

DISTRICT LETTERHEAD

School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

21 April 2016

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2014-2015 educational progress for the Unified Middle Cyber Academy (UMCA). The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Paula Watkins for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site

<https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles/ReportCard/AccountabilityScorecard/AccountabilityScorecard.aspx>

M-STEP Grades 3-8

Subject	Grade	Testing Group	School Year	State Percent Students Proficient	District Percent Students Proficient	School Percent Students Proficient	Percent Advanced	Percent Proficient	Percent Partially Proficient	Percent Not Proficient
Science	7th Grade Content	White	2014-15	27.4%	3.4%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Science	7th Grade Content	Female	2014-15	20.8%	1%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Science	7th Grade Content	Male	2014-15	24.6%	2.9%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Science	7th Grade Content	Economically Disadvantaged	2014-15	10.9%	0.6%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Science	7th Grade Content	Students With Disabilities	2014-15	4.7%	0%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	All Students	2014-15	29.7%	13.1%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	African American	2014-15	9.1%	8.5%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	Hispanic of Any Race	2014-15	18.1%	0%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	White	2014-15	35.2%	23.3%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	Female	2014-15	25.2%	14%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	Male	2014-15	34%	12.3%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Social Studies	8th Grade Content	Economically Disadvantaged	2014-15	15.9%	9.9%	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10

or you may review a copy in our main office at your child's school.

The state has identified some schools with the status of Reward, Focus or Priority. A Reward school is one that is outperforming other schools in achievement, growth, or is performing better than other schools with a similar student population. A Focus school is one that has a large achievement gap in 30% of its student achievement scores. A Priority school is one whose achievement and growth is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. Our school has not been given one of the labels by the state.

The key challenges for UMCA as denoted by the data are engagement of students who have experienced learning gaps as well as instilling and continuously motivating the students and parents so they know there is hope. We work very hard to engage students and parents or guardians; and we are committed to providing wrap around services that may include food, shelter, clothing, job search assistance for parents, and care for children. The gaps must be measured and addressed via a triangulated approach that includes understanding the specific subject area(s) where focus is required; understanding the student's motivation and confidence toward learning; and understanding the data that includes the student's prior academic performance in comparison with current learning levels.

The key initiatives involve an authentic approach to learning engagement that will foster a love of learning, a confidence in ability to learn, and a motivation to learn and be successful. Key tenets of the initiatives are focusing on student engagement, teaching for learning, using data to inform instruction and assessment, and providing a supportive environment. Additionally, we work to establish strong alliances and partnerships throughout the communities that we serve. Those alliances and partnerships are critical components for serving students and families for postsecondary education, job training, higher quality employment, early childhood learning for young children, cultural enrichment and exposure, and many other opportunities that ensure positive citizenship and lifelong learning.

Many of the students have, for various reasons, found themselves disengaged school environs and learning at their prior school. The reasons for the student disengagement ranges from the student's illness; care of sick parents or siblings; fear of traditional brick and mortar environment; pursuit of employment or continuous employment to support the family; or commitments with specialized talents such as the arts or sports; or childcare when the student is a parent. Often times, the students have not participated in state standardized assessments. They express a fear of taking the tests and the past avoidance is evidenced in their lack of attendance for the tests at prior schools attended. Further, the students' transcripts and pre-tests highlight areas of knowledge and skills that must be addressed to fortify the student for grade/age level learning. A cyber learning program provides an innovative approach to reengage the student.

Our entire staff is committed to working with ALL students to teach, support, encourage, and facilitate learning. Ensuring participation, teaching for learning, and academic growth are key areas of focus. As such, the participation of the student is essential. Students are provided laptop computers and Internet access. Students have access to program mentor and teachers as well as advisors or academic coaches, and personal development mentors via the learning management system that encompasses synchronous interaction and curriculum-based learning content by subject area. Tutors are available for students enrolled in the program with extended hours to allow for variation in the students' schedules. In addition, staff members are available by phone. Staff members are housed in a physical location. The support staff including enrollment, advising and technical support are also on site. A drop-in learning lab is available daily – Monday through Friday – for students who would like to come into the school and work directly with instructional or support staff. Specific sessions are organized on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Tutors are available both day and evening for students who seek additional support after hours. Mobile units of administrator, teacher, and/or advisor are deployed to provide direct one-on-one support for students with instructional guidance, encouragement, or technical issues.

The mentor and academic coach, as staff members, work to assist students in overcoming the anxiety of testing so that they attend school on the required testing dates and complete all requisite state-mandated standardized assessments.

State law requires that we also report additional information. It should be noted that UMCA is in its first year of operation and begins its second year in the 2015-16 school year. To that end, we share the following:

1. PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL

Students at UMCA are recruited and enrolled so that they can become steadfast learners and realize academic growth as they reach increased student achievement. Students were sought through open registration and enrollment, which was announced. Following the announcement and distribution of direct marketing materials, calls were received from prospective students. Students within the age and grade range who reside in the contiguous counties were registered and enrolled. Student enrollment was denied only when there was an issue based on a residential or age restriction. At times there are some students who decide the self-managed type of environment is not conducive for them.

2. THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The school improvement plan has a green indicator of compliance denoting the meeting or exceeding of indicators as required. We do have red indicators for certain subject areas.

3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

The school is a cyber program for the district's seat time waiver offering and meets the requirements of Michigan Curriculum Framework and the Michigan Merit Curriculum with integration of Common Core State Standards. Based upon satisfactory completion of courses or other credit-earning activities, the credits earned through the seat time waiver online courses and activities meet/exceed the course/class completion and academic growth as required to gain promotion to the next grade level or grade progression per the district's board approval. The goal is to instill the desire for the student to remain engaged so they will continue their secondary education.

4. IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM, A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE'S MODEL

The core curriculum can be accessed via request through the mentor assigned to the school electronically, by telephone or in person. The implementation involves establishing with the student the learning requirements and expectations that include the state's core requirements as well as mapping to the national standards. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are compiled for each student based on transcript evaluations, education development plan information; and pretest information. The students utilize the learning management system to access imbedded courses as well as other vendor-imbedded courses. Teaching for learning involves active and engaged instruction that is based on high expectations of excellence in academic performance. Students complete assigned lesson activities with focused rigor, and assessment to determine mastery of learning. Grades and

evaluations are computed and reported in both progress reports and via report cards. Teachers and tutors are available to work

5. THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
6. IDENTIFY THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Given the innovative nature of the school program, the traditional parent-teacher conferences are not held. Rather, the mentor and teachers contact the students regularly via electronic updates. Moreover, a number of students who enroll are independent or have assigned caseworkers. The staff members reach out to parents and/or guardians to review the student's status. The parents/guardians have continuous online access to the student's progress and grades. A tracking mechanism has not been established to determine how many times parents/guardians access the electronic student progress report. However, in addition to the continuous access and electronic updates, staff mails hardcopy updates; there are regular in-person visit; and parents make telephone calls or electronic media conferences are held. When parents come onsite for in-person updates, there is a sign-in book that is maintained. With varied options for interactions, the contact with parents/guardians/caseworkers tracks at approximately 75%.

7. FOR HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY ALSO REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENTS (DUAL ENROLLMENT)-N/A
 - b. THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES OFFERED (AP/IB)-N/A
 - c. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES (AP/IB)-N/A
 - d. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A SCORE LEADING TO COLLEGE CREDIT-N/A

We are entering into our third year of virtual learning at Unified Middle Cyber Academy. Our commitment is to serve those students for whom a traditional brick and mortar building just does not work—and yet, they are entitled to receive and education. The students express an interest in going to school, however, for many reasons – including but not limited to bullying, anxiety, illness, foster care, homelessness, behavior and others – they do not or cannot return to a building on a regular basis.

We are looking forward to a new year that will bring each student exciting experiences in learning, growing, and succeeding! Your commitment to your education and steps toward lifelong learning are to be commended. Moreover, as stated previously our entire staff is committed to working with ALL students to teach, support, encourage, and facilitate learning to ensure student academic growth and student achievement.

Sincerely,

Paula Whittaker Watkins, Ph.D.