the need for ongoing, job embedded professional development. In SY17, SY18, and SY19 we lost 16%, 55% and 32% of our staff respectively. A consistent lack of qualified substitute teachers to cover absences has also contributed to the inability to access teachers and provide ongoing and intensive professional development. The low unemployment rate coupled with fewer college students entering the teaching profession only further inhibits our ability to find talent.
- **Role of the Instructional Coach:** there is also a need to further define the role of the Instructional Coach within our school as it relates to mathematics, science, literacy and teacher support. We also need to identify a mechanism for ongoing instructional support for teachers to ensure effective implementation of high impact reading instructional strategies.

What happens next?

As referenced above, the recent performance at CAS is not where we would like for it to be. We have many young teachers in their first year dealing with a large population of students with emotional or behavioral challenges. The burn-out factor is very real, and it can be a daily struggle to make sure the teachers and the students have all the resources they need in order to achieve their peak performance. We continue to partner with the Human Resources department at Breakthrough Schools, our CMO, to attract and retain the highest quality teachers. Breakthrough is leveraging its external partnerships with organizations such as Teach for America, and has recently expanded its recruitment team in order to provide more specialized services. Breakthrough also recently completed a total network-wide compensation analysis that resulted in several "wins", including higher starting salaries for teachers and an increase in paid time off for all staff.

Our students can get burned out as well. In keeping up with the demands of a rigorous curriculum and state testing, not to mention whatever may be going on at home, it's no surprise that chronic absenteeism is too high.

When we looked at all these factors and the impact they were having on our staff and students, we knew that we had to make some changes.

Achievement Network

In order to jump-start academic achievement in both math and reading, Citizens Academy Southeast has partnered with Achievement Network (ANet) to strengthen our school-wide practice of using Ohio state learning standards as well as striving for educational equity for each of its students. This partnership began in the Spring of SY18 and continued with full partnership in SY19 which includes the following support:

- Roughly 20 interactions per school with a dedicated ANet coach. Each Citizens Academy school's ANet coach learns about the school's strengths and needs, then works alongside the

leadership team to support rigorous instruction that is grounded in a deep knowledge of the standards, shaped by data, and built on strong practices of great educators across the country.

- Formative interim assessments that educators use regularly throughout the year to gauge student mastery of grade level content and identify actions to help students where they are struggling. The rigor and quality of ANet's interim assessments have been endorsed by the leading experts on rigorous standards from across the country. Student Achievement Partners did not name any areas where ANet assessments could be improved in a recent audit, and ANet's assessments received a Tier 1 rating - one of only two assessments to receive this rating in ELA and the only one to receive this rating in math by the Louisiana Department of Education.
- An online platform that provides educators with easy-to-understand data and instructional resources in math and ELA. These resources enable them to plan rigorous, standards-aligned lessons and adjust instruction based on student understanding.
- Access to the best practices of our network of partner schools delivered through professional development convenings throughout the school year.
- Common planning opportunities for grade level teams using complex text; a 5 strategy approach to mathematical practices and lesson planning, attention to the major work of the grade, as well as coaching opportunities for Leadership Teams.

This exciting partnership will ensure that each student is reading, speaking and writing with complex text during ELA blocks of instruction. Implementation of school wide Enrichment/Intervention blocks each day will provide interventions for students who are below-grade level in ELA. Through this dedicated time, students will be able to gain mastery of skills and concepts previously not attained in earlier grades. Students who are at- or above-grade level will be able to explore skills and concepts above grade level and/or delve more deeply into grade-level standards.

As a model, the Citizens Academy schools also recognized the need for a singular model-wide approach and progress monitoring tool to identify specific areas of need (the model was using 3 benchmark assessments prior to the SY19-20 school year). We have moved to a singular approach, providing model leadership, principals, and classroom teachers with detailed and personalized student information relevant to reading skill weakness and strength.

STEM Focus

As a response to our downward trend in 5th grade Science, more notably our SY19 -3.39 Value Added score in 5th grade Science, CAS implemented a STEM integration course for our current 4th and 5th graders. As a model we moved a highly effective 5th grade Science teacher from another Citizens campus and offered a STEM integration course as a means for adding meaning to and linking students' learning across the STEM disciplines. This decision was not only in response to our declining scores, but to also to increase access to rigorous curricular that is backed by research.

The scope of the course takes a scaffolding approach, beginning with simple disciplinary approaches, where concepts and skills are learned separately in each discipline. The continuum progresses to multidisciplinary forms involving concepts and skills, with each discipline being learned separately but within a common theme. Finally, transdisciplinary approaches encompass knowledge and skills learned from two or more disciplines applied to real-world problems and projects, thus shaping the total learning experience for our students.

Creating Safe and Supportive Schools

One of our goals for SY19 is to transform the Citizens Academy elementary schools into Safe and Supportive Schools.

Through our partnership with World Peace Teachings (WPT), Citizens Academy Southeast will offer direct services to students, families and staff. WPT provides coaching for families and teachers on a variety of topics, such as knowledge of adolescent brain development, guidance for emotional identification and regulation, and creative strategies for reaching our children where they need us most. Offering sessions to the entire Citizens community will prepare us to support our parents, teachers and children through a crisis and establishing positive conflict resolution techniques.

Over the past year, the Citizens Model has been dedicated to developing a positive climate for both students as well as staff through the use of CHAMPS which is based on the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support approach (PBIS). This approach teaches appropriate behaviors and provides the necessary supports to attain the desired behaviors throughout the building. Our goal as a CHAMPS school is to decrease the number of negative behaviors that interfere with attaining positive environments. In an effort to continue improving our overall school climate, our PBIS Team will continue to work together to improve our PBIS plan.

Throughout the upcoming year, our students will learn our CHAMPS procedures and our virtues through our classroom cultures, watching topic specific videos, participating in teacher led discussions, and attending PBIS centered events. Our CHAMPS expectations are clearly stated, promoted, and will be frequently reviewed in order to assure that students retain the information throughout the entire year. Our PBIS team will concentrate on not only providing rewards for students who are caught being great but also providing support. Our team may use person-centered planning and feedback in order to best meet each student's individual needs. The interventions that will be suggested will be based on the data gathered in addition to the student's strengths. By doing so, each student will work toward improving his/her behaviors which will directly correlate to improving the learning environment.

CAS is also pleased to partner this year with Nancy Lowrie & Associates (NLA), who will be an integral part of the CA model's vision and implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Through this partnership, we are prepared to educate, implement, and reinforce the methods and mindset throughout the CAS school staff, parents, and ultimately community, and to increase school performance and improved interpersonal connections.

To develop and support a trauma-sensitive community, NLA will be working with all members of the CAS team to develop a basic understanding of trauma, the impacts of trauma, and how to "do no harm" or avoid "re-traumatizing". All school staff, including teachers, administrators, volunteers, janitors, security guards, etc. are essential to cultivating a truly trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive community, and for that reason all staff will be trained throughout the year on how to recognize and manage students who have suffered from trauma. CAS has been assigned a NLA site-specialist who will deliver ongoing professional development, and model best practices of a trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive system in their interactions with every part of the school system.

NLA is also available to provide ongoing support to school staff, including attending student-related meetings and collaborating in real time (crisis management) with school personnel to address challenging issues in a trauma-sensitive way. NLA will also be facilitating "parent groups" one to two times per month

to help our parents develop an understanding of trauma and the impact of trauma. In addition to developing a trauma-informed parent community, we want to help parents develop the knowledge and skills they need to better understand their children's behaviors and help them begin to develop and expand their own network of support. CAS's site specialist is a consistent face "in the building" which we feel will likely cause parents to feel more supported and help get more parents in the building comfortably over time as well to engage in a student's education and issues.

This year we will continue to take a positive and proactive role that will be consistently implemented beginning in our classrooms and continuing throughout the entire school, including hallway and cafeteria transitions. As a staff we will also continue to use common practices and language in order to maintain the necessary consistency to ensure success.

Within our building, we will continue to work toward creating an inclusive community that builds character and empowers students to become future leaders of our global society through the achievement of high academic standards and respect for human life. We will continue striving to create a safe, orderly, and stimulating learning environment while fostering high academic and behavioral expectations through diversity, tolerance, and a bully free zone while challenging ourselves to be innovative, creative, self-motivated, courageous, and determined to help others. We will create and provide a support system that will not only support our students' efforts to manage their own behaviors, but one that also promotes academic success and supports our staff.

Middle School Transition

The 2019-2020 school year marks the first year that Citizens Academy Southeast offers middle school (grade 6). Our middle school utilizes an EL (formerly known as Expeditionary Learning) framework. EL Education, formerly known as Expeditionary Learning, is a national network of schools – public district, public charter, independent, and parochial – that aspire to prepare students for their adult life through “an overarching vision of increasing student engagement and elevating and expanding student achievement through driving student educational excellence in three core areas: mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality work. EL schools push students to demonstrate mastery of Common Core skills in each discipline, apply that knowledge and skill to meaningful tasks, and to think critically and communicate clearly. EL Education schools are grounded in a multi-faceted approach to self-advocacy, community building, and social justice locally, nationally, and globally. One of the cornerstones of an EL school is “crew,” an advisory community that meets daily to discuss classroom and school culture as well as current issues at the local, national, and global levels.

Instead of “units,” EL schools have “expeditions” or “case studies” that begin with building background knowledge and assuring mastery of skills on a strand(s) of state standards, but then apply those skills to an engaging project that has an authentic component or real-world application. The audience for the culminating product goes beyond a student's teacher, but often includes a service, or a publication that will be read by experts, or a proposal for a local, national, or global concern. A final product goes through a rigorous revision process. As students progress through a case study, they conduct research in the community, and they work with community experts at the school and at universities, businesses, government offices, and social service agencies.

The EL approach has been so well received by students and families that we are looking into the possibility of bringing EL to the 5th grade students at Citizens Academy Southeast. Earlier this month, a team of CAS educators as well as a CAS parent attended the EL National Conference in Atlanta, GA, and

will be part of a task force this year who will evaluate the how and when of expanding the EL reach within this campus.

And finally, we are also excited to have teamed up with the Center for Arts Inspired Learning this year to provide arts related programming to our 6th grade students four days a week. Students will have the opportunity to engage in dance & theater, digital music, visual arts, and capoeira (capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art, developed by enslaved Africans in Brazil at the beginning of the 16th century, that combines elements of dance, acrobatics, and music). These programs are not elective, but rather are incorporated into the compulsory school day.

Additional Collaboration

The Citizens Academy elementary schools are continuously looking for opportunities to collaborate with our middle school partners within the Breakthrough Schools network, Citizens Leadership Academy. In addition to EL mentioned above, we are also evaluating additional ways to collaboratively develop and consistently implement comprehensive curriculum that aligns with rigorous academic standards. This comprehensive curricular approach increases academic achievement for students by preparing all of our students to challenge themselves, improve their skills and ensuring they are exposed to college / career content.

The Board of Directors of the Citizens and Citizens Leadership Academy schools also joined forces this school year, and formed a combined board that now focuses on the effective governance and operation of a K-8 school model (vs. two separate K-5 and 6-8 boards). This newly formed board was created to support a vision of greater collaboration between our Citizens and Citizens Leadership educational models, in order to offer families a seamless K-8 educational experience.

There are ten members on the combined board, which we refer to as the Citizens Educational Model (CEM) board. Five members came from the Citizens Academy family of schools and five members came from the Citizens Leadership Academy family of schools. Jennifer Howard, former CA board chair, remains chair of the CEM board. Cynthia Tancer, former CLA board chair, is the vice-chair of the CEM board.

The CEM board has also adopted a bi-monthly meeting schedule which allows for more time in between for committee meetings (finance, parent engagement, and academic). There are some exceptions to the schedule during busier times of the year but we are pleased with the level of engagement we have already seen from our committees.

Conclusion

On behalf of Citizens Academy Southeast, we would like to thank the Ohio Department of Education for the opportunity to provide additional information regarding performance during the 18-19 school year. While we acknowledge that we have substantial work to do, we are hopeful and motivated that the current initiatives will result in measurable growth and satisfaction. We are looking forward to the continued evolution of SY19-20 and to ensuring that CAS continues to grow and prosper.