Idaho Connects Online School

Continuous Improvement Plan

Dedicated to Improving the Student Performance of our Idaho Students

Adopted June 14, 2016

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# History of School

Idaho Connects Online School (ICON) began serving students in grades 6-12 throughout the state of Idaho in the 2009-2010 school year. ICON operated our first two years under the name of Kaplan Academy of Idaho (KAID). During those early years KAID worked in conjunction with a Kaplan, Inc., a school management company based out of Florida. KAID was formed with the goal of supporting the high achieving student who needed options in rural areas to support their education. This would include students who were seeking advanced courses such as AP and Honors courses, as well as, advanced language courses such as Mandarin Chinese that are often difficult to find in local Idaho schools.

However, soon after beginning our school year, it was apparent that we were attracting and serving students that did not match that initial vision. Students enrolling into KAID were not requesting advanced courses. Many were however requesting credit recovery courses in an attempt to earn credits that they had previously lost in other schools due to a non-success. KAID also began to see a large number of students who qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). Students may not have been given opportunities to engage in educational resources due to the communities in which they lived.

As KAID teachers began to work with these students they were not equipped to customize the courses to meet their credit recovery needs. The curriculum, which was provided to KAID from Kaplan, was not able to be modified to meet the individual needs of students and to address their academic needs. In addition, the financial model that was in place with Kaplan did not allow for an increase of teachers to meet the challenging needs of our students. KAID needed to offer a different curriculum and to provide additional teachers to meet the needs of our students.



After the 2009-2010 school year, it was the agreement of the KAID staff and Board of Directors that a change needed to be made in order to provide more teacher support for our students. KAID ended m the Kaplan school contract and begin to form an identity that better matched the students that we were serving. This included the ability to staff and choose our own curriculum that we could adapt to meet the academic needs of our students. After a charter revision and approval from our authorizers, KAID emerged as Idaho Connects Online School for the 2011-2012 school year.

# Mission and Vision

*The mission of ICON is to provide middle and high school students with a personalized education alternative that integrates one-to-one support, a robust curriculum, flexible instruction, and innovative technology in an Idaho Public Charter School.*

While we serve a different population of students than we had anticipated to educate in those early KAID years, our mission and vision has remained constant. Our at-risk students need an educational plan written for them that involves the support of not only teachers but other caring adults that will help them thrive. Our customizable curriculum combined with their ability to take advantage of live and recorded instruction allows them to school in a unique way to meet their needs. We have put the following practices in place to support our mission and vision:

* Core course offered in 4 unique formats to meet the needs of our various learners. These include un-modified courses for our general students, modified courses for our at-risk learner that focus on skill building, courses in a credit recovery mode that allow students to test out of concepts that they already have mastered and course designed for students that live and reside in treatment facilities throughout the state. Instruction includes course overview and grading policies, recorded academic instruction, opportunities to meet in virtual classrooms with their teacher and other students, and the use of study guides to help students structure their learning while in the course to promote mastery of concepts.
* Students are supported by highly qualified teachers who focus on academic need while also having the support of an advisor who works with them on behavioral needs such as time management and organization skills. The advisor also serves as a support system for the students as they work through daily challenges that may affect their academic performance.
* 24/7 access to courses with no penalty for late work.
* Bi-weekly progress reports to both students and parents to keep them informed of student progress.
* Parent Portal access provided to all parents so that they can have 24/7 access to their child’s grades and assignment status.
* Bi-weekly Checkpoint system where all students in the school are examined for progress and grades with intervention tools and strategies applied as needed.

# Analysis of Demographic Data

As ICON has developed and progressed over time it has been clear that we are consistently changing to meet the population of students that we receive. It has been a priority for our school to monitor our demographics carefully so that we in turn can provide the best instructional strategies to promote student achievement and success. ICON’s enrollment has increased over the last few years and staff per full time equivalency (FTE) has tripled. ICON also continues to enroll a high percentage of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch.

 

Many of the students that we serve at ICON come to us as a temporary stop in their educational journey. While a small percentage of students enter ICON with the intent to graduate, most of our students stay with us for a short time to satisfy a temporary need. This could be temporary housing placement, time to serve out a suspension or expulsion from another school, and/or time to have a baby before returning to a traditional model. Because of our high transitory nature, ICON is often challenged within the state accountability system to show an adequate sample size that truly represents how ICON students are performing.



ICON also serves a unique and distinct students that eventually led ICON to rewrite its charter in 2013 to separate our Local Education Agency (LEA) into two separate school. ICON operates a general school that serves a general student population, as well as, operates an alternative school that serves our at risk population. It is important to note that after separating into two schools that the state accountability data remained stoic while new accountability measures were implemented. Once new accountability measures have been adopted and approved, data for the Continuous Improvement Plan can be separated as well.

The at-risk school includes students in treatment facilities where students school with ICON while working on behavioral or addiction needs. ICON facility students on average earn 97% of the credits that they attempt. This is important because many of these students have never had a positive school experience before and in some cases, earn their first credits while attending ICON.



# Organizational Structure

As evidenced by ICON’s 14-15 Performance Certificate with the Idaho Public Charter Commission ICON has strong organizational structure, earning 370 points out of a possible 400 points. ICON’s received the maximum points in the areas of Students and Employees, School Environment, and Additional Obligations. ICON did not earn the full points possible in the area of the Educational Program, Financial Management and Oversight and Governance and Reporting. This loss of points resulted from the school not publishing their annual performance certificate on the school website. This was corrected upon noted deficiency. It is also important to note that there were no instances of non-compliance documented in the areas of the handling of school information, complying with health and safety requirements, complying with facilities and transportation requirements, complying with background checks, protecting employee rights, complying with credentialing requirements, protecting student rights, complying with governance requirements, employing GAAP Practices, protecting the needs of ELL students, protecting the rights of students with disabilities, and meeting the material terms as outlined in the Performance Certificate.

As part of our 2015-2016 Accreditation Review, ICON has a recognized need for the establishment of policies (including a continuous improvement plan and updated teacher evaluation rubric) that support practices and ensure effective administration of the institution. While ICON does have a policy manual, it is in an infancy stage. ICON has made an Improvement Goal for this with more information found in the Clear and Measurable Targets section of the plan.

# Financial Stability

As evidenced by ICON’s 14-15 Performance Certificate with the Idaho Public Charter Commission ICON has strong financial stability and management practices earning 400 points out of a possible 400 points. It is important to note that there was no default of delinquency noted in audit in the area of loan covenants or debt service payments. ADA and student population has continued to grow since 2011. As evidenced in the chart below, the highest best 28 weeks ADA is consistently higher than the first 8 weeks indicating student’s enrollment throughout the course of the year.

 

# Academic Success including but not limited to College and Career Readiness, Standardized State Testing and Graduation Rates

ICON recognizes that we serve a unique population of students. ICON recognizes that our students may not respond well to traditional methods of instruction and assessment and we continue to seek out additional methods and tools that we can use to support our students.

**School Improvement WISE WAYS**

Beginning with the 2014 school year, ICON wrote a grant with the State Department of Education to be part of the Idaho Building Capacity Project (IBC). The IBC project is a cornerstone of Idaho’s Statewide System of Support for schools and districts that are in NCLB Needs Improvement status. The project is designed and delivered in partnership with the State Department of Education. This project provides scaffold support designed to assist LEAs in building their own internal leadership capacity to implement and sustain school and district improvement efforts. Over the course of the last 3 years, ICON has implemented the following WISE indicators (Ways to Improve School Effectiveness) to improve student performance and success:

1. All teams operate with work plans for the year and specific work products to produce.
2. All teams prepare agendas for their meetings.
3. All teams maintain official minutes of their meetings.
4. The principal maintains a file of the agendas, work products, and minutes of all teams.
5. A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who leader the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly.
6. The Leadership Team serves as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff.
7. The Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.
8. Teams are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area instructional teams.
9. The principal participates actively with the school’s teams.
10. The principal monitors curriculum and instruction regularly.
11. The principal spends at least 50% of his/her time working with teachers to improve instruction.
12. The principal challenges and monitors unsound teaching practices and supports the correction of them.
13. Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.
14. Objectives are leveled to target learning to each student’s demonstrated prior mastery based on multiple points of data.
15. Units of instruction include pre/post -tests to assess student mastery of standards-based objectives.
16. Unit pre- and post- test results are reviewed by the Instructional Team.
17. All teaches re-teach based on test results.
18. Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives.
19. Materials for standards-aligned learning activities are well-organized, labeled, and stored for use by teachers.
20. The school maintains a central database that includes each student’s test scores, placement information, demographic information, attendance, behavior indicators, and other variables for teachers.
21. The Leadership Team monitors school-level student learning data.
22. Instructional Teams use student learning data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.
23. Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan instruction.
24. Instructional Teams use student learning data to identify students in need of instructional support or enhancement.
25. The school maintains an official document that clearly defines the curriculum and instruction for each level of prevention and support in core content areas and social behavior.
26. All teachers are guided by an evidence-based curriculum.
27. The school leadership team evaluates the school schedule yearly and redesigns the schedule to include time for extended learning opportunities for students.
28. All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
29. The Leadership Team implements, monitors, and analyzes results from an early warning system at the school level using indicators to identify students at risk for dropping out of school.
30. The school confirms that a student has mastered prerequisite content knowledge before allowing the student take higher-level courses.
31. All students’ demonstrating prerequisite content mastery are given access to higher level courses.
32. The curriculum and schedule provide pathways for all students to acquire missing content knowledge.
33. The school provides all student extended learning opportunities to keep them on track for graduation.
34. The school provides all students with opportunities for content and credit recovery that are integrated into the regular school day to keep them on track for graduation.
35. The school provides all students with opportunities to enroll in and master rigorous coursework for college and career readiness.
36. The school provides all students with access to relevant data to make decision about their course of study as they progress toward their post high school goals.
37. Teachers make individual professional development plans based on classroom observations.
38. The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers.
39. Parents receive regular communication (absent jargon) about learning standards, their children’s progress, and the parents’ role in their children’s school success.
40. The school tests each student at least 3 times each year to determine progress toward standards-based objectives.
41. All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.

**STATE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR PROFIEICNY AND GROWTH**

 The following tables display the percentage of student since ICON opened that achieved one of four accountability levels as defined by the SBE; Advanced (%Adv), Proficient (%Prof), Basic (%Basic), Below Basic (%BB).

% Adv

% Prof

% Basic

% BB

% Tested

2014-2015

9.1%

35.5%

31.5%

23.6%

90.2%

2013-2014

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\*

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\*

69.0%

2012-2013

15.8%

38.9%

14.7%

30.5%

100.0%

2011-2012

\*

41.4%

\*

24.1%

98.3%

% Adv

% Prof

% Basic

% BB

% Tested

2014-2015

9.1%

35.5%

31.5%

23.6%

90.2%

2013-2014

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\*

\*

\*

68.3%

2012-2013

18.8%

37.5%

18.8%

25.0%

100.0%

2011-2012

\*

39.7%

\*

29.3%

98.3%

% Adv

% Prof

% Basic

% BB

% Tested

2014-2015

19.2%

28.8%

15.1%

37.0%

96.1%

2013-2014

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40.0%

\*

27.3%

63.2%

2012-2013

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27.5%

\*

41.2%

100.0%

2011-2012

33.3%

\*

\*

36.1%

97.3%

% Adv

% Prof

% Basic

% BB

% Tested

2014-2015

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2013-2014

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2012-2013

35.8%

42.1%

\*

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100.0%

2011-2012

32.8%

36.2%

\*

\*

98.3%

*\* Masked per State Law or Statistical Irrelevence*

Observations:

1) These measure are for both the General and Alternative schools combined,

2) The percentage Basic for ELA doubled from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015,

3) The Math scores increased by19 percentage points 2012-2013 to 2014-2015.

**All Students, All Grades, Reading**

**Accountability Measures: 2009-2010 to 2014-2015**

**All Students, All Grades, Language (ELA)**

**All Students, All Grades, Math**

**All Students, All Grades, Science**

Because of the demographic population that we serve, in many years ICON has not been able to yield sufficient sample sizes in the state accountability system to yield a true picture of how ICON students are performing.

 

**ADDITIONAL DATA FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GROWTH**

As part of our baseline metrics within ICON, we examine the percent of credits attempted vs. credits earned for our school year. Below is the information for the school year 2015-16.

 



In order to gain a more accurate picture of how our students were performing ICON conducted a study on several key areas for our 10th grade students for the last two years of school. This included raw data from the SBAC assessments complete with sub categories, credits attempted vs credits earned in math and language and benchmark testing in the area of mathematics.





Both for ELA and Math the percentage of students achieving levels 3 and 4 increased in the school year 2015-2016 over 2014-2015. For ELA there was an increase by 16 percentage points and for Math an increase of 11.2 percentage points.

The following seven graphs display data for ICON’s 10th grade students that fell into the Smarter Balanced exams sub-areas for both ELA and Math In five of these sub-areas ICON 10th grade percent of students improved in the above standard designation for the school year 2015-2016 over 2014-2015.















The following two tables indicate the percentage of ICON 10th grade students who earned credits relative to the credits attempted in Math and ELA.

 

The three tables below show the result differences in benchmark exams that were taken the first day of class and then again at the end of the year.





 

# Clear and Measurable Targets for Continued Improvement

ICON has applied to be part of the Idaho Building Capacity Project for the 2016-17 school year. ICON will focus on the WISE indicators listed below. It is important to note that indicator IEOI also complies with the Accreditation CIP for policy and practice in the area of Governance and Leadership.

**Goal: School Leadership and Decision Making**

* IEO1 The Principal makes sure everyone understands the school’s mission, clear goals, and their role in meeting the goal.

**Rationale:**

Leaders in high-performing schools devote energy to “the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and support by the school community” (Council of Chief State School Officer, 1996, p.10). On the development end of the continuum, leaders ensure that the vision and mission of the school are crafted among stakeholders. They also ensure that a variety of sources of data that illuminate student learning are used in the forging of vision and goals. In particular, they make certain that assessment data related to (a) student learning, (b) demographic data pertaining to student and the community, and (c) information on patterns of opportunity to learn are featured in the development process.

Source: Joseph Murphey, Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement

**Strategy:**

* Head of School will bring forth a Continuous School Improvement Plan for Board review and approval in June of 2016.
* Head of School in conjunction with Board Chair will set a calendar for the year and a monthly agenda that includes board policy and school improvement data. Policies to include an update of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric.

**Goal: Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning**

* IIDO2 The school tests each student at least 3 times each year to determine progress toward standards based objectives.

**Rationale:**

Assessment is the process of testing to see: (1) what a student knows, and can do, and (2) patterns of strengths and weakness in what a group of students know and can do. Assessment includes (1) diagnostic-prescriptive assessment, such as unit pre and posttest, used by teachers and teams; (2) embedded assessments that are part of the learning activities by which the teacher determines mastery of objectives by the student’s successful completion of the activity; (3) periodic assessments such as those provided by testing firms or developed by the district or school to gauge student mastery of standards-based objectives at several points through the school year; and (4) annual assessment such as state standard assessments and standardized achievement tests (Redding, 2007).

Source: Sam Redding, Systems for Improved Teaching and Learning.

**Strategy:**

* Leadership will evaluate the effectiveness of the testing environment for the benchmark tests currently used within ICON. 2015-16 data suggests that the testing environment does not lend itself to accurate student results.
* Head of School will work with the State Department of Education to gain guidance and understanding of how the Interim SBAC tests can be used in ICON.
* If determined these assessments will work with the virtual model, ICON will secure resources to staff for these assessments.
* In August, the Head of School will provide PD training for teachers and testing coordinator as to the administration, interpretation, and analysis of how to use the data to drive instruction.
* In August, the Director of Student Services will educate parents and students as to the importance of these assessments and how they relate to their end of high school goals. ICON will focus on 10th grade students for the 2016-17 school year.
* 10th grade students will be given the English and Math Interim Assessments in the fall, winter, and the summative assessment in the spring of the 2016-17 school year.

**Goal: Family and Community Engagement**

* VAll Guidance counselors provide all students with feedback and reports on their assessment results to facilitate student driven decision about their own work and college and career goals.

Rationale:

Counselors can be particularly influential with students from disadvantaged backgrounds; important elements include the provision of information on college costs, financing options, and courses required for college admission (McDonough, 2004**).**

Source: P.M. McDonough, The School to College Transition: Challenges and Prospects.

**Strategy:**

* Head of School will seek approval from the School Board to recruit and hire a school counselor for the 2016-17 school year.
* Leadership will work in conjunction with the counselor to determine the process for working with parents and students. This will include academic, as well as, behavioral support to help students reach goals and navigate their academic requirements and post-secondary needs.

# Key Indicators for Measuring Success

ICON will use the following accountability measures with the goals and objectives therein to measure their success.

* Accreditation Report complete with plans for improvement as outlined in both our general and alternative schools. ICON will include the use of students and parent surveys. Goals include the design and implementation of a school improvement plan, the design and implementation of a continuous school improvement plan, and board policies and processes to protect and serve the stakeholders of Idaho Connects Online School.
* School Improvement Goals complete with key indicators for school success. Goals include policies and processes for all stakeholders, academic benchmark testing to drive instruction and student achievement, and the support of key personnel such as a school counselor to assist students in meeting academic and behavioral goals to route them toward post-secondary success.
* Performance Certificate complete with academic, mission-specific, operational, and financial objectives. Goals include credits attempted vs credits earned, pre and post tests for Career and Tech Prep and Personal and Family Living.
* Continuous Improvement Plan complete with the outlined goals and objectives and continued data tracking in the areas of demographics, entry and exit data, assessment data and credits attempted vs credits earned for our special populations.
* State Accountability Data which will measure the proficiency and growth of students on state assessments along with graduation rates.

# Report of Progress

This annual Continuous Improvement Plan will be reviewed and updated annually no later than October 1st of each year. This shall happen at the September Board meeting.

The Board of Trustees in conjunction with the school administrator shall continuously monitor progress toward the goals by utilizing relevant data to measure growth. Progress monitoring toward the goals will occur three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring.

This plan shall be made available to the public and posted on the school website.