ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Chad R. Carr

The Graduate School
Morehead State University

April 14, 2017
Abstract of Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education At Morehead State University

By

Chad R. Carr
Dublin, Ohio

Committee Chair: Dr. Shane Shope, Assistant Professor
Morehead, Kentucky
April 14, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

COLUMBUS PREPARATORY ACADEMY – A CASE STUDY

Columbus Preparatory Academy (CPA) was a school in Academic Emergency and in jeopardy of being closed in 2007. In 2016, CPA was ranked “Excellent with Distinction” and has been the top-ranked academic school for five consecutive years. There have been many “how-to” books written about how to turn schools around, but few schools, if any, have ever gone from closure status to the overall top-ranked school in the state. This capstone is a step-by-step procedure taken by the researcher and his staff to turn the school around. Existing literature on this subject is about tips or tricks school leaders can use to improve in one area, but seldom do the authors go the extra step in explaining what to do once an obstacle is overcome. The CPA case study will examine what the researcher and staff did on a yearly basis, challenges they faced, a review of academic data, finance and demographics.

CPA is a charter school in Columbus, Ohio considered by the government to be an inner-city school, and CPA is in Columbus, which is considered part of the “big 8” allowing for charter schools to be opened. CPA was school-wide Title 1 in 2016 and had a population with 58% free and reduced lunch. CPA opened in 2004 and had six different school leaders until the summer of 2007 when Mosaica, the educational management organization (EMO) hired the researcher, a principal and superintendent from Kentucky, to turn the school around. The researcher and staff began a school transformation to change the culture of CPA both behaviorally and academically, but soon CPA turned into the highest academic achieving school in the history of Ohio.
CPA has been ranked the number one academic school for the past five years in the state of Ohio: this is their story.

KEYWORDS: Turnaround schools, charter schools, high-performing schools, school reform, recovery schools.
COLUMBUS PREPARATORY ACADEMY – A CASE STUDY

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Name

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DEDICATION

To my sons, Huck and Rhett, and my wife, Erin,

We did it…
We did it…
We did it…

You all make me better. I love you.

To Coach Graham:

Thanks for teaching me to never quit and how to win.

To Dawn:

Thanks for taking care of me. I would not be here without you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my wife who watched the boys while I lived in the basement and wrote this paper.

Thanks to Dr. Shane Shope who picked up the pieces after 4 different committee chairs left the program. Thanks to Dr. Kessinger for the help with the references.

Thank you to Ron Packard who stuck with me during the tough times and believed in me to run the Ohio Schools.

Thanks to Huck and Rhett who gave me a reason to achieve.
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Executive Summary

Forward

Since 2007 the administration of Columbus Preparatory Academy (CPA) has adhered to a behavioral and academic plan to improve the school. There is an extensive list of extant literature about turning a school around or improving scores or culture, but there is a limited amount of literature or evidence of a school going from being one of the worst institutions in the state to being the overall number one academic school in the state. The most popular of this literature is *Closing the Achievement Gap*, (Williams, Manning, Kovach, Marzano, Trumbull, Marks, Greenfield, Quiroz, Zeichner, Benard, Stevens, Louis, & Ingram, 2003), where researchers investigated best practices, and even the personality traits of the best teachers and school leaders in the country. However, their research focuses just on improvement, no matter how large the improvement or small. Limited to no research exists focusing on a school that has gone from being in an academic emergency and closure status to being the top academic ranked school in the entire state.

The strategies and methods outlined in this capstone began in June of 2007 and were currently still in practice as of the date of this capstone. This investigation can impact all administrators and teachers in any school setting, especially those in schools with difficult behavioral and academic challenges. The greatest limitation of the study was the limited amount of literature that does justice to explaining the rapid rise that occurred at CPA. Improvement programs, best practices, and five step methods like Marzano (2003) explain various steps a school can take for
improvement, but nothing that details a school’s achieving the same level as CPA. The researcher points out similarities with and differences between the methods for school turnaround as well as the entire “school turnaround movement” that is sweeping the United States. The extant research does not discuss how impactful these practices achieve success at a rate experienced at CPA.

What is the Core of the Capstone?

Changes were obviously needed at CPA in 2007. Although the school had only been open for three years, it was suffering from many of the same issues that charter lobbyists have been complaining about for years. Low enrollment, financial struggles, lack of quality personnel, behavioral issues and no academic focus were just a few of the issues. Charter schools differ from traditional public schools in that they do not receive levy or property tax money. Public charter schools operate on a third of the funds that traditional public schools receive, however, charter schools are public schools and not to be confused with private schools. All chartered schools are overseen by an educational management operator and a statewide authorizer as opposed to a central office NAPCS (2016).

Charter Funding and Finance

Like most charter schools, CPA received one-third of the funds for traditional public schools, and like the other charter schools, CPA's achievement was low as was their funding. Constant teacher turnover, non-certified teachers and administration, an ever-changing student body that was typically performing below grade level and poor facilities were common. Charter schools operate on just foundation funding
(state funds that follow the student) and federal entitlements (Title I, Title II, Title II, etc.). Charter students also receive a third of targeted assistance funding. Money that has been set aside by the state government to level the playing field for those who are of the lowest economic status. A student who attends a traditional public school receives 100% of these funds, but students who exercise school choice only receive 25% of the targeted assistance funds in Ohio.

State and federal funds were not properly being used. Many teachers were making $25,000 per year and spending much of their own money on supplies. However, some teachers with the same credentials and number of years of experience were making a great deal more. Salaries did not reflect any standardized system and apparently not based on merit. The researcher found bonuses were not being based on teacher achievement merit, but rather personal relationships between administration and staff. There would have to be an overhaul of teacher regular pay and bonus pay so that there was some standard escalation for seniority and merit.

Success at CPA

In 2007, unlike most charter schools, CPA found success with the Blitz™ system and the hard work of the staff and administration, CPA was able to rise out of closure status and eventually gained the top academic school status in the state. The impact of this capstone is what CPA was able to accomplish with less funding by using the Blitz™ system. (A full description of the Blitz™ can be found in the prolog as well as a Blitz™ booklet in Appendix E.)
Recruitment and Discipline

Teachers were responsible for recruiting, then teaching students. Teachers who did not recruit enough students would be laid off each year around the end of November. Furthermore, CPA was enrolling students who had experienced issues at other schools (typically discipline issues) just so the school could have enough students in a class to justify teacher salaries. The combination of recruiting and then trying to teach the same students they had recruited caused CPA to become an unruly institution with a limited amount of learning taking place. The practice of having teachers act as salesmen for the school caused issues with the climate of the school. Typically in charter schools, enrollment seems to matter more than achievement as the business people involved in running charter schools want a return on their investment.

Additionally, teachers were ineffective when it came to discipline and teaching the curriculum. Teachers who had recruited the students were then asked to educate and discipline the students. Having teachers perform as the salesmen and recruiters diminished their ability to be disciplinarians and educators. With all the issues surrounding CPA, the recovery could not begin without behavioral changes within the schools. Teachers were not teaching at CPA; they were just surviving until the end of the day. Students were tardy, truant, disrespectful, and dangerous.

In 2007, many students were arrested for assault, bringing knives, guns, and drugs to CPA. CPA had no system in place for disciplining students while at school, and the school would not suspend or expel students because it needed to keep
enrollment high. Many times teachers did not report issues with students, as they knew reporting them could make the student withdraw and could ultimately cost the teachers their jobs because their enrollment decreased. If teachers did not have at least 18 students enrolled in their classes, the management company could not justify the teacher's paycheck and benefits. Teachers were afraid students would withdraw from school if they were disciplined, so the teachers dealt with the issues in class, and the students got away with disruptive behaviors. Teachers had no support from certified principals, only from former teachers who had never been trained in administration.

**Teacher Certification Issues**

CPA had a personnel problem; people were working in jobs without proper credentials. In many cases, long-term subs were being used to teach classes based simply on them having a degree in something other than teaching. Fifty percent of the staff was highly qualified. Proper certification was not adhered to by the administration as well. For example, a first-grade teacher who had done a great job in the classroom had been promoted to principal, another first-grade teacher was promoted to curriculum specialist, and a fifth-grade substitute with a theology degree had been promoted to assistant principal. Inexperience had the school going in several directions, and none of the staff had any prior knowledge of state testing.

**Working for an Educational Management Operator**

The management company did not understand or respect the roles of the teachers or administration. CPA was being operated by a for-profit educational
management operator (EMO) known as Mosaica. Founded in 1997, Mosaica owned over 50 schools in the United States and internationally. Mosaica simply gave the teachers a prescribed curriculum (Paragon, social studies based arts and literature curriculum) to teach from, with other step-by-step curricula that anyone could present to the students. No creative thinking was required on the part of the teachers.

The management company did not understand that administrators and teachers received two very different styles of training to handle certain situations. Teachers were trained to manage a classroom as principals are taught to manage a school as a whole. This was a recipe for failure in the operation of the school. According to Mosaica, parents were always right, students were always right, and teachers were always to blame.

Enrollment was the measure of success for the EMO, so both the teachers and administrators were afraid to discipline too harshly if the student might withdraw. Many stories of teachers being accosted, stalked, and harassed by parents, and the administration or EMO doing nothing to support the teachers because enrollment was the primary goal. CPA had to be willing to lose some students to set a precedent for behavior and to establish that it was going to be a teacher-first institution because clearly, it was not at that time.

CPA was a low performing charter school until the staff and administration sought to change the operational and pedagogical aspects to a point where it became one of the top performing schools in the state. Each chapter in this capstone details initiatives and struggles that CPA faced on a yearly basis and how it dealt with them.
School administrators, central offices, teachers, and turnaround leaders will be able to look up, in this case, study, a problem they are facing within their respective schools, learn how CPA dealt with the same or a similar problem, and perhaps find solutions of their own. The staff and administration met and developed plans to meet the needs of each student unaware that much of what they developed was grounded in best practice supported by extant research.

Introduction

How does a school, a charter school to be exact, which is in academic emergency and on the state closure list change its fortunes so drastically that it eventually becomes the top academic school in the state and remains so since 2012? The capstone was a reporting of the step-by-step process that allowed Columbus Preparatory Academy to improve and suggests where the school might go in the future. The staff of CPA implemented research-based strategies such as an alternative to suspension program (Sheets, 1996), short-cycle assessments (Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson, 2008), data tracking (Schmoker, 1999), and student and teacher motivation (Moore, 2016). The staff of Columbus Preparatory Academy created a competitive atmosphere where second place was not acceptable, and failure was not an option.

CPA was a charter/community school located on the west side of Columbus, Ohio. Charter schools are public schools that adhere to the same regulations as traditional public schools concerning minimal requirements for enrollment, hours of attendance and graduation requirements. However, charter schools may choose to have longer school days and years. For-profit companies can operate charter schools.
Charter schools must have fully certified, highly qualified teachers. In the state of Ohio, charter schools pay into the State Teachers Retirement System, and they participate in and are measured by the state assessment system.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this case study was to give school leaders a description of what a school did to improve, reach the top, and remain the best academic scoring school in the state five years in a row. There are a few how-to guides to school improvement, but the case study of CPA explains each step taken, on a yearly basis, of how the school became the top-ranked academic school in Ohio. Within this capstone are the many successes and failures the school experienced in its turnaround. This capstone examined each of the methods used to spark the meteoric rise of Columbus Preparatory Academy.

**Guiding Questions**

1. What strategies were implemented by the school administrator and staff to turn around an inner city charter school in Columbus, Ohio, that was on the state closure list in 2007/2008 and had only one year to improve before it was shut down?

2. How did behavioral and academic improvement create a winning and over-achieving student culture at a school?

3. How did a school staff work together to become the top-ranked school in the state from 2012-2016 while operating on one-third of the budget of traditional schools?
4. Can the strategies use at CPA work in any public charter or traditional public school district?

5. Can a recovery school that uses the same strategies used at CPA be saved from closure?

This capstone has provided school leaders and teachers a model they can use to improve their schools that are facing similar situations.

**Review of Literature**

One seldom finds a case study in which a school that was struggling academically and in danger of being closed then began a recovery process and eventually became one of the highest-rated schools in the state. One is more likely to find literature that details the steps a school or district have taken to effect very small amounts of change to the extent that the school is performing at a proficient level just in time to avoid closure. This capstone is unique in that it details an actual school that achieved the very highest level of academic success.

Following is a review of literature on the subject of turnaround schools and the effectiveness of in-school suspensions, short-cycle assessments, test preparation, test familiarization, data analysis, and empowering students and teachers to succeed. *Columbus Preparatory Academy*—*A case study* examines strategies that other schools, districts, and administrators have used to see if they had similar methodologies compared to what was used at CPA.

The literature review covers topics that were essential to the turnaround and recovery of CPA. The topics of the examined literature included:
1. History of the charter school movement
2. Ohio charter school development
3. Federal support and policies
4. Public charter schools
5. Funding for public charter schools
6. Marzano and data driven schools
7. Turnaround/recovery schools – definition, process, and steps
8. Organizational change process
9. High stakes testing and data collection
10. Data tracking and goal setting
11. Behavior and in school suspension
12. Dress code and behavior
13. Teacher support

**History of the Charter School Movement**

Charter schools had their beginning in the late 1980’s with an idea from Albert Shanker. “Albert Shanker first proposed the creation of “charter schools”—publicly funded institutions that would be given greater flexibility to experiment with new ways of educating students. At the time, some conservative education reformers opposed the idea, saying we already knew what worked in education. Today, the positions are reversed: Conservatives largely embrace charters, while teachers’ unions are mostly opposed” (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). Ironically, Shanker was the longtime
leader of the American Federation of Teachers, a group who currently does not support charter schools.

"Schools would be freed from certain collective bargaining provisions; for example, class-size limitations might be waived to merge two classes and allow team-teaching. Shankar's core notion was to tap into teacher expertise to try new things (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). Charter schools were supposed to be progressive, research based schools free of the bureaucracy of traditional public schools and without the same price tag. The obstacles to achieving this have been for profit companies mismanaging the school's finances, and the funding is so much less than traditional public schools, the charter schools cannot afford to keep their best teachers.

Kohlenberg (2008), states that Shanker and Democrats wanted a public school alternative to private school vouchers when families are displeased with their district schools. Charter schools in Shanker’s vision would not just be private schools that catered to the white advantaged students (Kohlenberg, 2008). Essentially, charters would give a private school education alternative to students free of charge as it is run on state funding. Many Educational Management Operators still use that mantra of providing a private school education free of charge. Private schools pay roughly the same wages as charter schools but they are selective in their enrollments and they tend to have more private donations.

"In the early 1990s, Minnesota legislators, working with Shanker, adopted the nation's first charter school legislation. However, as the idea spread (eventually to 40 states and the District of Columbia) Shanker was fundamentally at odds with where
the charter idea was headed" (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). This is how charter schools began but in most states, the idea has become a political argument. Traditional public schools claim that charter schools are poorly managed and that the charters are taking money from their district, whereas charter schools claim that they are underpaid and could perform better if given the same funds.

"Many conservative advocates saw charters as a way to make an end run around teachers' unions, and the vast majority of charter schools today lack collective bargaining agreements" (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). As mentioned in chapter one of this text, the charter movement in Ohio was political. Republicans support charter schools as an anti-union move and typically do not enroll their children there. Democrats oppose charter schools, but typically their constituency enrolls their students at charter schools. "Moreover, as a practical political matter, as charter schools became a vehicle for anti-union activists, powerful education unions naturally opposed their expansion and effectively limited the ultimate growth of the experiment" (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). Now the movement is stronger than ever and slowly moving into all 50 states. For better or worse, the charter school movement has changed modern education in America.

**Ohio Charter School Development**

The charter school movement in Ohio had a rocky start. Republican legislators had tried to get the law passed for years unsuccessfully because of teacher unions. However, in 1997 a Republican representative from Toledo took it upon herself to get the charter school law passed in Ohio.
“State rep. Sally Perz (R-Toledo) approached then Gov. George Voinovich with an idea for a pilot charter school program. The program would be limited to northwestern Ohio and - most importantly - enacted not through stand - alone legislation but as an amendment attached to a comprehensive budget bill” (Russo, 2005, p. 7). Perz went on to create Ohio Council of Community Schools (OCCS) as well as Cardinal learning. Perz eventually left government and helped her daughter operate OCCS. Perz was the first regional representative of CPA and personally helped the researcher understand how charter schools operated.

Aurora Academy was the first ever charter school created in the state of Ohio and also became the first unionized community school in Ohio. Though unions are typically not in charter schools, it is still an option for teachers to seek union representation. Aurora was located in Toledo and is still in operation today.

“Perz’s legislative tactic succeeded, and charter schools were launched in Ohio, albeit on a very small scale. Charter proponents like Perz considered the law an important first step in demonstrating the demand for public school alternatives and in proving the effectiveness of charter schools to the rest of the state. “It gave us the chance to show that charters could work, under highly controlled circumstances,” says Perz.” (Russo, 2005, p. 7). Once charter schools gained a foothold, the idea spread to the rest of the state.

“Soon a separate bill from Representative Fox from Hamilton county allowed schools to open in the Big 8 urban districts” (Russo, 2005, p. 7) “It allowed charter schools to be created in any of the state’s eight largest urban school districts known as
the “Big Eight” – Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron/Canton, Youngstown, Columbus, Toledo, and Dayton – not just the Northwestern part of the state” (Russo, 2005, p. 7).

Table 1

Differences in Early Charter School Legislation in Ohio

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What the law did</th>
<th>Perz Amendment (AHB 215)</th>
<th>Fox Bill (SB 55)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a pilot charter program in the Toledo area</td>
<td>Expanded charter schooling to the eight largest urban districts in the state</td>
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<td>Entities eligible to sponsor charter school startups</td>
<td>Lucas County Service Center -University of Toledo*</td>
<td>State Department of Education -Big Eight School Districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic areas where start-up charter schools could be located</td>
<td>Lucas County</td>
<td>Big Eight urban districts (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Toledo, and Dayton) -Allowed conversions of existing schools to charter status in any part of the state</td>
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*Authority since transferred to the Ohio Council of Community Schools.
Source: Legislative Office of Education Oversight, 2003; Russo, 2005

“The motivation behind the two charter laws was similar: They were both expressions of dissatisfaction with the educational standards and performance of most of the urban districts in the state, as well as a desire to give parents more choices that might keep them in the public school system” (Russo, 2005, p. 7). Parents only had one free public education choice (the district school), before charters. If parents were dissatisfied, they only had private schools to choose from which limited them economically. Still 20 years later, dissatisfaction with local districts and school choice are the reasons cited for having charter schools although politics and profit are also underlying reasons.
Below is a chart that effectively summarizes the outline of the charter school law.

Table 2
Features of Ohio’s Current Charter School Law

| General Statistics | 225 start-ups in Big Eight districts, the state's 21 urban districts, and districts reported being in Academic Emergency or Academic Watch. The cap of 225 start-ups expires in July 2005.) An unlimited number of conversion charters are also allowed. |
| Number of charter schools allowed | Number of charter schools currently operating |
| 243 (including conversion charters not counted under the cap) |

| Approval Process for Charter Schools |
| Eligible chartering authorities | - Local school board or joint board in the county in which the community school will be located |
| | - State Board of Education (until 2005) |
| | - The boards of trustees of the state's 13 public universities, or their designated sponsoring authorities |
| | - The governing board of any state-approved educational service center |
| Types of charter schools | Start-up schools and converted public schools |
| Eligible applicants | Any individual or group |
| Formal evidence of local support required? | No |
| Appeals process? | None |
| Terms of charters granted | Up to 5 years |

| Operations |
| Automatic waiver from most state and district education laws, regulations, and policies? | Yes, unless specified within the unique charter |
| Legal autonomy? | Yes |
| Form of governance | Specified in each unique charter |
| For-profit organizations | Cannot apply for charters, but can manage charter schools |
| Facilities assistance | Schools may negotiate with districts to lease public school facilities; charter schools also have access to lease-purchase agreements |
| Reporting requirements | Annual report cards for parents and sponsors, including academic and financial information; required participation in state's Education Management Information System |
Table 2
Features of Ohio’s Current Charter School Law

(continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Funding</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Path</strong></td>
<td>Funds pass directly from state to schools</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
<td>Community schools receive 100 percent of the state-based formula funds, as well as an adjustment to reflect variations in costs among different parts of the state</td>
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<td><strong>Autonomy?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- New charter schools may receive grants of up to $50,000 in state funds for start-up costs, and may apply for additional federal funds up to $450,000</td>
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<td>- Schools may also seek public or philanthropic grants, foundation support, and private financing</td>
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<th><strong>Teachers</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collective bargaining</strong></td>
<td>- Teachers in conversion schools remain part of district collective bargaining agreements for at least one year unless a majority of a school petitions to organize as a separate bargaining unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Charter school teachers in new start-ups may work independently or create bargaining units</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Certification</strong></td>
<td>- Required, but alternate certifications allowed</td>
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<td><strong>Leaves of absence from district</strong></td>
<td>At least three years are permitted if teachers from district want to work in conversion or start-up charters in that same district</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Retirement benefits</strong></td>
<td>Participation in state's retirement system</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Students</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible students</strong></td>
<td>All students are eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Previously enrolled students (for conversion charter schools), district residents, and siblings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The racial demographics of the charter school must represent the demographics of the district</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preference for enrollment</strong></td>
<td>- Schools must enroll at least 25 students</td>
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<td>- Schools may limit enrollment to students in a certain geographic area or at-risk students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment requirements</strong></td>
<td>Random lottery</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Selection method</strong></td>
<td>- Schools may restrict enrollment to at-risk students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>At-risk provisions</strong></td>
<td>Each charter must provide a plan describing academic goals and the method of measurement to analyze student performance; the plans must include statewide proficiency tests</td>
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Source: Center for Education Reform, 2003; Russo, 2005

Ohio's charter school movement began in 1997 with the passing of House Bill 215. HB 215 allowed for the creation of charter schools in Lucas County as part of the state's initial pilot project; the University of Toledo was one of the original two
charter school sponsors selected for the pilot. Initially, in 1997 up through 2005, there were very few rules or laws governing charter or community schools. If one looks up the house and senate bills about community schools on the Ohio Department of Education website, they will notice that there are very few laws in the first eight years of charter schools. However, since 2005 there are countless house and senate bills about sponsorship, management, and operations of community schools. The assumption is that there was little regulation to that point and that charters needed more governing rules.

As community schools gained popularity in Ohio and as more of them found themselves involved in a scandal, more and more rules were passed. Since 2012 operators and school sponsors have been under heavy scrutiny. Appendix F is a summation of bills passed during the charter school movement that was retrieved from the Ohio Department of Education website. Education.ohio.gov.

**Public Charter Schools**

Charter schools may include any combination of grades K–12. Charter schools are public schools, so they may not charge tuition and must serve anyone who applies if there is room; if not, a lottery is required. Charter schools may not screen students based on race, religion, sex, or test scores. Students are selected randomly for admission if the number of students applying exceeds the school's enrollment capacity. Also, charter school teachers must be certified and highly qualified; charter school students have assessed annually as part of the state testing program.  

(Retrieved from - Ohio revised Code; 3314.023).
The general public seems to have many misconceptions about charter schools. Detractors believe and preach that charters hire people who are not certified teachers and many still do by hiring long-term subs or alternative licensed personnel. The state and the authorizers want charter schools to have 100% highly qualified teachers, and if they do not, they have to send out the notice to all families of their school. This may occur at some charter schools, where the school utilizes long-term subs or noncertified administrators especially in the early days of the charter movement, but CPA only hired certified teachers. For the first three years, CPA hired non-certified teachers but stopped the practice once the researcher arrived. There are examples of charter schools' pushing the envelope on many of the rules governing public schools; however, CPA has always maintained exceptional status with the compliance items overseen by the school authorizer, Ohio Council of Community Schools—OCCS.

One of the issues that explain the story of CPA is a basic understanding of charter or community schools. Many people assume that a charter school is a private or parochial school. According to NAPCS (2016),

"Charter schools can be independent, single site schools or they can be part of a network of schools run by a management organization. These management organizations are typically nonprofit and are referred to as charter management organizations (CMOs). Some states also allow for profit companies to manage charter schools and these are referred to as education management organizations (EMOs)" (p. 2).
Charter schools are public schools and abide by the same laws as any traditional public school. Charters are also required to enroll any student that applies. Charter schools cannot deny enrollment to anyone, but they, like any traditional school, may set standards for enrollment or academic expectations based on resolutions from the board of directors. Boards can set reading level benchmarks and attendance, behavior, and academic performance benchmarks with placement, promotion, and retention (PPR) policy. The board of education of each city, exempted village, local, and a joint vocational school district is directed to adopt a grade promotion and retention policy for students (Ohio Revised Code 3313.60.9). The policies can be unique to each district with achievement levels and attendance requirements. CPA established such a policy in 2013, which made achievement regulations easier for both the staff and parents to understand.

In general, charter schools are “publicly financed but free of many of the regulations that govern traditional public schools, such as those involving staffing, curriculum, and budget decisions” (Gleason, 2016, p. 1). Charter schools are publicly financed but at a third of the traditional public schools. Charter schools do not receive property tax or levy money, which is why many charter schools cannot afford holistic programs and why they tend to pay their teachers $20,000 to $30,000 less than their traditional school counterparts.

**Funding for Public Charter Schools**

In the state of Ohio, as well as many other states, school funding is not equal, and charter schools operate on half the funding as local traditional schools. CPA has
struggled with the problem of funding for years. "The truth is that public charter schools have access to a little over half of the funding that a traditional public school has access to" (Batdorff, Maloney, May, Speakman, Wolf, & Cheng, 2014, p. 1).

Funding practices like this limit a number of holistic opportunities offered to students of public charter schools. Public charter schools typically do not have sports, academic, or club programs because all the money is spent on rent and salaries. Each student usually comes with $4,000 foundation funds from the state. Charter schools do not receive local tax dollars or levy funds. Curricula, building rents, teacher salaries, educational management fees, and utilities are all paid from the basic state funds. Furthermore, most traditional schools are built on land that has been donated by the community. The schools then receive building funds from the government to pay for the facilities. Charter schools use one basic pot of money to pay for everything. Charter schools are not given land, and they have to pay rent for both land and buildings. Typically, charters obtain their facilities through triple net leases and are responsible for all building maintenance as well. Triple net leases are when a company pays for a property then rents it back to the school with no further obligation like upkeep and maintenance.

Because charter schools are not regulated by the state, many charter schools are profitable for educational management organizations. All charter organizations have different methods for allocating the funds that come into the schools and there is no set template for budgets or how much the management fee will be according to state authorizers. Charter schools, however, must be financially and academically
sound. Most EMOs typically collect 12% of charter schools' total funding; what is left over is used for facility funding, buying curricula, and salaries according to Ohio Council of Community Schools. While examining district school budgets (with very few specifics) the researcher found that 80% of all money is usually spent on salaries, (Though each school district is unique and this is just an average). The typical breakdown for a charter school is 12% for the EMO, 40% for rent and facilities, 35% for salaries, 10% for curricula, and 3% for various other costs. (According to Mosaica and ACCEL budgets). All charter schools and EMOs are different in the way they extract their payment from the schools, so there is no concrete formula for how charter schools pay their EMOs. However, when considering a typical traditional public school, an average of 80% of all funds are dedicated to salaries. Since there is little to no overhead for rent or taxes, most of the money can be dedicated to teacher salaries. Comparatively speaking, one can see that charters, with 35% going to salaries, have very little money available for teachers’ pay. Furthermore, charter schools are subject to property taxes.

How does this inequity of funding affect strategies for academic achievement? Charter schools are typically just trying to stay afloat financially and cannot afford to pay the best teachers, nor can they provide students and teachers with a lot of research-based programs.

Federal policymakers should ensure that charter school eligibility for federal funding is on par with that of traditional public schools across all ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] programs and other related federal
education programs. In particular, federal funding should be appropriated based on annual school enrollment data since many young charter schools grow to scale one grade at a time. Also, Congress can encourage equitable state- and local-level funding streams by prioritizing states and districts that ensure fair, adequate charter school funding for competitive federal education dollars. (Lazarin, 2011, p. 17)

Lazarin (2011) also wrote,

Charter schools are public schools that enjoy more regulatory freedom than traditional public schools. Similar to other public schools, charters are nonsectarian, tuition free, open to all students, and subject to the same state and federal education standards that are required of other public schools. Also, educational progress at charter schools is measured against the stated goals outlined in their charter contract, which can be revoked if they fail to meet the necessary benchmarks. In exchange for this accountability, charters have flexibility over budgeting, curricula, and school operations, such as the length of the school day and year. (p. 1)

This is true for most charter schools, but in Ohio, the rules were the same for traditional public and charter schools until last year with the passing of House Bill 2, which made the regulations for charter schools much harder than those for traditional public schools. For example, if a charter school has a poor academic year, it is subject to closure, whereas the traditional public school is not.
Charter schools struggle to draw interest from fully certified teachers, as salaries are not competitive. Many class leaders in charter schools are not fully certified, teachers. This has given rise to using long term subs and hiring administrators and teachers who are not certified, magnifying the problems in charter schools of dealing with a very difficult population without fully trained teachers and administrators. Schools will sometimes use long-term subs or teachers from programs like Teach for America that is not college-based programs.

With typically only 3% of total funds available after paying teachers and administration, charter schools do not have enough money for many holistic programs. All charter schools want to offer speech teams, theater, band, and sports, but after technology buys and other various costs, no money is left for such holistic offerings. Many times teachers are expected to coach a sport or host a club with no consideration given to stipends. School improvement for all schools cannot be enacted without a level playing field financially.

**Marzano and Data Driven Schools**

Marzano is a theorist who has written 30 books and 150 articles about school improvement. The staff at CPA developed without full awareness many of the practices he outlines in his articles. In Ohio, many schools claim to be data driven, but very few are. Marzano writes that “successful organizations do not just collect data, they revere it” (Marzano, 2003, p. 1). Marzano is saying, schools need to have a system to collect data to measure the learning, then they need to use to data to direct instruction (Marzano, 2003).
"This commonly happens when a school or district relies on what I refer to as ‘indirect' learning data, often provided by off-the-shelf standardized tests and even state-level standards tests. Such measures are indirect because they frequently do not adequately assess the content that is taught in a given school" (Marzano, 2003, p. 2). One of the biggest issues the researcher faced with the 16 other schools he supervised was their use of ready-made tests that did not reflect what the teachers had been teaching. The Scantron computer-testing program and NWEA are two of the most popular off-the-shelf testing systems used in the Accel organization as well as in Ohio. These tests provide great practice, but they do not necessarily assess what the teacher has taught within a window of time, two weeks in the case of CPA.

Scantron and NWEA produce great nationally norm reference tests (achievement series and MAP respectively) that check for growth on a quarterly basis. Scantron achievement series and NWEA map tests are used to insure proper alignment, not necessarily to function as a day-to-day or even bi-weekly short cycle assessment, but many schools try to use them as such. Scantron achievement series and NWEA Map tests are great tools for early and mid-point check of student levels according to their grade levels. Teachers can put in the standards they were teaching to generate questions, but some of these standards are broad and getting specific questions is difficult. According to Marzano, a school needs an instrument of measure to see if a student has mastered the standard, then that result is what drives the teacher’s instruction. (Marzano, 2003). That is exactly what happened at CPA with the scrimmages and data tracker. Marzano suggests programs like The Blitz,
where we track assessment data, are required to improve student performance, and Marzano says every school needs to be a data driven school (Marzano, 2003).

A lot of the education is going to the teachers in assessment recognition. And helping the students get used to the style of the assessment and taking the anxiety out of what they will face during spring testing. Detractors may claim this is teaching to the test. However, teachers are encouraged to use all different styles of pedagogy including project-based learning. Teachers are not teaching to the test, they are assessing to the test. Teachers are not asked to change any of their teaching methods, just their assessment style.

Teachers spend a great deal of time during pre-service learning to create assessments, helping the students get used to the assessment style, and seeking to relieve students’ stress about taking the assessments. "No test can tap all the concepts and processes embodied in a subject area…. Instead, test makers construct a sample from the entire subject matter, called a domain" (Marzano, 2003, p. 2).

The teachers are not teaching to the test as no one has a copy of the test. Rather, the educators are teaching to the standards and developing assessments that tell them through data when the students have mastered the standard and when the teacher can move on to the next standard. Marzano says, “One option is to use district-made or school-made tests that measure the content taught in specific courses. But my preferred option is to develop report cards that track student performance on specific knowledge and skills” (Marzano, 2003, p. 2-3). What Marzano is describing is the short cycle assessments that the teachers are making themselves with four
multiple choice, one extended response question, and one essay, and the data tracker and data walls that are displayed outside of every classroom at CPA.

The Data Tracker™ gives teachers the information they need to know when to move on, so curriculum maps and pacing guides are no longer needed. The common core standards are the pacing guides. There is no need for teachers to spend hours creating a pacing guide. Teachers use the standards as a curriculum map, and the students' mastery of the standard is the pacing guide. Teachers are asked to use their formal training to decide what order to teach the standards for optimum learning and then to create assessments that mirror the state assessment in style and construction so as to familiarize the students with the structure of the test. The students' results dictate whether the teacher can move on to the next standard or if he or she needs to repeat and differentiate the instruction so the students can better demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers simply use the standards and the Data Tracker to know when to move on to the next standard. According to Marzano (2003), these report cards or data recordings create formative data over time that explains whether the student has mastered standards.

As practitioners, the teachers at CPA began to experiment with ideas generated within the school, and over time they discovered that much of the extant research validated their practice. "Challenging goals and effective feedback mean that a school has a method of assessment that provides detailed information on specific learning goals for specific students on a timely basis – at least once every nine weeks. Schools use these data to set specific learning goals for individual
students and to monitor student progress toward those goals systematically” (Marzano, 2003, p. 3). Marzano essentially describes the basis of The Blitz™, but The Blitz™ method gathers data from scrimmages at once every two weeks or more often for constant feedback.

**Turnaround/Recovery Schools – Definition, Process, and Steps**

One can find a great deal of literature about “turnaround schools” (Good, Burross & McCaslin, 2005) (King & Lopez, 2008) since the recent movement toward, and subsequent financial backing of, having schools shut down and reopen as chartered turnaround schools. The standard practice is to release the administration and most of the teachers, then reopen the school with an entirely new outlook and educational management company instead of a district central office. One can also find literature from educational experts who have developed systems that are promised to work to improve schools.

"Turnaround schools require some steps to happen to qualify under the guidelines of turnaround schools" (Good, Burross, & McCaslin, 2005, p. 2209). Schools must be able to prove that they are taking proven, research-based steps toward improvement. “Schools must use effective, research-based methods and strategies; ongoing professional development; measurable goals and benchmarks; support for teachers, principals, administration, and other staff; parent and community support and involvement; external support and assistance; evaluation strategies; and scientifically based research” (Good, Burross, & McCaslin, 2005, p. 2209).
In 2008, King and Lopez stated that to make your school exceptional, you must have the following systems in place:

- A school-wide culture of universal achievement
- Teacher collaboration
- Classroom lessons aligned to academic standards
- Classroom assessments that guide instruction and interventions
- A system for easily managing data
- Data-driven interventions, both academic and social

The process for exceptional schools includes the following: “Great Principals dream big, great principals know how to organize others around visions of excellence, teachers must feel they are part of the process, and teachers must sign off, signifying that they will abide by the contents of the exceptional system” (King & Lopez, 2008, p. 16).

The steps above by King and Lopez constitute the basic outline the government has laid out for schools that have completely failed and that districts or educational management companies could not salvage. At this point, outside experts and turnaround partners are brought in to fix the school.

Finding cases where a school had improved scores, behavior, and atmosphere was difficult. A movement is occurring (where the government steps in to assist with low-performing schools) that is linked to requests for proposals for educational companies to come into those schools and turn them around. In fact, an examination
of the extant literature provides a listing with the term "turnaround school." This term was used when the Race to the Top Grant (2009) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) set parameters for EMOs to take over failing schools, both charter and a traditional public.

A school that is designated in the lowest performing 5% of all schools in the nation has consistently not met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). As such, schools that are identified in this category are subject to one of the four Initiatives to turn schools around (Turnaround, Restart, Transformation, or Closure). The Turnaround model, specifically, varies from school to school, yet it meets many of the following criteria.

• Replace principal

• Use locally adopted “turnaround” competencies to review and select staff for school (rehire no more than 50% of existing staff)

• Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff

• Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs

• Provide job-embedded professional development (PD) designed to build capacity and support staff

• Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction

• Provide increased learning time for staff and students

• Provide social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports

Implement new governance structure (Pearlman & Redding, 2010, p. 3)
CPA did replace its principal, and the new principal implemented the data collection instructional strategies and improved the professional development. This researcher was the replacement principal, but the hiring was not a result of a federal program and did not use federal funds. Rather, the move was done to find the next replacement in the ever-changing administration position at CPA. After the new principal was hired in 2007, no one was fired from the staff; the instructional model was to just teach the standards and assess them with the Blitz data tracking system. The teachers were not handcuffed to a curriculum or program; they were just to implement the Blitz data tracking system and teach the standards however they saw fit. Seven teachers piloted the Blitz program in 2007–2008 with great results (seven specific teachers’ data improved resulting in them being the first teachers to receive their merit bonuses), so the entire staff chose to use the Blitz data tracking method in 2008 and beyond. The result was that the school improved fourteen PI points on the 2009 school report card. (Appendix C)

At CPA, expectations were immediately elevated. A new principal was hired in 2007 at the time of the turnaround, but CPA did not have external intervention. In fact, CPA did just the opposite. CPA eliminated outside professional development, all external intervention, and closed its doors to Mosaica’s interventions. Essentially, CPA closed ranks, and the administration and teachers shared best practices and data analyses.
Many turnaround schools use the following models and programs:

- ATLAS Communities,
- Audrey Cohen's Co-Next,
- Coalition of Essential Schools (CES),
- Community of Learning,
- Core Knowledge,
- First Steps,
- Modern Red Schoolhouse,
- Reading Recovery (probably not in middle grades at the K–8 school),
- Talent Development Literacy Program, or
- Success for All.

Again, turnaround schools tend to experience the same formula in which an educational company invests in a well-researched program that can show immediate academic results.

All turnaround models tend to have the same formula for limited success. Labaree (1997) writes about what the American educational system is facing and what the common attitudes from the general public are about the system.

Restructure the organization of schools, permit parents to choose which school their children attend, promote specialized magnet schools, establish autonomous charter schools, create black academies, require competency testing for teachers, open up alternative routes to teaching, upgrade the
professional education of teachers, establish national achievement tests for students, require performance testing as a prerequisite for endorsed diplomas, equalize school funding, make funding dependent on school performance, extend the school year, reinforce basic skills, increase vocational education, beef up academic curriculum, develop national curriculum standards, increase multiculturalism within the curriculum, end bilingual education, stabilize the American family, provide economic opportunities for the poor, institute prayer in school, attack the roots of racism, and promote traditional values. (p. 15)

Labaree (1997) goes on to make many good points in his piece, stating, "I argue that the central problems with education in the United States are not pedagogical or organizational or social or cultural but are fundamentally political" (p. 16). Politics is the issue in the state of Ohio. Schools are in a constant state of flux with expectations and goals. In the last three years, Ohio has given three separate state assessments—the Ohio Achievement Assessment, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and American Institutes for Research (AIR).

In Exiting school improvement: Principals’ roles in turning schools around for success, Corcoran (2012) writes that he

Found that principals in highly impacted schools that were persistently low performing exhibit five core practices when working to turn the school around. Principals demonstrate: (a) extensive and effective use of the School
improvement team; (b) utilization of multiple professional development opportunities; (c) communication through meaningful conversations; (d) developing and articulating a vision for the school’s success; and (e) practicing strategic leadership for second order change. (p. 283).

**Organizational Change Process**

Michael Fullan is recognized as a leader in the area of organizational change. Fullan (2005) concentrates on organizing the typical steps to school reform and improvement: "The most important principles for the struggling school's program were capacity building, partnership, and accountability" (Fullan, 2005, p. 175). Creating an atmosphere where teachers understand how improvement works, the steps to achieving success and taking ownership of the process and improvement are the keys to successful organizational change.

Fullan (2005) goes on to say that capacity building "consists of developments that increase the collective power in the school in terms of new knowledge and competencies, increased motivation to engage in improvement actions, and additional resources (time, money, and access to expertise)" (Fullan, p. 175). Schools must invest in the common knowledge of the stakeholders. Principals cannot just tell staff what to do; the staff needs to understand how and why they are taking such steps.

Fullan (2005) states that “raising expectations, a focus on improving teaching, new or enhanced leadership by principals, and external intervention” is part of the school turnaround process and is essential for success (p. 175). Essentially, a school
must invest in the education of staff so that they understand their part in the school turnaround.

King and Lopez (2008) write that principals should do the following:

1. Identify an individual or team in the school that succeeds in extraordinary and unexpected ways.
2. Identify the practices that account for their success.
3. Using your unique resources, replicate the core principles of those practices and turn them into your exceptional systems. (2008)

High Stakes State Testing and Data Collection

“In recent years, educators have experienced much outside pressure to raise student achievement. To avoid falling into reactive and sometimes prescriptive teaching with prepackaged lessons, teachers and schools must increase the precision of our teaching” (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006, p. 71). Teachers must understand how effective teaching strategies coupled with authentic assessments designed to gauge the mastery of each standard and let the data results drive interventions and individual education for student success.

“Formative assessment strategies—such as oral questioning, writing prompts, and tests (Fisher & Frey, 2007) —‘are essential if we are to develop the detailed knowledge of students’ understanding and misunderstandings necessary to teach with precision’” (Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson, 2008, p. 1). Good teaching coupled with properly developed assessments can help teachers track students’ progress and should help schools improve their overall academic rating.
In 2014, the researcher began looking for schools that effectively use student data to shape the teaching and curricula. That is what CPA does correctly.

Unlike schools of the past, effective professional learning communities view data as a powerful tool for meeting the needs of individual students and for informing and improving the professional practice of the entire team. When schools use data in this way, they are certain to improve student learning. (DuFour, 2015, p. 26)

The researcher found that many schools claimed to be data-driven schools, but using DuFour’s article as a basis will show whether other schools use data to the same degree CPA does. CPA did not refer to itself as a professional learning community as it steered clear of buzzwords in education. DuFour goes on to explain that schools who claim to do such in-depth data analysis “use the evidence of student learning to improve instruction” (DuFour, 2015, p. 26).

Indeed, most literature records that using data is the most effective tool when trying to grow a student's academic ability. Instead of taking ready-made tests like Scantron achievement series, teachers develop their tests using what they have directly taught from the standards.

Teachers develop these test items in such a way as to provide information that will help them determine what content students understand, where students have gaps in comprehension, and who needs intervention. As groups of teachers develop these assessment items, they learn more about their state’s
content standards and how those standards might be assessed on the state tests. (Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson, 2008, p. 2)

Ultimately, the researcher had to pull pieces and parts from a lot of other research because nothing like the transition and academic rise that CPA has seen has occurred anywhere in American education before. Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson (2008) say teachers should teach, assess, then according to the outcome, either reteach all the students or go back and differentiate instruction for students whose data indicates they do not understand. This is the same foundation that the Blitz is built on, and why CPA had so much success.

The item analysis is key to instructional conversations and the interventions that flow from them because it enables teachers to look across the student body for trends—content or concepts they need to reteach, assessment items they may need to change. (Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson, 2008, p. 3)

Educating teachers how to analyze data and to use the four R's—reteach, redo, remediate, and retain—was essential to the success of CPA. Every question has been tracked for ten years at CPA, and the Data Tracker allows teachers to analyze not only each standard but also each question. Teachers see trends like, students are struggling with the writing. This echoes the premise of what Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson are saying. Study each item, and the data will tell you what students understand and what they do not understand. (Fisher, Grant, Frey & Johnson, 2008)

The system not only worked at CPA but also in rural Kentucky. The Blitz data tracking system will produce results in any setting, traditional public school or
charter. The demographic does not matter. Teach, assess, analyze data and reteach what the students are struggling with and the student scores will improve.

“Short-term results act as vital feedback and provide encouragement and momentum toward continued improvement” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 5). CPA had the Data Tracker, but it was only observed by the teachers and the researcher. So CPA decided to place data walls up outside every classroom for all students, parents, teachers, and administrators to see. Confidential cards represent students with numbers, stickers, avatars, or emoji. Each color represents the academic level. Red means limited or basic, yellow means proficient, green means accelerated, and blue means advanced. The card colors are where the students started in August, and the field they are in represents where they are now. The data walls, along with the PI posted prominently, gives the viewer a snapshot of where the student and the staff are at that point in the year. The data walls are accurate to within 3 points, so everyone at the school knows what their class is going to score before the test, and there are no surprises. Schmoker (1999) explains that results drive productivity. Constantly displaying the data results worked for CPA as well as for industrial giants like Toyota.

Coupling goals with results, Schmoker (1999) goes on to say that “Goals are the stuff of motivation, persistence, and well-being. In language that echoes Farmer’s thoughts, he discovered that generally what people enjoy most is pursuing a clear, doable goal that they value. This connection accounts for
why many people are as happy as or happier at work than at leisure. In the absence of goals, entropy and aimlessness rush in” (p. 23).

In general, people want to be part of something. Schmoker (1999) believes that people want to be part of accomplishing a goal and reaching a standard. Set a goal and people (including students) want to reach that goal. All one has to do is watch a child play a video game. The child wants to beat a level to see the next level. The competition to succeed creates an addiction to winning.

Educators want students to do their best, and they want students to achieve higher each time assessed. "Goals give teamwork meaning." Gene Maeroff (1993) writes, "teams are vehicles for increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and motivation. But what motivates and energizes effective teams”? (p. 514-515) Maeroff believes that educators need to set the bar and continue to raise the bar after a student reaches their goal. According to Maeroff, the answer is "(1) a clear, elevating goal and (2) a results-driven structure, pointing once again to the interdependency between teamwork and tangible improvement" (p. 514–515).

Data Tracking and Goal Setting

If you make goals clear, inviting and doable, attainable then the goals themselves will drive you, they drive you. Teachers and principals that buy into it...the do ability of it and the clearness of it; they eventually get to the point where they say, "Hey what's happening here? I'm a whole new ball game. And you see now that people are finding it very rewarding".

(Schmoker, 1999, p. 23)
By creating the yearly goals, CPA had a target to shoot for. Going for the perfect 120 PI score ensured that CPA was always scoring high. Aim small, miss small.

From a statewide perspective, schools fail when only a few (school personnel) are analyzing data. If only administrative teams or teacher-based teams (TBT’s) are analyzing data, the schools are not as successful as those where the entire staff is analyzing data.

Try to collect and analyze data collaboratively and anonymously by team, department, grade level, or school. Ensure to the greatest possible extent that those closest to the point of implementation, the practitioners, analyze the data. When possible, let the team exercise its accountability. (Schmoker, 1999, p. 41)

The hardest thing to instruct staff in other schools is that teachers need to be able to analyze and be responsible for their data. The great accomplishment of CPA was that each teacher learned to analyze their students' data. Data analysis is taught in college teaching programs, but teachers need to understand and use the data from their respective schools. Student and classroom data is understood and used to drive instruction at CPA. Essentially, Schmoker (1999) says to set goals, work together and keep track of student achievement, then attack the student's weaknesses. That is the essence of the Blitz.

At the end of the movie Stand and Deliver, Jaime Escalante’s character is walking down a corridor of Garfield High School in East Los Angeles. He
has just discovered that 18 of his students—a record number—have passed the AP calculus exam. The year is 1982. The movie screen shows his subsequent successes. (Schmoker, 1999, p. 49)

Similar to the school in *Stand and Deliver*, CPA’s subsequent successes have been obvious:

Table 3

*Performance Index Scores by Year for CPA (2008-2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>112.9</td>
<td>115.3</td>
<td>114.6</td>
<td>116.3 (K-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115.9 (K-9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As Schmoker (1999) states, “small successes eventually lead to large successes” (p. 49). Schmoker goes on to say that "if we consistently analyze what we do and adjust to get better, we will improve" (p. 56). Much like the credo of the New England Patriots: do your job; pay attention to detail and improve on what you can do. Students at CPA are held to high expectations, failure is not an option, no excuses, and be the best version of yourselves. This along with countless other sayings have become the mantra of the school. If every student does their job, improves, and is the best version of themselves, the school will always get better, and each student will get better. "Continuous, incremental improvements are the real building blocks of sweeping systemic change that are rapid" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 56).
Using the biweekly short-cycle assessments or scrimmages has brought incremental successes at CPA. “Success starts with quick wins in target areas . . . initiatives that employees could take right away to generate measurable improvement in a short time.” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 68)

Tournaments for the highest PI score and giving teachers and students dress down for being over 115 PI and not having to turn in lesson plans resulted in improved scores and been responsible for effective short-term wins. CPA students who consistently score advanced are inducted into the excellent zone; students who score perfectly on the test are inducted into the ring of honor. The Ring of Honor students gets their names on a place card on the gym wall, are allowed to dress down all year, and are Distinguished. Students want to be distinguished, and they want to compete. Even students who are behind grade level compete within their ability groups and learn efficacy, which typically inspires them to work harder and achieve more.

Doing reverse planning at the beginning of the year as a staff has helped CPA to establish common exams and times. "Careful planning can all but ensure small-scale victories. Those victories provide positive reinforcement" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). College and professional sports teams do not plan, so they are at their full strength for the beginning of a season; they plan so their teams will be at full strength at playoff time. Schools should use the same logic. "The key is to regularly marshal collective intelligence and chart progress toward goals that teachers have agreed upon, and that can reveal incremental progress" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). Efficacy
(student success on statewide exams and bi-weekly practice scrimmages) is a key component to getting teachers and students to succeed.

"An atmosphere charged with progress and improved results sustains and energizes people toward effective alternatives to their existing routines" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). Reaching goals and competition is the secret to what has driven CPA's success. "Carefully selected, short-term projects can precipitate successful change—and optimism" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). Celebrating this success with teacher-of-the-week and teacher-of-the-year awards and the excellent zone and ring of honor for the students is the positive praise that all humans are seeking. "Praise from the administration was the most frequently cited source of good feelings, and that most teachers have unfulfilled needs for recognition and approval" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 112). Reaching small attainable goals will ultimately cause a school to reach the big goal (Schmoker, 1999).

Goal setting is essential to every school and its success. In 2007, the researcher entered CPA and set a goal of an 85 on the performance index. Everyone, inside and outside of CPA, thought the researcher was crazy. How could a school reach an 85 when they were currently at a 67? The researcher was reminded of a shooter’s mentality of “aim small, miss small” or “shoot for the moon and even if you miss you will reach the stars.” Blanchard (2010) says, “Marksmen will tell you that when you aim at a target, you should go for the bull's eye. The reason is that if you miss the bull’s eye, you’re still on the target” (p. 1).
In 2007, the researcher was asked to create a continuous improvement plan. He already had a plan of action and a system that would lead CPA to its ultimate goal of being excellent with distinction; however, the Ohio Department of Education mandated that struggling schools complete a continuous improvement plan. Simply filling out a plan and jumping through bureaucratic hoops does not mean a school will implement the plan or change will occur. Victoria Bernhardt, in her book *System Wide Change*, looks at the continuous improvement plan and how it helps improve schools.

At CPA, the Blitz data tracking system is essentially a framework for continuous improvement or mastery learning without the official name. Many times, schools use an improvement plan, but they do not use it yearlong to shape their teaching. Instead, it becomes a hoop to jump through, and then it is never revisited. "Schools need a framework of teaching and learning for each teacher and student. Schools are learning that if they don't analyze and change inefficient or ineffective processes, they'll keep getting the same results" (Bernhardt, 2015, p. 56). Schools need a system of tracking progress, and if all teachers are doing that system, the school will improve (Bernhardt, 2015). CPA needed a system and found one in the Blitz. After total staff buys in, CPA reached all of the goals they set for themselves.

Blanchard (2010) reinforces many of the practices done at CPA. Blanchard’s theories and steps for success are probably the best steps for practitioners of operating schools who are trying to turn around a failing program. Blanchard begins with “S= Shared Information and Open Communication” and goes on to say, “In high
performing organizations, information needed to make informed decisions is readily available to people and is openly communicated.” (p. 10)

Most of the issues at CPA were that teachers did not know what type of standards they were being measured by. In fact, at that time, the teachers did not even know they were supposed to be teaching from the Ohio State Standards. The researcher asked the teachers how often they talked about the state test and how often they practiced and was astonished when the answer was that they talk about the test on the day of the test. The researcher immediately knew that he had to share the Blitz data tracking and test practicing system with the staff; he introduced certain measures at different times but shared the information about all the steps. The teachers had to become masters of this system for the students to perform better.

Blanchard (2010) goes on to say that schools need “C=Compelling Vision” and a compelling vision is the hallmark of a high performing organization. When everyone supports an organizational vision, including purpose, a picture of the future, and values—it creates a deliberate, highly focused culture that drives the desired business results toward a greater good. (p. 10)

CPA had a typical, long, meaningless vision statement when the researcher arrived. The researcher immediately asked all the teachers what they wanted to be and they replied "the best." The researcher then changed CPA's mission statement to read: "To be the best, highest rated school in America, No excuses!" Next, the researcher raised the academic expectations and set a goal of 85 PI. Everyone—
teachers, aides, parents, and students—got behind that vision and began working to that end.

Blanchard (2010) goes on to say that the school as a whole needs to focus on results.

**R = Relentless Focus on Customer Results** . . . No matter what industry they are in, high performing organizations understand who their customer is and measure their results accordingly. They produce outstanding results, in part because of an almost obsessive focus on results. (p. 11)

**E = Energizing Systems and Structures** . . . The systems, structures, processes, and practices in high performing organizations are aligned to support the organization’s vision, strategic direction, and goals. This makes it easier for people to get their jobs done. Energizing systems and structures provide the platform for rapid response to obstacles and opportunities (Blanchard, 2010, p. 11).

Whether in business or education, it is important for everyone to be aligned with the goal and the vision. Alignment has been a major buzzword in the ACCEL Company. Recently, the researcher has been training other schools in Blitz, and he found that the other schools were not in alignment. The researcher discovered that the K through 4 grades were doing things differently than grades five through eight. Schools were using different vocabulary, different schools were using different systems from other schools, and none of the teachers were accountable to one another. For a school to have total success, different grade-level teachers have to be
able to depend on the other grade-level teachers to do their jobs. Once the schools realized that they need each other to succeed, the output of work increased.

Finally, Blanchard (2010) explains that shared involvement is essential for an organization’s success. “S = Shared Power and High Involvement” (p. 11). At CPA there was shared decision making, but the researcher always had to be the catalyst. For years the researcher tried to build capacity within the building. Five employees showed talent and interest in fulfilling a leadership role, but something was always missing.

In high performing organizations, power and decision-making are shared and distributed throughout the organization, not guarded at the top [of the hierarchy]. Participation, collaboration, and teamwork are a way of life. When people feel valued and respected for their contributions, are allowed to make decisions that impact their lives, and have access to information to make good decisions, they can and will function as valuable contributors to the organizations' purpose and vision." (Blanchard, 2010, p. 11)

Every decision made at CPA, from the school calendar, testing dates, and student interventions were discussed and shared. CPA was truly a teacher democracy where everyone had a voice. Blanchard is saying that every school needs a vision or goal, they need to pursue that goal relentlessly with a shared system that is agreed upon and shared by all stakeholders (Blanchard, 2010). The Blitz was that system for CPA, and all within the school pursued the 120 goals.
Behavior and In-School Suspension

For all its academic success, none would have been effective or useful had CPA not gotten the behavior problem under control. CPA had a major issue with student and parent behavior. Teachers were surviving, not thriving, on a daily basis, and CPA was losing half its staff each year – the most cited reason was that the students had no discipline. In 2007, CPA made discipline the major focus before it moved on to academics. CPA designed an effective alternative to the suspension program (ASP), enforced and improved the dress code, and focused on supporting the teachers.

“In-school suspension as a method of discipline has become widely used in schools today” (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 1). Students were either being sent back to class after an infraction, or they were being suspended; there was nothing in between for behaviors. “In-school suspension is a program to which a student is assigned because of disruptive behavior for a specific amount of time” (Sheets, 1996, p. 87).

Many states have defined disruptive behavior as behavior that interferes with the student’s own learning and/or the educational process of others and requires attention and assistance beyond that which traditional programs can provide or results in frequent conflicts of a disruptive nature while the student is under the jurisdiction of the school, either in or out of the classroom. (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 1).
ASP was a major component to the overall success of CPA. Morris and Howard are saying that In School Suspension provides another alternative between sending unruly kids back to class and suspending them from school.

"Among the first ISS [in-school suspension] programs in the United States it [ASP] was described as three-fourths education and one-fourth punishment" (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 1). Teachers who could no longer redirect students without disruption to others in the class sent students to a discipline bench, and they typically went to ASP unless the infraction was more severe. Students received all their work, all their special services (e.g., special education, Title 1 benefits), restroom breaks, and assistance from a teacher, and lunch in the ASP room. Teachers were required to visit the room twice a day to check on the student's progress. "In her research of ISS programs in the late 80's, Paula Short (1989) determined the predominate goal of most ISS programs appeared to be ‘excluding the problem student from the regular classroom while continuing to provide some educational experience’" (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 1). This is exactly how ASP was utilized at CPA.

Short (1989) identified five common characteristics of successful ISS programs:

1. Students were isolated with no interaction with other ISS students or others in the school.

2. Students ate their lunches in isolation in the cafeteria after other students had completed lunch.
a. The average length of an assignment to ISS was three to five days.

3. Talking was not allowed, and privileges were restricted.
   a. Regular classroom teachers sent assignments for ISS students to complete. (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 157)

   The key to ASP is that students still come to school, keep up with their work, and receive all their services. Students are out of the classroom but not out of the school. By providing all services and referring to the program as an alternative to suspension as opposed to an in-school suspension, a school can avoid using the 10-day rule with special education students and avoid having a manifestation determination meeting.

**Dress Code and Behavior**

Concerning behavior, changing the dress code seemed to have an effect on the students who came to CPA. By having a strict dress code, CPA attracted students who were more concerned with education than those concerned with expression, fashion, and individualism. By banning certain articles of clothing like cargo pockets, CPA avoided safety issues that plague many schools.

Concerns about school safety have also prompted interest in strict dress codes or school uniforms. As the U.S. Department of Education’s Manual on School Uniforms notes, Uniforms by themselves cannot solve all of the problems of school discipline, but they can be one positive contributing factor to discipline and safety. (Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 2)
Enforcing and improving the dress code helped CPA achieve its behavioral goals. "Students, teachers, and parents stated in interviews that "uniforms place all students on an equal level"" (Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 3). Students were less concerned with brands and clothing costs and more concerned with academic achievement at CPA. In speaking with principals, "most expressed the belief that dress codes improve student behavior, reduce peer sexual harassment, prepare students for the work world, and are worth the trouble that it takes to enforce" (Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 4). The researcher found that behavioral problems decreased, not necessarily because of the strictness of the dress code but because students who disagreed with the dress code decided to leave the school. "Principal's interest in enforcing dress regulations that teach community values and promote school discipline takes precedence over a student's right to wear gang-related or sexually provocative clothing," (Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 4). Johnson and Howard (2009) say there are eight steps to adopting an effective dress code policy:

1. Get parents involved from the beginning.
2. Protect students ‘religious expression.
3. Protect students’ other rights of expression.
4. Determine whether to have a voluntary or mandatory school uniform policy.
5. When a mandatory school uniform policy is adopted, determine whether to have an opt-out provision.
6. Do not require students to wear a message.
7. Assist families that need financial help.
8. Treat school uniforms as part of an overall safety plan (pp. 5–6)

**Teacher Support**

The last step was to provide great support for teachers, both new and veteran. In 2007, the researcher met with every teacher and asked what the biggest issue they faced in teaching was and what the school did best. By 2012, CPA established that it was a teacher-first institution. The principal would take care of the teachers, and the teachers were expected to take care of the students. The result was that over a 10-year period, the turnover rate at CPA was 1%. "The trusting relationship that develops between new teachers and their coaches allows the coaches to personalize learning to each teacher's needs" (Moore, 2016, p. 63). Moore goes on to say that teachers need support, and if given that support with lessons and dealing with parents and unruly students, there is a better chance that the teacher will stay at the school and in the profession for a greater period. "Other times, teachers need a sympathetic ear as they grapple with student behavior, collegial interactions, or organizational challenges" (Moore, 2016, p. 63). Teachers need to know they have someone in their corner protecting them. Make the teachers comfortable and allow them to do the job they were trained for, and the teachers will make the school success.

**Who is the capstone meant to impact?**

The product of this capstone, a book detailing the changes that took place at CPA from 2007 to 2016, is intended to provide the reader with a structure to change the academic setting of their respective schools. The lessons of how a school advanced from Academic Emergency to Excellent with Distinction should impact
school leaders, superintendents, teachers, and, ultimately, students and the entire educational system. Truly, the results at CPA can influence how students are assessed and may bring about change in the state testing system.

Students, teachers and entire communities are affected when a school begins to achieve. Students begin to achieve at higher levels, teachers will learn how to work smarter and achieve more, and communities will support and have pride for their local school.

School leaders will find this capstone helpful in that it may give them ideas on how to or how not to deal with certain situations that arise in their respective buildings. Principals may be able to base the focus on their academics on how the subjects of this capstone were able to transform a school from failing to over achieving.

Change agents, people who are brought in to turn an organization around from a toxic, defeated group into a high performing organization no matter what type of work they do can use the lessons in this capstone. Change agents will learn how to listen to their employees and use their ideas to improve their organization.

Finally, parents will learn what to look for in a school and how to support their children to be successful in that school. Should the parents wish to provide support for the school with volunteering, they will learn what schools need and how to support them best.
How was the Capstone Project implemented?

It is planned that this capstone will become a book detailing the steps taken behaviorally and academically to change CPA from 2007-2016. This capstone is intended to provide the reader with a structure to change the academic setting of a recovery school scheduled to close to rise to one of the top academic schools in the state of Ohio. The book: Columbus Preparatory Academy – A Case Study, detailed the yearly steps taken by the school using the Blitz data tracking process and the challenges faced each year.

Data Collection

Nine years of academic data, as well as behavioral data, have been collected. The academic data has been pulled from the school report card for CPA from the Ohio Department of Education. The behavioral data has been pulled from Power School, data collection software that has collected and stored all behavioral data for CPA for the past ten years. Additionally, teachers who had been at CPA longer than five years completed a seven-question survey.

The academic scores for the past nine years from the state tests (Ohio Achievement Assessment, PARCC, and AIR tests, as well as K–2 data from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) have been collected. Records of behavioral data for the past nine years have also been kept. The data from the school report cards show the number of students tested, the academic achievement of those students, how the school has grown academically, and a grade-by-grade breakdown of each subject and attendance average for the school as represented 21 indicators.
Instrumentation

The Ohio state report card and the Data Tracker have been used, as well as surveys of teachers who have more than five years of experience. Every year the Ohio Department of Education creates a report card based on each school in Ohio's academic results. For the school report card results of CPA, the researcher examined the Performance Index as well and the grade and subject indicators. The researcher did this because the calculations are based only on numbers and easily show improvement with school scores. There is a value add section of the school report card, but that formula has not been released state wide, so school personnel is not able to calculate value add data as easily. By using the performance index calculations, the researcher showed how working with individual students to alleviate the lowest rank helped to improve the overall PI score of the school.

A teacher survey was conducted to find out what programs and changes made the biggest difference at CPA. The survey is located in Appendix A. The data was not used for the capstone, but the results have been posted in Appendix H.

Interviews and Survey

A teacher survey was conducted for teachers who had been in service five years or more at CPA. The survey questions are located in Appendix A of this capstone. The survey details what actions the teachers felt were most beneficial to the change that occurred at CPA. Results of the survey are in the behavior chapter, academic chapter, and in Appendix H.
Methods and Procedures

The data for this capstone covered ten years of school reports that contained financial, academic, and demographic information. This capstone relied on the school report cards that just focused on the academic data of the school. A simple year-by-year narrative explains where the school is academically and behaviorally, and how it got there. This includes the step-by-step methods employed by the staff and principal, the goals that were set, and the methods by which those goals were achieved. Demographic information will be included about each year, the major challenges that arose during those years, and other obstacles from a state perspective, compliance perspective, and management company perspective. There was a survey with teachers; asking them about the steps that were taken and what they thought were the most impactful actions the school took. The survey was given to teachers who have been with the school five years or more. CPA employed not all teachers from 2007 forward, so they have no idea how ineffective and unsuccessful the school was from 2004 to 2007. The newest teachers only see the successful version of CPA. The survey responses were not used in the forming of this capstone, but are interesting to get a teacher perspective on what worked and the impact it had.

Research Design

The researcher provides academic and demographic data from each year, beginning with 2007 in the prolog in the demographics section. Along with this, the researcher explains the overriding system that the school uses to prepare students with the Blitz™ data tracking system and how the research demonstrates that the method
worked for both behavioral and academic achievement. The step-by-step methods employed on a year-to-year basis will be important, as no two years are alike, just as no two classes are alike. The researcher also shows the results of the teacher surveys, which may give a different perspective by revealing what methods the teachers thought were effective.

This case study is qualitative research in that it explored methods that were used to effect academic change. This capstone explored the reasons why changes were made and how they affected CPA. Simultaneously, this capstone is also quantitative because it examines the numerical rise academically that CPA had with the performance index on the school report card.

**Subjects and sampling.** The finding of this study explain the strategies and approaches the school staff and principal used to achieve change academically and behaviorally at CPA. However, the data will come from general student tests. The report does not focus on individual students but on class levels of students as a whole and school-wide report cards, which are already public record. The year-by-year data is the subject that was studied for this capstone. The researcher examined the strategies used to improve the school academically and the results are the performance index scores on the school report cards from each respective year. There was a survey given to teachers who had been with the school for five years or more, but the results were not used in the construction of this capstone. The survey questions are in Appendix A, and the results are in Appendix H.
Improved test taking strategies, improved behavior, more academic rigor, improved data collection and data analysis by staff resulted in improved PI scores. The data analysis revealed that there was a weakness in writing skills. The focus on improving student writing helped CPA improve their academic scores on the Ohio school report card and saved CPA from closure.

**Data analysis.** There is a year-by-year breakdown of the school report card as well as some behavioral analyses with suspension rates and alternative to suspension (ASP) rates. The study will show the correlation between rising test scores and the improvement of the written extended-response questions and the responses the students constructed. The researcher details the use of the Do, What, Because (DWB) that developed while employed in a Kentucky school. This graphic organizer proved to be a difference maker in teaching students to break down extended-response questions and to answer them correctly for full points. Children learned to find the "do" word, or power verb, figure out what the question was asking them to do with the "what" column, and finally, explain that their answer made sense "because." The DWB box helped raise student test scores and pushed CPA to perfection. The DWB is considered part of the overall Blitz™ system.

The result was that CPA improved test scores from a rank of academic emergency to a rank of excellent with distinction. By improving test taking strategies, school-wide behavior, more academic rigor, improved data collection and analysis by staff and focus on writing, CPA not only improved its academic rank but
became one of the highest scoring schools in the state. The results of the academic and behavioral improvement are contained in this capstone.

**Capstone Implementation**

The capstone has been implemented at CPA since June 17, 2007. The Blitz was first used in 2002 in a Kentucky school, and the school improved by 30 academic index points on the school report card. In 2006, it was used again in another Kentucky school that improved by 18 academic index points on the school report card.

In 2007, the Blitz ™ data tracking system was implemented at Columbus Preparatory Academy. In nine years, the Blitz has caused an increase in scores of over 52 performance index points on the school report card. CPA had a PI score of 69.2 in 2008 that by 2016 had risen to a 116.34 (K-8), 115.9 (k-9) overall school score and an 119.8 for third grade (the only score available at the time of print).

**Impact of the capstone**

The capstone impacted schools that were located in impoverished areas, whether rural or urban but can also have an impact in affluent areas. The methods used to turn around CPA have worked in rural Kentucky as well as urban areas in Ohio. The research-based methods can work in public charter schools and traditional public schools. The question is always "Will this work in my school?" The results are clear. In two Kentucky districts, the Blitz system worked, and in multiple Ohio schools, the system worked as well. Below are the scores where the system was implemented. The first number is the school's PI before using the Blitz system; the second number is what the school achieved after using the system. The first year was
the when the Blitz™ was implemented, and the last year (2014) was the last year of the OAA (keeps the data common among schools).

Table 4

Academic Results (PI) for Schools Using the Blitz™ Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>05-06</th>
<th>06-07</th>
<th>07-08</th>
<th>08-09</th>
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<th>11-12</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland Arts and Social Sciences Academy</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>92.7</td>
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<td>62.4</td>
<td>59.7</td>
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<td>77.6</td>
<td>86.6</td>
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<td>76.5</td>
<td>77.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus Preparatory Academy</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>82.7</td>
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<td>102.2</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>112.9</td>
<td>115.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornerstone Academy Community</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>94.0</td>
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<td>96.9</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>63.8</td>
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<td>79.9</td>
<td>81.7</td>
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<td>64.5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold=PI with Blitz being implemented  
NS = no score available

Source: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio School Report Cards for years 2005-2006 through 2013-2014. Years indicate the year the researcher implemented the Blitz™, and 2014 is the last year of the OAA.

The results are obvious; the Blitz data tracking method had an impact within the management companies (Mosaica and Accel) and very well could have an impact in other schools. Teachers become better test makers; teachers become better modelers of how complete the test and teachers become better graders. The result will be that students will become better test takers. Considering that the state of Ohio has administered three tests in the last three years, CPA's achievement did not decrease, no matter which tests they had to complete. The Blitz data tracking system will work for all tests and all schools.
Results and Findings

Any school, whether in rural Appalachia Kentucky or the inner city of Columbus, Ohio, can be recovered and can experience academic success if it improves the behavior of the school and uses the Blitz data tracking system. The Blitz data tracking system is working in many locations around the state of Ohio. Mansfield, Cleveland, Youngstown, and various locations in Columbus have all improved by at least 20 academic points since using the Blitz system. The true impact of the capstone is that school leaders can reference situations that may help them in similar circumstances when they are trying to improve school performance.

However, this study goes beyond the current research and details specifically what CPA did to improve on a yearly basis until it became the top academic school in Ohio. While many of the methods used at CPA were based on research, CPA generated ideas based on its data and the practices the researcher originated while in the state of Kentucky. The success CPA experienced is unprecedented, rising from a 67 PI to an 116.34 PI k-8 and 115.9 PI including 9th grade and being the number one academic ranked school in the state of Ohio for five consecutive years. (Appendix B)

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study were the lack of literature because this is the first time this type of improvement has taken place. There are many books and articles about turning a school around and many schemes and professional development strategies on how to improve scores, but the literature only cites schools with moderate improvement. The researcher did not find another situation where
Reflections

The unique aspect of this study was that CPA was able to maintain its status as the highest academic ranked school for five consecutive years. Using the Blitz™ data tracking system not only recovered a school from academic failure but also sustained high achievement for as many years as it was used. The researcher refers to the methods as the Blitz™, but essentially it is a program that packages all research based best practices into one system wrapped around a motivating competition for staff and students. The researcher will never know if the perfect 120 could have been reached, but now the focus shifts to the other 34 schools in the state. In a matter of two years, Accel schools have become the largest operator of charter schools in Ohio, and it has decided to use the Blitz™ data tracking system in most of the schools.

Implications for future research

Sustainability will be the focus. With 17 more years of his career, the researcher will see if this method will continue to succeed for years to come. Additionally, the state of Ohio's (and other state's) ever-changing testing requirements will be a challenge to the adaptability of the Blitz™ tracking system and whether it can relate to the different testing structures. So far, with three different tests in three years, the Blitz™ has been successful.

What do you plan to do with your findings?

The researcher is creating a book that school leaders can use to quickly reference a problem and find a solution that works. There are so many theoretical solutions available, and schools spend thousands of dollars every year on professional
development; this book gives the school leader a step-by-step plan that has already worked in an inner city school.

**Capstone Project**

Using this capstone as the foundation, the researcher is planning on writing a book on the turnaround at CPA. The book will focus on charter schools, behavior, academic achievement, the Blitz™ and future growth of Accel, CPA and the researcher. The chapters on behavior and academics will provide a year-by-year and step-by-step breakdown of what CPA did to improve and correct situations in those respective subjects. The chapter on the Blitz will provide readers with an outline of the mechanism CPA used to improve their school. In the appendix the researcher provides a Blitz manual used during one school year. The Blitz manual along with the detailed description of the Blitz can help readers create their own program and would work well with a professional development based on the Blitz.

On the following pages is a rough draft of the content of the book planned for this project. The various chapters represent a preliminary idea of the content and would be revised with the help of a publisher’s editor. These materials are by no way the final version of the content of the book, but only serves as a foundation by which the writing of the book will continue.
Prologue

History of Columbus Preparatory Academy

Columbus Preparatory Academy (CPA) opened its doors in 2004. However, CPA did not have doors to open on the first day as they did not have a Certificate of Occupancy and were not allowed to open by the city of Columbus. CPA had to buy tents in order to conduct school in mid-August in 2004. Within a few weeks, CPA was able to move into their new building. CPA was a community school, which meant community members could come together to voice their concerns about their local school district and an Educational Management Operator (EMO) stepped forward to provide educational guidance and financial support to the school. The name of that EMO was Mosaica Education.

Mosaica Education was based out of Atlanta, Georgia and had over 50 national and international schools. Mosaica provided educational oversight and provided schools with its proprietary literacy and social studies curriculum, Paragon. Mosaica handled the legal and financial burden of opening CPA. However, the method of opening the school in 2004 was not typical of charters opening in the state.

In 2004, Mosaica bought the real estate where CPA was located. Mosaica created a Board of Directors that signed off on opening a school in west Columbus. CPA opened along with three other schools in Columbus all run by Mosaica in that same year: Cornerstone Academy, Columbus Arts and Technology Academy, and Columbus Humanities Arts and Technology Academy. In 2004, Columbus City Schools as well as South Western City Schools had failed according to the No Child
Left Behind (NCLB) standards, which enabled the doors for a business modeled school to open in that district.

In Ohio, the regions where this was allowed are known as the Big Eight. The Big Eight consists of Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Akron/Canton, Youngstown, Toledo, Cleveland, and Warren. Once a school district falls so low, (in this case a school deemed academic emergency or academic watch with a PI below 75 for watch and below 70 for emergency), educational businesses are able to open schools if they had a Board of Directors willing to sign off on and an authorizer (essentially a central office backed by a university or school based organization).

CPA was located on the west side of Columbus. All around the CPA campus were low to middle-class housing. To the north and west are industrial parks and middle-class housing. A little further north lies the Dublin City School district and Upper Arlington School district, considered higher socio-economic status districts. Both Upper Arlington and Dublin are considered to be the richest districts in Ohio; their tax and income numbers fluctuate back and forth every year. To the south of CPA is a section of town known as the Hilltop and Bottoms. The Hilltop and Bottoms area of Columbus are considered poverty level. Two districts, Columbus and South-Western, share rights to the Hilltop and Bottoms.

At this time Dublin and Upper Arlington had Academic Performance Indexes (AI) over 100 while CPA had a PI in the 50s. CPA had an ever-changing staff. Less than 20% of the teachers would return from year to year. Additionally, CPA could not keep a school leader. CPA was started by a leader who left after the first year.
His replacement eventually quit after six months. After that, the school operated without a Principal for a few months, and then promoted a first grade teacher to Principal shortly after the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. That principal lasted for most of the year, and then was released early in the 2006-2007 year. At that point CPA survived without a principal again for a few months, then eventually brought back the original principal before she was promoted to a regional position.

**Issues at CPA**

CPA suffered some problems that many schools have in that they served too many masters. CPA teachers were told that they had to teach the proprietary curriculum. Teachers were not focused on the state standards, nor did they ever talk about the state test. CPA was focused on taking Scantron achievement series tests, A+, Dibels and Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Very little time was spent on the Ohio State Test.

In 2007, Mosaica went on the search for another school leader. Mosaica found a young principal in Kentucky who had proven academic success in each of the schools where he had taught or been an administrator. In June of 2007, Mosaica hired the researcher. The researcher inherited a school with 384 students and a budget deficit of 5 million dollars. CPA was on the school closure list for poor performance on the Ohio State Test and financial probation. The Sponsor (OCCS) and the Ohio Department of Education were threatening to close the doors for good.

From 2004 to 2007, CPA had created a deficit of five million dollars. There was also a lingering property tax issue. CPA was a school that is non-profit.
However, CPA was run by an educational management company that was for profit, so therefore, it was subject to property taxes. There was a court case disputing the property tax of the land where CPA was situated. Two million dollars had surmounted during that time and a 2011 court case would cost CPA another two million in deficit, but CPA would not have to pay property tax again after 2011. CPA was plagued by extreme debt as well as academic failure.

Mosaica had a brilliant financial plan. Mosaica allowed all schools, including CPA, to build debts into the millions. Each month, Mosaica would “clear” all monies in the school budget because the school owed so much to Mosaica. Mosaica would sweep all money out of the account, then would loan the money back each month so that the school could make payroll. However, the loaned money came with a 12% interest rate. Essentially no school, including CPA, could ever pay back the debt that they owed to the EMO.

When the researcher arrived, CPA had no administration and no leadership. There was no one running the school except an administrative assistant, a curriculum specialist and behavioral specialist. CPA’s focus was on the proprietary curriculum of Paragon, a social studies and arts curriculum. However, the Ohio State’s test only assessed in the areas of reading, math, and science. Paragon addressed reading in a sense, but did not address math or science.

**Changes Made at CPA and the Rationale**

The researcher arrived at CPA and conducted personal interviews with all employees asking them what issues they believed were affecting CPA and what was
keeping them from achieving. The administrator found that discipline was the
biggest issue that teachers were dealing with. Additionally, teachers had no guidance
from an academic stand point. The administrator decided to pilot the Blitz™ data
tracking system that he had used effectively in Kentucky.

Behaviorally changes had to be made at CPA. Teachers needed to feel better
supported by administration, unruly students had to be disciplined in a timely and
consistent manner and parents had to be made aware of the rules. Chapter 2 of the
book goes into intricate detail on a yearly basis explaining what CPA did to fix the
behavior problem that was plaguing the school. However, the following were
immediate changes made to correct the problem:

1) Establish an alternative to suspension plan.
   a. In her research of ISS programs in the late 80’s, Paula Short (1989)
determined the predominate goal of most ISS programs appeared to be
‘excluding the problem student from the regular classroom while
continuing to provide some type of educational experience’. (Morris &
Howard, 2003, p. 1) This is exactly how ASP was utilized at CPA.

Short (1989) identified five common characteristics of successful ISS
programs:
   a. Students were isolated with no interaction with other ISS students or
others in the school.
   b. Students ate their lunches in isolation in the cafeteria after other
students had completed lunch.
c. The average length of assignment to ISS was three to five days.

d. Talking was not allowed and privileges were restricted.

e. Regular classroom teachers sent assignments for ISS students to complete. (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 157)

2) Create a consistent behavior consequence list.

3) Thorough orientation for parents and well-detailed handbook for students’ rights and responsibilities.

4) Detailed dress code.

   a) Concerns about school safety have also prompted interest in strict dress codes or school uniforms. As the U.S. Department of Education’s Manual on School Uniforms notes, Uniforms by themselves cannot solve all of the problems of school discipline, but they can be one positive contributing factor to discipline and safety. (Lumsden & Miller, 2002, p. 2)

5) Consistent enforcement of the rules.

6) Constant vigilance by the teachers and administration.

7) Thorough adherence to homeland security safe schools policies.

8) State and Federal background checks for anyone entering the building during business hours.

9) Monthly practices of drills concerning school safety.

10) Willingness to suspend and expel.
Academic Changes

Chapter Three of the planned book is entirely dedicated to the academic policies, practices, and changes that occurred at CPA. The key to success for CPA has been The Blitz™ system. Teachers were asked to create an assessment based on what they had specifically taught in the previous one or two-week period. Teachers created short-cycle assessments on only the standards they had taught in that period using a set of parameters by which they must create the test or what CPA calls scrimmages™. Teachers became better test writers, graders, and modelers, and in turn, students became better test takers.

In the beginning, the researcher could not just come in and force the Blitz program on the existing teachers. The Blitz had to be piloted, so the researcher introduced the Blitz data tracking system to the staff and asked if anyone wanted to pilot the program. Seven teachers wanted to be part of the change. Prior to this, the CPA staff never discussed the Ohio State Test. During the extensive teacher interview calls in 2007, the teachers voiced their dissatisfaction with being the lowest achieving Mosaica School and they asked for support and advice with their teaching methods and their test prep methods.

At CPA, no teachers had yet experienced success. In 2007, the teachers had experienced no efficacy, but the pilot group who used the Blitz system had great success that first year, and they were the only teachers to receive their bonuses. The

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1 The Blitz™, Scrimmages™, and Data Tracker™ are proprietary tools owned by Chad Carr.
process had been identified, but the teachers had little to share as they had been teaching from a curriculum that did not address the Ohio standards. Mostly, the teachers took the Blitz system and made it their own, with some unique standards and testing styles from Ohio, to help instruct their students and themselves for better success.

After the pilot year, other teachers observed that the teachers who used the Blitz were having academic success. In the summer of 2008, the teachers decided that they wanted to use the Blitz as an entire staff and the academic accomplishments began. CPA rose from the ashes and became the top academic school in the entire state of Ohio.

Table 5

*Performance Index Scores by Year for CPA (2008-2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Performance Index Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>82.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>102.2</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>111.1</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>114.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>116.3 (K-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115.9 (K-9)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


CPA conducted its own professional development and did not truly succeed at a high rate academically or behaviorally until it was able to end any professional development coming from the educational management operator, Mosaica. CPA utilized data on a daily basis, and that information and the analysis of that data was the majority of its professional development sessions. Marzano writes that “successful organizations do not just collect data, they revere it” (Marzano, 2003, p.
1. Marzano is saying, schools need to have a system to collect data to measure the learning, then they need to use to data to direct instruction (Marzano, 2003).

CPA teachers began to utilize data in a manner that guided instruction. Teachers were also able to relate how their scores affected the school’s score and relentless pursuit of 120. A 120 means that every student in the school performed two years above his or her grade level on the state test. Eventually, CPA scored 116.34 (K-8), 115.9 (including 9th grade), in 2016, which indicates that 95% of students performed two years above their grade level, and 5% performed at least one year above their grade level. For perspective, the top score in the state of Ohio that any school can achieve is 120. CPA scored 116.34 (K-8) or 115.9 (K-9) – the school closest to that performance index (PI) score achieved 92. (See Appendix B)

Every year CPA set an achievement goal and they worked very hard to achieve that goal. A perfect 120 has been the goal since 2013 and CPA came very close to achieving that.

Challenging goals and effective feedback means that a school has a method of assessment that provides detailed information on specific learning goals for specific students on a timely basis – at least once every nine weeks. Schools use these data to set specific learning goals for individual students and to monitor student progress toward those goals systematically. (Marzano, 2003, p. 3)

In 2007, teachers, parents, students, and organizations involved with CPA thought CPA was overreaching. No schools were setting goals because they thought
students would be disappointed and their confidence crushed if they did not reach the goal. Within the last five years, CPA has set a goal of a perfect 120. After CPA beat Cornerstone with a 91.8, then reached a 102.2 when the goal was 100, then a 111 when its goal was 107, CPA needed a new goal. The administrator describes this as a Death Star. In *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker needed his Death Star or his goal to defeat in order to obtain success or total victory.

After CPA became the top school in the state in 2012, there were no other schools to beat. At that point CPA concentrated on achieving the perfect score. To score a perfect 120, every student had to score two years above their grade level. If that happened, each student would count as 1.2; that number is divided by the total number of students multiplied by 100. CPA achieved as high as a 116.34 (k-8) in 2016. Setting a goal was essential to CPA’s success, so Blanchard’s theory is correct.

Schools other than CPA have a lot of data, but they do not use it and do not share it with one another. Most of the professional developments conducted by the researcher have to do with sharing school-wide data (not just teacher or leadership teams within the school). Schools were collecting data all year long, then not using it when it is most important: the review time right before the test. At CPA, the staff members shared grade and subject-level data, talked to one another about how to improve from grade to grade, complimented and critiqued one another from a grade-level standpoint, and used the data to review by creating and playing games weeks before the state test. “This commonly happens when a school or district relies on what I refer to as ‘indirect’ learning data, often provided by off-the-shelf standardized
tests and even state-level standards tests. Such measures are indirect because they frequently do not adequately assess the content that is actually taught in a given school” (2003, Marzano, p. 2).

In the case of CPA, the investment was made in people and training them in one program (The Blitz™) that taught teachers how to analyze and approach data so they could then help the students on their own. Thus, the teachers were not dependent on a set program. This capstone compares CPA’s programs to other best practices used by other schools and educational programs. According to Marzano, a school needs an instrument of measure to see if a student has mastered the standard, then that result is what drives the teacher’s instruction (Marzano, 2003). That is exactly what happened at CPA with the scrimmages™ and Data Tracker™. The Blitz™ is the type of assessment and tracking tool that Marzano says every school needs in order to be a data driven school (Marzano, 2003).

CPA required teachers to create short-cycle assessments, snapshots, or scrimmages made up of four multiple-choice items, one extended-response question, and one essay question. The teachers were required to track each question in an Excel document known as the Data Tracker™. It became abundantly clear that students could and would answer multiple-choice items, but they were skipping the extended writing portion. Discovering and fixing this problem was how CPA improved scores so quickly. Each morning would start with a writing prompt, and students were required to break down that prompt with a graphic organizer called the Do, What, Because™ (DWB) box, which allowed the students to understand what the
question was asking and to write sentences based on the answers in the organizer. Just improving the writing skills of the students raised the test scores fourteen PI points in the second year. (See Appendix B)

**Policies**

From 2007 to 2012, anyone who came to CPA was enrolled, and the school was very successful with those students. CPA rose academically from a 69.2 to a 111.1 PI (which is considered excellent with distinction, the highest academic ranking in the state of Ohio) while enrolling every student who showed an interest. In 2013, the CPA board passed a PPR—placement, promotion and retention policy. The PPR policy states that if a student were not at grade level, he or she would be offered the previous grade. (See Appendix D) The policy also allows the school and board to set a common standard for promotion; thus, any student basic or below would be retained in the same grade level (CPA board policy). The designations of student scores are Advanced – two years above grade level, accelerated – one year above grade level, proficient – grade level, basic – one year below grade level and limited – two years below grade level. Similarly, the different designations for organizations in the state of Ohio from lowest to highest are the following: Academic Emergency seventy and below PI (closure status), Academic Watch – 70-75 PI, Continuous Improvement 75-85 PI, Effective – 85-92 PI, Excellent – 90-100 PI, and Excellent with Distinction 100 – 120 PI.

The rationale for retaining students at a proficient or below status was that proficient was 60% mastery of the standards according to the state test. 60% has
always indicated a D or even F level grade in schools. Since CPA inspired to be academically elite, the staff, administration, and Board could not accept the same standard of promotion and success that had been set by the failing public school (Columbus City). The school had to set the standard for success higher than the local schools. The high academic and behavioral expectations are what set CPA apart from the other charter and local school districts.

CPA reached the top ranked status without much variance in demographics as shown in the data and demographics section, but the Board did utilize the PPR policy in 2012 to ensure that students were prepared for their appropriate grade level. The PPR policy deals with the admission of pupils and such requirements for their promotion from grade to grade to ensure that they are capable and prepared for the level of study at the next grade level that the board finds necessary. (Many boards enacted Placement, promotion and retention (PPR) policies).

Enrollment and placement has never been an issue. If a fifth grade student came to CPA and tested at a first grade level, that student would be offered fourth grade (not first grade). This policy allowed parents to decide whether they wanted to be part of CPA or whether they were more concerned with getting their students promoted. Public schools can set their own policy, as the Ohio Revised Code is very vague. The code simply asks that schools set their own promotion policy.

Setting the bar for those above proficient was a little harder. The state of Ohio wants each student to score at a proficient level; however, to take the next step, CPA decided that proficient was not good enough. A proficient rating is the equivalent of
60%. Both the staff and the board felt that a proficient rating was too low to show mastery, so any student scoring proficient or below could have been retained (although that never happened).

Charter schools in Ohio were considered public schools and abided by the same laws as any traditional public school. Charters were also required to enroll any student that applies. Charter schools could not deny enrollment to anyone, but like any traditional school, could set standards for enrollment or academic expectations based on resolutions from the board of directors. Boards were able to set reading level benchmarks, attendance benchmarks, behavior expectations, and academic performance benchmarks with a placement, promotion, and retention (PPR) policy. The board of education of each city, exempted village, local, and joint vocational school district was directed to adopt a grade promotion and retention policy for students (Ohio Revised Code 3313.60.9). The policies could be unique to each district with achievement levels and attendance requirements. CPA established such a policy in 2013, which made achievement regulations easier for both the staff and parents to understand.

Many detractors say that CPA did not allow all students in, when in reality CPA enrolled any student who showed an interest. Parents ultimately decide if they wanted their students enrolled at CPA. CPA and any other charter school cannot deny enrollment based on age, race, gender, or other protected factors because CPA was a public school. However, CPA and other charter schools did have the right to set graduation standards and promotion standards.
Curriculum decisions were based on need and not by contract or adoption year. Having freedom with the curriculum allowed the principal to bypass the traditional district-wide curriculum person and to work with the teachers individually to select a curriculum that best addressed the common core standards. In most cases, teachers selected a non-traditional curriculum. Teachers elected to use 21st century strategies like the internet and Pinterest to get ideas for everyday lessons in their classrooms. While the internet and Pinterest were not curricula, they had great ideas for teaching certain concepts within the common core. Teachers nationwide are sharing ideas on the internet and Pinterest, so a teacher could just Google a standard or concept and get a wealth of ideas for free.

As far as staffing, teachers needed to be highly qualified, but they do not need to be interviewed by a site based council. Administrators, on the other hand, do not need to have administrative degrees, but the EMO, ACCEL would not hire noncertified principals. ACCEL is the EMO that bought Mosaica in 2015 when the company went up for sale and required administrators to be certified by the state.

**Challenges and Barriers**

The biggest challenge at CPA was how grossly underpaid teachers were compared to their district colleagues. The inequity of pay made it hard for teachers of CPA or any other charter school to feel good about what they were doing. CPA teachers were outscoring their district colleagues by 25 points but were being paid $25,000 less per year with a longer work year, longer work day, and fewer benefits. Teachers at CPA, for example, average $35,000 per year, whereas the median
teacher’s salary for those working for Columbus Public Schools was $60,643 in 2017 (Columbus city schools teacher salaries, 2017). All of this implies that charter teachers were underpaid and over utilized.

Charter organizers try to use CPA as the poster child for the movement in that CPA used a third of the funds of traditional public schools but has higher academic achievement results. In reality, CPA was run exactly like a traditional public school academically but with fewer funds to draw from. Obviously the staff of CPA would have preferred to have a comparable budget to traditional public schools, but that was neither the nature nor the original intent of charter schools.

The reason CPA was run like a traditional public school was because the researcher was trained in a traditional public school. CPA’s main complaint from students, parents, teachers, and the community as a whole was that it did not have the money to run a school and cannot provide holistic offerings. Quite often CPA was cited by the charter movement as a model of how charter schools can succeed. CPA staff would speak out concerning the great disparity in funding. CPA’s administration and parents were constantly being called upon to speak with local representatives about the financial inequality.

All of CPA’s teachers were highly qualified, and the principal/superintendent was fully certified. This capstone was not a study of the shortcomings of charter schools and the qualification rules but an explanation of charter schools and best practices that CPA used to improve its academic status. CPA employed only fully
certified teachers administrators, and superintendent. This book presents what certified teachers at CPA did to help recover their school.

The other challenge was going against the status quo. Trying to change or reform a school that has operated incorrectly for three years is quite a task. When one comes into a situation and tries to increase rigor, preparation and expectations, they are met with opposition. Instructing teachers, parents and students to be accountable for their results and how to work as a team is quite a challenge. Motivating parents, students and teachers was also challenging.

**History of Researcher**

Chad Carr is a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Arts in History, Masters in Education, and a Kentucky’s Rank 1 in Curriculum and Instruction. Carr, the researcher also obtained a Masters of Arts in School Administration from Eastern Kentucky University, and a superintendent certificate from Morehead State University. The researcher had been a social studies teacher at Harrison County (KY) High School, adjunct professor at the University of Kentucky, social studies teacher at Grant County (KY) High School, and assistant principal at Montgomery County (KY).

The researcher had developed a method for raising test scores shortly after serving as one of the CATS test creators in 2002. During this time on the content advisory committee or (CAC), Carr learned the parameters of creating tests by using standards guidelines and developed a method called Measurement Driven Instruction. The researcher took that knowledge back to his school in Grant County, where his
class showed considerable gains on state tests. In 2004, Carr was asked to share that method with the staff at Grant County High School. In that year of giving standards-based, short cycle assessments, or what the researcher called scrimmages™, Grant County’s Academic Index rose from a 52 to an 82 in just one year.

Soon after, the researcher took a position at a Montgomery County (KY) Middle School and was asked to do the same thing academically. The researcher again instituted the Measurement Driven Instruction method, but soon realized that the name was neither appealing to younger students nor exciting to teachers. It was at this school where the researcher renamed Measurement Driven Instruction to the Blitz™. In 2007, the researcher took a principal job with Mosaica Education and became the Chief Academic Officer (the charter name for principal) of Columbus Preparatory Academy (CPA).

When asked why he chose to work for charter schools, first and foremost the researcher did not know what charter schools were. Secondly, the researcher was allowed to move right into a superintendent position and make decisions that he knew were correct without the typical red tape involved with district schools. By age 34, the researcher was a district superintendent, by 36 he was a regional superintendent, and by 39 he became a state superintendent. It is likely that if he had remained in the state of Kentucky, he would still be a principal or at best an assistant superintendent.

**The Blitz™**

The Blitz™ was a program that the researcher developed in 2002/2003 in which teachers instruct on a specific standard(s), and then create an assessment on
those standards. The teacher takes the most crucial objectives of the standards and creates four multiple-choice questions one extended response (called an open response question in Kentucky) and one essay question. The researcher conducted a professional development every summer where teachers learn question structure and the process of making tests and scrimmages™. From this training the teacher learned how the OAA, PARCC, AIR or CATS questions were structured and became better test makers. In turn, students became better test takers. Teachers also became better at modeling how to take the test and become better at grading. With this type of preparation, both students and teachers learned what the grader was looking for and they could better answer the test questions.

In 2002, the researcher was included in the design of the new Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). While working with the Content Advisory Committee, the researcher began to understand how tests were constructed and how monitoring student data closely could yield the desired results. The researcher brought this measurement-driven instruction method, the Blitz™, to CPA in 2007 and used it as the backbone of the recovery effort at CPA.

“In recent years, educators have experienced much outside pressure to raise student achievement. To avoid falling into reactive and sometimes prescriptive teaching with prepackaged lessons, teachers and schools must increase the precision of our teaching” (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006, p. 71). There had been no practice of the teachers’ familiarizing themselves with the test at CPA prior to 2007. In 2007 the researcher brought the Blitz method to CPA and improved results followed.
The Ohio State tests as well as other state tests were tricky in nature. In fact, the multiple-choice items were labeled answers and distractors. Typically, for most schools, testing time was high anxiety for both teachers and students. At CPA, while there was an excitement about performing well on the test, both teachers and students are familiar with the test because they have done similar assessments all year long in preparation for the state assessment. This was not teaching to the test. This was teaching to the standards while making all assessments closely resemble the Ohio State Test (OST).

Teachers use this type of assessment for everything in their classrooms. In fact, what curriculum the teacher uses to address and teach the standards does not matter. The only thing the researcher demanded was that the teachers use the scrimmages to pace their classes and to determine when they should move on to the next standard. This method also dictated student mastery and tells teachers when students need differentiation on the subject. Similarly, students became better test takers once the teacher models what the grader of the state tests were looking for. When the teachers became better graders, they could speak the test language and everyone grows academically.

**Scrimmages™**

Scrimmages™ were short cycle assessments made up of 4 multiple choice, one extended response and one essay. Teachers were instructed during pre-service every year on how to make correct multiple choice questions. The researchers
experience in the Content Advisory Committee for Kentucky taught him that multiple choice questions have specific parameters on correct structure.

A few of the rules were: make sure it is an actual question with punctuation, not just a Family Feud question (open ended), make sure the answers and distractors are plausible, the same length, or two of them can be one length and two can be a different length. The questions must be relevant; questions should not contain student or teacher names. Scrimmages must include at least one extended response question with an appropriate power verb, a prompt and a multistep question.

CPA did this for all grades including kindergarten so that by the time the students was in a testing grade they were masters at writing extended response questions (ERQs). “An atmosphere charged with progress and improved results sustains and energizes people toward effective alternatives to their existing routines” (Schmoker, 1999, p.69). Reaching goals and competition was the secret to what has driven CPA’s success. “Carefully selected, short-term projects can precipitate successful change—and optimism” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). Celebrating this success with teacher-of-the-week and teacher-of-the-year awards and the Excellent Zone and Ring of Honor for the students was the positive praise that all humans are seeking. “Praise from administration was the most frequently cited source of good feelings, and that most teachers have unfulfilled needs for recognition and approval” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 112). Reaching small attainable goals ultimately caused a school to reach the big goal. (Schmoker, 1999)
Finally, scrimmages™ should have an essay question and answer box for a five paragraph essay. Scrimmages usually take between 20 to 30 minutes to complete for students. Students typically take longer in August but they are much faster in March. Scrimmages are easily completed in 15 minutes by March. Scrimmages are shorter than traditional tests so CPA was not over-testing, but the same amount of data could be gathered from them in relation to a longer test. Marzano says, “One option is to use district-made or school-made tests that measure the content taught in specific courses. But my preferred option is to develop report cards that track student performance on specific knowledge and skills” (Marzano, 2003, p. 2-3). The strategy that Marzano is describing is similar to the short cycle assessments that the teachers are making themselves with four multiple choice, one extended response question and one essay, and the data tracker and data walls that are displayed outside of every classroom at CPA.

**Example scrimmage.** An example of a typical scrimmage is provided.
Long and Short Vowel Scrimmage

Name ____________________________ Date ____________________

Directions: Read the question and circle the correct answer.

1. Choose the word that has a short vowel sound.
   a) moon
   b) bright
   c) weight
   d) better

2. Choose the word that has a long vowel sound.
   a) book
   b) water
   c) stain
   d) when

3. Choose the word that has the same vowel sound as only.
   a) short
   b) cross
   c) toast
   d) class

4. Write a word with the same vowel sound as fussy.
   Write a word with the same vowel sound as team.

5. Write a sentence with three long vowel words. Circle the long vowel words.

Each vowel has a long sound and a short sound. Identify two words with a short vowel sound. Identify two words with a long vowel sound

* Teachers should create answer boxes for the extended Response.
**Do, What, Because (DWB)™**

The Ohio State Test was basically broken down between multiple choice questions and writing questions. Multiple choice made up 60% of the test and the writing made up 40% of the test. However, on the test there was usually close to 60 multiple choice questions and typically four or less writing questions. What did this mean? It meant that the multiple choice questions were worth about one point each and the writing questions were worth around 10 points each. A student could answer every multiple-choice question correctly and still fail the test if they did not answer any of the writing questions. In 2007 after close examination of the state test data, the researcher found that the students were not doing the writing section of the test. The students scored zeros on the writing component. CPA needed to get their PI into the 80’s within a year to stay open. The researcher realized that if every student could score a one instead of a zero on the writing component, CPA could have a PI of 80 or above if all other things stayed the same.

The researcher had developed a graphic organizer at the same time as the Blitz™ so he introduced it to the staff of CPA. Do, What, Because (DWB)™ changed the trajectory of CPA forever. Students would read the extended response then at the top of their answer box they would label DWB. The Do stood for the do word or power verb. Every power verb indicates that there is a question that needs to be answered. This helped students realize that there might be more than one question in their extended response. The What was “what is the question asking you to do”. So the students would label that. The Because was for the answer, “my answer
makes sense because …”. This was the proof section or where the student provided their answer and the proof of why their answer makes sense. The DWB™ worked for both extended response questions as well as essays. Many schools try to use the hamburger method, which works great for essays, but it does not work as well for the extended response questions where students need to get their answer out immediately.

The result was that students who just filled out the DWB™ box were receiving one or two points of credit whereas they had been getting zeroes in the past. Essentially, they were answering the question but not writing sentences. The DWB allowed lower performing students the ability to answer the questions without a lot of writing. CPA’s PI score rose from a 69% to an 83% between 2008 and 2009. In subsequent years as students became better at writing full sentences, the PI score for CPA rose each year. The DWB was the reason for the drastic rise in PI scores each year; CPA students were becoming better writers and CPA never stopped using the DWB.

**Data Tracker™**

When the short cycle assessments, or “scrimmages™” are graded, the teachers track those results for every student to find students and teachers strengths and weaknesses. What the researcher and staff found was that patterns occur and those patterns read like the text of a book. The data from this method allowed the teachers to apply the rule of the four R’s. If a majority of students failed the scrimmage, then the teacher knew that he/she had either created a bad test or that the teaching of the standard was not sufficient, therefore they either needed to Reteach the standard or
Redo the scrimmage. Should five or six students fail the scrimmage that indicates that those are the students who need Remediation? Finally, should one or two students continuously fail the tests; that indicated the students who need to be retained?

Teachers tracked data from August until April. Teachers administered a pre-test in August to see how far along the students were with the current standards of that grade. Teachers monitored growth throughout the year. Finally, teachers gave their post-test to see if students were still struggling with the same standards (same test as the pre-test). Teachers could look back at these data to dictate what they needed to review before the test. Whatever data points or standards are still a struggle, the teacher created original Blitz review games for the students.

The researcher had created an archaic data tracker while working in Kentucky with his limited spreadsheet knowledge. Over the years at CPA, various teachers who had more knowledge with the Excel program helped to create a much better data tracker that recorded each individual multiple choice and extended response question. The multiple choice were each worth one point, the ERQs were worth four points and the essay was worth four points. With this tool, the teachers were able to monitor their students’ growth and ability level. The data tracker told the teachers when they could move on to the next standard or when to reteach a subject. The data tracker was also invaluable when teachers would review student reports with parents. Below is a snapshot of what the data tracker looks like:
### COLUMBUS PREPARATORY ACADEMY – A CASE STUDY

#### Scrimmage Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrimmage</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>105.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>83.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>76.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>105.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>93.96</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>90.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>105.43</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>83.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>76.42</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>105.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>93.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>117.96</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<td>86.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>88.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>112.55</td>
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</table>

#### Test Count by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points per Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
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<td>3.775065</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13.20755</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>105.433759</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Scrimage Comparison**

*Scrimmages so far: 23*

**Series Scrimage Comparison:**

- Scrimage 1: 105.43
- Scrimage 2: 90.87
- Scrimage 3: 83.26
- Scrimage 4: 76.42
- Scrimage 5: 105.43
- Scrimage 6: 93.96
- Scrimage 7: 105.43
- Scrimage 8: 90.87
- Scrimage 9: 105.43
- Scrimage 10: 83.26
- Scrimage 11: 76.42
- Scrimage 12: 105.43
- Scrimage 13: 93.96
- Scrimage 14: 105.43
- Scrimage 15: 86.86
- Scrimage 16: 117.96
- Scrimage 17: 86.86
- Scrimage 18: 105.43
- Scrimage 19: 88.98
- Scrimage 20: 86.86
- Scrimage 21: 93.96
- Scrimage 22: 105.43
- Scrimage 23: 88.98
- Scrimage 24: 112.55
Data Walls

Teachers were also asked to create data walls. The researcher had access to every teachers’ data tracker, but that process was time consuming and sometimes interrupted classes. Teachers created card charts and placed them outside of their classrooms. Each card represented a student and the student had an original number or a unique symbol such as a sticker, avatar or emoji. The color of the students’ card represented where they began the year. For example, the red or bottom section of the chart represented students who scored limited or basic. Limited is two years behind grade level and basic is one year behind grade level. The yellow section represented students who were proficient or right at grade level according to state standards. Green represented accelerated or one year above grade level and blue (CPA’s school color) represented advanced or two years above grade level. This led to mantras of Go Big Blue, Believe in Blue, and Eliminate Proficient. If a student had a red card it meant that they started the year in limited or basic, but the goal was for them to get to blue as soon as possible.

Teachers were also asked to calculate their class’ Performance Index (PI) scores after every biweekly scrimmage and to have the students move their cards in a confidential fashion after each Scrimmage. The result was that the teacher knew basically where their class and each individual student would score come April. The data wall method also allowed the principal to keep track of each individual student and class. The principal could visit with a student who was struggling and call their parents or compliment a student who was doing well. Everyone involved, students,
teacher’s administrators and parents always knew the academic status of each student and could intervene if necessary. This system was explained to parents every year at orientation so that there were never any surprises. Below is an example of a data wall:

**Data Walls**

Students must be in green (Accelerated) or blue (Advanced) in all subjects.

**Blitz Review Games**

Teachers were encouraged to create original review games to cover what they feel is their respective strength. For example, if there are four third-grade teachers, one teacher may cover English Language Arts multiple choice style questions, and another will cover Extended Response or Essay style questions. The other two teachers would do the same thing for math. For students who had completed eight months of paper/pencil assessments, the Blitz Review Games were an exciting way to review and the students are relaxed and competitive.
Students competed for a variety of small prizes all the while memorizing standards, formulas, and rules that eventually helped them with the test. Hence, their test scores continued to rise. Students may lose a competition in a Blitz review game on a Monday, but they were motivated to go home and practice for the competition on Tuesday. The students enjoyed winning the small prizes (usually a sticker or press on tattoo from Oriental Trading) but the real motivation came with them winning and working to be the best.

During professional development sessions in the summer and throughout the year, teachers met with other grade levels and passed on the data from that student so that the new teachers had background data on the student’s strengths and weaknesses. Parents cannot argue the data and that made the retention meetings much easier. There were also confidential charts where the students as well as parents, and the principals could monitor their success or struggles. All stakeholders received an instant snapshot of the student’s academic progress. The data tracking system along with the electronic tracking system, adhered to the same scoring as the state test, but further the teachers’ understanding of data. Professional developments were geared to data review as well as specific student review.

CPA made each homeroom a team. The Blitz was not just a data tracking system; it was a yearly competition where each classroom represents something. The classrooms have been countries, cities, decades, movies, books, and colleges, to name a few. The classrooms competed against one another within the room in Blitz review games before taking the tests the teachers created from the year’s data collected from
scrimmages, mock tests, pretests, and posttests. The data also included whatever standards the class as a whole was struggling with when the teachers developed their review games. Then the classes competed against each other in the areas of attendance, behavior, pep rally performances, and chants (about scoring a 120 PI, the top score available in the state of Ohio). Neither behavior nor achievement were ever a problem during the Blitz competition, which lasted eight weeks from Spring break in late March to the end of testing in early May. Ultimately, like Schmoker (1999) says, goals and results drive success and happiness, and that helped CPA rise from the ashes.

Each year a Blitz book was created for teachers to guide them through the Blitz competition season which lasts eight weeks. The book is replete with a mission statement, famous motivational sayings from the principal, list of Blitz rewards (filed trips paid for by fund raisers), guidelines, rules, review game guidelines, list of all the Blitz teams, competition schedule, specials schedule, a reworked school schedule to incorporate Blitz games, pep rally schedules, Ohio State Test as well as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills administration schedule, Blitz calendar, daily competition rubric, good faith testing reward rubric, pep rally performance rubric, guest judge point sheet for pep rallies, and Blitz soundtrack. A full copy of a Blitz book is contained in Appendix E.

The Blitz mission was simply an exciting way to teach students to create, motivate, be a team player and above all, be responsible for their own success in testing and academics. As educators, we are responsible for an experience like no
other. Through dedication, creativity and hard work, we are challenged to teach students to think in depth and prepare them for excellence in academics and life.

The Blitz rewards are a group of field trips that have been scheduled by the CPA staff. The field trips are totally paid for by various fundraisers such as the Penny War and the Fall Festival. The field trips included miniature golf, zoo visit, and a day at the park, waterpark visit, Magic Mountain, and a tour of Ohio Stadium. There were enough field trips so that all 25 classrooms could experience a field trip. However, the trips were not of the same value. Classrooms that finished at the top of the leader board could get a day long trip to a waterpark or the Columbus Zoo while those who were at the bottom of the leader board might get a donut party in their classroom. The value of the field trip caused great competition amongst the students in each classroom and also caused students to work as a team as they had to depend upon one another for points.

Blitz points come from a number of different places and aspects of testing and everyday school routines. Students received or lost points for Behavior and transitions. Students must not get in trouble at school or on the bus, they are expected to transition between rooms during the Blitz games as well as to and from the academic pep rallies with no disruptions. Attendance and tardiness could also add or subtract points from classrooms. Every student that was absent or tardy lost points, but if a classroom had perfect attendance with no tardy students, that class received an attendance bonus. Each classroom with daily perfect attendance was able to put a
letter on the door to spell cougars. If a class spelled cougars that meant they had seven straight days of perfect attendance and they received a mega bonus.

Classrooms could also earn Blitz points with costumes. Each classroom was encouraged to design a class tee shirt so that the students were easily recognized. Should the students and teacher have gone above and beyond with the costume, extra points were given. Enthusiasm and creativity were also worthy of Blitz points. Students and teachers were encouraged to chant, cheer, sing, perform and decorate their rooms with their classroom name and the goal of scoring a perfect 120.

Participation could also earn a classroom points. All students have to be present and engaged to get these points. If a small group of students is not participating, then no points are given. Other ways to gain or lose points were destruction of another classrooms’, going to ASP, suspensions, creative teacher review Blitz games, room décor, or fundraisers (Blitz basket sales).

Students could earn points during testing time as well. A “good faith” reward rubric is given to each teacher. Each individual student could earn points for attendance, preparation, completing their extended response questions with a DWB box, best effort and staying busy while others are testing. Students could earn points during the academic pep rallies for enthusiasm, props (giant heads like at a basketball game or motivational sayings on signs), collaboration, preparedness, attire, sportsmanship, and performances.
Academic Pep Rallies

Chances are we have all sat through athletic pep rallies where the team comes up on the stage before the big game. Cheerleaders are performing and the coach and maybe even the team captain say a few inspiring words to the student body while they ask for support. This is not the style of pep rally that CPA had. Instead, CPA involved all students in the school. Students would prepare for weeks to give performances that represented their Blitz™ class and how they were going to score on the Ohio State Test as well as how the school would perform. These well-rehearsed pep rallies were scheduled to the minute and included traditional hype videos, physical and mental challenges, dance parties, and student performances. At the end, classes would receive Blitz™ points and rewards for the most spirited, best performances and best signs. A typical pep rally was set up like this:

Academic Pep Rally

12:00 – Seating students while traditional school hype videos played
12:20 – Pregame video – hype video that begins every pep rally
12:25 – Principal intro with motivational talk
12:30 – Class Performance 1
12:40 – Class Performance 2
12:50 – Funny or motivational video
1:00 – Skit with teachers and students
1:10 – Class Performance 3
1:20 – Rumble 120 – chant to score a 120 and shake the gym
1:25 – Class performance 4
1:35 – Dance party 1
1:40 – Funny or motivational video
1:45 – Student competition
1:50 – Skit or video
1:55 – Class performance 5
2:05 – Student competition k-2
2:10 – Class performance 6
2:20 – Student competition 3rd-5th grade
2:25 – Funny or inspirational video
2:30 – Teacher competition
2:35 – Dance party 2
2:40 – Final motivational video
2:45 – Spirit stick, golden sharpie and performance award
2:48 – standings
2:53 – dismiss to buses

Competition proved to be a difference maker with CPA. It is true that scrimmages and the DWB gave the students and teachers secret weapons to outsmart the test. However, the real success story was the motivation and the desire to win that all students and teachers had at CPA. Everyone involved learned to work as a team and they held one another accountable. Students expected other students to show up every day for school so they could get perfect attendance. Teachers expected one another to get the students prepared for the test and parents expected other parents to give their students a good night’s sleep a healthy breakfast and to get their child to school on time so that their class would be successful. Wanting to be the best individually and wanting your team to be the best caused the entire school of CPA to be the best in the state of Ohio.

Excelsent Zone and Ring of Honor

Everyone likes to be distinguished. Two programs that coincide with the Blitz were the Excellent Zone and the Ring of Honor. Anyone who attends an athletic function in a stadium or arena will always notice that there is one section that is rowdier than the other sections. In Ohio Stadium it is the Block O section where the rowdiest students are seated. At Rupp Arena in Lexington that section is the Eruption
Zone. At CPA there was a section reserved for students who had maintained an
Advanced score on scrimmages for at least three months or they scored advanced on
last year’s state test. That section at CPA was called the “Excellent Zone”. Students
were ceremoniously granted the right to sit in the Excellent Zone if their Scrimmage
scores indicated mastery. The Excellent Zone is the closest section to the stage
during special events, assemblies and academic pep rallies. Students as well as
parents are proud to be part of the Excellent Zone.

Similar to the Excellent Zone but even more prestigious was the Ring of
Honor. The Ring of Honor was a distinction for students who had scored perfect on
the Ohio State Test. Should a student not miss one question on the Ohio State Test in
a given year, that student would get their name hung in the gym in a designated area.
The students’ name remains there as long as the gym stands. The same students
received dress down for the entire year and were automatically inducted into the
Excellent Zone. The parents of these students received bumper stickers that said “My
child is in the Ring of Honor at CPA”. Students were also placed in a
hype/motivational video that played at the beginning of each pep rally challenging
other students to join the ring. In the first year only three students were in the Ring.
By 2016, 53 students became Ring of Honor members. The special designation was
noticeable and the students were treated like academic royalty and that was a major
motivating factor for student academic achievement.
Demographics

For the demographic information and background on Columbus Preparatory Academy (CPA) the researcher would like to focus on student demographics (Table 6) and student achievement. One should be able to recognize some basic shifts in enrollment numbers, demographics, and achievement numbers. One can also see teacher numbers increase while “other staff” decreases.

2006-2007. Beginning demographic data with school year 2006-2007. There were 25 teachers, three instructional aides, and 11 “other staff.” Other than custodians, and lunch workers, the researcher was not sure what the “other staff” was, but there sure were a lot of them. The student makeup of CPA vastly changed over the last ten years. The enrollment almost doubled and the socio-economic status of the enrolled families changed. One will notice a shift after the 2012 year. The demographics of CPA stayed basically the same through 2011-2012 and CPA reached Excellent with Distinction status with what are considered to be at-risk students. However, one will find that race and socio-economic status changed for the students after the 2011 school year.

The reason for the change was that CPA increased behavioral and academic expectations. When most schools reach the Excellent with Distinction status, they just continue status quo, but CPA increased expectations and hit the proverbial throttle. It was never the intention of CPA to draw students from the suburbs and more affluent areas. However, CPA transcended the traditional charter school status and began drawing students from the more affluent suburbs (Dublin, Hilliard, Upper
Families were exercising school choice and deciding to leave their district schools to be part of a higher achieving school. This was not looked at as a public charter vs. traditional public issue. Families were simply choosing the best education for their children. The demographic data was retrieved from the CPA annual reports.

Table 6

Demographics for Columbus Preparatory Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<td>African American</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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</table>

Source: PowerSchool

CPA’s 2006-2007 demographic was similar to that of all of Columbus inner city schools. However, on the outskirts of Columbus are little townships: Dublin, Hilliard, Worthington, and Upper Arlington (suburb schools). The suburb schools
have 90% white, affluent, middle class students. Therefore, a game plan was devised so that CPA could succeed with the students they had, but that at some point, CPA would be so good that students from the suburban districts would begin vying for seats at the academically elite Columbus Preparatory Academy.

The researcher then examined CPA’s school report card. Apparently no one in the organization had ever done that before and certainly no one at the school level had done so. The following is grade level achievement on the OAA in 2006-2007.

Table 7

*Columbus Preparatory Academy OAA Performance 2006-2007*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers in the chart are very low. There were no passing grades (out of a score of 120) other than third grade math. It was clear that there was no academic focus in this school. Teachers were just surviving, not thriving. The children seemed to do worse academically the older they became.

2008-2009. Skipping ahead two years to the 2008-2009 school year, there were then 39 classroom teachers (Highly Qualified Teachers), seven instructional aides, and only two listed as “other”.
There were then three grade levels passing the OAA with a proficient status and the school had moved from a 67% Academic Emergency status to 83% Continuous Improvement status. There had been some demographic change, but that was due to the increased behavior expectations.

2010-2011. Moving ahead two more years to 2011, CPA was now exceeding 100 points with a 102.2% Academic Index and had earned the status of Excellent with Distinction. Out of all of the tested grades, there was only one grade that did not meet the requirement and that was fifth grade reading, which missed the cut off by 2.3 points. Also, the school’s mission statement had changed at this point to read, “To be the best, highest rated school in America – No Excuses.” There were still the same number of teachers and aides, but the student demographic had changed. With the higher test scores came a higher enrollment. With the higher enrollment, the ability to change rules and policies became easier. CPA became stricter both behaviorally and academically.

What would happen over the next few years is quite astonishing. The demographics from 2011 are not that different from 2006-2007. Enrollment had increased, attendance had increased, and CPA basically had the same students but had added about 300 more students. One can see that when CPA reached the 100% threshold, the entire make-up of the school changed. Parents who wanted their children to be pushed academically and in a safe environment began rushing to the school and parents who were not committed to that goal began to leave. One will see that the “Other” category began to rise. The Asian demographic began to rise. Asian
cultures who traditionally stress academics above all else and who have a great respect for schools and the teaching profession started enrolling at CPA. When speaking with the Asian population, they stress that they are not impressed by most “standard schools” (the term they use to describe K-12), but that CPA has the academic focus that they are used to in their respective cultures. Entire Asian communities enrolled at CPA and caused a drastic shift in the demographics.

2015-2016. Finally, we will look at the most recent year’s data. Every grade scored at the 100% proficient level. CPA’s overall score was a 116.34% (k-8), 115.9 (k-9) Performance Index. As of 2015 there were 45 teachers, and one aide. The school was 3.5 points from the perfect score of a 120 and was named a National Blue Ribbon School and National Title 1 School of the Year.

Ultimately the administration and staff of CPA did not just fix a school; they created an Academic Empire. The demographic shift was not intentional but rather a result of the high rank.

The Book Project

Using this capstone as the foundation, the researcher is writing a book on the miraculous turnaround at CPA. The book will focus on charter schools, behavior, academic achievement, the Blitz™ and future growth of both CPA and the researcher. The chapters on behavior and academics will provide a year-by-year and step-by-step breakdown of what CPA did to improve and correct situations in those respective subjects. The chapter on the Blitz™ will provide readers with an outline of the mechanism CPA used to improve their school. In the appendix the researcher
provides a Blitz™ manual. The Blitz™ manual along with the detailed description of the Blitz™ can help readers create their own program and would work well with a professional development based on the Blitz.
Chapter 1

Charter Schools

The charter movement is really a political issue. Republicans argue that charter schools can effectively run, and many times out-perform, traditional public schools at a fraction of the cost. While that was true at CPA, CPA did not offer the type of holistic programs that typically make a school great. There were no Friday night football games, field trips, clubs, or bands. Children did not receive the same experiences they would at a traditional public school. While CPA out-performed all other schools in Ohio academically and did so for less money, the overall experience for its students is different and lacking. CPA also carried a large deficit financially from years of start up debt.

Democrats support unions; Republicans are staunchly against unions, and that is the origin of the political battle surrounding charter schools. Charter schools do not have unions, so they are politically backed by Republicans, and Democrats support traditional public schools that have unions. The teachers’ union is powerful in Ohio and it financially supports democratic candidates. Democrats argue that charters are taking money from the traditional public schools, and Republicans argue that charters are doing school better than the large districts that are sapping the property taxes from hard-working Americans. “Conservatives largely embrace charters, while teachers’ unions are mostly opposed” (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24)

“Many conservative advocates saw charters as a way to make an end run around teachers’ unions, and the vast majority of charter schools today lack collective
bargaining agreements” (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). Republicans support charter schools as an anti-union move and typically do not enroll their children in charter schools. Democrats oppose charter schools but typically their constituency enroll their students at charter schools. “Moreover, as a practical political matter, as charter schools became a vehicle for anti-union activists, powerful education unions naturally opposed their expansion and effectively limited the ultimate growth of the experiment” (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). Now the movement is stronger than ever and slowly moving into all 50 states. For better or worse, the charter school movement has changed modern education in America.

“Charter schools can be independent, single-site schools or they can be part of a network of schools run by a management organization” (NAPCs, 2016, p. 2). The major differences in traditional public schools and charter schools are that traditional public schools are state, federal, and locally funded whereas charter schools are only state funded and partake in federal funding programs (such as Title 1). The local tax funding is immense in Ohio compared to Kentucky. Charter schools do not receive local funding and they only receive 25% of targeted assistance dollars compared to 100% by traditional public schools.

“Some states also allow for profit companies to manage charter schools and these are referred to as education management organizations (EMOs).” (NAPCS, 2016, p. 2) Ohio is one of those states. Charter schools are typically not unionized, but there are exceptions and in this past year, ACCEL schools have acquired 3 charter schools that do have unions.
“In the early 1990s, Minnesota legislators, working with Shanker, adopted the nation’s first charter school legislation” (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24). This is how charter schools began but in most states the idea has become a political argument. Traditional public schools claim that charter schools are poorly managed and that the charters are taking money from their district, whereas charter schools claim that they are underpaid and could perform better if given the same funds.

Charter schools were supposed to be progressive, research based schools free of the bureaucracy of traditional public schools and without the same price tag. “Schools would be freed from certain collective bargaining provisions; for example, class-size limitations might be waived to merge two classes and allow team-teaching. Shanker’s core notion was to tap into teacher expertise to try new things (Kohlenberg, 2008, p. 24).

Kohlenberg states that Shanker and Democrats wanted a public school alternative to private school vouchers when families are displeased with their district schools. Charter schools in Shanker’s vision would not just be private schools that catered to the white advantaged students. (2008). Essentially, charters would give a private school education alternative to students free of charge as it is run on state funding. Many Educational Management Operators still use that mantra of providing a private school education free of charge. Still 20 years later, dissatisfaction with local districts and school choice are the reasons cited for having charter schools although politics and profit are also underlying reasons.

Table 8 summarizes what charter schools are in the state of Ohio:
Table 8

Features of Ohio’s Current Charter School Law

| General Statistics | 225 start-ups in Big Eight districts, the state's 21 urban districts, and districts reported being in Academic Emergency or Academic Watch. The cap of 225 start-ups expires in July 2005.) An unlimited number of conversion charters are also allowed. |
| Number of charter schools allowed | 243 (including conversion charters not counted under the cap) |

| Approval Process for Charter Schools |
| Eligible chartering authorities | - Local school board or joint board in the county in which the community school will be located  
- State Board of Education (until 2005)  
- The boards of trustees of the state's 13 public universities, or their designated sponsoring authorities  
- The governing board of any state-approved educational service center |
| Types of charter schools | Start-up schools and converted public schools |
| Eligible applicants | Any individual or group |
| Formal evidence of local support required? | No |
| Appeals process? | None |
| Terms of charters granted | Up to 5 years |

| Operations |
| Automatic waiver from most state and district education laws, regulations, and policies? | Yes, unless specified within the unique charter |
| Legal autonomy? | Yes |
| Form of governance | Specified in each unique charter |
| For-profit organizations | Cannot apply for charters, but can manage charter schools |
| Facilities assistance | Schools may negotiate with districts to lease public school facilities; charter schools also have access to lease-purchase agreements |
| Reporting requirements | Annual report cards for parents and sponsors, including academic and financial information; required participation in state's Education Management Information System |
Table 8

Features of Ohio’s Current Charter School Law (continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Funding</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Path</strong></td>
<td>Funds pass directly from state to schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
<td>Community schools receive 100 percent of the state-based formula funds, as well as an adjustment to reflect variations in costs among different parts of the state</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- New charter schools may receive grants of up to $50,000 in state funds for start-up costs, and may apply for additional federal funds up to $450,000</td>
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<td>- Schools may also seek public or philanthropic grants, foundation support, and private financing</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Teachers</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective bargaining</strong></td>
<td>- Teachers in conversion schools remain part of district collective bargaining agreements for at least one year unless a majority of a school petitions to organize as a separate bargaining unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Charter school teachers in new start-ups may work independently or create bargaining units</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Certification</strong></td>
<td>- Required, but alternate certifications allowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Uncertified teachers may teach up to 12 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leaves of absence from district</strong></td>
<td>At least three years are permitted if teachers from district want to work in conversion or start-up charters in that same district</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Retirement benefits</strong></td>
<td>Participation in state's retirement system</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Students</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible students</strong></td>
<td>All students are eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previously enrolled students (for conversion charter schools), district residents, and siblings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The racial demographics of the charter school must represent the demographics of the district</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Schools must enroll at least 25 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Schools may limit enrollment to students in a certain geographic area or at-risk students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preference for enrollment</strong></td>
<td>Random lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection method</strong></td>
<td>Schools may restrict enrollment to at-risk students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At-risk provisions</strong></td>
<td>Each charter must provide a plan describing academic goals and the method of measurement to analyze student performance; the plans must include statewide proficiency tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
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Source: Center for Education Reform, 2003; Russo, 2005

Ohio’s charter school movement began in 1997 with the passing of House Bill 215. HB 215 allowed for the creation of charter schools in Lucas County as part of the state’s initial pilot project; the University of Toledo was one of the original two
Charter school sponsors selected for the pilot. Initially in 1997 up through 2005 there were very few rules or laws governing charter or community schools. If one looks up the house and senate bills pertaining to community schools on the Ohio Department of Education website, they will notice that there are very few laws in the first eight years of charter schools, however, since 2005 there are countless house and senate bills pertaining to sponsorship, management and operations of community schools.

Charter schools today are on the rise, and are operated in 47 states in the United States. The basic difference between a traditional school and public charter school is in the funding and in school choice. Parents from anywhere can choose to send their students to a charter school no matter where they are located or what their local district school is. Charter schools simply do not receive local property taxes and they receive 75% less targeted assistance funding. Other than that the basic operating rules are the same and charter school boards are not an elected position.
Chapter 2

Behavior

2007-2008 – Cleaning Up

Before explaining the steps that were taken to improve conditions at CPA, the reader should be warned that nothing discussed past this point will work unless the administration and staff gets the behavior of the school under control. When presenting at conferences or doing professional developments, the researcher begins each session with that statement and will stress the same principle here.

Upon arriving for the first time in Columbus, Ohio, the researcher found a school in disarray. There was no leadership structure. First impressions were that someone had put in a temporary modular trailer and that school was being conducted inside it. When the researcher walked in from the parking lot, he saw a temporary brown modular. There was no grass; trash cans and trash were strewn all around the front of the building. Two little girls were playing in the dirt, scooping up handfuls of dirt and putting it into a plastic baby pool that had been run over by a lawnmower. Baby doll heads surrounded each of the girls; no bodies, just heads, and other children were sitting around the front doors.

After spending a considerable time trying to find whom among the staff was in charge, the researcher came to the realization that no one was in charge. Essentially the school had been under the supervision of a behavioral specialist and a secretary. The behavioral specialist was a man with a theology degree who had picked up some extra work as a substitute. Because that person had good rapport
with the students, he had been promoted to behavioral specialist, for which he had no certification.

The first move the researcher made was to have phone interviews and/or face-to-face meetings with each existing teacher. Many of the past teachers would not meet with the researcher citing the lack of support or supervision by the prior principals; they simply quit instead of speaking with the researcher. Looking back on the many strategies that were employed, speaking with the teachers was one of if not the most important for teacher retention and recognizing what the problems were that needed to be fixed. In all, five of the teachers would never take the researcher’s call, but those who did shared a lot of information in various ways. Some teachers talked for up to three hours on the phone, some came in for face-to-face conversations and others spent a few minutes in passing to tell the researcher what the issues were.

Testing was never mentioned nor was curriculum. The main issue from each teacher was the same. Behavior was out of control at CPA and it needed to be fixed. The researcher soon came to realize that teachers were not thriving in this environment; they were simply surviving to the end of the day. Most teachers believed that this was just the next in a long series of administrators who had taken the job. In three years CPA had been through six administrators and they were now on number seven.

The researcher eventually found what he called the “Core,” a group of teachers from 22-27 years old that had teaching experience of 1-3 years. Most of the teachers were already employed at CPA, but some were new hires. There were 20
teachers at that time and 13 of them still are still employed at CPA as of date of publication of this capstone. There was only one staff member older than the researcher (34). That teacher was in her mid-40s and had taught in traditional public schools for 18 years but had wanted a change of pace.

The interviews were lengthy, but usually boiled down to this; the teachers wanted to know what would happen to students if students hit the teacher, bit the teacher, threw furniture or trash cans at the teacher, or simply walked out of the school. From this information, the researcher was able to see that behavior was the number one problem. The researcher’s answer was that the student would be expelled or at the very least suspended. The teachers responded with a doubtful glare but most of them decided to give it a chance.

From this point forward, none of the academic strategies will work unless the school administration gets control of the behavior of the school. Everyone’s first question is about academics, but the researcher did not fully implement the Blitz™ in year one. CPA piloted the program because forcing The Blitz™ on the teachers at this time would have been career suicide. The researcher had to put the teachers in the position to have the desire to learn the program.

The plan was to fix the discipline issue once school began and the researcher was given the time to assess the situation with the students. When July came around, the researcher led the teacher professional developments and spoke about how the discipline issue would be handled. At the first professional development the researcher delivered the company line and spoke about the proprietary curriculum
(Paragon) for hours. Soon the researcher realized that the teachers were being polite and smiling but that they were zoned out. Finally the teachers explained that they had been through this training for multiple years and it was always the same thing.

The professional development plan was then thrown out and the researcher asked what the biggest issues with teaching were in the school. The teachers responded that the behavior was so bad that “no real teaching or learning was going on.” The second issue brought up by the teachers was that teachers were last place in the pecking order. Parents were always right, students were always right, and teachers were always wrong and to blame. Finally, there was no direction, no focus, and no preparation when it came to the state test in Ohio. Teachers did not know the importance of the test, they did not know when it was to be given, what was tested, nor did they know how it was scored or what CPA’s score was. Together, as a staff, CPA decided that the school would be a “teacher first” institution and that parents were not to critique or speak cruelly to teachers – ever.

It became clear that the discipline issue at CPA was the result of lack of authority in the building. The only discipline for students came from inside the classroom. Teachers used all the tools that they had learned in college to stop a behavior: proximity, redirection, talking to the student in the hallway, and finally, parent calls. Typically the parent calls ended with teachers being yelled at and cussed at by the parents, so those were ineffective. A teacher’s last resort would be to send the student to the office. In one instance prior to the researcher’s arrival, a student hit Mrs. C, and then threw a trash can at her head. Mrs. C. sent the student to the office
where the child was given a piece of candy, a hug, told not to do it again, told to apologize, and was then sent back to class. Obviously this behavior could not continue if CPA wanted to be a successful school.

Upon hearing this the researcher explained and instituted the concept of ASP. Alternative to Suspension Program (ASP) is a concept that the researcher had learned in Kentucky. Much like In-School Suspension, ASP was just a little different in that no services were withheld. ASP was an uncomfortable, small room where students went spend the entire day and do homework from the day they were missing in class. Students do not talk; they enter the room and copy the rules of ASP first. Students are expected to finish all of their work during that designated time. Students were given bathroom breaks and they were taken to lunch but they brought the lunch back to that room and eat in silence.

“In-school suspension as a method of discipline has become widely used in schools today” (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 1). Students were either being sent back to class after an infraction, or they were being suspended; there was nothing in between for behaviors. “In-school suspension is a program to which a student is assigned because of disruptive behavior for a specific amount of time” (Sheets, 1996, p. 87). “Many states have defined disruptive behavior as behavior that interferes with the student’s own learning and/or the educational process of others and requires attention and assistance beyond that which traditional programs can provide or results in frequent conflicts of a disruptive nature while the student is under the jurisdiction of the school, either in or out of the classroom” (Sheets, 1996; Morris & Howard,
ASP was a major component to the overall success of CPA. Morris & Howard are saying that In School Suspension provides another alternative between sending unruly kids back to class and suspending them from school (Morris & Howard, 2003).

The difference between ASP and In-School Suspension (ISS) is that all services are given to the student that they require. For example, students will receive all special education services, Title 1 services, and ESL services. Special services are an essential component to the ASP room. No group mobilizes quite like special education. It is imperative that special education students receive their services, for if they do not, the day spent in ASP will be counted as a suspension day.

Short (1989) identified four common characteristics of successful ISS programs:

Students were isolated with no interaction with other ISS students or others in the school.

1. Students ate their lunches in isolation in the cafeteria after other students had completed lunch.
2. The average length of assignment to ISS was three to five days.
3. Talking was not allowed and privileges were restricted.
4. Regular classroom teachers sent assignments for ISS students to complete. (Morris & Howard, 2003, p. 157)

The logic of CPA is that if the school is going to use a suspension day on the student and it is going to be counted as one of the out of school suspension days
regardless, then the student should truly be out of school. This way, the day does not count against the school. In a survey of teachers who were at CPA prior to 2007, each of them noted the effectiveness of the ASP room and cited it as one of the major reasons for the CPA turnaround. The below graph will show the effectiveness of ASP.

* Retrieved from power school data.
Many administrators wonder how ASP is this effective without teachers abusing the room. There have to be rules of use of ASP for it to be effective. The first rule is that if you have an unruly student, you as the teacher should use all the tools you learned in college to deal with a behavioral situation. Once you have exhausted all methods to get the student under control, you call for the principal or you send the student(s) to the Black Bench. The Black Bench was simply a bench where students had to wait to be seen by the principal. Much of the discipline is done while the students are waiting. Students fear the unknown and they do not know what the administrator is going to do when he finds them on the bench. The bench itself began as a pink bench but students would sometimes soil themselves worrying about what was going to happen. Eventually a waterproof covering was placed on the bench that happened to be black. Through the years the legend of the bench has grown. Students do not know if they are going to be put in ASP, suspended, expelled or asked to leave CPA.

Teachers at that point explain the situation to the administrator then they “wash their hands of it.” When teachers call in an administrator for such a takeover it means that you also forfeit the right to critique what happens to the student. The student could be sent back to class (however, they never are) or the student could be given ASP, suspension, or expulsion. No matter what the decision is, the teacher has forfeited his/her right to critique. As a rule of thumb, the administration does not send a student back to class after an altercation.
In these cases there is obviously a problem between the student and teacher and no one will benefit from having the two in close proximity. Another important element is that no teacher can send a student to ASP. Only an administrator can send a student to ASP. This keeps the teachers from “filling up the room” if they have had a bad day.

The ASP room was highly effective. Students grew to hate the ASP room. Certainly there were complaints filed with the state, but when the Department of Education came out to see the simple room they were amazed by how quaint it was. There were no handcuffs or chains and all the students were perfectly safe. The room was very effective over the years; behavioral issues no longer existed at CPA. ASP once had violent offenders and now the worst offender is usually there for not turning in homework.

Finally, the academics in 2007-2008 were non-existent. The staff was preoccupied with teaching the Mosaica curriculum instead of teaching the standards. Knowing that behavior had to be resolved first, the researcher piloted the Blitz™ in the first year. Prior experience had taught the researcher that to develop the program slowly or the staff would eventually rebel. The researcher instituted the academic program with seven teachers at first. During the first year, those teachers’ test scores rose and the teachers received their academic bonuses that year. By year two, all the teachers wanted to do The Blitz™. CPA had a performance index of 69 after the first year and pilot program. However, the program set in motion a change that increased the scores to 83% by year two and more importantly, the teachers were
teaching and assessing the standards and were not living in fear of being fired for not teaching the Paragon Curriculum “with fidelity.” By the end of year one, many students had left CPA for schools that were less strict but their seats were filled with students who thrived in the more structured atmosphere and wanted a bigger academic challenge.

2008-2009 – Line in the Sand

2008 began with increased enrollment from 515 to 550 students. However, of the 515 who had been at CPA, a large number of the unruly students had decided to leave because of the increased behavioral policies. One of the most effective tools with this change was the dress code. First and foremost, just enforcing what was already there was a big step. Second, CPA removed anything that would be stratifying in regards to race or religion. Next, CPA made sure to look at shoes. The prior rule had been that students could only wear brown, black, or blue dress shoes. However, that was not enforced and students were wearing multicolored tennis shoes. CPA kept the dress shoe rule and added that students could wear tennis shoes, but they had to be completely (laces, soles and all) black or white. The parents felt like CPA had given students more freedoms by allowing athletic shoes, but in fact CPA had removed one of the bigger problems. Colored shoes can be a distraction and they draw from attention from the uniform.

Visitors to the school could not tell that the demographic makeup was 95% free and reduced lunch by looking at the students. Further, there was no issue with brands or the jealousy associated with those brands. There was no association with
gangs and colors. Next the dress code removed hoods and cargo pockets: anywhere a student could hide a weapon or drugs (and there were many cases of each in 2007).

Finally, the dress code looked at hairstyles. There could be no coloring, shavings, or words etched into hair. CPA sold this by saying, “we want your student to get attention from academic success, not because they have blue hair. They are beautiful how they are born; we don’t want them altered.”

With all of the rule changes, the timing was everything. CPA made sure that they started sending home the changes in January. The researcher made sure that CPA had the backing of the board, teacher support, and that reminders were sent home every month for six months. The students who wanted to go to school for a fashion show simply did not come back. However, a very special thing happened: seemingly, for every poorly behaved student who left, a very mannerly, high-achieving student searching for a safe environment in which to learn in replaced the student that left. The following is an actual copy of the CPA dress code:
Student Dress Code; Updated May 2015

While Fashions change, the reason for being in school does not. Students are in school to learn. Any fashion (dress, accessory, or hairstyle) that disrupts the education process or presents a safety risk will not be permitted. Personal expression is permitted within these general guidelines.

Students are required to wear school uniforms daily. Shirts must be solid white, grey, yellow, or any shade of blue (Never sleeveless, including picture day). Shirts must have a collar or turtleneck, logos no larger than a quarter, and may be polo or oxford style. Columbus Preparatory Academy logo is always allowed (unless on a hooded sweatshirt). Students must wear shirts tucked in at all times.

V-neck, cardigan, fleece, pullover that has a zipper at the top, vest or crewneck sweater or sweatshirt may be worn over the collared or turtleneck shirt and must be solid blue, white or grey in color. These items are not to be below hip level. No pouch pockets or hoods will be allowed on any garment. NO HOODIES. Students may wear jackets to school to protect them from the weather, but must be removed once the student is in the classroom. Should the occasion arise that a room is cold, CPA administrator will allow jackets to be worn.

• Shirts that are never allowed are anything with a rebel flag, Fubu, Roca wear, Ecko, or Phat Farm, Sean John, Paco, Pink, etc. Please ask if you have questions.

Exception: Turtleneck sweaters may be worn without a collared shirt underneath. Students must wear shirts tucked in at all times.

Slacks, shorts, and Capri’s must be solid khaki or navy in color. Logos no larger than a quarter on the pocket will be acceptable. No stitching or jeweled designs on the pockets. The following items will not be allowed: Jean material, cargo pocket pants, multi-colored and patterned leggings, parachute pants, windbreakers, fad fabrics, spandex, lycra, leather, wet look, mesh, sheer, metallic, fishnet, frayed hems, stripes, MUDD handprint, “lace up” on ankles or waist pants (drawstring waist is okay). Leggings, spandex and tights are not to be worn by themselves. Snug/tight pants are not appropriate. Pants must be worn at the waist on top of the hips.

Girls may also wear skirts, skorts, or jumpers in navy or khaki. Girl’s leggings, stockings or knee-highs should all be one color of white, brown, blue or black. No designs please. They must be worn with skirts, skorts or shorts.
Pants, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be worn with the waistline at the waist level. No hip-huggers, low rise, sagging pants, or gauchos. Shorts, skorts, skirts, jumpers and shorts must not be any shorter than 1 inch above the knee. Proper underwear must be worn, and should not be visible. All hats are to be removed upon entering the building. Other items such as bandannas, scarves, sweatbands, combs, rakes, picks, or rollers are not to be worn as clothing. All outerwear, such as coats, jackets, oversized shirts, wind shirts; hooded sweatshirts, hats, etc. are not to be worn inside during the school day. **Students must wear shirts tucked in at all times.**

A belt must be worn with slacks, skirts, skorts, or shorts that have belt loops and the belt must be visible. If clothing item has belt loops, the belt loops may not be removed, belt must be worn. Shirts should remain tucked during the school day for student and teacher safety.

**Shoes (including dress shoes) must be solid black, brown, navy blue, or white, including laces, soles and logos.** Tennis shoes may be worn everyday as long as they are solid white or black. **Shoes must be worn at all times and should be tied if designed to do so. NO Flip Flops. “Skate shoes” (HEELIES) are never allowed with or without wheels, NO crocs. All shoes must cover the toes and heels-no sandals. **Shoes must be tied appropriately, no skateboard knots.** If the shoe has eyelets, there should be a shoestring in it, properly tied. Same color laces as shoes. This includes picture day and field trips, unless otherwise noted. Non-jewelry chains including, but not limited to, chains attached to wallets or purses may not be worn. No chains or dangling belts. Students should not have writing, or temporary tattoos on their skin or clothes. **Piercing jewelry may be worn only in ears.** Rubber band bracelets, colored bands and bracelets/necklaces with words/logos are not allowed. Any jewelry deemed harmful to the wearer or distracting to other students in the classroom must be removed.

**No hair spiking or unnaturally colored hair (i.e. green, blue, orange).** Students are not allowed to have words, designs or parts cut in to their hair. Mohawks nor faux hawks are never allowed. Highlights and multiple colors that are not natural are not allowed. For example, if you are a blonde, then black streaks or red streaks are not natural. Again, any colors of highlights are NOT allowed. Any kind of BRAID, WEAVE, EXTENSIONS or FEATHERS that are a different color than your natural hair are NOT allowed. They must match your natural hair color perfectly. Any type of accessory that is supposed to represent hair is NOT allowed. If a student’s hair stands more than 4 inches off of their scalp then the hair needs to be pulled down in some way.

Clothing or accessory with obscene language, pictures or statements pertaining to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex or violence is not permitted. No clothing with holes or tears. Hems must be finished (no cut-offs or frayed hinges). Sunglasses may not be worn in the building (exceptions allowed for medical reasons).

**CPA shirts may be worn at any time, unless there is a hood attached.**

**Should the student come to school in attire outside of these requirements we will:**
1. Call home for replacements.
2. Try to find the student acceptable replacements from our extra uniforms.
3. A.S.P.

**Exceptions:**
If a teacher is conducting a special activity that requires special attire, the staff member will seek prior approval from the administration and contact the parents in advance in writing about the event and type of clothing. Special days may be designated as school spirit days.
On these days a school or CPA team T-shirt or sweatshirt may be worn. Students must be in compliance with the rest of the dress code.

If any type of clothing worn in building leads to confusion or misunderstanding, the administration will make the final decision as to the clothing’s appropriateness. The administration reserves the right to exercise discretion concerning individual physical needs (weight, issues, etc.)

**Dress Down Policy:**
When dress down days are allowed, please follow these guidelines.
1. Dress code shoes are still required.
2. Plain blue jeans, no designs or holes allowed. No colored jeans or jeggings allowed.
3. Plain color or patterned shirt. Cartoon and college shirts are allowed.
4. Students may always dress up on dress down days.

**Procedures for Dress Code Violations**

**First Offense:** Sent to the school principal and/or to the office to change and notify parents. If dress issue cannot be resolved during the school day, student will be in ASP for remainder of that day.

**Second Offense:** 1 day ASP

**Third Offense:** 2 days ASP

**Fourth Offense:** 3 days ASP

If a student borrows clothing from the school office the following will apply:
1. Student will have to sign out the item.
2. A habitual borrower will constitute four or more trips and will result in ASP.

Students who are representing Columbus Preparatory Academy at an official function or public event may be required to follow specific dress requirements,

**There will be special days to dress up, including picture days and dances. Dresses, suits, sweaters, etc. are appropriate. More specific details on dress code for these events will be sent home closer to their scheduled dates.**

Incredibly, the dress code had a profound effect on the type of student who was being attracted to CPA. Students who were concerned with expressing themselves through fashion and who sought attention with how outrageous their hair or dress was did not return to CPA. However, students and parents who were interested solely in academic achievement sought out CPA.

The new student’s ability coupled with the teacher’s growing experience and improvement of teaching and tracking the state standards resulted in higher
achievement levels for CPA. Furthermore, this strict dress code allowed the researcher to reward students for their attendance and academic achievement. Dress down days have been an effective way to increase attendance, which is an indicator on the school report card. On the school report card there are fifteen indicators and one of them is that the school maintains a 93% attendance rate throughout the year.

From 2007-2010, the researcher would tell the students that if they average 97% attendance or better throughout the week, they would receive a dress down day on Fridays. As the demographic changed, the truancy problem decreased. Eventually attendance was addressed with a game where each classroom could spell the words cougars (CPA mascot) for perfect attendance, no tardy students and no one in ASP. If the class met those qualifications seven days in a row, they would spell cougars and receive dress down and/or blitz points.

Finally, as academic achievement increased, CPA developed the “Ring of Honor.” The Ring of Honor designation recognized the students who scored perfect on the state test. Should a student not miss one question on the Ohio State Test in a given year, which students would get their name hung in the gym in a designated area? Their name remains there as long as the gym stands. The same students received dress down for the entire year. The special designation was noticeable and the students were treated like academic royalty and that was a major motivating factor for student academic achievement.

Although this chapter deal mainly with behavior, it is important to speak about academic improvement each of these years. As one can see, there is a direct
correlation between improved behavior and improved academics. Chapter three deals with only academic policies, ideas and changes that occurred at CPA, but it is important to see how each change in behavioral expectations changes academic achievement. Academically, the teachers who did not participate in the pilot were clamoring to learn the Blitz™ method of teaching standards, assessing standards with short cycle scrimmages™, and tracking the results in the data tracker™. The excitement created from the improved test scores made for an easy sell and there was 100% buy in of the program. With the new program, great teaching, and improved behavior, CPA’s performance index scores soared 14 points from a 69% to an 83% in just one year. Seemingly overnight, CPA had become the poster child for charter schools in Ohio, and had removed itself from Academic Emergency and had moved into the Continuous Improvement category, skipping the Academic Watch category completely. A side effect from the success was that Mosaica did not need to focus on CPA academic improvement; therefore they did not force us into using their professional development. CPA would be able to conduct their own professional development and concentrate on what was relevant to their individual needs. Conducting their own professional development and removing Mosaica’s experts was a huge motivating factor for teachers to improve their academic scores. Indeed, winning is the cure for all that ails you.

It was during the summer of 2009 that the rush to be the best began. CPA had set a goal of 85% and most of the teachers were disappointed that they did not hit the goal, but they were pleased with the results. That summer, when everyone was
celebrating CPA’s success, one of the other principals in the city made a statement that would propel CPA to Excellent with Distinction. Cornerstone was the school and the principal was the one who made the disparaging remarks. Cornerstone is located in a very affluent area of Columbus called Westerville. Due to strange annexations and property lines, the school fell within the Columbus City district, but was so close to the border that all of the children came from New Albany and Westerville. Cornerstone had an enrollment of 54 kids KG-fifth. As a result, only 15 students in third grade were being counted for scores and they had scored a 92.7%. The score should have been much higher, but what people did not know within the Mosaica organization was how data was checked in each school and how it could be manipulated. In later years, as students and accountability increased for Cornerstone, their performance index went down to an 85.5. However, on this day, the Cornerstone principal said, “Congratulations, 83% is a really good score; that is about the best they will ever do considering where the students are from and who they are.”

The researcher can remember that conversation like it was yesterday. The response was, “this will be the last time Cornerstone ever outscores CPA.” To this day, eight years later, Cornerstone has never outscored CPA again.
Table 9

*CPA Vs. Cornerstone Performance Index Scores 2010-2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CPA</th>
<th>Cornerstone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>88.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>112.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>114.6</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>115.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
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It became an annual event to see by how much CPA would beat Cornerstone. The teachers all gather to celebrate. The “bad blood” and competition were a very important chapter in the history of CPA, when motivation and goal setting became an important part of school achievement and the overall culture of CPA.

It is important for every principal to set a goal. Every hero must have a conflict. Every Luke Skywalker must have his Death Star. In following years, our goals numerically changed and so did our opponents. In 2010, when CPA beat Cornerstone 92-85, Cornerstone was still presented with Mosaica School of the Year. That motivated the staff even more. The next year CPA asked, “What do you have to do to get Mosaica School of the Year; score a 100?” Therefore, CPA’s goal in 2011 became a 100 and to win Mosaica School of the Year. CPA did just that.
scored a 102.2 and won Mosaica School of the Year and was the first charter school in the state of Ohio to reach the rank of Excellent with Distinction.

Each year since, CPA had a goal and a slogan. In fact, the slogan idea came from an unfortunate event in February of 2009 where the researcher fell while skating and suffered a broken arm. So many students asked what happened that finally the researcher wrote “no excuses” on the cast. “No Excuses” has been the main slogan of CPA since then. After 2011, the staff decided that they did not just want to be the top charter school in Ohio, and did not just want to be Excellent with Distinction. The CPA staff made a pact that CPA would be the number one ranked school in the state.

CPA wanted to outscore the affluent districts. CPA wanted to be the number one academic ranked school overall. Staff members looked up every school in the state, especially the local affluent districts. Dublin was number one at the time with a PI of 107%; Hilliard was 103%; Upper Arlington was 105%; and Olentangy was 104%. CPA set its goal at 107 in 2012. In another turn of events, a local district, hired away one of the CPA teachers in September. That was not a problem and everyone was happy that the teacher had found a higher paying job. However, when they introduced him to the other teachers in the district, they commented on how the “little poor school of CPA was able to score a 102.2 and that was amazing; we don’t know how you did it.” The school district was actually trying to give CPA a compliment, but the comment was twisted into the idea that they were taking pity on CPA. In 2012 you could hear “Beat Dublin” or “Beat JA” throughout our school, and, in fact, CPA did beat them both. CPA scored a 111.1%, Dublin scored a 107%
again, and JA scored a 102%. CPA did not realize it, but that was the first year that they were ranked number one in the state of Ohio academically.

The 2012 – 2013 year was interesting. CPA was #1 and there was no clear opponent or enemy. The students still yelled, “Beat Dublin,” even though most of them did not even know where Dublin was. There was a rumor that the numbering system (0-120%) was going away and that the state was going to a lettering system (A-F) for ranking schools, as well as changing the language from the Academic Emergency – Excellent with Distinction categories. Therefore, CPA decided that they would forego the prior goal of a 114 and shoot for the perfect 120.

Sixteen of the teachers were pregnant during that year, including the assistant principal. Many teachers were unhappy at the end of that year because the researcher pushed so hard. Regardless, CPA scored a 113 and was ranked the number one school in the state for a second year in a row. School year 2013 was an important year though, because it gave rise to the rally cry, “120!”

2009-2010 – Fixing things from the inside

The 2009-2010 school year was the third year of the experiment with the researcher. Typically, principals, coaches or business heads will either succeed or fail in the third year of their tenure. CPA teachers, administration, staff, students and parents were in full alignment. CPA had set a goal of a 92 PI and had the right combination of students and teachers to reach their goal. Ninety percent of the students had bought into the Blitz™ system and likewise, 90% of the teachers had as well. CPA was well on their way to outscoring Cornerstone and becoming the top
school in the Mosaica system as well as being the top charter school in Ohio and ranked Excellent with Distinction. There was a much bigger problem coming this year than academics or behavior.

Administration and staff recognized that there was a lack of holistic programs at CPA. In 2007, CPA had a basketball team and that was all. There was a 7th grade student who could dunk a basketball and CPA won the city basketball tournament. However, with the increase in expectations of academics and behavior, many of our best athletes left CPA. With Ohio being the “Wild, Wild, West of charter schools, all organizations related to schools were also without regulation. When stating that 90% of charter schools are not legitimate, one could say 99% of the charter athletic associations are not legitimate.

CPA had joined one league where a husband and wife group would schedule games and the wife would teach a life lesson before the game. The researcher had questioned this group a number of times about the fee money CPA was asked to pay, but received no answers. The researcher then explained to them that they could use the gym but no other part of the facility. The wife disregarded the request and they were found in one of the classrooms and it had been damaged. After a heated exchange the researcher kicked the group out of the school. That night, the husband had a wreck and was found with over $25,000 in embezzled money from various charter schools. There simply was not enough scrutiny given to these groups that began organizations. Many charter schools had to learn a hard lesson, and the
researcher gained a deep appreciation for the traditional public school athletic associations such as KHSAA and OHSAA.

Detractors of charter schools like to say that charter schools are not real schools. In other words, charters are not legitimate. For ten years the researcher has tried to make decisions and instill checks and balances used in traditional public schools to establish that legitimacy. However, when any charter school is shut down for mishandling money, or mishandling a student discipline situation, all charter schools suffer. Currently, all charter schools are being scrutinized because of the funding scandal with the largest e-school in the state.

In another legitimacy threatening situation, the CPA lunch director approached the researcher in the fall of 2009 wanting to start a cheerleading team. The lunch director seemed trustworthy enough and had been a hire of our regional vice president (RVP) at the time. The RVP and the lunch director were old friends so the program was allowed. At the time, CPA did not have any active sports teams but the lunch director explained that the cheerleaders would compete in their own competitions.

By November of 2009 the researcher was named Regional Vice President for the Columbus and Mansfield area. While that added two other schools to watch, it was a blessing in disguise as it allowed the researcher to be priveledged to information that had previously not been available. Soon after being named RVP an accountant filed a complaint against the lunch director; not for finance issues, but for speaking with her daughter about inappropriate subject matter in front of children.
At the CPA campus, the upstairs floors housed the financial hub of the state. Quite often there were accountants intermingling with school staff as well as students. This was a very dangerous situation. Furthermore, the accountant, the lunch director and the former RVP were “old friends”. Later it was found out that the accountant had been diagnosed with some form of psychosis that required medication. What is worse, the accountant had recently enrolled his daughter (later learned that it was not his daughter). Soon the accountant “blew the whistle “that the lunch director was using funds from the school to support her cheerleading group and that lunch funds were not accounted for. Apparently the lunch director was selling extra items at lunch (state funded lunches) and keeping a petty cash box that had not been approved. Moreover, the lunch director was depositing money into a fundraising account that was for the school, not cheerleading, then spending not only what she had deposited but also what the school had raised for other things like the fall festival and field trips.

Immediately the lunch director was transferred to another school and soon after she moved away before charges could be filed. In a strange turn of events, the accountant filed a number of complaints on the school with the authorizer asking for the researcher and a teacher to be removed from their positions because his daughter was caught kissing another girl and because the lunch director was “let go”. Later it was learned that the accountant was receiving help from the former regional vice president on how to complain and who to complain to. After receiving a number of complaints about his coworkers, Mosaica realized that the accountant might not be entirely stable. The accountant helped the researcher uncover mishandling of federal
lunch funds by the lunch director, so he was both helpful and harmful. In either case, the accountant, the lunch director and the former RVP threatened the legitimacy of CPA. While this event seems trivial and isolated, this sort of issue happens often in schools both traditional public and public charter and casts a shadow of mistrust in the school system.

What can readers gain from the 2009-2010 year at CPA? Keep a very close eye on the exchange of money; nothing will get someone in trouble faster than finance. There should be no one in a school that has not been extremely vetted. Finally, never take someone’s word about another’s trustworthiness. If you are a new administrator, especially in a new town or school district, you may never know how deep the roots grow with employee’s relationships.

2010-2011 – SPED cleanup and push for 100

Special education is a needed and important part of schools. Up until the early 90’s, special education students were treated well but they were not really included in the everyday life of the other students in the school. Not long before that, special education students were shunned or encouraged to not even attend regular school. At the turn of the century, clinical names were given to these students such as idiot or imbecile, depending on the severity of their disability. Well into the 1960’s these students were not given a free and equal education, and even into the nineties, special education students were not really part of the student body and often isolated.

During the 1990’s something changed. Inclusion was introduced to schools and special education students came into the mainstream classroom and the program
was seen as a revolution to education. Now in modern education, no teacher or administrator would ever imagine treating special education students unfairly. There is a saying in modern schools that “no one mobilizes like special education parents and supporters”. One misstep and a school will find themselves in a litany of meetings and paperwork, or worse, sanctioned and shut down. The playing field was leveled and fair and equal education was offered to all students.

Inclusion was a great idea in the beginning. Place two or three special education students into a regular education classroom and typically the special education student will rise up to the level of their counterparts with special help and accommodations from the regular education teacher as well as the special education teacher. However, there were two things that began to happen. Educators, counselors and schedule makers started to push the ratio. Instead of having three special education students in a classroom and 22 regular education students, the ratio was starting to look more like twelve special education students and thirteen regular education students in a classroom. The result was that the speed of teaching slowed down, the teacher was overwhelmed with accommodations and no real teaching was occurring in the classroom.

The hard truth was that the students with disabilities were inadvertently bringing the regular education students down to their level as opposed to being the other way around. Why did this happen? State testing is really to blame as to why teachers and counselors began scheduling this way. Typically, each state assesses certain subjects in a year’s time. For arguments sake, let’s say this is a third grade
classroom in Ohio and they are testing Math and Reading. The phenomena that has been happening is that regular education students are placed in an ability classroom for reading and for math, so there are typically little to no special education accommodations in the upper level classrooms. The real problem occurs in history and science. Because of scheduling snafus, all of the special education caseload will be placed into one history or science class. Scheduling such as this causes the teacher in many cases to have to split the class, where the regular education students may be taking a test and the teacher is required to give over ten students’ accommodations in the hallway.

Accommodations could range from reading, scribing, extended time and modified tests and assignments. Essentially, scheduling has destroyed the ability of the teacher to run an effective classroom. Furthermore, since history and science are not tested in third grade, there is little to no help from the special education teachers in those subjects as the SPED teachers are focusing on the tested subjects. This is an issue that the staff of CPA tried to avoid. The 2010-2011 school year is when this issue became a prominent problem.

In the 2010-2011 school year, CPA had set a goal to score a 100 PI and to become the first charter school in Ohio to be ranked Excellent with Distinction. Through very careful data analyses using the Blitz™ data tracking system, CPA found that most of the students affecting their score were special education students. For years the CPA staff had been told that special education students had a different scale that they were judged upon academically. The theory was that if a special
education student scored at one level, they would be counted for the next academic level up. For example, if a SPED student scored Basic they would count as proficient. There is no differentiation; students are scored the same no matter their educational classification. Vertical shifts in scores were only true in the case of students who were on an alternative assessment plan. In fact, special education students who scored a basic were not counted as proficient. The special education students were scored the same as any regular education student.

In 2007, the staff of CPA drew a line in the sand with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) issue at CPA. There were 100 students out of 500 in 2007 that were on IEPs however only 30 of those students were legitimately registered with the state constituting eight percent of CPA’s total population. When looking at CPA’s demographics there has been a six percent reduction in SPED students from 2007-2016, but most of the students who were on IEP’s were not correctly reported to the state nor were their IEPs legitimately written.

What was worse, the company who serviced CPA’s Special Education (SPED) population had made all IEPs due on May 30th. Making all the IEP reviews to be done on the same day is impossible not to mention criminal. The CPA staff spent most of the spring cleaning up that issue as well as graduating students off the IEPs whenever possible. In Ohio, parents have the misunderstanding that if their student is on an IEP, they pass on to the next grade no matter the circumstance. The truth of the matter is that every IEP contains goals, both academic and social that a student must meet and if they don’t meet those goals they can be retained.
From 2007-2009 CPA retained a great deal of special education students because they and their parents were convinced that they did not have to do anything in order to pass and they did not meet the goals agreed upon by the teachers and parents during the IEP. The students and their parents had a rude awakening when CPA retained them. Of course, CPA told the parents in writing in October, January and March that retention was a possibility, but typically parents did not listen and of course they were highly upset when their student was retained. The result of this was mass exodus of special education students from CPA. The number of special education students dwindled to sixteen students in the entire school. There were lot of fights and legal paper work to sift through, but CPA was following the special education law to the letter.

It is said that special education has gone from being an advocate for students with disabilities to a bully in the education system, and many would argue that it is the biggest issue in American education along with behavior. In 2010-2011, CPA dealt with three very distinct issues that had to be solved before they could become the most elite community school in the state.

One student we will call John, was on an IEP for basically being lethargic. John was a brilliant child, but he had many social issues that seemed to be the result of his environment. John’s mother was a former special education teacher for Columbus Public Schools and she knew the rules and her rights. When John tried, he was one of the top students in his class, however, John’s IEP basically allowed him to
get by on very little effort. Throughout the course of 2010-2011, CPA received 14 complaints about John’s IEP.

John’s mother was terminally ill and all she wanted was to know that he would be taken care of. John’s father was much more cooperative and explained that when John’s mother passed, he was going to take John to another district and hold him more accountable so he could be successful on his own. Instead of fighting with John’s mother, CPA became empathetic with her issue and asked her what she wanted for John. Eventually, CPA lightened the load that John was expected to do and gave him his own aide who would assist him all day long. John did not like the special attention, but it was needed to appease John’s mother. A few months later John’s mother passed away and true to his word, John’s father took John to another district. It is a terrible statement about special education, but some of the services really handcuff schools from getting better. CPA was able to better address all students after John left.

Another student who needed considerable attention was Jeremy. Jeremy also had a parent who knew how to work the system and to get every form of disorder diagnosed for her son. The parent had an older son who was a legend in the Columbus City School district for his malevolence and had been placed in a special school for behavior. Jeremy had been convicted of four felonies, but because he was a minor Jeremy was allowed to continue in public schools. Jeremy needed a resource room of which CPA did not have. Because of the limited funding and lack of physical space, CPA did not have a resource room. If CPA staff suggested to
Jeremy’s parent that she needed to find a school with a resource room, the parent would file a complaint. Should CPA not be able to find a resolution, the school would need to create a resource room for Jeremy, causing the school to lose a grade level to create the room. Creating a resource room would cost 50 student enrollments, disrupt the way the school was structured, operated and maintained and may cost teacher jobs. 50 students would lose the opportunity to attend the elite school all because of one student.

The Jeremy situation occurred because a mother was using her right to free choice in schools and CPA was in the middle of a very delicate position where providing accommodations for a child may cost the school grade levels and may cost teacher’s jobs. The parent did not like her home district so she was willing to leave Jeremy at CPA even though CPA did not have a resource room. The district schools were much better equipped to handle a student with Jeremy’s disabilities, but the mother refused to see that aspect. CPA decided again to use a personal aide while Jeremy stayed in school. Jeremy was physically aggressive with the aide and with the special education teachers. Eventually, two teachers and an aide quit CPA because they did not feel safe. Of course CPA wanted to expel Jeremy but he was protected under the disability provided in his IEP.

The eventual solution was that Jeremy was in 6th grade and there was a physical space issue. There were 65 spots available in 6th grade and only 40 spots available in 7th. Enrollment was not by design. Per student square footage regulations and the layout of the school, space was limited. CPA was originally
designed to be K-5, so as rooms were added, CPA simply filled what was available. CPA followed both authorizer guidelines and fire marshal parameters when filling rooms. Should all 65 students re-enroll on the same day a lottery was used to choose the 40 who get in. However, if forty re-enrollments are received and others do not re-enroll on the same day, those with late enrollments are automatically placed on a waiting list. Ultimately, Jeremy did not turn in his re-enrollment form that his mother had entrusted him with and all the spots were filled. Of course Jeremy’s mom argued that it was due to his disability that he forgot to turn in his form but after hours of review by ODE and the authorizer it was deemed that CPA followed compliance protocol and that Jeremy would have to find another school. The resources that were saved from Jeremy’s departure once again allowed the staff of CPA to concentrate on students and service them better improving CPA’s behavior and academic performance.

The final family that was a major obstacle to CPA reaching its top performance was actually a very intelligent group of educators. A family joined CPA in July of 2010 with twin sisters. Both young ladies were intelligent, but one sister was more gifted in traditional schoolwork while the other sister needed a lot of help in expressing her intelligence. The twins, (we will call them Emily and Enid), joined the CPA Kindergarten class in the fall of 2010. The father of the girls was a teacher in a local school district. However, the father thought so poorly about the school district that he decided that the girls needed to attend CPA. The reputation of CPA was growing in Columbus and CPA was considered to be an elite public charter
school. The mother of the twins was a doctorate of nursing, so she was also an educator. In addition, the mother was well versed in the rights of special education students and she had access to doctors that would diagnose whatever disability she chose.

It was apparent even in kindergarten that Emily was behind academically compared to Enid. Once the idea was suggested to the parents that Emily could use another year, (perhaps in 1st grade), the parents became irate. Initially the parents attacked the teachers. The parents complained on the kindergarten teacher, the 1st grade teacher, the 2nd grade teacher and the 3rd grade teacher. Each time, the teachers gave notice that Emily was not performing at grade level.

Emily was being evaluated each year for a disability. Each time Emily scored just above the cut off line for eligibility. Each year, Emily would fail most of her classes, parents were put on notice of retention, but with the help of accommodations, Emily would pull good enough state test scores to pass on to the next grade level avoiding what the parents feared; separation of the twins.

In a strange turn of events, CPA had a contracted psychologist who was sharing information between schools and had to be released from service. The new psychologist evaluated Emily once again for a disability and she scored just above the line for services. The parents were allowed to get a second opinion at the cost of the school. The parents chose to use the psychologist that had been released by CPA. The psychologist found that Emily scored just below the line for services. The student was diagnosed with a mild form of dyslexia. CPA had the right to get a third
opinion but the parents brought in child advocates who argued that CPA was over testing the student and causing undue pressure on the child. Eventually a teacher came forward and said that the child could benefit from the services and with CPA being a teacher first institution, the IEP was created and Emily began receiving Orton-Gillingham services.

CPA provided services for Emily for the next 3 years but the same result was occurring. Emily’s grades were still too low to pass to the next grade. Emily would officially be retained but she always passed the state test with accommodations. Three more years resulted in three more years of complaints on teachers and administration. By the twin’s 5th grade year, both girls were failing classes. Fifth grade in Ohio is the most heavily tested grade and the most academically scrutinized grade according to proficiency standards. To reach a passing grade in 5th grade, students must score 10-15% higher on their standardized exams.

The twins each received retention notices and the parents verbally attacked the teachers claiming that the teachers were ruining their lives. Administration ended the parent teacher conference by citing that parents had broken protocol on addressing teachers. Immediately the parents requested a review of the IEP for Emily and requested an evaluation for Enid. Enid was considered a gifted student, but because she was not putting in the effort and was failing a class, the parents wanted her evaluated for a learning disability. The IEP meetings lasted 7 hours and administration refused to send the teacher who had been berated by the parents in the
prior meeting. CPA was required to have a teacher in attendance but it did not have to be the teacher whose class the students were failing.

Eventually the child advocates convinced the parents to take the students to a new school because the parents had complained on 8 teachers in 6 years and the girls had developed the attitude that if they were to fail a class their parents would just complain. After this family left, CPA was able to better concentrate on students who had legitimate disabilities and once again CPA’s special needs scores improved.

2011-2012 – The Perfect Year

In the 2011/2012 school year the stars seemed to align. CPA had just scored a 102.2 PI on the OAA, becoming the first charter school to be ranked Excellent with Distinction. Most schools would not have introspected how to improve. After receiving an Excellent with Distinction ranking, many schools may have stayed with the status quo, but CPA “hit the proverbial gas”. CPA increased the academic expectations to any student scoring proficient or less could be retained (dependent on teacher recommendation). This sounds harsh, but a proficient is the equivalent of a 60% on the PI scale.

CPA sought to eliminate any behavioral issues. CPA had reached a level of performance that would require great effort and focus to improve on and there simply was not time for behavioral issues. CPA’s academic status had created a demand for the product and the waiting list for students to attend CPA began growing each year. The following is each year with its respective waiting list;
Table 10

*Student Waiting List by Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Waiting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CPA Powerschool

CPA presented a new student behavior and consequences chart to the board of directors along with new achievement goals. The following consequence list allowed CPA to essentially eliminate major behavioral issues within the school. Parents abided by the rules because getting into CPA was so hard with the enrollment rush, they held their children accountable for abiding by the rules. After this behavior chart was passed, typically the worst behavior was a student not doing their homework. Furthermore, when a more egregious behavior occurred, parents simply came and withdrew their children in fear of expulsion. It should be noted however that CPA did not expel one child from 2007-2016.
### Table 11

**Student Behavior & Consequences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Description</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Offense</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dress Code Violation</td>
<td>Sent to office to change; Parents notified; ASP if not corrected</td>
<td>1 Day ASP</td>
<td>2 Days ASP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defiance/Insubordination/horseplay</td>
<td>5 Days ASP</td>
<td>5 Days ASP; 1 Day OSS</td>
<td>5 Days ASP; 3 Days OSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusing to Complete Homework</td>
<td>1 Day ASP</td>
<td>3 Days ASP</td>
<td>5 Days ASP; 1 Day OSS; Parent Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying/Intimidation/Harassment</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy/Excessive Tardies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive Language/Profanity</td>
<td>3 Day ASP</td>
<td>5 Days ASP</td>
<td>10 Days ASP; 1 Day OSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Aggression, Fighting, Threatening Harm towards Staff or Students</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent Exposure</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spitting/Biting/Kicking</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving School Grounds without Permission</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession or Threat of Illegal Drugs/Deadly Weapons/Bomb Threat</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing and Vandalism</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Release from ASP:

1. Student release from ASP is at the discretion of Mr. Carr
2. Student with homework violations will be released when all assigned work has been completed.
3. Students with IEP’s will be provided all accommodations detailed in their plans.
There are years that administrators look back on fondly and 2012 was that year for CPA. The school administrator won principal of the year for the entire state of Ohio and a sixth-grade teacher won teacher of the year for Ohio. CPA not only reached their goal of a 107 but they surpassed it by scoring a 111.1 PI and becoming the top ranked academic school in the state. 2012 was a very special year at CPA and the increased behavioral expectations had a great deal to do with it.

**2012-2013 – The Push**

Coming off the great victory of bypassing the 107 PI goal and becoming the top ranked academic school in the entire state of Ohio, there were no other schools to beat. Within 5 years, CPA had brought themselves out of Academic Emergency and closure status and had ascended to the very top and had scored higher than any school in the history of Ohio. The plan was to set the goal at 114, but there was rumor that the grading system and the OAA test was going to be replaced. The researcher decided that the time was now to reach for the ultimate goal of a perfect 120 PI score.

Behavior issues were no longer a problem at CPA. With the new #1 status CPA did not have to recruit students. Once the newspapers published the results, families were lining up to be part of CPA. Waiting lists grew and parents were reinforcing at home how students should act. At this point, the biggest behavioral issues were students coming from other districts that didn’t understand that homework was not optional.

Along with homework, CPA began every day with a writing prompt. Students would come to class and were expected to write an extended response question that
had to be completed with a DWB box as a graphic organizer. CPA had analyzed that students had approximately seven minutes to complete each extended response question (ERQ) on the state test. In August, CPA would allow the students to take 15 minutes to complete the ERQ but as the school year progressed, the time available went down. By October, students were expected to be finished in 12 minutes, by January it was 9 minutes and by March the students had to be finished in 7 minutes. If students could not meet this requirement, teachers sent the students to the office where the principal would escort the students to ASP to finish the ERQ. Completion or lack there of the ERQ was typically the only reason why any students were in ASP. There was some push back from parents, but typically parents reinforced our decisions and were just happy to be in a school with academic focus and no bullying.

The real behavioral issue came from the teachers. There was not any misconduct, just some pushback on the expectations. The teachers knew that they were the top professionals in their field, but they were still being paid like any other charter school teacher. CPA teachers were outscoing the competition (Dublin and Hilliard schools) by 10 points but they were being paid $20,000 less on average than those teachers. Couple this with the high expectations of scoring a perfect 120 PI score and the dissention was starting from within. From the first day of school in 2007 the researcher had told the teachers “schools are not torn down from the outside, schools are torn down from the inside”. The truth was that the administrator was pushing too hard and something had to change.
The administrator decided to take something off of the teacher’s plates. The Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) had begun. OTES was a massive, time-consuming task for both principals and teachers. OTES required teachers to be evaluated 3 times a year with many meetings in between evaluations. In order to help teachers with their motivation issue, the administrator decided that teachers, whose classes achieved a 115 or above, would have dress down all year, they would not have to complete lesson plans and they would receive an accomplished on their OTES evaluation. Teachers appreciated having less responsibility and the administrator had given them the gift of time. Time, in addition to the unyielding support against parents and troubled students and the promise that the administrator would pursue raises kept the teachers happy. The administrator backed off the pursuit of 120 just a little, and the teacher turnover rate stayed at 1% although many had considered stepping away previously. The administrator also made a pact to stay in his position for the next 19 years. Over 85% of the teachers also made the pact to stay on for that amount of time. The fear of the unknown is a major issue with charter teachers as there is little consistency. CPA went on to score a 112.9 in 2013.

2013-2014 – Relentless Pursuit

There were no real behavioral issues in 2014. However, CPA was able to concentrate totally on academics and they realized that they could not increase their score with students scoring proficient. Proficient was the equivalent of scoring a 60%. In order to become truly elite, CPA had to eliminate proficient. The phrase, “eliminate proficient” had become the mantra for 2014 and for years to come.
It was apparent that the student makeup of CPA was changing. What was astonishing was that the students CPA wanted to attract in 2007 were actually the lowest achieving students by 2014. Most of those students grew academically and became some of the top students in the state. However, there was a small pocket of those students who thought proficient was good enough. In 2007, CPA was thrilled to get students who were proficient because every student to that point who was enrolled at CPA was limited. In 2014, the proficient students were the lowest achievers in the school. Many of the proficient students decided that school was too hard and that they wanted a different experience. Many of the seats left vacant by the proficient students were filled by families that just wanted to attend the top school in the state. The newly enrolled students realized the high expectations and embraced them whereas the students who were leaving did not grow with the school. CPA scored a 115.3 in 2014.

**2014-2015 - Perfect Chemistry**

There are school years that everyone remembers fondly as being their best year. The 2014-2015 school year was the year the CPA had a perfect chemistry with students, teachers, parents and administrators. Again there were no discipline issues at CPA other than homework and writing. Students were happy and teachers were happy. The only issues in 2014-2015 were students graduating CPA in the 8th grade and moving into traditional public high schools, and business decisions being made by the EMO.
The first issue is that CPA was turning out students who were two years above grade level and when they graduated 8th grade they were expected to find a new high school. Students were leaving the highly disciplined, high academic achieving CPA and entering high schools that were considerably behind CPA and had very little discipline. Each year, students and teachers returned to CPA to tell the horror stories of how students were being bullied and how everything they were learning they had already learned at CPA. It became clear that CPA needed to create a high school so the students could continue their elite education at CPA.

The administrator approached the board about creating a high school and received little support. The administrator explained, “I am not asking for a high school, I am building a high school”. Eventually, new board members were elected and the administrator moved on with building the high school, a decision that would shape the future of CPA.

Mosaica, the EMO that ran the operations of CPA had entered into some questionable business deals with turnaround schools. Mosaica took on Muskegon Heights in Michigan as a turnaround school and had lost a considerable amount of money. Eventually Mosaica sold debt from their schools to a company called Tatonka. However, schools were not informed to forward their funds to Tatonka and Mosaica continued to pay themselves and not send the money to Tatonka. Eventually Tatonka placed Mosaica into receivership and asked the receiver to find the best buyer for the Mosaica Company. By the summer of 2015, CPA and other former
Mosaica schools were going to be bought by a company known as ACCEL, run by someone named Ron Packard.

Most of this business exchange and receivership had little to no effect on CPA. CPA continued to improve and finished the year with a 114.6 PI on the state test. 2015 was the first year for the PARCC test. However, third grade students still took the OAA and they scored a 119.8, the only score that was published that year and was only .2 from being the perfect 120.

2015-2016 – Storm Coming (High School)

The 2015-2016 year was a tough one for CPA although they improved academically. CPA was going to have to take yet another new state test. In 2016, CPA would be taking the AIR test. The new test, coupled with the sale of Mosaica and the building of a new high school could have been overwhelming for CPA. There were still very few discipline issues and the day-to-day schoolwork was a pleasant escape from all the other business dealings going on around them.

In the summer of 2015, the administrator met with the new owner of the company, Accel’s Ron Packard. The administrator was pleasantly surprised that Ron was a “people first” owner who had bought the company to better education for all students and to work with CPA, Ohio’s elite public charter school. After a very nice meeting Ron asked to negotiate the administrator’s salary. Immediately the administrator asked to negotiate the teacher’s salary. By the end of that meeting, the administrator and Ron had agreed to an initial $5,000 raise for each CPA teacher and a 3% increase for each teacher every year as long as the PI score goes up each year.
After five years another $5,000 increase would occur and that system would continue until the teacher retired. This agreement would finally even the playing field for CPA teachers and compensate them equally with teachers at other top schools in the region. One of the greatest victories in the history of CPA had just been signed into contract.

The biggest issue of the year was the high school. The students were incredible, but the teachers were an issue. The high school had been built and billed as an avenue for advanced students to acquire as many college credits while in high school as they could. There was a program called college credit plus which allowed students to take up to thirty college credits per year. The plan for the CPA high school was for students to take classes on a semester basis. Students would finish their 24 high school credit requirements in two years, take 4 classes that count for both college and high school credits during those first two years, and then dedicate their junior and senior years to getting 30 college credit hours each year. Students would end up with 70 college credit hours by the time they graduated high school.

A high school teacher and a counselor wanted to provide an alternative education and high school path to students who were not dedicated to the early college program. However, that is not the program CPA advertised. There were only 25 students per each high school grade and there was only one path, the early college path that was available. This caused a great deal of dissention between the administration and the high school teaching staff. The high school was the lowest
scoring group of 2015-2016 with a 113, but CPA as a whole scored a state high 115.9 PI on the AIR test but the k-8 scored a 116.34.

CPA had a full high school staff because of certification requirements with subject areas. The vision was that as years passed teachers would get more and more classes to teach. However, for the first two years of the high school 2015-2016, these teachers would have some down time and they were expected to service Title I students with that extra time. In truth, some of these teachers did service the Title I students but some who were not self-motivated did not. Some teachers found themselves with free time and “idle hands are the devil’s work”. Dissention was noticeable between the teachers who had full classes as opposed to those who only taught one or two subjects per day. The result was that the teachers with no responsibilities filled their time gossiping with office staff and mingling with board members and slowly CPA was being torn down from the inside.

2016-2017 - The End

The 2016-2017 school year began better than any school year in the history of CPA. The CPA teachers had received their $5,000 increase to their salaries the year prior and had just received their yearly increase of 3% in July. The family of Emily and Enid had transferred to another school district. Everything was perfectly aligned academically for CPA. Special education was able to dedicate all of their resources to students who needed the help, proficiency had been eliminated and the teachers were being fairly compensated.
ACCEL was a breath of fresh air with their improved benefits package and the financial backing they could provide. CPA was set up to have their greatest academic achieving year on record. ACCEL and Ron Packard were an employee first institution and looking at alternative EMOs, CPA was very lucky to have them.

There were no behavior issues at all in 2016. The only issue was that the high school required two more rooms to continue to grow. The current sophomore class needed two more rooms to finish their junior and senior years and still fit the younger grades. The administrator approached the contractor about building just two rooms. Plans had been drawn to complete five rooms and the cost would be $570,000. The increased enrollment would pay off the cost of expansion in less than 3 years.

The Board of Directors wanted ACCEL to buy the school building, forgive past year’s debt, and wanted ACCEL to buy out a factoring program they had entered into in 2014. ACCEL could not drop ten million in one school at one time so the relationship between the board and ACCEL had become stressed. The administrator was looking for a way to build two rooms to accommodate the junior class for 2017. The administrator had raised some money with small fundraisers (fall fest, penny war and various sales). The contractor quoted two rooms at $150,000. The Administrator approached ACCEL for the $150,000 with no answer.

During the October board meeting, the board rejected the five-year forecast, which projected a small loss each year. The board decided the way to make the budget work was to not give the teachers their contracted raises. Of course the administrator argued and said “you can put that you will not give raises on the 5 year
forecast, but come summer, if the score of CPA goes up, the teachers will get their raises.” Little did the administrator know that there were other negotiations occurring. In order to attempt to get ACCEL to pay for the back debt and the high school build out, the board decided to remove the opposition to their plan. Although the administrator offered to pay for the extra high school rooms himself, the board had decided to try a new strategy to get their debt paid off. In a show of force, the board decided that they would remove the administrator so that they did not have to give raises and to force ACCEL to take their threats seriously. On November 18th, 2016 the researcher worked his last day at CPA. After 10 years the researcher stepped away from CPA and began working with all schools in the state of Ohio.

The desired effect did not occur. The researcher began improving the academic results of other schools and CPA did not receive debt reduction nor the high school classrooms. The final chapter has yet to be written about CPA.
Chapter 3

Academics

2007-2008 – The Blitz Pilot Program

In the summer of 2007, the researcher asked for volunteers to pilot the Blitz™ data-tracking program. These seven teachers gave bi-weekly scrimmages™ and tracked the students’ data. The researcher had all teachers conduct review games and conducted very small scale academic pep rallies. The result was that the seven teachers who piloted the Blitz™ had great success and were the only teachers to exceed the proficiency mark and they were the only teachers to receive their bonuses. CPA’s PI did improve however small. However, CPA’s performance index would increase 14 points by 2009.

2008-2009 – All In

After the success of the pilot group it was not a hard sell to get teachers to want to do the Blitz™ School wide. Teachers obviously wanted to gain their entire bonus for the first time in their careers, but moreover, teachers were competitive. Teachers did not like to be outscored and they wanted to be the best at what they do. In the summer of 2008, the researcher conducted an eight hour professional development on proper scrimmage™ parameters, ERQs, the school report card, state indicators for successful schools, Blitz™ games and the Blitz™ competition. The CPA staff accepted the Blitz™ fully, found ways to become involved and took the researcher’s idea and turned it into something much greater. The teachers wanted to win and in 2009, CPA scored an 82.7 PI and removed themselves from closure status.
2009-2010 – Excellent (Defeat of Cornerstone)

It was during the summer of 2009 that the rush to be the best began. CPA had set a goal of 85 PI and most of the teachers were disappointed that they did not hit the goal, but they were pleased with the results. That summer, when everyone was celebrating CPA’s success, one of the other principals in the city made a statement that would propel CPA to Excellent with Distinction. Cornerstone was the school and the principal was the one who made the disparaging remarks. Cornerstone is located in a very affluent area of Columbus called Westerville. Due to strange annexations and property lines, the school fell within the Columbus City district, but was so close to the border that all of the children came from New Albany and Westerville. Cornerstone had an enrollment of 54 kids KG-fifth. As a result, only 15 students in third grade were being counted for scores and they had scored a 92.7 PI. The score should have been much higher, but what people did not know within the Mosaica organization was how data was checked in each school and how it could be manipulated. In later years, as students and accountability increased for Cornerstone, their performance index went down to an 85. However, on this day, the Cornerstone principal said, “Congratulations, 83% is a really good score; that is about the best they will ever do considering where the students are from and who they are.”

The researcher can remember that conversation like it was yesterday. The response was, “this will be the last time Cornerstone ever outscores CPA.” To this day, eight years later, Cornerstone has never outscored CPA again.
Table 12

*CPA versus Cornerstone Performance Index Scores 2010-2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CPA</th>
<th>Cornerstone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>112.9</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>115.3</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>114.6</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>115.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It has become an annual event to see by how much CPA beats Cornerstone.

The teachers all gather to celebrate. The “bad blood” and competition was a very important chapter in the history of CPA, when motivation and goal-setting became an important part of school achievement and the overall culture of CPA.

It is important for every principal to set a goal. Every hero must have a conflict. Every Luke Skywalker must have his Death Star. In following years, our goals numerically changed and so did our opponents. In 2010, when CPA beat Cornerstone 91.8-85.5, Cornerstone was still presented with Mosaica School of the Year. That motivated the staff even more. The next year CPA asked, “What do you have to do to get Mosaica School of the Year; score a 100?” Therefore, CPA’s goal in 2011 became a 100 and to win Mosaica School of the Year. CPA did just that. CPA scored a 102.2 and won Mosaica School of the Year and was the first charter
school in the state of Ohio to reach the rank of Excellent with Distinction. “An atmosphere charged with progress and improved results sustains and energizes people toward effective alternatives to their existing routines” (Schmoker, 1999, p.69). Reaching goals and competition is the secret to what has driven CPA’s success. “Carefully selected, short-term projects can precipitate successful change—and optimism” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69).

2010-2011 – Excellent with Distinction – 100 or Bust

CPA had just reached “Excellent” status in academic state rankings, had beaten Cornerstone for the first time and was setting their new goals when the researcher attended the Summer Leadership Retreat with Mosaica. At the retreat awards were given. The researcher won superintendent of the year and educational entrepreneur of the year, but those were not the awards CPA desired. Being the top school in the company, CPA was surely going to receive school of the year. However, at the end of the evening, the school of the year award was presented to Cornerstone; a school that CPA had beaten by eight PI points on the state test.

Once again, CPA found motivation in defeat. CPA realized that they would have to score above a 100 in order to receive the school of the year award. The CPA staff examined the state report card and realized that every grade level needed to score above proficient and that was an average of 80% for the entire class. The CPA staff looked at the scores of each grade level and realized that fifth grade was where students were struggling.
In fifth grade students take reading, math and science. After analyzing the data, the staff of CPA realized that the cut score to reach proficiency in fifth grade was higher than any other grade, hence why fifth grade scores were low across the state. The researcher had to make personnel changes to place the very best teachers in fifth grade. CPA made a complete overhaul in fifth grade. No one was fired, but the teachers were placed in grades where they could better use their strengths. A math and science specialist was placed in fifth grade and the longest tenured Title I teacher was placed in fifth grade to team teach with the ELA teacher.

Teachers were also asked to create data walls. The researcher had access to every teachers’ data tracker, but that process was time consuming and sometimes interrupted classes. Teachers then to card charts and placed them outside of their classrooms. Each card represented a student and the student had an original number or a unique symbol such as a sticker, avatar or emoji. The color of the students’ card represented where they began the year. For example, the red or bottom section of the chart represented students who scored limited or basic. Limited is two years behind grade level and basic is one year behind grade level. The yellow section represented students who were proficient or right at grade level according to state standards. Green represented accelerated or one year above grade level and blue (CPA’s school color) represented advanced or two years above grade level. This led to mantras of Go Big Blue, Believe in Blue and Eliminate Proficient. If a student had a red card it meant that they started the year in limited or basic, but the goal was for them to get to blue as soon as possible.
Teachers were also asked to calculate their class’ Performance Index (PI) scores after every biweekly scrimmage and to have the students move their cards in a confidential fashion after each Scrimmage™. The result was that the teacher knew basically where their class and each individual student would score come April. The data wall method also allowed the principal to keep track of each individual student and class. The principal could visit with a student who was struggling and call their parents or compliment a student who was doing well. Everyone involved, students, teacher’s administrators and parents always knew the academic status of each student and could intervene if necessary. This system was explained to parents every year at orientation so that there were never any surprises.

There was a precedent placed on writing school wide. For CPA, their weakness from 2007 was going to be a strength. The staff decided that every morning, at the start of each class, teachers would ask students to complete an extended response question and to use the DWB box to do so. Teachers would take the first 10 minutes of every class to ask a question. Most teachers do this already but seldom do they use the parameters of the extended response question. The question can be about anything. Many teachers ask “what did you do this weekend”? For CPA, teachers would ask, “Describe three things you did this weekend”. “Explain why you enjoyed each activity.” This way, students received a bare minimum of 180 practices on extended responses each year. If every teacher did this for every class, students received 720 practices each year. If every teacher did this every day, every class each year, a student who attended CPA from kindergarten to 3rd grade would
receive 2,880 practices on extended response questions before they ever took their first Ohio State Test. In the words of Vince Lombardi, “perfect practice makes perfect”.

The data walls, morning ERQs, concentration in fifth grade and motivation to score 100 and beat Cornerstone propelled CPA to victory. CPA scored a 102.2 PI in 2011 and became the first ever charter school to reach Excellent with Distinction status. CPA was awarded school of the year in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Most schools would take time to celebrate the victory and CPA did celebrate, but they did not stop improving. The following year CPA became even more focused and began their pursuit of being the top ranked school in the state.

2011-2012 – Top School in the State – 111.1

After achieving the “Excellent” achievement status in the state of Ohio and being the first charter school to do so in the history of the state, CPA had to find new motivation to achieve. The easiest route would have been to stay with the status quo, but the staff and administration of CPA had a larger vision. CPA examined their own data on the state report card as well as the data of the affluent districts in the surrounding area. The surrounding affluent school districts included Hilliard, Dublin, Upper Arlington and Olentangy. The PI for those schools ranged between a 103 and a 107. In order to be considered academically elite, CPA had to surpass those school districts.

CPA wanted to take down the affluent districts. CPA wanted to be number one overall. Staff members looked up every school in the state, especially the local
affluent districts. Dublin was number one at the time with a PI of 107%; Hilliard was 103%; Upper Arlington was 105%; and Olentangy was 104%. CPA set its goal at 107 in 2012. In another turn of events, a local district, hired away one of the CPA teachers in September. That was not a problem and everyone was happy that the teacher had found a higher paying job. However, when they introduced him to the other teachers in the district, they commented on how the “little poor school of CPA was able to score a 102.2 and that was amazing; we don’t know how you did it.” The school district was actually trying to give CPA a compliment, but the comment was twisted into the idea that they were taking pity on CPA. In 2012 you could hear “Beat Dublin” or “Beat JA” throughout our school, and, in fact, CPA did beat them both. CPA scored a 111.1%, Dublin scored a 107% again, and JA scored a 102%. CPA did not realize it, but that was the first year that they were ranked number one in the state of Ohio academically.

In order to reach the 107 mark, CPA had to understand the data on the state report card. Besides helping students to reach proficiency (because a limited or basic score will drop a school below 100, CPA had to address the proficient students. Proficiency in the state of Ohio is 60% or higher on the state test. A score of 60% is not a stellar score by any means and with hard work and focus the staff and students could eliminate proficient. Moreover, for every student who scored proficient, the classroom had to have at least two students score advanced to offset that score. That was the only way to reach the goal of 107.
The staff was motivated to reach the goal, but it came down to student desire. By February of 2012, students were saying “we got this”. It was at that moment when the researcher realized that the 107 was attainable and that CPA would most likely exceed that goal.

2012-2013 – Maintain the Championship – 112.9 – Top School Year 2

The 2012 – 2013 year was interesting. CPA was #1 and there was no clear opponent or enemy. The students still yelled, “Beat Dublin,” even though most of them did not even know where Dublin was. There was a rumor that the numbering system (0-120%) was going away and that the state was going to a lettering system (A-F) for ranking schools, as well as changing the language from the Academic Emergency – Excellent with Distinction categories. Therefore, CPA decided that they would forego the prior goal of a 114 and shoot for the perfect 120.

Sixteen of the teachers were pregnant during that year, including the assistant principal. Many teachers were unhappy at the end of that year because the researcher pushed so hard. Regardless, CPA scored a 113 and was ranked the number one school in the state for a second year in a row. School year 2013 was an important year though, because it gave rise to the rally cry, “120!”

2013-2014 – Continue Improving – 115.3 – Top School Year 3

With the new year came a new set of evaluations for schools. Schools would now be evaluated with a letter grade. However, it was later learned that schools would still receive a PI score and that is how the schools would earn their letter grade. The letter grade was enacted to help parents better understand the status of their
school. Upon learning that PI numbers were still in play, CPA once again set their goal at a perfect 120PI. After a lot of self-examination and review, the researcher came back to CPA with the same fervor for a 120 but more of an easy going approach. The solution was in the numbers.

In order for a school to score a perfect 120, all students needed to score advanced. CPA was not quite at that level yet. However, all students could score accelerated or advanced. The new mission was to eliminate proficient. Banners and chants were created with the new mantra. Parents were wearing t-shirts that said eliminate proficient. If all students scored accelerated, the score would be 110PI. Therefore, if any student scored proficient, CPA needed two students to score advanced to offset that score.

There was a renewed focus placed on writing at CPA. Every morning started with an extended response question (ERQ) and if a student did not complete the ERQ within the time frame the student was sent to the office to visit the principal and would eventually go to ASP to finish their work.

Another strategy was to raise the bar at CPA. While creating and improving the data tracker, the researcher and staff decided to create CPA standards. CPA standards were essentially 10 points higher for each grade classification (Advanced – Limited). What this means is that a student had to score 10 points above the state cut scores to reach the next academic level. So if a student needed an 80% to reach accelerated, at CPA they needed a 90%.
CPA was not totally heartless in this new venture. CPA used the escalated scores from August until November, than in December CPA would shift back to state standards and cut scores. The same method was used in the spring. CPA would use the escalated scores from January until the week prior to spring break and then shift back to state cut scores. The result was that students had a heightened sense of confidence both at Christmas and testing time. The rest of the year the students had to work especially hard to reach the next achievement level. The heightened cut scores coupled with the elimination of proficient propelled CPA to a state high score or 115.3PI.

2014-2015 – PARCC – 114.6 – Top School Year 4

2014-2015 introduced the PARCC test to Ohio. There were no released testing items to review mostly because the test was not complete. The staff of CPA concentrated on the fundamentals of creating tests and continued to stress writing. The PARCC test was poorly written and tended to ask questions based on standards from the wrong grade level. The truth was that Pearson did not have time to construct a quality test and thus lost the contract with Ohio.

During this year, parents of Ohio students decided to opt their students out of the state tests. Ohio threatened to hold the students and parents accountable for not taking the test. In the end, Ohio did not punish districts with students who opted out of the test. The issue would have been who to punish. If the state held the school accountable, their scores would suffer and some of the more affluent districts would have been ranked Academic Emergency. Should the state not hold the schools
accountable, schools and districts would have opted out their lowest students to raise their test scores.

Most schools and districts dropped 10 points with the change to the PARCC test. However, CPA stayed essentially within one PI point of where they were. The new test just widened the gap between CPA and other schools. During the summer of 2015 Ohio decided that they would not use the PARCC test again.

**2015-2016 – AIR – 116.34 (K-8), 115.9 (K-9) - Top School Year 5**

2015-2016 brought a third test in three years. CPA again just stayed the course and practiced what they knew to be a proven strategy. The AIR test proved to be much better aligned for standards with their respective grade levels. However, the questions were just as confusing and a whole host of new style questions were presented. In addition, schools were being forced to take the test online so students needed technology and typing skills to be successful. CPA found a typing curriculum to use and practiced all year. That being said, one can see the inequity with underprivileged schools and expectations of taking tests online.

To keep things comparable, CPA scored a 116.34 with their K-8. Since those were the grades that had been assessed before it helps from a comparison standpoint to look at that score. CPA initiated the high school in 2015-2016 and that was the first year of end of course assessments. The ninth grade scored a respectable 113, but ultimately that brought the overall score of CPA down to a 115.9PI.
Chapter 4

The Blitz™, Motivation, and Leadership

The Blitz™ was a program the researcher developed in 2002/2003 in which teachers instruct on a specific standard(s), and then create an assessment on those standards. The teacher takes the most crucial objectives of the standards and creates four multiple-choice questions and one extended response (called an open response question in Kentucky) and one essay question. The researcher conducted a professional development every summer where teachers learn question structures and the process of making tests and scrimmages™. From this the teacher learned how the OAA, PARCC, AIR or CATS questions were structured and became better test makers. In turn, students became better test takers. Teachers also became better at modeling the way to answer test questions and better at grading the test questions. Teachers learned what the graders were looking for and they became better at instructing the students on how to respond the different types of questions. With this type of preparation, both students and teachers learned what the grader was looking for and they can better answer the test questions.

The Ohio State test as well as other state tests are tricky in nature. In fact, the multiple-choice items are labeled answers and distractors. Typically, for most schools, testing time is high anxiety for both teachers and students. At CPA, while there is an excitement about performing well on the test, both teachers and students are familiar with the test because they have done similar assessments all year long in preparation for the state assessment.
Teachers use this type of assessment for everything in their classrooms. Gone are the days of giving students crossword puzzles, word searches and other types of busy work. In fact, what curriculum the teacher uses to address and teach the standards does not matter. The only thing the researcher demanded was that the teachers use the scrimmages to pace their classes and to determine when they should move on to the next standard. This method also dictates student mastery and tells teachers when students need differentiation on the subject. Similarly, students will become better test takers once the teacher models what the grader of the state tests are looking for. When the teachers become better graders, they can speak the test language, then students begin speaking in the test language and everyone grows academically.

**Scrimmages**

Scrimmages™ are short cycle assessments made up of four multiple choice, one extended response and one essay. Teachers are instructed during pre-service every year on how to make correct multiple choice questions. The researcher’s experience in the Content Advisory Committee for Kentucky taught him that multiple choice questions have specific parameters on correct structure.

A few of the rules are; make sure it is an actual question with punctuation, not just a Family Feud question (open ended), make sure the answers and distractors are plausible, the same length, or two of them can be one length and two can be a different length, the questions cannot be non-sensical, questions should not contain
students or teachers names. Scrimmages must include at least one extended response question with an appropriate power verb, a prompt and a multistep question.

CPA created assessments for all grades including kindergarten so that by the time the students reach a testing grade they are masters at writing Extended Response Questions (ERQs). “An atmosphere charged with progress and improved results sustains and energizes people toward effective alternatives to their existing routines” (Schmoker, 1999, p.69). Reaching goals and competition is the secret to what has driven CPA’s success. “Carefully selected, short-term projects can precipitate successful change—and optimism” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 69). Celebrating this success with teacher-of-the-week and teacher-of-the-year awards and the excellent zone and ring of honor for the students is the positive praise that all humans are seeking.

“Praise from administration was the most frequently cited source of good feelings, and that most teachers have unfulfilled needs for recognition and approval” (Schmoker, 1999, p. 112). Reaching small attainable goals will ultimately cause a school to reach the big goal. (Schmoker, 1999)

Finally, scrimmages™ should have an essay question and answer box for a five paragraph essay. Scrimmages usually take between 20 to 30 minutes to complete for students. Students typically take longer in August but they are much faster in March. Scrimmages are shorter than traditional tests so CPA is not over-testing, but the same amount of data can be gathered from them in relation to a longer test.

Marzano says, “One option is to use district-made or school-made tests that measure the content taught in specific courses. But my preferred option is to develop report
The type of assessment that Marzano is describing is the short cycle assessments that the teachers are making themselves with four multiple choice, one extended response question and one essay, and the data tracker and data walls that are displayed outside of every classroom at CPA.

Below is an example of a typical scrimmage:

Name _____________________________ Date _______________

Vocabulary Scrimmage Unit 2 Week 4

1. The link between two or more things in a community can be strong. Which word defines the underlined part?
   O rely
   O love
   O connection
   O leadership

2. Children trust someone to help on their parent for many things. Which word defines the underlined part?
   O admire
   O tolerate
   O respect
   O honest

3. Dogs like tasty treats. Which word defines the underlined part?
   O dislike
   O take
   O hate
   O enjoy

4. The coach’s ability to guide a group of people helped the team win the game. Which answer is the synonym for the underlined part?
   O community
   O leadership
   O assistant
   O knowledge
Extended Response 1
Admire is a vocabulary word. Define admire. Tell the name of the person who you admire and explain why you admire them.

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Extended Response 2
Leadership, rely, connections, and enjoy are vocabulary words. Choose a vocabulary word. Draw a poster to illustrate your word. Write the word, draw a picture, and write a sentence using the word.

|                                |                                |                                |
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Do, What, Because (DWB)™

The Ohio State Test is basically broken down between multiple choice questions and writing questions. Multiple choice makes up 60% of the test and the writing makes up 40% of the test. However, on the test there is usually close to 60 multiple choice questions and typically four or less writing questions. What does this mean? It means that the multiple choice questions are worth one point each and the writing questions are worth around 10 points each. A student could answer every multiple-choice question correctly and still fail the test if they do not answer any of the writing questions. In 2007, after close examination of the state test data, the researcher found that the students were not doing the writing section of the test. The students had scored zeros one the writing component. CPA needed to get their PI into the 80’s within a year to stay open. The researcher realized that if every student could score a one instead of a zero on the writing component, CPA could have a PI of 80 or above if all other things stayed the same.

The researcher had developed a graphic organizer at the same time as the Blitz™ so he introduced it to the staff of CPA. Do, What, Because (DWB)™ changed the trajectory of CPA forever. Students would read the extended response then at the top of their answer box they would label DWB. The Do stood for the do word or power verb. Every power verb indicates that there is a question that needs to be answered. This helped students realize that there might be more than one question in their extended response. The W was “what is the question asking you to do”. So the students would label that. The B was for the answer, my answer makes sense
because. This was the proof section or where the student provided their answer and the proof of why their answer makes sense. The DWB™ worked for both extended response questions as well as essays. Many schools try to use the hamburger method, which works great for essays, but it does not work as well for the extended response questions where students need to get their answer out immediately.

The result was that students who just filled out the DWB™ box were receiving one or two points of credit whereas they had been getting zeroes in the past. Essentially, they were answering the question but not writing sentences. The DWB allowed lower performing students the ability to answer the questions without a lot of writing. CPA’s PI score rose from a 69% to an 83% between 2008 and 2009. In subsequent years as students became better at writing full sentences, the PI score for CPA rose each year. The DWB™ was the reason for the drastic rise in PI scores each year; CPA students were becoming better writers and CPA never stopped using the DWB™.

**Data Tracker**

When the short cycle assessments, or “scrimmages™” are graded, the teachers tracked those results to find students and teachers strengths and weaknesses. What CPA found was that patterns occur and those patterns read like the text of a book. The data from this method allows the teachers to apply the rule of the four R’s. If a majority of students fail the scrimmage, then the teacher knows that he/she has either created a bad test or that the teaching of the standard was not sufficient, therefore they either need to Reteach or Redo. Should five or six students fail the
scrimmage than that indicates that those are the students who need Remediation?

Finally, should one or two students continuously fail the tests than that indicated the students who need to be retained?

Teachers track this data from August until April. Teachers gave a pre-test in August to see how far along the students are with the current standards of that grade. Teachers monitored growth throughout the year. Finally, teachers gave their post-test (same assessment as the pre-test) to see if students are still struggling with the same standards. Teachers can look back at this data to dictate what they need to review before the test. Whatever data points or standards are still a struggle, the teacher created original Blitz™ review games for the students.

The researcher had created an archaic data tracker while working in Kentucky with his limited spread sheet knowledge. Over the years at CPA, various teachers who had more knowledge with the Excel program helped to create a much better data tracker that recorded each individual multiple choice and extended response question. The multiple choice were each worth one point and the ERQs were worth four points. With this tool, the teachers were able to monitor their students’ growth and ability level. The data tracker told the teachers when they could move on to the next standard or when to reteach a subject. The data tracker was also invaluable when teachers would review student reports with parents. Below is a snapshot of what the data tracker looks like:
Scrimage Comparison

Scrimmage 1: 109.43
Scrimmage 2: 90.57
Scrimmage 3: 69.25
Scrimmage 4: 76.42
Scrimmage 5: 109.43
Scrimmage 6: 91.96
Scrimmage 7: 105.47
Scrimmage 8: 89.81
Scrimmage 9: 117.36
Scrimmage 10: 109.43
Scrimmage 11: 86.96
Scrimmage 12: 109.43
Scrimmage 13: 61.32
Scrimmage 14: 86.96
Scrimmage 15: 86.96
Scrimmage 16: 86.96
Scrimmage 17: 86.96
Scrimmage 18: 86.96
Scrimmage 19: 86.96
Scrimmage 20: 119.43
Scrimmage 21: 86.96
Scrimmage 22: 86.96
Scrimmage 23: 117.36
Scrimmage 24: 117.36
Data Walls

Teachers were also asked to create data walls. The researcher had access to every teachers’ data tracker, but that process was time consuming and sometimes interrupted classes. Teachers then to card charts and placed them outside of their classrooms. Each card represented a student and the student had an original number or a unique symbol such as a sticker, avatar or emoji. The color of the students’ card represented where they began the year. For example, the red or bottom section of the chart represented students who scored limited or basic. Limited is two years behind grade level and basic is one year behind grade level. The yellow section represented students who were proficient or right at grade level according to state standards. Green represented accelerated or one year above grade level and blue (CPA’s school color) represented advanced or two years above grade level. This led to mantras of Go Big Blue, Believe in Blue and Eliminate Proficient. If a student had a red card it meant that they started the year in limited or basic, but the goal was for them to get to blue as soon as possible.

Teachers were also asked to calculate their class’ Performance Index (PI) scores after every biweekly scrimmage and to have the students move their cards in a confidential fashion after each Scrimmage™. The result was that the teacher knew basically where their class and each individual student would score come April. The data wall method also allowed the principal to keep track of each individual student and class. The principal could visit with a student who was struggling and call their parents or compliment a student who was doing well. Everyone involved, students,
teacher’s administrators and parents always knew the academic status of each student and could intervene if necessary. This system was explained to parents every year at orientation so that there were never any surprises. Below is an example of a data wall:

**Data Walls**

Students must be in green (Accelerated) or blue (Advanced) in all subjects.

**Blitz Review Games**

Teachers are encouraged to create original review games to cover what they feel is their respective strength. For example, if there are four third grade teachers, one teacher may cover English Language Arts multiple choice style questions, and another will cover Extended Response or Essay style questions. The other two teachers would do the same thing for math. For students who have completed eight months of paper/pencil assessments, the Blitz™ Review Games are an exciting way to review and the students are relaxed and competitive.
Students compete for a variety of small prizes all the while memorizing standards, formulas, and rules that eventually help them with the test. Hence, their test scores continue to rise. Students may lose a competition in a Blitz review game on a Monday, but they are motivated to go home and practice for the competition on Tuesday. The students enjoy winning the small prizes (usually a sticker or press on tattoo from Oriental Trading) but their real motivation comes in them winning and working to be the best.

During professional development sessions in the summer and throughout the year, teachers meet with other grade levels and pass on the data from that student so that the new teachers have background data on the student’s strengths and weaknesses. Parents cannot argue the data and this makes the retention meetings much easier. There are also confidential charts where the students as well as parents, and the principals can monitor their success or struggles. All stakeholders can get an instant snapshot of the student’s academic progress (data walls to be discussed later). This data tracking system along with the electronic tracking system, which is also trademarked, adhere to the same scoring as the state test, but further the teachers’ understanding of data. Professional developments can be geared to data review as well as specific student review.

CPA made each homeroom a team. The Blitz is not just a data tracking system; it is a yearly competition where each classroom represents something. The classrooms have been countries, cities, decades, movies, books, and colleges, to name a few. The classrooms compete against one another within the room in Blitz review
games before taking the tests the teachers created from the year’s data collected from scrimmages, mock tests, and pretests and posttests. The data also includes whatever standards the class as a whole was struggling with when the teachers developed their review games. Then the classes compete against each other in the areas of attendance, behavior, pep rally performances, and chants (about scoring 120 PI, the top score available in the state of Ohio). Neither behavior nor achievement are ever a problem during the Blitz competition, which lasts eight weeks from Spring break in late March to the end of testing in early May. Ultimately, like Schmoker (1999) says, goals and results drive success and happiness, and that has helped CPA rise from the ashes.

Each year a Blitz™ book is created for teachers to guide them through the Blitz™ competition season which lasts eight weeks. The book is replete with a mission statement, famous motivational sayings from the principal, list of Blitz™ rewards (filed trips paid for by fund raisers), guidelines, rules, review game guidelines, list of all the Blitz™ teams, competition schedule, specials schedule, a reworked school schedule to incorporate Blitz™ games, pep rally schedules, Ohio State Test as well as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills administration schedule, Blitz™ calendar, daily competition rubric, good faith testing reward rubric, pep rally performance rubric, guest judge point sheet for pep rallies, and Blitz™ soundtrack. A full copy of a Blitz™ book has been supplied in Appendix E, p. 240.

The Blitz™ mission is: An exciting way to teach students to create, motivate, be a team player and above all, be responsible for their own success in testing and
academics. As educators, we are responsible for an experience like no other. Through dedication, creativity and hard work, we are challenged to teach students to think in depth and prepare them for excellence in academics and life.

The Blitz™ rewards are a group of field trips that have been scheduled by the CPA staff. The field trips are totally paid for by various fund raisers such as the Penny War and the Fall Festival. These trips included miniature golf, zoo visit, and day at the park, waterpark visit, Magic Mountain, and a tour of Ohio Stadium. There were enough field trips so that all 25 classrooms could experience a field trip. However, the trips were not of the same value. Classrooms that finished at the top of the leader board could get a day long trip to a waterpark or the Columbus Zoo while those who were at the bottom of the leader board might get a donut party in their classroom. This caused great competition amongst the students in each classroom and also caused students to work as a team as they had to depend upon one another for points.

Blitz™ points come from a number of different places and aspects of testing and everyday school routines. Students receive or lose points for Behavior and transitions. Students must not get in trouble at school or on the bus, they are expected to transition between room during the Blitz™ games as well as to and from the academic pep rallies with no disruptions. Attendance and tardiness can also add or subtract points from classrooms. Every student that is absent or tardy loses points, but if a classroom has perfect attendance with no tardiness they receive an attendance bonus. Each classroom with daily perfect attendance gets to put a letter on the door
to spell cougars. If a class spells cougars that means they have seven straight days of
perfect attendance and they receive a mega bonus.

Classrooms can also earn Blitz™ points with costumes. Each classroom is
encouraged to design a class tee shirt so that the students are easily recognized.
Should the students and teacher go above and beyond with the costume, extra points
can be given? Enthusiasm and creativity are also worthy of Blitz™ points. Students
and teachers are encouraged to chant, cheer, sing, perform and decorate their rooms
with their classroom name and the goal of scoring a perfect 120. Participation can
also earn a classroom points. All students have to be present and engaged to get these
points. If a small group of students is not participating, then no points are given.
Other ways to gain or lose points are; destruction of another classrooms’ décor, going
to ASP, suspensions, and creative teacher review Blitz™ games, room décor,
 fundraisers (Blitz™ basket sales).

Students can earn points during testing time as well. A “good faith” reward
rubric is given to each teacher. Each individual student can earn points for
attendance, preparation, completing their extended response questions with a DWB™
box, best effort and staying busy while others are testing. Students can earn points
during the academic pep rallies for enthusiasm, props (giant heads like at a basketball
game or motivational sayings on signs), collaboration, preparedness, attire,
sportsmanship, and clear performances.
Academic Pep Rallies

Chances are we have all say through athletic pep rallies where the team comes up on the stage before the big game. Cheerleaders are performing and the coach and maybe even the team captain say a few inspiring words to the student body while they ask for support. This is not the style of pep rally that CPA had. Instead, CPA involved all students in the school. Students would prepare for weeks to give performances that represented their Blitz™ class and how they were going to score on the Ohio State Test as well as how the school would perform. These well-rehearsed pep rallies were scheduled to each minute and included traditional hype videos, physical and mental challenges, dance parties, and student performances. At the end, classes would receive Blitz™ points and rewards for the most spirited, best performances and best signs. A typical pep rally was set up like this:

Academic Pep Rally

12:00 – Seating students while traditional school hype videos played
12:20 – Pregame video – hype video that begins every pep rally
12:25 – Principal intro with motivational talk
12:30 – Class performance 1
12:40 – Class performance 2
12:50 – Funny or motivational video
1:00 – Skit with teachers and students
1:10 – Class Performance 3
1:20 – Rumble 120 – chant to score a 120 and shake the gym
1:25 – Class performance 4
1:35 – Dance party 1
1:40 – Funny or motivational video
1:45 – Student competition
1:50 – Skit or video
1:55 – Class performance 5
2:05 – Student competition k-2
2:10 – Class Performance 6
Competition proved to be the difference with CPA. It is true that scrimmages™ and the DWB™ gave the students and teachers secret weapons to outsmart the test with, but the real success story is the motivation and the desire to win that all students and teachers had at CPA. Everyone involved learned to work as a team and they held one another accountable. Students expected other students to show up every day for school so they could get perfect attendance. Teachers expected one another to get the students prepared for the test and parents expected other parents to give their students a good night’s sleep a healthy breakfast and to get their child to school on time so that their class would be successful. Wanting to be the best individually and wanting your team to be the best cause the entire school of CPA to be the best in the state of Ohio.

**Excellent Zone and Ring of Honor**

Everyone likes to be distinguished. Two programs that coincided with the Blitz™ were the Excellent Zone and the Ring of Honor. Anyone who attends an athletic function in a stadium or arena will always notice that there is one section that is rowdier than the other sections. In Ohio Stadium it is the Block O section where the rowdiest students are seated. In Rupp Arena in Lexington that section is the
Eruption Zone. At CPA there was a section reserved for students who had maintained an advanced score on scrimmages for at least three months or they scored advanced on last year’s state test. That section at CPA is called the “Excellent Zone”. Students are ceremoniously granted the right to sit in the Excellent Zone if their Scrimmage™ scores indicate mastery. The Excellent Zone was the closest to the stage during special events, assemblies and academic pep rallies. Students as well as parents are proud to be part of the Excellent Zone.

Similar to the Excellent Zone but even more prestigious was the Ring of Honor. The Ring of Honor was a distinction for students who had scored perfect on the Ohio State Test. Should a student not miss one question on the Ohio State Test in a given year, that students would get their name hung in the gym in a designated area. Their name remains there as long as the gym stands. The same students received dress down for the entire year and were automatically inducted into the Excellent Zone. The parents of these students receive bumper stickers that said “My child is in the Ring of Honor at CPA”. Students were also placed in a hype/motivational video that played at the beginning of each pep rally challenging other students to join the ring. In the first year only three students were in the ring, but in 2016, 53 students became ring of honor members. The special designation was noticeable and the students were treated like academic royalty and both the Ring of Honor and Excellent Zone were major motivating factors for student academic achievement.
Mock AIRs, Pre-test, Post-test

In the fall of 2009 CPA was enjoying their effective status with the state and they did not have to worry about being closed. Besides the scrimmages™, Blitz™ review games and academic pep rallies, the staff felt that the students could use a little more practice in testing situations. The staff was still adjusting to the elevated focus placed on state testing. The researcher noticed that on test days, teachers did not have a sense of urgency. Teachers meandered the hallways, had loud transitions to the bathroom, and did not pick up their accommodation students in a timely manner. CPA had to practice testing situations.

CPA decided to administer practice tests that were the same length as the actual Ohio State Tests. CPA referred to these tests as Mock OAA, Mock PARCCs and Mock AIR tests. These mock tests were made up of the released items from the state, supplements from crosswalks and triumph learning, and teacher created assessments that were designed to take the same amount of time to complete that the actual test would take.

The rationale was that all subject tests would be combined into one big test and all subjects would be given in the same day. Teachers and administrators would be able to determine if a student suffered from fatigue during the test and the students would get used to taking a six-hour test as opposed to taking a one and a half hour test. Many schools have attempted to do something similar but they tend to block out two or three days to take the test whereas CPA would do all tests in one day. It was a
miserable day of testing but students learned to perform under duress and it made the actual test much easier in April.

Teachers benefitted from the mock tests in that they learned how the school should behave when any test is administered. CPA established a proper testing culture by using these tests. Classroom teachers learned to get their students into the classrooms, take bathroom breaks and to get the students mentally ready for the tasks. Support staff (specials teachers, aides, special education teachers, Title I teachers and administrators) learned to get to their respective areas, pull their accommodation students and to not interrupt the classroom. Gone were the days of a special education teacher sauntering into a classroom, drinking coffee, or interrupting the regular classroom to pull a student for accommodations. The mantra “All hands on deck” was adopted in 2010 reminding teachers to get to their responsibilities during test. Whether the teacher was a hall monitor, an extra proctor for a room or someone administering accommodations to students, everyone had a duty and responsibility to be at their assigned job. In 2010, the testing process at CPA was a well choreographed process.

Mock tests provided different types of data to teachers on student achievement. The actual data were not that useful early in the year but the practice with testing fatigue was helpful. In August teachers gave a pre-test. This test was made up of mostly released Ohio State Test items and was indicative of what skills students need to master by the end of that year. This test gave teachers a baseline of where their students were academically in August. This process also helped non-
subject tested teachers fulfill their Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) requirements. The Mock tests were usually given on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in the middle of each month. Teachers were able to gauge if a student were growing academically at an acceptable rate each month and the student was earning valuable experience of pacing and surviving the length of the test.

Teachers used a number of different tests throughout the year as long as they administer a mock test that is the same length as the actual test. In March, the last test of the year was also the first test given in the year. The pre-test and post-test were the same. Teachers should have been able to measure the growth from the beginning of the year to understand if the students had mastered all standards to that point. Teachers then compared the data from the post-test to the data from their scrimmages to determine if students were struggling with certain standards and concepts. Should students struggle teachers would create their Blitz™ review games from the standards and concepts students were struggling with. CPA’s rationale was that there is no need to review what the student has mastered, but use the week or two of review to prepare students for the standards that they are still struggling with. Using this pinpointed data approach helped CPA discover weaknesses and attack them before the test was administered. Every year, CPA gains a few points in PI by using this method.

**Morning ERQ’s**

Almost every teacher was taught in college to begin each day with some sort of writing prompt, bell ringer or objective starter. In 2011, CPA noticed that students
were scoring well on the extended response questions, but not all were scoring the perfect four out of four. Years prior the researcher realized that improving writing scores would improve the schools’ overall scores. The students were successful with multiple choice but it took a little more effort with extended responses. The researcher decided to use a theory used by Vince Lombardi.

According to Lombardi, every team needs to have a play that they can use in a situation when they need to gain three yards. This is a play that the team is known for. This play is the teams’ bread and butter play that the opponent knows is coming but they are powerless to stop. For Lombardi that play was the student body right, for CPA that play was the extended response question and the DWB.

For CPA, their weakness from 2007 was going to be a strength. The staff decided that every morning, at the start of each class teachers would ask students to complete an extended response question and to use the DWB box to do so. Teachers would take the first 10 minutes of every class to ask a question. Most teachers were doing this already but seldom did they use the parameters of the extended response question. The question could be about anything. Many teachers ask “What did you do this weekend?” For CPA, teachers would ask, “Describe three things you did this weekend”, or “Explain why you enjoyed each activity.” This way, students received a bare minimum of 180 practices on extended responses each year. If every teacher did this for every class, students received 720 practices each year. If every teacher did this every day, every class each year, a student who attended CPA from kindergarten to 3rd grade would receive 2,880 practices on extended response
questions before they ever took their first Ohio State Test. In the words of Vince Lombardi, “perfect practice makes perfect”. The extended response question had become CPA’s student body right.

Motivation

Motivation for students and teachers was a big part of the daily routine at CPA. Each morning, students would receive words to live by from the administrator. These motivational quotes may have come from famous athletes or scholars, coaches, Joel Osteen, famous speakers, business leaders or world leaders. Sometimes the phrases were just made up by the administrator. Coupling the motivational speeches with the competitiveness of the school, establishing a goal, establishing an opponent or enemy to overcome, students and teachers were ready to compete everyday at CPA. Events such as this occurred everyday at CPA for the entire year and culminated in academic pep rallies four times a year on the Friday before the test. The following week the test was the equivalent of the Super Bowl to the teachers and students. After receiving the scores from the prior year CPA raises a banner in the gym to commemorate that score that they achieved as well as the classroom team who won the Blitz™.

Each August when the official school report card came out, CPA hosted an excellence assembly. At the assembly CPA would do a countdown to their overall PI score. State political leaders would attend, Board members, authorizers and representatives from ODE would give speeches to the students to congratulate them for their hard work. At this event, new Excellent Zone members and Ring of Honor
students were inducted. Every student received their own theme music as the entire school and parents watched. It was at this assembly where CPA staff would set their new goal for the following year, pick out an enemy and preview the Blitz™ theme for the coming year. Banners were raised, students compete in academic competitions and political figures like Mike Dewine the Ohio Attorney General might present the school with a plaque or recognition from the house or senate proclaiming CPA the top school in Ohio. The student motivation from this assembly propelled students to achieve higher each year.
Chapter 5

America’s School, Future Growth, Summary, The Plans That Never Happened

Every employee at CPA was part of the decision making process and felt comfortable sharing his or her views. However, few to no employees wanted to take the reins should the researcher step aside. In 2011, the researcher was named executive vice president of Mosaica, and he held the same position with ACCEL schools. That position requires a considerable amount of travel to other schools and a lot of time committed to the training of the respective staffs. Obviously the researcher was unable to do a good job at that position as he was spending most of his time at CPA.

Recently, through a disagreement with the board about teacher pay, the researcher has moved out of CPA and into the statewide superintendent role. Five employees are trying to do the job of CPA principal, but no one wants the responsibility of power. CPA’s success was having shared power and involvement, but without a strong and willing leader, the shared power has now deteriorated into small groups and infighting. To date, there have been two principals since the researcher left CPA. There have been 20 resignations in the past 7 months compared to 11 resignations from June 2007-November 2016.

For CPA, the future seems to focus on student enrollment and financial stability. CPA is currently fighting to stay open as the threat of losing their EMO and sponsor is looming. CPA will continue to use the skeleton of the Blitz™ and best
practices but the name will change. The researcher will never discover if CPA could have reached the perfect 120.

As for the researcher, the focus has shifted from one school to many schools. The researcher is now full time Executive Vice President/Superintendent of ACCEL schools in Ohio. There are now 41 schools to be supervised and the number is growing everyday. ACCEL is now the largest Educational Management Company in the state of Ohio. The researcher is currently supervising schools, delivering professional developments on the Blitz™ and evaluating other school leaders on a daily basis. Most of the ACCEL schools in Ohio are doing some if not all parts of the Blitz™. The goal now has shifted to raise every schools’ PI by 10 points, get the schools fully enrolled and get each school financially solvent.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Survey

Teacher Survey – five or more years experience at CPA

1. In your opinion, what is the practice that made the most difference for the CPA students and their test scores?
   A. Weekly Scrimmages
   B. Teaching/practicing the DWB™ and power verbs
   C. The Blitz™ Program
   D. Teaching content standards
   E. Motivational pep rallies and speeches
   F. Competition
   G. Other…please specify

2. In your opinion, what has made the most difference for teachers in improving our test scores at CPA?
   A. Professional Development time dedicated to and the creation of scrimmages?
   B. Professional Development time dedicated to teaching data tracking and data tracking itself?
   C. Overall teacher support.
   D. Other…please specify

3. What one thing do you feel changed the school’s outlook from being a failing school about to close to being the overall top academic school in the state? Please explain.

4. Clearly there was a change in attitudes and the culture of the students, parents, and teachers. What one change do you attribute the turnaround to?

5. Is there something that you have implemented in your classroom that you feel brought about results or helped students raise their scores? Please share here:

6. What behavioral change most contributed to the turnaround of CPA?

7. What policy change most contributed to the turnaround of CPA?
Appendix B

CPA Annual Report 2016
Appendix C

CPA Annual Report 2009
Appendix D

PPR Policy

Promotion and Retention Policy

The Board recognizes that the personal, social, physical, and educational growth of children will vary, and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate for their needs at the various stages of their growth. Each student will be moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth that is in harmony with his/her own development.

Parent(s) and students are made aware of the instructional objectives, performance standards, and promotion criteria. Periodically during the year teachers shall provide written progress and grade reports. Teachers will also provide evaluation reports to parent(s) and students during teacher-parent conferences. The grading system used to measure student progress toward achieving the predetermined instructional objectives and performance standards is applied consistently throughout the School. All promotion and retention decisions are subject to the third grade reading guarantee requirements.

Promotion

A student will be promoted from one grade to the next provided the student meets the applicable promotion criteria. The decision to promote a student shall rest solely with the Principal, with appropriate input from the student's teacher(s), the professional staff, and parent(s).

Retention

A student is required to be retained if he/she is truant for 10% or more of the required school days and has failed at least two (2) courses of study, unless the Principal and the teachers of the failed subjects determine that the student is academically prepared to be promoted.

Additionally, a student shall not be promoted or allowed to pass to a higher grade or course level if the student fails to meet established standards for a particular grade or course level.

Retention decisions will be made only after the Principal or applicable teachers have notified and conferred with parent(s) as to the student's progress or lack thereof. These notifications and conferences will take place as soon as teachers and the Principal identify that a student's promotion could be in jeopardy.
Factors

Teachers and the Principal will consider at least the following factors in arriving at decisions on promotion or retention. Factors are applicable in all grade levels.

- The student's level of academic aptitude and achievement;
- The student's level of social and emotional development; and the student’s ability to effectively interact with other students in his/her current grade level;
- The student's attendance patterns (absences, tardiness, early checkout, excused, or unexcused) and its effect on the student’s progress; and
- Any other factors thought to be appropriate by the Principal, teacher(s), and professional staff.

The School will not utilize a Student’s failure to attain a specified score on any statewide achievement assessment as a factor in any decision to deny a Student’s promotion to a higher grade level, except that the School may use a Student’s failure to attain a score in at least the basic range as a factor in deciding to deny a Student’s promotion to the next level on the following assessments:

- 3rd grade math and reading achievement assessments;
- 4th grade reading, writing and math achievement assessments;
- 5th grade reading, math, science and social studies achievement assessments;
- 6th grade reading and math achievement assessments;
- 7th grade reading, writing and math achievement assessments; or
- 8th grade reading, math, science and social studies achievement assessments.

The School may choose not to promote to the next grade level a Student who does not take a required statewide achievement assessment or make-up assessment, and who is not exempt from the requirement to take such assessment.

Disabled Students

Promotion and retention of previously identified disabled students shall be subject to the factors and policy above, but shall also consider the contents of the student’s individualized educational plan (IEP).

Third Grade Guarantee

The School will not promote any student to the fourth grade who does not achieve at least the level equivalent to the level designated by the Ohio Board of Education unless:

- The student is a limited English proficient student who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than three full school years and has had less than three years’ instruction in an English as a second language program;
• The student is a student with a disability entitled to special education and related services and the student’s IEP exempts the student from retention;
• The student demonstrated an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment as determined by the Ohio Department of Education;
• The student received intensive remediation for reading for two school years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in any grades K through 3; or
• All of the following apply:
  (a) The student is a student with a disability;
  (b) The student has taken the third grade English language arts achievement assessment;
  (c) The student’s IEP or 504 plan shows that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for two school years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading; and
  (d) The student previously was retained in grades K-3.

If a student is promoted despite not attaining the Ohio Board of Education specified level (which may change yearly), the student will continue to receive intensive reading instruction in the fourth grade, including an altered instructional day, specialized diagnostic information, and specific research-based reading strategies that have been successful in improving reading among low performing readers.

If the student is retained, the School shall:
• Provide intensive remediation until the student is able to read at grade-level, including intensive interventions in reading and a minimum of 90 minutes of daily reading, that address the deficient areas; and
• Provide each student with a high-performing teacher, as determined by the teacher’s student performance data when available, and performance reviews. If a student who has been retained demonstrates that he or she is reading at or above grade level, the student may be promoted mid-year to the fourth grade at the Principal’s discretion.

Intervention

Annually, the School will assess the reading skills of each student enrolled in grades 1 to 3 by September 30, and in kindergarten by November 1, and will identify students who are reading below grade level, except those students with cognitive disabilities or other disabilities as authorized by the Ohio Department of Education on a case-by-case basis. The students’ classroom teachers shall be involved in the assessment and identification of students reading below grade level, however such assessment may be administered electronically using live, two-way video and audio
connections if the teacher administering the assessment is in a separate location from the student.

For students reading below grade level, the School will:

- Provide written notification to the student’s parent(s) that includes the following:
  
  (a) A statement that the student has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading;
  
  (b) A description of the current services that are provided to the student;
  
  (c) A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that will be provided to the student that are designed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency;
  
  (d) A statement that if the student receives a score within a certain range on the assessment to measure English and language arts skills, the student will be retained unless the student is exempt; and
  
  (e) A statement that the assessment is not the sole determinant of promotion and that additional evaluations and assessments are available to assist the School and parent(s) in knowing whether the student is reading at or above grade level and is ready for promotion.

- Provide intensive reading instruction services and regular diagnostic assessments to the student immediately following identification of a reading deficiency, including research-based reading strategies that have been shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers and targeted at the student’s identified deficiencies.

- Develop a reading improvement and monitoring plan within 60 days after receiving the student’s results on the diagnostic assessment. The plan must include:
  
  (a) Identification of the student’s specific reading deficiencies;
  
  (b) A description of the additional instructional services and support that will be provided to the student to remediate the identified reading deficiencies;
  
  (c) Opportunities for the student’s parent(s) to be involved in the instructional services and support;
  
  (d) A process for monitoring the extent to which the student receives the instructional services and support;
  
  (e) A reading curriculum during regular school hours that does all of the following: assists students to read at grade level, provides scientifically based and reliable assessment, and provides initial and ongoing analysis of each student’s reading process; and
  
  (f) A statement that if the student fails to attain a level designated by the Ohio Board of Education on the assessment to measure skill in English language
the end of the third grade, the student may be retained in the third grade.

Teacher Qualifications

Each student with a reading improvement and monitoring plan shall be assigned a teacher who has at least one year of teaching experience and:

• Holds a reading endorsement on the teacher’s license and has attained a passing score on the corresponding assessment for that endorsement, as applicable; or
• Completed a master’s degree program with a major in reading; or
• Was rated “most effective” for reading instruction consecutively for the most recent two years based on assessments of student growth measures developed by a vendor and that is on the list of student assessments approved by the State Board of Education; or
• Was rated “above expected value added” in reading instruction, as determined by criteria established by the Ohio Department of Education, for the most recent consecutive two years; or
• Earned a passing score on a rigorous test of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction approved by the State Board of Education; or
• Holds an educator license for teaching grades pre-kindergarten through three or four through nine issued on or after July 1, 2017.

The student may be assigned a teacher with less than one year of teaching experience provided that teacher meets one of the above criteria and is assigned a teacher mentor who also meets the qualifications above.

A student with a reading improvement and monitoring plan who enters the third grade after July 1, 2013 but prior to July 1, 2016, a student who is an English language learner and has been in the United States for three years or less, or a student who has an IEP may be assigned a teacher who holds an alternative credential approved by the Ohio Department of Education or who has successfully completed training based on principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction approved by the Ohio Department of Education. Beginning July 1, 2014, the alternative credentials and training must be aligned with the reading competencies adopted by the State Board of Education.

Nothing in the Third Grade Guarantee prevents a student with a reading improvement and monitoring plan from receiving reading intervention and remediation services from an individual employed as a speech-language pathologist who holds a license issued by the board of speech-language pathology and audiology and a professional
pupil services license as a school speech-language pathologist issued by the State Board of Education.

A teacher other than the student’s assigned teacher may provide any services required under the Third Grade Guarantee, provided that the teacher meets the qualification requirements and that the assigned teacher and Principal agree to the assignment. Any such assignment of services must be documented in the student’s reading improvement and monitoring plan.

**Reporting Requirement**

The School shall annually report to the Department of Education its implementation and compliance with the Third Grade Guarantee. When a student enrolls in the School, the School will provide the parent(s) with a copy of the most recent School report card.

R.C. 3313.608; 3313.609; 3301.0711; 3313.6411(B); 20 USC 1400 et seq.
COLUMBUS PREPARATORY ACADEMY – A CASE STUDY

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

CPA

FINISH THE FIGHT
THE BLITZ™ 2015

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BLITZ™ MISSION

THE BLITZ IS AN EXCITING WAY TO TEACH STUDENTS TO CREATE, MOTIVATE, BE A TEAM PLAYER, AND ABOVE ALL, BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SUCCESS IN TESTING AND ACADEMICS.

AS EDUCATORS, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER. THROUGH DEDICATION, CREATIVITY AND HARD WORK, WE ARE CHALLENGED TO TEACH STUDENTS TO THINK IN DEPTH AND PREPARE THEM FOR EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS AND IN LIFE.

“WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO. EXCELLENCE, THEREFORE, IS NOT AN ACT BUT A HABIT.”
FAMOUS CARRISM’S

“FINISH THE FIGHT.”
“Dare to be champions.”
“Big players make big plays in big games.”
“NO EXCUSES.”
“This ain’t 2006-2007.”
“Are you tough enough for CPA?”
“We’re going to destroy the bell curve.”
## REWARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*World of Bounce</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Athletic Adventure</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COSI</td>
<td>Thursday, May 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Bowling</td>
<td>Thursday, May 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Putt-n-Play</td>
<td>Thursday, May 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild Wonders Program</td>
<td>Thursday, May 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ice Skating</td>
<td>Friday, May 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Columbus Zoo</td>
<td>Friday, May 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fort Rapids</td>
<td>Friday, May 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Down Week</td>
<td>Week of May 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Graeters Tour (K-3 preferred)</td>
<td>Monday, May 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Columbus Clippers</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Magic Mountain</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Homestead Park</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Float Party</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ice Cream Party</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Popsicle Party</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cookie Party</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movie &amp; Popcorn in Room</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donuts Served</td>
<td>Thursday, May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pizza Party: Little Caesars</td>
<td>Teacher Decides Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Your Own Sub</td>
<td>Teacher Decides Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*OSU Planetarium</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fish Hatchery</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates field trips. Teachers will be given permission slips as well as pick-up and drop-off times.
Review Game Guidelines
Blitz™ 2015

1. The review games are based on state standards relevant to the PARCC, OAA and ITBS.

2. Review days are filled with education, movement, energy and competition for the students.

3. Each teacher will create a fun and exciting gamed based on data that has been tracked using Scrimmages© and the mock PARCC/OAA/ITBS.

4. Each teacher will review one subject during review games. Decide among your team as to which teacher will review which subject. Review what the students did not perform well on, rather than what they already know.

5. Review games should last 30-60 minutes, depending on your grade schedule. The winning team or players should be rewarded or
celebrated. Please make your game original, creative and worth everyone’s time.

6. During review games, students will change rooms to complete another competition on a different subject. Please follow the pre-determined schedule.

7. Teachers will be judged on how engaged the students are and how well your game is designed.

8. Use everything to your disposal—music, technology, manipulatives, the gym, the outdoors, and non-classroom teachers and staff.

9. Keep the action fast, the content heavy and the activity rigorous.

10. The homeroom teacher is responsible for leading the competition and for creating the review game.
Blitz™ Rules

1. All teams will be assigned a band.
2. All costumes, signs, props, songs, etc. must have a positive theme and relate to your band.
3. Days for team dress: Pep Rallies, Review Days, Testing Days
4. How to earn points:
   a. Attendance and Behavior (Including Teachers)
      i. Absences: At least -5000
      ii. Tardies: At least -5000
      iii. Discipline Issues: At least -25,000
      iv. Destruction of team property: At least -250,000
      v. ASP: At least -250,000 per student
      vi. Suspension: At least -250,000 per day
      vii. Perfect attendance bonuses will be given.
   b. Good Faith Effort: See Rubric
      i. +25,000 points per student, per day of testing
      ii. +50,000 points per student for giving good faith effort on the test
      iii. +20,000 points per student for not disrupting others
   c. Team Dress and Decorations:
      i. Everything must relate to your band—logo, mascot, costumes, chants, performance, etc.
      ii. Room décor must relate to your band.
      iii. Creativity and originality!
      iv. There will be exceptions to the dress code during the Blitz©. Please see Mr. Carr with any questions.
   d. Review Games:
      i. Creativity, originality, effort, student engagement
      ii. Questions are related to the OAA, ITBS, PARCC
      iii. Learning relevance
   e. Participation: Students and Teachers
      i. All students must be taking part in: Pep rallies, review games, class performance, chants and cheers.
   f. Fundraising: Top selling team will receive at least +1,000,000 points.
   g. Testing Materials on Test Days: Organization, implementation, accountability, punctuality
   h. Other activities may be added throughout the Blitz©.
5. Judging:
   a. Mr. Carr, who has the right to give and take away points at his discretion.
   b. Staff members that do not have their own team.
Review Games
February 18th-20th and April 13th-16th
### Blitz™ Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Teachers/Artists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kindergarten</strong></td>
<td>Angelo—Kiss, Elton John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barnette—The Laurie Berkner Band, Heyder—Taylor Swift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roach—Disney, Urban—The Wiggles, Wells—Keith Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Grade</strong></td>
<td>Capriato—ACDC, Caudill—The Bee Gee’s, Pritt—Bob Marley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rankin—Spice Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Grade</strong></td>
<td>Early—Katy Perry, Matheny—The Beach Boys, McKee—Elvis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presley Band, Semon—Michael Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Grade</strong></td>
<td>Glispie &amp; Ohr—Billy Joel &amp; Rausch &amp; Wietrzykowski—Daft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth Grade</strong></td>
<td>Justin Timberlake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth Grade</strong></td>
<td>Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sixth Grade</strong></td>
<td>John Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seventh Grade</strong></td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eighth Grade</strong></td>
<td>The Ohio State Marching Band</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blitz™ Schedule

On pep rally days, lunches begin at 10:30am and will continue every 2 minutes until all classes, K-6, have gotten lunch. Students will eat in their rooms. Mr. Carr plans to have all students eating lunch by 11:00am. Please adjust your schedule accordingly. Also, please adjust your Blitz© schedules to fit your team's needs.

Kindergarten Blitz© Schedule

Review Days
February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th
*Barrettto & Urban: Specials at 9:30-10:05am
8:00-8:45am Math
8:50-9:25am Specials
9:25-9:50am Paragon
9:50-10:15am Science
10:15-10:30am Recess
10:30-11:15am Lunch
11:15-12:40pm Literacy
12:45-1:20pm Challenge 1
1:20-1:25pm Rotate
1:25-2:00pm Challenge 2
2:00-2:05pm Rotate
2:05-2:40pm Challenge 3

Pep Rally Days
February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th
*Barrettto & Urban: Specials at 9:07-9:53am
8:00-8:30am Math
8:35-9:05am Specials
9:05-9:30am Math
9:30-10:30am Literacy
10:30-11:00am Lunch
11:00-11:45pm Recess
11:45am-3:00pm Pep Rally
### First Grade Blitz™ Schedule

#### Review Days
February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th

- **8:10-10:10am** Literacy
- **10:10-10:50am** Math
- **10:50-11:20am** Lunch
- **11:30-12:05pm** Specials
- **12:05-12:25pm** Recess
- **12:25-12:45pm** Science/Paragon
- **12:45-1:15pm** Review 1
- **1:15-1:20pm** Rotate
- **1:20-1:50pm** Review 2
- **1:50-1:55pm** Rotate
- **1:55-2:25pm** Review 3
- **2:25-2:30pm** Rotate
- **2:30-3:00pm** Review 4

#### Pep Rally Days
February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th

- **8:10-10:10am** Literacy
- **10:10-10:40am** Math
- **10:40-11:10am** Lunch
- **11:10-11:20am** Option
- **11:20-11:45pm** Specials
- **11:45am-3:00pm** Pep Rally
# Second Grade Blitz™ Schedule

## Review Days
February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th

- 8:10-9:10am: Math
- 9:10-11:10am: Literacy
- 11:10-11:40am: Lunch
- 11:40-12:00pm: Recess
- 12:00-12:10pm: Option
- 12:10-12:45pm: Specials
- 12:45-1:45pm: Challenge 1
- 1:45-1:50pm: Rotate
- 1:50-2:50pm: Challenge 2
- 2:50-2:55pm: Rotate back to homeroom

## Pep Rally Days
February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th

- 8:10-9:10am: Math
- 9:10-10:10am: Literacy
- 10:10-10:40am: Specials
- 10:40-11:20am: Lunch
- 11:20-11:45am: Recess
- 11:45am-3:00pm: Pep Rally
# Third Grade Blitz™ Schedule

## Review Days
February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10-10:10am</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10-10:45am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15am</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:45pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:10pm</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10-12:45pm</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:15pm</td>
<td>Review 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-1:20pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:20-1:50pm</td>
<td>Review 2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1:55-2:25pm</td>
<td>Review 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:25-2:30pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00pm</td>
<td>Review 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Pep Rally Days
February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10-9:40am</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-10:10am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10-11:00am</td>
<td>Math</td>
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<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45am</td>
<td>Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Fourth Grade Blitz™ Schedule

### Review Days
**February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10-9:30am</td>
<td>Block 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:05am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
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<td>Block 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:25-11:40pm</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40-12:10pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10-12:45pm</td>
<td>Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:15pm</td>
<td>Review 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-1:20pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20-1:50pm</td>
<td>Review 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50-1:55pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55-2:25pm</td>
<td>Review 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:25-2:30pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00pm</td>
<td>Review 4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Pep Rally Days
**February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>10:40-11:05am</td>
<td>Option</td>
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<td>11:05-11:25pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:25-11:45am</td>
<td>Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
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</table>
# Fifth Grade Blitz™ Schedule

## Review Days

February 18th-20th & April 13th-16th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Block 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:50-11:25am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:25-11:45am</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:15pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-12:45pm</td>
<td>Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:25pm</td>
<td>Challenge 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:25-1:35pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
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<td>1:35-2:05pm</td>
<td>Challenge 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:05-2:15pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
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<td>2:15-2:45pm</td>
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## Pep Rally Days

February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>8:00-9:00am</td>
<td>Block 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00am</td>
<td>Block 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:45am</td>
<td>Block 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:40am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
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### Sixth Grade Blitz™ Schedule

**Review Days**  
February 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> & April 13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Specials</td>
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<td>9:35-10:25am</td>
<td>Block 2</td>
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<td>10:30-11:20am</td>
<td>Block 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20-12:10pm</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:25pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:25-2:55pm</td>
<td>Challenge 3</td>
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**Pep Rally Days**  
February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 13<sup>th</sup>, April 17<sup>th</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:15am</td>
<td>Block 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:30am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45am</td>
<td>Option</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
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</table>

![Signature Image](image-url)
## Seventh Grade Blitz™ Schedule

### Review Days
February 18^{th}-20^{th} & April 13^{th}-16^{th}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:45am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45-9:35am</td>
<td>Math</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:35-10:25am</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:25-11:20am</td>
<td>ELA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20-12:15pm</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-12:45pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:45pm</td>
<td>Challenge 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-1:55pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55-2:55pm</td>
<td>Challenge 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pep Rally Days
February 20^{th}, March 13^{th}, April 17^{th}, May 8^{th}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:30am</td>
<td>Block 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Block 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:15am</td>
<td>Block 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20-11:40am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Eighth Grade Blitz© Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Review Days</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pep Rally Days</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 18th-20th &amp; April 13th-16th</td>
<td>February 20th, March 13th, April 17th, May 8th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:45am</td>
<td>Specials</td>
<td>8:00-8:30am</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>9:35-10:25am</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>9:30-10:30am</td>
<td>Block 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25-11:20am</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>10:30-11:15am</td>
<td>Block 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20-12:15pm</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
<td>11:20-11:40am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-12:45pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>11:45am-3:00pm</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:45pm</td>
<td>Challenge 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-1:55pm</td>
<td>Rotate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:55-2:55pm</td>
<td>Challenge 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
# Special’s Schedule

## Review Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:45am</td>
<td>6th, 7th, 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:50-9:25am</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:05am</td>
<td>Kindergarten / 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10-10:45am</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:50-11:25am</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-12:05pm</td>
<td>1st Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10-12:45pm</td>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers:**
- Mr. Guerrero—5th Grade
- Mrs. Rock—5th Grade

## Pep Rally Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30am</td>
<td>6th, 7th, 8th</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:35-9:05am</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:07-9:37am</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-10:10am</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10-10:40am</td>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15am</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20-11:45am</td>
<td>1st Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers:**
- Ms. Pyshora—7th Grade
- Mr. Williams—6th Grade

## Title 1 Math, Reading & ESL Teachers and Instructional Aides

- Mrs. Allen—5th Grade
- Mrs. Deiter—Mrs. Wietrzykowski
- Mrs. Johnson—6th Grade
- Mrs. Henry—4th
- Mr. Martin—Mrs. Wietrzykowski
- Mrs. Flowers—Mrs. Urban
- Mrs. Smith—ASP
- Mrs. Vitale—K
- Mrs. Leachman—1st
- Mrs. Carlton—KD
Testing Reminders

1. Testing buckets will be in your classroom the morning of each test. Please return your bucket to the office after testing is complete for the day.
2. All student information on the back of the test book and/or answer document needs to be bubbled. Student information will be in your test bucket.
3. Breakfast and water will be served to all students on test days.
4. Students identified as ESL may use a dictionary and receive extended time if necessary. Mrs. Rock and Ms. Henry will be in charge of these students.

Special Education & ESL Testing

1. Mrs. Kaur will have all testing materials for students she is in charge of testing.
2. Mrs. Rock and Ms. Henry will have all testing materials for ESL students they are in charge of testing.
3. A designated staff member will come to the classroom to pick up students who will receive accommodations prior to the test beginning on test days.
4. Testing schedule and location for students with an IEP, 504 or identified as ESL will be in your testing bucket.
Pep Rally Schedules

Pep Rally 1—
Friday, February 20th
11:45—Seat Students; 5 Old Videos Playing
12:10—Excellent Zone Enters; Pregame
12:15—Mr. Carr Welcome; Drop Banners
12:20—Class Intro Video
12:25—Class Performance #1: Matheny: Beach Boys
12:35—School of Rock
12:40—Hype Video
12:42—Class Performance #2: Wells: Keith Urban
12:52—Student Competition: K-2
12:57—CPA Celebration Video (Hall)
1:07—Class Performance #3: Angelo: Kiss
1:17—Dance Party
1:20—Rumble at 120
1:22—Hype Video
1:24—Footloose: Video and Live Skit
1:34—Class Performance #4: Capriato: ACDC
1:44—Student Competition: 3-5
1:49—Don’t Fear the Reaper: Video and Live Skit
1:54—Deep Thoughts with Dr. P
1:55—Student Competition: 6-8
2:00—Class Performance #5: McKee: Elvis
2:10—Step Brothers
2:15—Class Performance #6: Roach: Disney
2:25—Teacher Competition
2:30—Hype Video
2:32—Detroit Rock City
2:37—Crown Top Performance; Give out Moon Man
2:40—Battle of the Bands
2:50—New Standings Announced
2:55—Dismiss Students
Pep Rally 2—
Friday, March 13th
11:45—Seat Students; 5 Old Videos Playing
12:05—Pregame Hype
12:10—Mr. Carr Welcome; Class Intro Video
12:15—Class Performance #1: Semon: Michael Jackson
12:25—Hype Video
12:28—Student Competition: K-2
12:33—Class Performance #2: Rankin: Spice Girls
12:43—Grease/American Bandstand: Video and Live Skit
12:50—Student Competition: 3-5
12:55—Class Performance #3: Heyder: Taylor Swift
1:05—Barbershop Quartet: G, Ohr, Moss, Carr, and Ross
1:10—Deep Thoughts with Dr. P
1:12—Nike Motivational Video
1:15—Student Competition: 6-8
1:20—Rumble at 120
1:22—Class Performance #4: Caudill: The Bee Gee’s
1:32—Thriller Video and Dance
1:42—Class Performance #5: Early: Katy Perry
1:52—Teacher Competition
1:57—The Goonies
2:02—Hype Video
2:03—Class Performance #6: Barnette: The Lori Berkner Band
2:13—Karate Kid
2:18—Live Moss
2:20—Dance Party #1
2:25—Dance Party #2
2:30—NKOTB starring Friendship Team
2:40—New Standings Announced and Moon Man Given
2:45—Dismiss Students
Pep Rally 3—
Friday, April 17th
11:45—Seat Students: 5 Old Videos Playing
12:05—Mr. Carr Welcome; Pregame; Bells of War
12:10—Hype Video
12:13—Grammy Nominees:
   Homecoming Court Enters
12:25—Class Performance #1:
   8th Grade: TBDBITL
12:35—Family Guy Voiceover
12:40—Cougar Motivational Video
12:42—Student Competition: K-2
12:47—Class Performance #2: G and Ohr: Billy Joel & Elton John
1:10—Parent Trap
1:15—Prancersize
1:16—Student Competition: 3-5
1:20—Rumble at 120
1:22—Dance Party #1
1:27—Hype Video
1:29—Deep Thoughts with Dr. P
1:30—Class Performance #3: 7th Grade: The Beatles
1:40—The Wedding Singer
1:45—Student Competition: 6-8
1:50—Real World
1:55—Class Performance #4: Urban: Muppets
2:05—TRL, hosted by Carson Daily (Mossbarger); Video countdown to show class videos
2:15—Teacher Competition
2:20—Class Performance #5: Pritt: Bob Marley at 2:30, Sabotage by 7th Grade; Performance Overlap
2:45—Crown Homecoming King and Queen; Ultimate Moon Man Given
2:55—New Standings Announced
3:00—Dismiss Students
Pep Rally 4—
Friday, May 8th
11:45—Seat Students; 5 Old Videos Playing
12:05—Hype Video; Bells of War
12:10—Carr Welcome; Class Intro Video
12:15—Class Performance #1:
   6th Grade: John Williams
12:30—Dazed and Confused
12:35—Student Competition: K-2
12:40—21 Jump Street
12:45—Deep Thoughts with Dr. P
12:46—Class Performance #2:
   4th Grade: Justin Timberlake
1:00—Student Competition: 3-5
1:05—Old School
1:10—Dance Party #1
1:15—Friendship Team Aerobics
1:20—Rumble at 120
1:22—Blue Oyster Cult
1:27—Class Performance #3: 5th Grade: Queen
1:42—Student Competition: 6-8
1:47—November Rain
1:52—Dance Party #2
1:57—Class Performance #4: Rausch & Wietrzykowski: Daft Punk
2:12—Teacher Competition
2:17—Mr. Ohr as Weird Al
2:22—Young Guns 2
2:27—Sharknado
2:32—Live Fame
2:37—Winning Band from Pep Rally 1
2:47—Ball Drop with Top 5; Moon Man Given
2:50—New Standings Announced
:55—Dismiss Students
**PARCC Administration Schedule: PBA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Testing Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 24(^{th})</td>
<td>ELA Session 1 (4(^{th})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 25(^{th})</td>
<td>ELA Session 2 (4(^{th})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 26(^{th})</td>
<td>ELA Session 3 (4(^{th})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 3(^{rd})</td>
<td>Math Session 1 (3(^{rd})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 5(^{th})</td>
<td>Math Session 2 (3(^{rd})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 10(^{th})</td>
<td>Science (5(^{th}) &amp; 8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 10(^{th})</td>
<td>Social Studies (4(^{th}) &amp; 6(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARCC Administration Schedule: EOY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Testing Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 21(^{st})</td>
<td>ELA Session 1 (4(^{th})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 23(^{rd})</td>
<td>ELA Session 2 (6(^{th})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 28(^{th})</td>
<td>Math Session 1 (3(^{rd})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 30(^{th})</td>
<td>Math Session 2 (3(^{rd})-8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 5(^{th})</td>
<td>Science (5(^{th}) &amp; 8(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 5(^{th})</td>
<td>Social Studies (4(^{th}) &amp; 6(^{th}))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## OAA Administration Schedule: Spring 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Testing Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Reading OAA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ITBS Administration Schedule: Spring 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Testing Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, April 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K—Vocabulary, Word Analysis 1-2—Vocabulary, Word Analysis, Reading Picture Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K—Listening, Language 1-2—Reading Stories, Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K—Reading, Part 1 1-2—Language, Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, Usage and Expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K—Reading, Part 2 1-2—Math Concepts, Problems, Computation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K—Math 1-2—Social Studies, Science, Sources of Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teachers may change this schedule to fit the pacing of their students. All testing must be complete by Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.*
Please Note: All testing periods for the OAA, PARCC and ITBS will begin by 8:30am and continue until the specified testing window is complete. If Specials are scheduled during that time, please do not stop testing.
Blitz™ Rubric 2015

Team:__________  Current Point Total:__________

New Point Total:__________  New Standing:_____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior &amp; Transitions</td>
<td>Students transition quickly and quietly, without disruptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Tardies</td>
<td>Classes will earn and/or lose points for each student and teacher absent or tardy. Perfect attendance bonuses will be given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumes &amp; Props</td>
<td>Teams are distinguishable from other teams and all students are participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm &amp; Creativity</td>
<td>Chants, cheers, songs, room décor, performance, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>All students and teachers participate in all Blitz© activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deductions teams may incur:
1. Student destroys another teams property: -250,000 points (at least)
2. A student receives ASP: -250,000 points (at least)
3. A student is suspended: (per day) 250,000 points (at least)

Additional ways to earn points:
1. Teacher Review Games: 250,000 points (at least)
2. Room Décor: 100,000 points (at least)
3. Fundraisers: Blitz© Baskets 1,000,000 points (at least)

Please note: Mr. Carr has the right to give and take away points at his discretion
# Good Faith Reward Rubric

Team Name:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Attendance 25,000 points</th>
<th>Preparation 10,000 points</th>
<th>Effort 25,000 points</th>
<th>Completion 50,000 points</th>
<th>No Distractions 25,000 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Top Testers: 1. 2. 3.  

Point Total: ____________________________
# Pep Rally Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>At least…</th>
<th>At least…</th>
<th>At least…</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enthusiasm</strong></td>
<td>Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the test in others.</td>
<td>Facial expressions and body language sometimes generates a strong interest and enthusiasm about the test in others.</td>
<td>Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat fake.</td>
<td>Very little use of expression. Does not generate interested in the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
<td>Students use several props that show considerable work and creativity and make the presentation better.</td>
<td>Students use 1 prop that shows considerable work and creativity and makes the presentation better.</td>
<td>Student uses 1 prop, which does not add to the presentation.</td>
<td>Students use no props OR props chosen are not related to presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Always listens to, shares with and supports efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep peers working together.</td>
<td>Usually listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause “waves” in the group.</td>
<td>At times, listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group, but is not always a team player.</td>
<td>Rarely listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others in the group. Is not a good team player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Students are completely prepared and rehearsed.</td>
<td>Students seem pretty prepared, but might have needed more rehearsal.</td>
<td>Students are somewhat prepared, but rehearsal was lacking.</td>
<td>Students do not seem prepared and ready to present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td>All students are wearing Blitz© attire, very creative, professional look. Mr. Carr and judges should be able to distinguish between teams.</td>
<td>2 or more students are out of Blitz© attire.</td>
<td>5 or more students are out of Blitz© attire.</td>
<td>General attire is not appropriate for Blitz©.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>Listens intently. Is not distracting.</td>
<td>Listens intently, but is a little distracting.</td>
<td>At times, does not appear to be listening, but is not being distracting.</td>
<td>Does not appear to be listening and is being very distracting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Speaks clearly and distinctly 100% of the time. All can hear cheers, chants, songs and presentation.</td>
<td>Speaks clearly 90% of the time. Cannot make out all of cheer, chant, song or presentation.</td>
<td>Speaks clearly most of the time. Cheer, chant, song or presentation is hard to hear and does not mention test goals.</td>
<td>Often mumbles or cannot be understood. Cheer, chant, song or presentation does not make sense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BLITZ™ SOUNDTRACK

1. ELIMINATE PROFICIENT
2. MONY MONY
3. SAND STORM
4. SHAKE IT OFF
5. CENTURIES
6. GOING DOWN FOR REAL
7. SUMMER
8. WAKE ME UP
9. TURN DOWN FOR WHAT
10. WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE
11. SHIPPING UP TO BOSTON
12. ONE MORE TIME
13. TWIST AND SHOUT
14. TNT
15. DAYS GO BY
16. BYE BYE BYE
17. STAYING ALIVE
18. DON’T STOP ME NOW
19. FIGHT THE TEAM ACROSS THE FIELD
20. JAIL HOUSE ROCK
21. STAR WARS
22. ROAR
23. THRILLER
24. ROCK AND ROLL ALL NIGHT
25. I’M STILL STANDING
26. PRESSURE
27. ONE LOVE
28. YOUR LOVE
Appendix F

House Bills for Charter Schools

1997 – HB 770
• Toledo is named designee or sponsor for new start – up community schools.
• OCCS is formed with Sally Perz

1999 – HB 282
• Expands challenged districts to include Ohio Urban 21 districts.
• Expands challenged district to include those in academic emergency.
• Requires districts to transport community school students.

2001 – HB 94
• Sponsors have the right to suspend, terminate or non – renew community schools
• Expands sponsorship of new startups to include school districts, ESC’s and 13 four year state universities and qualified non – profits.
• Expands challenged districts to those in academic watch
• Allows e-schools

2003 – HB 95
• Details flow of state aid to community schools
• Requires auto withdrawal of community school students missing 105 consecutive hours.

2003 – HB 3
• The Big 8 – Lucas County districts in academic watch and emergency allowed to open community schools

2007 – HB 119
• Requires community schools to pass opening assurances before opening as judged by authorizer/sponsor.

2009 – HB 1
• Strengthens closure criteria for community schools who are not performing well academically.

2011 – HB 153
• Prohibits sponsors ranked in lowest 20 percent based on PI scores to open new schools.

2012 – HB 555
• Changed the state accountability system to replace ratings with letter grades of A, B, C, D or F.
• K-3 literacy – (this was the genesis of the third grade reading guarantee)
• Proficiency benchmark raise to 80%.
• Safe Harbor enacted for schools with high value add.
• Admission of pupils and such requirements for their promotion from grade to grade to ensure that they are capable and prepared for level of study at the next grade level that the board finds necessary. (Many boards enacted Placement, promotion and retention (PPR) policies)
• Residency – increase of flags where the home district can flag students and postpone payment to community schools.

2013 – HB 167
• Mayor can authorize community schools.
• How foundation funding is calculated. (Targeted assistance is currently under review. Money that has been earmarked for economically disadvantaged students. District schools receive 100% while community schools only receive 25%. The other 75% stays with the state.)
• Established additional aid for SPED, third grade reading guarantee funding, Limited English proficiency.

2014 – HB 487
• Third grade reading guarantee established.
• Career advising requirement passed for high schools.
• Must allow community school students to participate in district sports.
• End of course exams are put in place of OGT for high school students. (Last of OGT will be phased out in 2018).

2015 – HB 2
• Widely recognized as the most destructive bill for community schools and authorizers.
• Sponsors must be ranked effective in order to open new schools. (There are currently only 5 as of print of this capstone)
• Schools must be financially solvent.
• Ineffective sponsors cannot open schools and are subject to shut down.
• E-schools were not included in sponsor ratings initially and that led to scandal. When e-schools were added the majority of authorizers did not meet the requirements to open new schools.
• Sponsor oversight is outlined with; academics, fiscal performance, intervention in failing schools.
• A school cannot switch sponsors if they are failing.
• Sponsor cannot sell school services to schools they are authorizing.
• Compensation for governing boards is set at $125 per meeting. (Some boards were being paid $425 per meeting prior to this rule)

2015 – HB 7
• Prohibits school district and community schools from using students’ score (other than 3rd grade ELA assessment or High School end of course exams) as a factor in promotion.
• Permits High School students to retake end of course exams as many times as they wish.

2015 – HB 64
• Targeted assistance for community schools set at 25% while district is set at 100%. 
• Community schools can open pre-k.
• Resident Educator program established for new teachers requiring a four-year process.
• College Credit Plus program established so students can take college credit classes while in middle and high school.

2016 – HB 113
• Prohibits community school teacher or licensed professional from terminating his/her employment contract after July 10th without consent from board and administration. Educator license can be suspended. (Enacted to stop teachers from taking jobs and leaving the school with an open position at the start of school.)
Appendix G

Federal Support and Policies

Charter schools are afforded the same federal support, policies and programs that any other public school in the nation receives. There is no differentiation in the support that a community school receives at the Federal level because community schools are public schools. There are only variations at the state and local level. Below are a list of supports and policies and descriptions given to all schools by the federal government: (retrieved from U.S. Department of Education)

• **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**
  1. Signed into law in 2015
  2. Revision of 2002’s No Child Left Behind Act
  3. Advances equity among America’s disadvantaged and high needs students.
  4. College Prep
  5. Statewide assessments measuring students’ progress
  7. Sustains administrations historical investments.
  8. Effects powerful change in lowest performing areas.

• **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**
  1. Title 1 – Allocation of funds based on free and reduced lunch information that can be used for hiring teachers in English Language Arts or Math. Technology, Professional Development or community outreach.
  2. Title II - Recruiting, preparing, training school staff or administration for high quality schools including merit pay.
  3. Title III – Language instruction for English learners and immigrant students.
  4. Title IV – 21st century Schools and School Safety – before and after
school care and tutoring along with improved safety for schools (i.e. cameras, and safety equipment)

5. Title V – Districts and local education agencies can target grant funds.
6. Title VI – Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaskan Native education
7. Title VII – Average Daily Attendance and compensation

• **Civil Rights**
  1. Disability Discrimination
  2. Sex Discrimination
  3. Race and National Origin Discrimination

• **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
  1. Confidentiality of student records

• **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
  1. Establishes the rights of individual students who have a disability the chance to have a free and public education.
Appendix H

Teacher Survey Results

Teacher Survey – five or more years experience at CPA

1. In your opinion, what is the practice that made the most difference for the CPA students and their test scores?
   A. Weekly Scrimmages
   B. Teaching/practicing the DWB™ and power verbs
   C. The Blitz™ Program
   D. Teaching content standards
   E. Motivational pep rallies and speeches
   F. Competition
   G. Other…please specify

Results: Weekly scrimmages was the answer for 90% of the staff members. One staff member answered “all work in combination”, and another answered “all of the above”, which was not a choice.

2. In your opinion, what has made the most difference for teachers in improving our test scores at CPA?
   A. Professional Development time dedicated to and the creation of scrimmages?
   B. Professional Development time dedicated to teaching data tracking and data tracking itself?
   C. Overall teacher support.
   D. Other…please specify

Results: 50% of the staff members answered B, professional development and data tracking. 50% answered C, Teacher support.

3. What one thing do you feel changed the school’s outlook from being a failing school about to close to being the overall top academic school in the state? Please explain.

Results: Being an open ended question there were multiple answers. The responses were, “no tolerance for misbehavior, academic emphasis and motivation for students and teachers, the Blitz, School Pride, teachers were taught to make scrimmages based on standards, learned to calculate PI, accountability. Accountability was the theme that showed up more than once.”
4. Clearly there was a change in attitudes and the culture of the students, parents, and teachers. What one change do you attribute the turnaround to?

**Results:** 60% answered teacher support and 40% answered student and parent accountability.

5. Is there something that you have implemented in your classroom that you feel brought about results or helped students raise their scores? Please share here:

**Results:** There were multiple answers again. High expectations behaviorally and academically, no excuses, Implementation of scrimmages, DWB’s and data charts. Both DWB’s and data charts had an equal number of mentions in the answers.

6. What behavioral change most contributed to the turnaround of CPA?

**Results:** Consistent expectations and accountability for students and parents & ASP.

7. What policy change most contributed to the turnaround of CPA?

**Results:** Teacher led instruction in the classroom, teacher support, celebrating excellence, smart kids were the cool kids at CPA.
VITA

CHAD RYAN CARR

EDUCATION

May, 1995
Bachelor of Arts
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

May, 1998
Master of Arts
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

May, 2001
Master of Arts
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

May, 2004
Master of Arts
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky

Pending
Doctor of Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2011 - Present
Executive Vice President – State Superintendent
Mosaica/ACCEL
Columbus, Ohio

2007 – 2016
Principal/Superintendent
Columbus Preparatory Academy
Columbus, Ohio

2005 – 2007
Assistant Principal
McNabb Middle School
Mount Sterling, Kentucky
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School/Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-2005</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Grant County High School</td>
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<td>Dry Ridge, Kentucky</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998-2000</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Harrison County High School</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Cynthiana, Kentucky</td>
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</table>

**HONORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Principal Of the Year</td>
<td>Mosaica</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Principal of the Year - Ohio</td>
<td>Ohio Alliance of Public Education</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>EVP of the Year</td>
<td>Mosaica</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Academic Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Mosaica</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Educational Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Mosaica</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>