**URBAN ACT ACADEMY**

**FOURTH YEAR REVIEW**

**Prepared For: Office of Education Innovation**

**Office of the Mayor, City of Indianapolis**

**Site Visit Dates: November 18, 2020**

**Executive Director: Nigena Livingston**

**Evaluation Team: Cindy Farren**

Dr. Jacob Tandy

Dr. LaTonya Turner

Jeff Hannah

Allison Segarra Hansen

Stephanie Williams

[](https://www.facebook.com/113316596727751/photos/113348533391224/) [](https://www.urbanact.org/)

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## **Process:**

The school evaluation process involved three phases of data collection and synthesis

1. Pre-site visit communication
2. Document review including mission and vision
3. On-site observations and interviews

Documents reviewed prior to the visit included original charter proposal, URBAN ACT’s family and staff handbooks, curriculum and instructional guides, Special Education and ELL policy and procedures, performance evaluation plans (administration and teachers), personnel plan, professional development methods/plan, and school safety and emergency preparedness plan; and parent and staff survey results. URBAN ACT Academy parents and staff completed sets of survey questions, geared to the particular audience and prepared by the lead evaluator. In each case, the questions were based on Indicator four indicators of: curriculum, school culture, professional development and family engagement. These guiding documents informed the questions asked during the focus groups and multiple interviews of parents, faculty and staff, students and the administration team. The on-site visit consisted of the following components:

* Review of services and supports for Special Education students and English Language

Learners which included interviews with both teams and document analysis (e.g., student

IEPs, and ILPs);

* Classroom observations of teachers and observation of shared spaces;
* multiple focus groups with teachers: representing all grade levels and special areas;

Students: representing students in grades 1-8th grade; and a parent focus group

* Interviews with the CEO, Head of School, Assistant Heads of School, Director of Operations, Director of Social and Emotional Learning, Director of Academics and Instruction, Director of Operations and Finance, the Director of Special Education and the Special Education team and, the Director of English Language Learning.

# Part II: URBAN ACT Academy Background Information

URBAN ACT stands for “Us reaching, benefiting, aiding and nurturing a community together”. URBAN ACT Academy aims to work with and within our community to disrupt the cycle of poverty that primarily impacts low-income and minority students.

The **vision** of URBAN ACT Academy is to develop critical thinkers, problem solvers and caring leaders who will use their knowledge, voice and talents to make positive contributions to their communities.

URBAN ACT Academy’s **mission** will develop and empower students as leaders, globally competitive scholars and informed citizens.

URBAN ACT Academy expects every member of its school community to exemplify the following core values (I Lead) in everything they do:

I – Intentionality: Purposeful and thoughtful actions are our drivers.

L – Loyalty: We support each other and remain faithful to our obligations.

E – Equity: We advocate for all voices to ensure that everyone has what they need for success.

A – Achievement: We are striving for excellence.

D – Determination: We will do whatever it takes.

**Academic Program[[1]](#footnote-1)**

URBAN ACT’s educational model is constructed around creating leaders by building and supporting emergence of student voice and ownership. There are 3 essential, academic design elements that comprise URBAN ACT Academy’s educational experience, which will contribute to the vision of creating empowered leaders. They are:

1. Placed-Based Curriculum Design/Personalized/Targeted Instruction;

2. Restorative School Community;

3. Instructional Support & Teacher Development.

**Place-Based Learning**: In place-based learning, students study mathematics, language arts, social studies and other subjects across the curriculum by innovative learning and immersion in the culture, heritage, experiences and opportunities in the world around URBAN ACT’s students. . **Personalized Learning:** Differentiated and personalized instruction tailored to meet the needs of individual students is the second core component of URBAN ACT Academy’s instructional design. URBAN ACT Academy utilizes personalized learning plans, small-group instruction and adaptive learning software. **Targeted Instruction:** The alignment of targeted student needs determined by classroom data collection followed by the analysis of that quantitative information to target and align instruction, to students’ knowledge and understanding of content. Teachers use assessment data from universal screeners to daily exit tickets to inform instruction.

**Place-Based Learning**: In place-based learning, students learn traditional subjects such as math, science, social studies, and language arts by studying the world around them.

**Personalized Learning:** Differentiated and personalized instruction is the second core component of URBAN ACT Academy’s instructional design. Methodology used to inform teaching includes exit tickets, quizzes and additional data gathering techniques to target missing and lagging skills as well as evaluate student mastery of content in reading, writing and math.

**Restorative Practice:** URBAN ACT has placed a high and focused priority of Restorative Justice Practices within classrooms, hallways and shared spaces to encourage the practice of relationship building, respect, responsibility, repair and reconciliation/reintegration. A dedicated team of adults works with all students in this area and provides students in need with a community of care and guidance. From morning meetings and framework for supportive and positive learning environments, to end of the day community circles, educators and the SEL team provide access to a process and an environment that enables students to thrive as they learn and practice skills that provide peace, confidence, conflict resolution and a pathway from perseverance to positive problem solving.

**Instructional Support & Teacher Development:** Supporting students in a personalized and focused manner and with targeted instruction components is provided by UURBAN ACT’s administrative team in a thoughtful and purposeful manner. Administrators work with educators and support staff in response to observed or requested needs through professional development, while providing instructional materials and programming to promote student success. In this fourth year, educators were encouraged to select their own staff development focus and the results were both interesting, enlightening and in line with the needs of the school, the students and the families UAA serve. An example would be landmarks of the city tour, which strengthens the connection of Place Based learning, or the Lexia program review which is an online intervention reading program that works closely with the principals of Orton Gillingham. Teachers receive ongoing support through weekly grade level and content team meetings, data team meetings, research-based texts, and professional development workshops. Each day, Administration spends time in classrooms, providing immediate feedback and coaching to teachers grounded in observable student behaviors. These same teams of administrators and educators collaboratively utilize data to drive decision making and provide a clear path to instruction. The restorative practice team comprised of trained and committed individuals, provides classroom support when needed to help maintain classroom focus and continuity. Most classrooms had team teachers, or another adult present during instructional periods of time.

## Student Demographics3

Due to the widespread impact of COVID-19, the US Department of Education granted Indiana a waiver from annual assessment and accountability requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. Information available on this site reflects assessment and accountability determinations from the 2018-2019 school year. The achievement results as reported from the Indiana Department of Education is cited from the 2018-2019 school year.

URBAN ACT Academy close to the heart of downtown Indianapolis strives to educate, support and mentor 306 students:

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| **Grade level** | **# of Students** | **Grade level** | **# of Students** | **Grade level** | **# of Students** |
| **K** | 33 | **3rd** | 36 | **6th** | 36 |
| **1st** | 38 | **4th** | 36 | **7th** | 26 |
| **2nd** | 43 | **5th** | 32 | **8th** | 26 |

**The racial and ethnic breakdown of the student population**

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| Black | **70.7%** |
| **Multi-racial** | **5.9%** |
| **White** | **13.1%** |
| **Hispanic/Latino** | **9.7%** |
| **Students with disabilities** | **19.3%** |
| **Economically disadvantaged** | **88.2%** |
| **English Learner** | **5.0** |

The charts below describe URBAN ACT Academy results on the state’s school assessments. Because URBAN ACT Academy has been open only four years, including time during the ongoing widespread impact of Covid, there is limited data to report. **The following are scores from the 2018-19 school year:**

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| **Reading Proficiency**  Grade 3  50.0%  State Average 87.3% | **English Language Arts Proficiency** Grades 3-8  6.7%  State Average 47.9% | **Science Proficiency**  Grades 4 & 6 5.3%  State Average 47.4% | **Social Studies Proficiency**  Grade 5 12.9%  State Average 46.0% | **Mathematics Proficiency**  Grades 3-8  5.5%  State Average 47.8% |

<https://inview.doe.in.gov/schools/1090959094/proficiency> Retrieved 12/10/2021

## ILEARN Performance Scores

|  | Below Proficiency | Approaching Proficiency | At Proficiency | Above Proficiency |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English/Language Arts Grades 3-8 | 73.2% | 20.1% | 6.0% | 0.7% |
| Mathematics Grades 3-8 | 75.3% | 19.2% | 5.5% | 0.0% |
| Science Grades 4 & 6 | 82.5% | 12.3% | 5.3% | 0.0% |
| Social Studies Grade 5 | 64.5% | 22.6% | 12.9% | 0.0% |

<https://inview.doe.in.gov/schools/1090959094/proficiency>

Retrieved 12/10/2021

Mandated during the 2017 legislative session, ILEARN was created to serve as a replacement for

ISTEP+. This new online computer adaptive assessment is designed to measure a student’s proficiency of the Indiana Academic Standards in Grades 3rd–8th (e.g. English/Language Arts 3rd-8th, Mathematics 3rd-8th, Science 4th and 6th, Social Studies 5th). It is important to note that the 2018-19 school year was the first administration for this new assessment. Public and private schools of all sizes, in all parts of the state and on all achievement levels saw overall test scores decrease. Statewide, only 37 percent of students passed both the English Language Arts and math portions of ILEARN, compared to 51 percent who passed the prior ISTEP+ test.

Other Universal screeners, such as NWEA and formative and summative assessments were utilized during years 3 and 4 at UAA, to provide additional insight to the achievement and progress of students.

# Part III: Core Question 4 Indicator Ratings

Core Question 4 of OEI’s performance framework consists of ten indicators and four possible ratings. The chart below summarizes the evaluation team’s assessment of URBAN ACT Academy in a manner that is aligned to these indicators and ratings.

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| **Indicator Ratings Summary** | | |
| Does Not Meet Standard | Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored at 65% or less of the total overall points possible. | |
| Approaching Standard | Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored between 79% and 66% for the total overall points possible. | |
| Meets Standard | Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored between 80% and 89% of the total points possible. | |
| Exceeds Standard | Ratings across all sub-indicators were scored at or above 90% of the total overall points possible. | |
| **Sub-Indicator Point Values** | | |
| Planning | | 1 point |
| Emerging | | 2 points |
| Implementing | | 3 points |
| Sustaining | | 4 points |

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| **Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?** | **Finding** |
| 4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade? | **Exceeds Standards** |
| 4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school’s mission? | **Meets Standards** |
| 4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction? | **Meets Standards** |
| 4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively? | **Approaching Standard** |
| 4.6. Is the school’s mission clearly understood by all stakeholders? | **Meets standard** |
| 4.7. Is the school climate responsive to the needs of students, staff, and families? | **Meets standard** |
| 4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful? | **Meets standard** |
| * 1. Do the school’s special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice? | **Exceeds standard** |
| 4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency | **Approaching Standard** |

## Part IV: Findings

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| **Indicator 4.1: Does URBAN ACT Academy have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?** | **Exceeds standard** |

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| **Background** | |
| URBAN ACT Academy utilizes research based Reading Mastery, Benchmark literacy as well as a pacing guide for literacy instruction. | |
|  | • URBAN ACT Academy’s core curriculum utilizes the research based Reading Mastery for grades K-5 and guided reading for grades 1-3 with the goal to eventually utilize Reading Mastery K-5. Eureka Math, a math scope and sequence has been designed and illustrates competencies and materials aligned to grade level standards.   * Reading curriculum also includes Guided Reading, Benchmark Literacy and a pacing guide for ELA. * All curriculum has been vetted to ensure alignment to Indiana State Standards and cross walked with the Indiana Department of Education standards comparison documents. |
|  | * XRoads/Eureka math aligns with URBAN ACT Academy’s instructional model— taking students through the procedural and conceptual understandings in learning and practicing, through the learning cycle to application. The structure of the lessons in the Engage NY curriculum also seamlessly work with the URBAN ACT Academy’s instructional block due to the ease of alignment with the personalized learning, small group teaching model, as well as the alignment of the research based instructional strategies utilized throughout the curriculum (i.e. cognitively guided instruction, fluency practice, close reading, application problems). * Supporting materials at grade level are available and can be utilized based on student progress and provided in small group instruction |
|  | * Multiple faculty engage students to provide reinforcement and supplemental practice to insure competency and learning. Classrooms engage additional adult academic assistance to provide small group instruction, pull out and small group instruction and the ability to reteach and review. Exit slips provide support and academic feedback and evidence for the next day lessons in terms of remediation and academic planning. |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) The curriculum used across all academic areas is rigorous, evidence based and aligned with state standards.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * Data and evidence of curriculum alignment provided through classroom observations, review of curriculum materials, scope and sequence documents, teacher focus group interviews and interviews with the school leadership team confirm the curriculum being enacted at URBAN ACT Academy is intentionally standards-based and aligns with collaborative and thoughtful construct to the Indiana State Standards. * The staff survey confirms standard alignment with the curriculum they utilize daily, with 100% of the faculty confirming the curriculum carefully aligns to state standards. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Systematic reviews of curricula are conducted by administrators and school staff to identify gaps based on student performance across and within subgroups.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * Teachers noted during focus group interviews that they collaborate weekly to make lesson plans and design exit tickets to determine immediate student performance of concepts being taught. * Leadership noted that teachers submit exit tickets for review and these provides next step strategies and lesson planning * Wetstone, a customizable classroom observation platform that helps administrators to develop teachers through feedback is utilized and mentioned by teacher focus groups as an important tool for their growth and progress in curriculum design in terms of gaps in instruction and student performance. * Teachers submit weekly lesson plans to administration for review. * Every week there is a grade level meeting/PLC meeting and data, needs and instruction focus is discussed during the meeting. * Tracker created by leadership to track assessment data for each teacher is utilized to inform teaching * Formative and summative assessment plays a major role in the ongoing confirmation that the current curriculum is meeting the current needs of students by identifying missing and lagging skills and providing immediate feedback for remediation. * 85% teachers and staff agreed that a systematic review of the curriculum occurs to identify gaps in student performance. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) The school regularly reviews instructional curriculum maps to ensure presentation of content is aligned with learning objectives.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * The admin team reports a high priority on reviewing scopes, sequences and curricular mapping on a regular basis to inform instruction. * The additional admin team personnel help to review curriculum maps and heighten the opportunity for remediation and research based intervention to review with teachers at least weekly, revise and support the scope and sequences of curriculum in a focused and intentional manner. * The staff survey confirmed the observed data, as 90% of faculty and staff members agreed that the school regularly reviews its curriculum maps to ensure presentation of content in time for testing. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) The school has a well-designed horizontal and vertical alignment within and across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on core learning objectives.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * Standards-based curriculum maps are provided paired with weekly grade level planning for literacy and mathematics. * Grade level teams and multi-level teams gather to discuss and confirm horizontal and vertical alignment * The classroom observation data and reviewing of mapping documents conducted by Marian’s team could identify learning objectives built on a sequential order of learning * Classroom observations confirmed that teacher lessons are focused on core learning objectives, based on prior knowledge and appear to be horizontally aligned. * 100% of educators and staff surveyed agreed that a sequence of topics and academic content in their classrooms are prioritized and focused on learning objectives. * URBAN ACT Academy uses a plethora of curriculum documents procedures and practices pertaining to those documents to effectively deliver instruction. | |

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| **Element** | | **Evaluation** |
| *e) Instructional staff have access to provided materials to deliver the curriculum effectively.* | | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | | |
| * A plethora of Classroom Materials were evident to classroom observers on the day of the visit. * The materials observed being utilized by teachers were text books, multi-media support, hands on and concrete materials (especially for K-3 classrooms where hands on, concrete, explicit materials are recommended) , but also present and noted in multiple classrooms at multiple grade levels. * In addition, the teachers’ survey validated that Faculty confirmed they have the materials necessary to deliver curriculum effectively. In the survey, 83% of the teachers agreed that programs and materials are available to them to deliver the curriculum effectively (it should be noted that the other 17% of teachers gave varied responses indicating some focus on materials and delivery of content should be reviewed and prioritized) * Student interview groups were mostly positive in terms of materials they used on a daily basis in their classrooms. * Curricular resources are being used by the teacher and students in a manner aligned to the lesson’s standard. . * In almost every classroom, there was a variety of curriculum materials, both concrete and pictorial, available to provide additional understanding and support for the students. | | |
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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *f) Instructional staff understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| URBAN ACT Academy uses a plethora of curriculum documents procedures and practices pertaining to those documents to effectively deliver instruction.   * In teacher interview sessions, teachers confirmed they have access to and utilize curriculum documents and related program materials to inform delivery of curriculum. * During classroom observations, members of the evaluation team looked for and observed the following evidence that teachers understand and uniformly use curriculum documents and materials to effectively deliver instruction:   1. The lesson’s standard is clearly and completely displayed in the classroom or verbalized to the students;   2. The lessons observed by the evaluation team confirm alignment to the cited standard;   3. The teacher is following a lesson plan to deliver instruction;   4. Curricular resources are being used by the teacher and students in a manner aligned to the lesson’s standard. * 96% of the faculty felt they had the materials they needed to deliver curriculum effectively. | |

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| **Indicator 4.2: Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with URBAN ACT Academy’s mission?** | **Meets Standards** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) The curriculum is implemented in all classrooms with fidelity* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * In the evaluator classroom observations, there was evidence that in the majority of classrooms, the curriculum was being implemented appropriately in terms of fidelity, design, implementation, state standards, appropriateness to student learning and delivery of instruction. * The overwhelming majority of the observation rubrics scored by the evaluators from K-8 observations determined the curriculum implemented in the classrooms were implemented according to design and with fidelity. * The Faculty surveyed also suggested that this is the case, with 96% responding in agreement the curriculum is being implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design. * Administrator walk throughs provide feedback to faculty on a regular basis that informs instruction * Some classrooms observed did struggle with pacing. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) A clearly documented lesson internalization process is used to explicitly target core learning objectives across all academic areas* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * In nearly every classroom visited, evaluation team members observed instruction that was thoughtful, focused on a stated or observed learning objective that teachers were in command of . presenting curricula through learning objectives * A clear pattern of delivery permeated throughout the classrooms suggesting a process of internalization * In most cases the learning objectives were clear to the classroom observers providing a documented lesson plan that spoke to patterns and process of the curriculum. * Teacher verbalization of learning objectives utilized during the lesson indicated a process of thoughtful Internalization to target learning objectives. * The materials thoughtfully selected presented support to the delivery of the core learning objectives. * There is a clear expectation of regular lesson internalization for all teachers where they engage in this process, collaborate with an instructional coach and receive feedback. * Classroom observations shared a consensus that confirms teachers, delivered instruction that was focused on the stated learning objective. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) A clearly documented lesson internalization process is used to explicitly identify a wide range of instructional strategies that target core learning objectives across all academic areas.* | **Implementing** |
| **Findings**   * In some of the classrooms observed, the evaluation team found appropriate rigor/challenge, flow and pacing that appropriately met to the needs of the students, the lesson and age group in three quarters of the classrooms visited. * Multiple structured strategies were observed in the classroom * 96% of faculty confirm instructional activities they utilize in their classrooms use differentiated strategies to engage their students. * Teacher interviews supported the use of Place Based Learning coupled with strategies that would teach the objective at hand, and also offer a high interest kevel for their students. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) Instruction is differentiated based on ongoing formative assessment of student learning needs, identified student interests, and preferred learning styles.* | **sustained** |
| **Findings** | |
| * Differentiated activities were noted in every classroom witnessed by the Marian team as they observed instruction from faculty. A variety of instructional strategies were being implemented by teachers including scaffolding, formative feedback, place based learning, questioning, think, pair, share, hands on activities being the primary ones observed in the classrooms. * Thoughtful preparation in terms of instructional activities geared to student interests and learning styles were observed in several classrooms. Observers did note that some classrooms had students who appeared “lost” in the instruction, and were not engaged * Small group instruction tailored to the needs of the group were observed in several grade levels. * 96% faculty respondents agree that instructional activities use differentiated strategies. * Student interview groups were able to identify multiple ways their teachers were able to engage them and teach them. Some strategies mentioned by students could be identified by the Marian team as research based instructional strategies. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *e) Instructional strategies used are designed to promote authentic learning to impact levels of student engagement.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * The student interview groups confirmed that they appreciated their teachers and the material they learned. “fun,” “interesting,” “hard but I like it,” statements were collected from the student interviews * Most students said they liked to learn and described characteristics of Place Based Learning * Multiple strategies appeared to be geared to all of the students and their varied levels of understanding using different modalities to show competency. * Observation in classrooms confirmed student engagement was high, especially where teachers included appropriate pacing. | |

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| **Indicator 4.4: Does URBAN ACT Academy effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?** | **Approaching standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) Assessments utilized are well aligned to learning standards* | Emerging |
| **Findings**   * Although the data provided by assessments is reviewed systematically, there is a disconnect for some faculty to utilize the assessments effectively to inform and improve instruction. * 67% of the faculty surveyed felt that assessments are accurate and useful measures to establish and align with learning standards and objectives. * 33% of the teachers surveyed disagreed with the notion that the assessments both formal and informal were useful measures utilized to align to teaching standards. * Some teachers in interview groups confessed selection of strategies * Teacher comments from the survey support the assessments given align with standards, but they could use more help in translating that data to classroom strategies and focus. 74% of faculty surveyed believe that the school distributes assessments results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions and support, but teachers in the interview and through comments indicate a need for improvement in timing for aligning assessment results to learning standards to inform teaching and curriculum design. * One teacher may have captured the sentiments heard in teacher group interviews as a focus point for improvement, noting that large scale assessment data and curriculum aligning is useful, but more attention to scaffolding individual units and unit assessments would be helpful and meaningful to teachers. | |
| * URBAN ACT added personnel to their administrative team to among other responsibilities, streamline, support and oversee curriculum aligned to state standards and data driven student progress. * URBAN ACT Academy has utilizes both formative and summative assessments to inform and measure student progress. * Universal assessments provided by state exams measure a students’ progress in comparison to their peers. The scores on Universal assessments like ILearn would indicate a need for a process to support and provide immediate targeted intervention when necessary. * Urban Act gives the NWEA as universal measure of students’ skills levels * Evaluation and assessment are conducted on an annual, quarterly, weekly, and daily basis in all curriculum areas. * High stakes assessment scores may indicate a need to review and revise MTSS program. * These are all good steps forward to provide alignment to state standards, but further staff development and attention to the MTSS document to streamline alignment that is meaningful and provides student success should be revisited. | |
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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Assessments utilized are varied in order to support a wide range of*  *student learning styles and abilities* | sustaining |
| **Findings** | |
| * Administrators report teachers receive data and information from a cadre of formative and summative diagnostic data. These assessments are used to * Administrators report that teachers and support staff receive immediate results from Waterford assessments. * Teachers have instantaneous information that they collect on formative assessments such as exit tickets, etc. * In teacher interviews, teachers could identify a varied list of assessments, and data practice that provide immediate feedback, but some felt how to use the information needed a process that was more universal. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) Assessments utilized provide student level data focused on growth and proficiency* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● Math and Reading curricula have module/unit assessments that provide functional feedback on a timely basis.   * Teachers review data and conclude how best to modify or provide intervention through their instruction to address student needs * the gaps between current levels of performance and grade level expected performance | |  |
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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) Assessments are administered with sufficient frequency and results are provided in a timely manner* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● Math and Reading curricula have module/unit assessments that provide functional feedback on a timely basis.   * Administrators feel teachers receive almost immediate information from a varied about the diagnostic (e.g., IXL, NWEA/MAP) benchmark/interim assessments, summative assessments and daily exit tickets. * Administrators feel that teachers and support staff receive immediate results from Waterford assessments. * Teachers have instantaneous information that they collect on formative assessments such as exit tickets, etc. * 99% of the faculty and staff surveyed believe that the school distributes assessments results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions and support. * In teacher interviews, teachers could identify a varied list of assessments, and data practice that provide immediate feedback. * Teachers review data and conclude how best to modify or provide intervention through their instruction to address student needs | |  |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *e) A system is in place to ensure that assessment data is analyzed across and within subgroups and used to guide decision-making related to instruction and curriculum.* | emerging |
| **Findings** | |
| * Eighty-eight percent of teachers surveyed agreed that assessment results are used to guide instruction and decision making, and/or adjust the curriculum. * Some teachers interviewed stated that sometimes they struggle with the decision making piece and need coaching help to determine next steps for instruction. * Grade level faculty and staff talk with one another weekly about their assessment data, and that those discussions and insights help to drive planning and/or adjust instruction/curriculum. * Once the standardized assessments are completed, faculty and staff utilize their weekly meetings, to also talk about appropriate adjustments * URBAN ACT Academy administrators confirm in their interview with the Marian team, that the utilization of assessment results to guide instruction on a regular basis occurs with high stakes, and universal assessments. * Ninety percent of the faculty and staff agree URBAN ACT utilize assessment results to guide or make adjustments to the curriculum. Some faculty feel they need more instruction and assistance in making decisions independently. | |

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| **Indicator 4.5: Has URBAN ACT Academy developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?** | **Approaching standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *A standard recruitment/hiring policy and procedure is in place and is designed to ensure human resources are leveraged to reflect the needs of the school population.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * From year two to year four of URBAN ACTS’ presence, there has been a notable addition of new administrative and support staff hires that are intended to improve academic outcomes, social and emotional support and resiliency. * Administrative new hires will consult with educators in best practices and data driven analysis, also providing staff development, for all teachers, but especially, to support the success of new hires. * URBAN ACT Academy has created a defined system/process for hiring.   It utilizes a process that includes competency-based interviews aligned to their model (e.g., plan, teach, and review). First, there is a resume screening and candidates complete an online application. The candidates participate in an initial phone interview.  The final interview process includes a campus visit where the candidate conducts a demo lesson, participates in a group interview, and a meeting with the school leader.   * 90 percent faculty and staff surveyed agreed that hiring practices are organized and used to support the success of new staff. * Once the year begins, teacher teams collaborate with administrators who become primarily responsible for the mentoring of the assigned group of educators. The responsibility of guidance, support and mentoring while providing direction in lesson planning, pacing, classroom academic growth through scheduled meetings throughout the academic year. * Additionally, among the teachers there is support and mentoring as they meet in their various weekly planning meetings. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Hiring processes are well organized and used to support the success of new staff members.* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * There is a clear process for hiring in terms of what applicants experience in   screeners, interviews, as well as teaching a sample lesson.   * New staff receive additional professional development as part of their   onboarding, in addition to the standard professional development for all staff.   * A part of the additional staff development is to familiarize new hires to the “UAA way,”   which is a process to observe the academic day as well as the flow of a classroom.   * Faculty and new hires reported a high approval rating for Onboarding practices | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) Staff levels adequately allow staff to maximize their instructional time and capacity.* | Sustaining |
| **Findings** | |
| * The deployment of human resources at URBAN ACT Academy has improved their commitment to maximize instructional time and capacity. * Instructional assistants have been hired to provide support and two adults in most classrooms. * Some of the Instructional assistants hired have come with special knowledge in reading or math. * The school is lacking one lower school teacher in 1st grade, which has resulted in one large 1st grade classroom. The classroom has an Instructional assistant, and the principal was present to check in for one of the periods observed. * Small groups of students working in the hall ways and in the corners of classrooms were effective use of the second classroom adult. * The addition of the SEL team provides support to classroom instructors. * The additional staff in collaboration with faculty should be trained in co-teaching methodology * When asked whether the school employs sufficient number of teachers and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity, the breakdown was as follows: * Eighty one percent of faculty agreed with the statement, nineteen percent of teachers and staff disagreed with the statement and 2 teachers remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d)* *Faculty and staff are appropriately certified/sufficiently trained in areas to which they are assigned and possess the instructional proficiencies needed for the school population served.* | Emerging |
| **Findings** | |
| * From the 20-21 Staff certification document reviewed the following data was collected  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Grade level | teacher | License  In LVIS | Grade | teacher | License present in ELVIS | | Instructional Coach | AM | yes | 4th grade | MG | NO | | Instructional Math Coach | BM | yes | 5th | JT | No | | Kdg Teacher | CC | yes | 5th | PH | No | | Kidg Teacher | DD | no | 6th grade | No teachers listed | X | | 1st Grade Teacher | CR | no | 7th grade | MH | NO | | 2nd grade | BJ | no | 7th grade math | AP | yes | | 2nd grade | JM | yes | 8th ELA | AJB | yes | | 3rd grade | KN | yes | Middle school science | TA | yes | | 3rd grade | VN | no | Middle school SS | DF | yes | | 4th grade | DGC | no | SPED | 3 teachers | 2 yes 1 no | | Specials-Gym creative writing | JT  RC | Yes  no | Art, music, dance | 3 teachers | 3 no |  * 46% of the faculty hold licenses * One seventh grade teacher and all of the 8th grade faculty hold licenses * Each grade level has 2 teachers in KDG, 2nd, 3rd Each grade level has one licensed teacher * Both instructional coaches in Math and ELA hold teaching licenses * URBAN ACT provides a multitude of support and professional development * This year, faculty could select an area of interest to investigate and provide a staff development for their peers | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *e) Professional learning opportunities are offered regularly in order to support the staff in delivering culturally relevant and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.* | Emerging |
| **Findings**   * Professional learning opportunities at URBAN ACT Academy as observed from the staff development document supplied for review is primarily selected this year by teacher interest and presentation to faculty. * There is also formal professional development that helps acclimate new hires to the “UAA way.” * In the teachers/staff survey, respondents agreed that professional development is geared to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement. * Some staff developments this year were: Lexia, NWEA strategy, quarter wrap ups, reflective exercises, strategies for analysis of student work, observation of a day for new hires, PBL site visits to Indiana Museum and Landmarks are examples of some staff development provided.   There was not a focus on staff development focused on delivery of culturally relevant and differentiated instruction |  |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *f) Professional learning opportunities are determined through analyses of student outcomes data and clearly linked to strategic objectives and school improvement goals.* | emerging |
| **Findings** | |
| * At URBAN ACT Academy the evaluation process used is to grow and develop its teachers. * URBAN ACT Academy uses the Get Better Faster protocol to observe classroom instruction, give feedback, and coach teachers in instructional practices, according to evidence reviewed by site team members. Whetstone provides the data tracking system to ensure continual improvement among teachers. * While UAA has a clear process, as noted earlier, this process is not implemented with fidelity.   Eighty one percent of teachers surveyed agreed that the school **explicitly** and **regularly** implements its teacher evaluation plan with a clear process and criteria.   * Although data driven analysis is a focus area for student outcomes, the reviewer could not locate in documents, strategic objectives or school improvement goals tied to professional learning opportunities. | |

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| **Indicator 4.6: Is URBAN ACT Academy’s mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?** | **Meets standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) Procedures are in place for assessing all stakeholder’s perceptions, knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school’s mission.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● 100% faculty and staff members and 100% of surveyed family members believe that the school has a mission that is committed to their children. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Procedures are in place for establishing meaningful partnerships with all families and community stakeholders to support the school’s mission* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * The school mission is well understood by all stakeholders at all levels, with the teaching staff speaking eloquently regarding their personal missions at URBAN ACT Academy. * The students and the parents of URBAN ACT Academy also feel the mission of the school is to support the children who attend. * Family members and other stakeholders appreciate the commitment that the leadership and staff have for their children * Eighty-nine percent of the teaching staff surveyed believe that stakeholders possess widespread knowledge and commitment to the school’s mission. * Parents appreciate the emphasis on academics AND the caring, loving atmosphere in which students learn. | |

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| **Indicator 4.7: Is URBAN ACT Academy’s climate responsive to the needs of students, staff, and families?** | **Meets standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) A multi-tiered framework designed to support the academic,*  *behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students is implemented*  *with fidelity.* | Emerging |
| **Findings** | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Culturally responsive and evidence based interventions are explicitly identified and implemented throughout the school to support the needs of students.* | **Yes** / No |
| **Findings** | |
| * An examination of URBAN ACT Academy’s Family Handbook clearly delineates high expectations for student behavior. In addition to the Discipline Code, there are also school-wide expectations that are outlined in the handbook * In many classrooms, it was evident that a positive approach was generally used to change behavior (e.g., “I like the way…. is sitting on his square.”). * The SEL providers who help students who sometimes struggle with appropriate behavior in the classroom, understand where this behavior comes from and with compassion and respect work with the students who need them. * Faculty members voiced their appreciation for the SEL team and see their work as an important component to student success. * It should be noted, that although the faculty overall was appreciative of the removal of students who were disruptive, they also voiced a need to keep students in classrooms concerned about the extra time students missed. * Ninety five percent of teachers believe that the school holds high expectations for student behavior. This improved student rating from the last school review is a testament to student centered programming that supports the student’s needs. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) Explicit procedures for facilitating the development of strong, positive*  *Relationships between adults and students are clearly communicated to and implemented by all staff.* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● Students and teachers shared a mutual respect and appeared to truly care about each other.   * Teacher handbook, parent/family handbook, and mission clearly delineate expectations and goals which are clearly communicated in school documents for relationships between adults and students. * Students were respectful to their teachers inside of classrooms, and in common space outside of the classroom. * Students were considerate to their teachers during instruction periods with no distractions, noted. * Classroom procedures and positive reinforcement appears to help provide a platform for strong positive relationships. * Again, the SEL team and in turn the girls’ program coordinator strive to facilitate the development of strong, positive relationships between students and teachers, fostering behaviors that will be advantageous outside of the school. * The school mission clearly dictates the facilitation of building strong positive relationships between adults and students. * In interviews with faculty, the operations team, the administration, clearly one of the main contributing factors driving the internal intent of the adults is to build relationships that build strong, positive future adults. * Parents had effusive praise for the quality of interactions between the staff and students. One hundred percent of faculty and staff surveyed felt the relationships between students and adults were strong and positive in nature. * Parents mentioned that the care and concern staff have for the students was welcomed and appreciated. Parents also noted that the positive attitude, and respect for the students provided students with self-respect and confidence. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) Procedures are in place for assessing staff, student, and family perspectives to ensure a sense of connectedness and engagement within the school* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● One of the unique points that resonated over and over again with faculty and parents was the commitment to the students in the building.   * The parent group confirmed the school works hard to connect with the families and the families reciprocate through support and collaboration. * The handbook for families outlines procedures for engagement in the school. * The Operations team who together has a long history at the building, spoke eloquently about their commitment to the students and families in the school. * In turn, the parents also felt “heard” and believed that the administration and faculty cared deeply for their children. * Conversations with teachers and administrators provided evidence that in most cases, the interactions between teachers and administration are professional and constructive * There was a belief system that permeates amongst the adults in the building of a partnership that supports URBAN ACTS’ students and carries their best interests in a collaboration of mutual trust and respect. | |

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| **Indicator 4.8: Is ongoing communication with students and**  **families clear and helpful?** | **Meets standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) Does the school have active and ongoing communication with parents?* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● 96 percent of teachers surveyed agreed that UAA has active and ongoing communication with parents.   * The operations team explained the needs of families and working diligently to hear their concerns and understand their needs and provide assistance when they could. * 100% of the parents or family members surveyed believed that the ongoing communications with students and families was clear and helpful * 100% of the parents or family member surveyed believe communications were timely and always met their expectations. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Procedures for responding to concerns of families are clearly defined and implemented by all school staff and validated by families.* | **sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * The Parent handbook provides structure and procedures for responding and voicing concerns to school personnel. * Parents also expressed comfort in communicating concerns to the teachers, other staff members and to the school leadership team, and also reported they knew how to access information. * Communication with parents is provided in multiple ways including the website, twitter, Facebook, and robo calls. * Ninety Percent of the parent/ family member surveyed believed that the school’s methods for communicating with them, met their needs. * The parents were VERY appreciative of the ongoing communication that happens between the teachers and their families. During the parent/family interview, a parent noted, “They feel heard.” | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) Families are regularly informed in their native or home language of their students’ academic and behavioral strengths and areas of need.* | emerging |
| **Findings** | |
| * URBAN ACT is experiencing an influx of ESL students and families according to several teachers in the interview sessions. Teachers expressed concern that the language barrier was becoming a detriment to educating and communicating with new students and their families. * Not all information is clearly communicated to parents in their native language. * URBAN ACT is cognizant of the need to be able to communicate at all times with parents and family members whose first language is not English. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) The school’s communication methods are designed to promote family school partnerships in ways that meet the needs of a diverse set of families.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| ● URBAN ACT Academy communicates with families through a variety of media as noted above.   * The front desk area is a beacon of collaboration where parents re met with friendly and giving adults who are ready to help. * The handbook is comprehensive in terms of procedures and policy * 100% of the parents surveyed believe that the communication methods utilized by the school meets their needs. | |

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| **Indicator 4.9: Do the school’s special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?** | **Exceeds Standard** |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) Services outlined in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)*  *Adequately match the exceptional needs of the student.* | Sustaining |
| **Findings**   * .A review of IEPs confirmed services were in response to the exceptional needs of the student | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) IEPs include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings**   * The goals are skill specific and include a plan for ongoing assessment of student progress. This was found in all reviewed IEPs. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) IEP goals are rigorous and based on state and national learning standards.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * IEP goals were rigorous and based on state standards | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) IEP goals are reviewed and revised annually as determined by present level of performance.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| * A sampling of IEPs confirmed annual review and revision/updates determined by the present level of performance. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *e) IEPs explicitly identify requirements for specifically designed curriculum and instruction to align with student needs.* | **Sustaining** |
| **Findings** | |
| Students IEPs had evidence of Specifically Designed Curriculum as noted by IDOE strategies stated in IEPs. | |

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| **Indicator 4.10: Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related**  **to access and services to students with limited English**  **Proficiency?** |  |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *a) Staff have a clear understanding of legal obligations, current legislation, research, and effective practices relating to the provision of services for ELL students.* |  |
| **Findings**   * There is a consistent lack of documentation within the cumulative files. . * There does not appear to be a process and procedure from effective practices in place to track progress | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *b) Staff have a knowledge of the process of language acquisition and the skillsets needed to differentiate instructional strategies to meet the needs of ELL students.* |  |
| **Findings**   * Comments from teacher interviews and surveys indicate a lack of knowledge about the process of language acquisition and the skillsets needed to differentiate strategies to meet student needs. * Staff development was lagging in teacher preparation for ELL students in the general classroom | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *c) Procedures are in place to ensure relationships with ELL students, parents, and external providers are well-managed and in compliance with Indiana law and regulations.* |  |
| **Findings** | |
| * Documentation of the “good faith effort” to obtain the original Home Language Survey is needed * While the enrollment process has been revised, its full implementation needs refinement | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *d) ILPs include student specific goal and plan for ongoing assessment of student progress.* | **Emerging** |
| **Findings** | |
| * ILPs include specific goals. * ***100% of ELL cumulative files reviewed contained fully completed ILPs, which is a 100% increase from first review.*** * ***Transition to IILP system completed.*** * The next step is to include classroom teachers and ELL IA in the development and tracking of these goals to assess student progress in terms of goal completion. | |

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| **Element** | **Evaluation** |
| *e) ILPs explicitly identify needs for targeted instruction to align with student needs.*  .  *.* | **emerging** |
| **Findings** | |
| The ELL coordinator and IA are working towards individualized, targeted instruction for all ELs to forward progress on their ILP goals | |

**Part V: Closing**

URBAN ACT Academy has a focused endeavor to support their students, families and mission to provide an education for its students that develops critical thinkers, problem solvers and caring leaders who will use their knowledge, voice and talents to make positive contributions to their communities. They strive to disrupt the norms that plague students in high poverty areas and offer an education that will support and provide opportunity and change for their students.

URBAN ACT has enhanced their ability to reach students by utilizing more staff dedicated to disrupting the norms that make school difficult for their students, first by providing the opportunity to learn focused replacement skills from their SEL team and in targeted academic settings and then fostering relationship from role models who are trained to provide opportunities and skills to change outcomes.

Additional academic instructional assistant support staff provides two adults in most classrooms in the hopes that academia can be enhanced and more targeted hands on deck will translate to improved student outcomes at every grade level.

The data driven analysis of both summative and formative assessments and a data dive into the results of high stakes assessments provides an emphasis on teaching missing and lagging skills and providing guidance to inform teaching. This is an area where more support and faculty development is needed to provide Faculty with the confidence to apply strategies and matching curricula to eradicate missing and laggings student skills by deciding upon the correct curricula and differentiation to meet the needs of each student in their classroom. Streamlining this system and support by providing a clear and concise MTSS document that begins with universal scores that helps teachers see the gaps and missing skills before the student struggles or fails in the classroom is a good place to begin.

In the past two years, with a pandemic disrupting the vision as it was planned, URBAN ACT has thoughtfully made steps to improve the outcomes for their students. Translating those steps with individual faculty to improve individual student outcomes will be confirmed in high stakes assessments and student learning.

URBAN ACT Academy’s **mission** **will** develop and empower students as leaders, globally competitive scholars and informed citizens.

The following are recommendations to assist the school in delivering their mission and further improve academic outcomes:

1. **Reform MTSS** process that does not wait for the student to experience trouble in classroom settings, but identify early as children in need of tier two small group instruction. This can be instituted by treating tri-annual NWEA for all grade levels and the Dyslexia screener required by the state for K-2 grades and for other children experiencing reading difficulties as an early indicator for intervention. Identifying students who do not score well on high stakes universal assessments should receive early intensive small group focused instruction on missing and lagging skills. This should provide immediate and focused intervention to be provided for those students who need the most help. This will quickly target missing and lagging skill remediation after high stakes results are reported.
2. The incursion of an additional adult in each classroom is an opportunity to provide training and support to research based **co-teaching models** that will effectively provide methodology that will close learning gaps, drive real time data to make quicker curriculum decisions and provide structured delivery of content in a manner that is designed to meet the needs of all students. Each classroom should be using one of the research based co-teaching methodology/models at all times of the academic day.
3. Continue to **grow the SEL program** with emphasis of replacement skills and strategies that help the students self moderate their feelings so they don’t need to leave the classroom... Although teachers who appreciate and noted the value of SEL methods, their concerns about students who need SEL support and missing chunks of instruction are valid. This program is valuable and appears to be working, so the goal is to continue to provide support through MTSS model, but track the progress of each student, and the replacement strategies utilized.

**Special Education Recommendations:**

The quality of the 20 reviewed IEPs is overall very high. They were all characterized by a priority on collecting data and using that data to drive the student’s program. Some opportunity for improvement is specific to Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. This data should always be current and specific. There were some instances where the data came from past testing, and may not be an accurate representation of where the student is at the moment. There was inclusion of NWEA scores and grades in all the IEPs where that data was available, and this should be included. The way to improve the usefulness of this data is to communicate what the data means in terms of accessing the grade level curriculum. For example, how does the child’s NWEA score compare with their peers/grade level expectations? This will help to tell the story of the impact of the child’s level and the impact on accessing the general education curriculum. This will also help to encourage families to be more active collaborators in case conferences as it helps them to understand what these data mean. Grades should be included, but it would be more useful to explain why the student has the grade they do. Is it due to missing assignments, poor performance or something else? These conversations likely take place at case conferences, but I only have the benefit of what I can see in these documents.

The special education team as a whole is in a good place to move forward as this has been built over time and there is some stability on the team. Ongoing training and support of the SPED team and the rest of the instructional staff will be helpful to build more collaboration and to support students with disabilities in the general education setting.

English as a Second Language Recommendations:

The following data collection activities were conducted: Confidential student file review, ILP review, enrollment processes review, general education classroom teacher focus group, interviews with ELL coordinator and ELL paraprofessionals/service providers, observation of ELL small group pull-out instruction, and observation of general education classrooms.

Observation notes (evidence to justify ratings):

UAA has demonstrated growth on indicator 4.10 since the last review in 2019. Specific areas of growth include the following:

* ***There is now a documented enrollment process for potential ELLs.***
* ***100% of files reviewed contained parent notification letters.***
* ***20% increase in original Home Language Surveys found in ELL files.***
* ***100% of ELL cumulative files reviewed contained fully completed ILPs, which is a 100% increase. Transition to IILP system completed.***
* ***An instructional aide/paraprofessional has been hired to provide push-in and pull-out support for ELLs which is supplemental to any other supports and interventions.***
* ***An ELL consultant has been hired to serve as coordinator and TOR one day per week.***

While the enrollment process has been revised, its full implementation needs refinement. Evidence of this can be seen in the lack of documentation within the cumulative files. Documentation of the “good faith effort” to obtain the original Home Language Survey is needed. A cumulative file checklist was recommended in 2019 and is just now beginning implementation by acting ELL coordinator.

Overall, to best serve the growing population of English Language Learners at UAA, ALL instructional staff need training in the process of language acquisition and aligned instructional strategies. The EL coordinator has plans to provide this training in the near future.

The administration at UAA has sought a full-time licensed EL TOR to no avail. Current ELL specific instructional staff should be supported in obtaining their licensure and more ELL licensed staff should be added (seek out others on staff interested in obtaining this credential). Finally, a full-time ELL Director to oversee the program (separate from Director of Special Education) is recommended.

The evaluation team from Marian University appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with URBAN ACT Academy, and believe with a few adjustments all students will benefit from the mission, commitment and hard work provided by the faculty and staff. UAA has a place in the city and a unique opportunity to continue to provide education for those most in need.

1. UAA Charter Prospectus (2017, Fall) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)