

THE EXCEL CENTER

District Improvement Plan

2017/2018

Operatur Per Literas -- Work Through Learning



Traci Berry - Superintendent
1015 Norwood Park Blvd. Austin, Texas 78753
512-637-7100

Date Reviewed: 10/4/2017

DMAC Solutions ®

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Date Approved:

10/4/2017

THE EXCEL CENTER

Mission

Generating Lifelong Connections to Work

Vision

Empowering 100,000 Central Texans to Transform their Lives through Work

Values

Make the Difference

Own It

Spirit of Service

Work Hard, Play Hard

Nondiscrimination Notice

THE EXCEL CENTER does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973; as amended.

THE EXCEL CENTER Site Base

Name	Position
Berry, Traci	Superintendent
Evans, Sharon	Director of Family Services
Hunt, Susan	Director of Student Supports
Moody, Charles	Humanities Team Lead
Solis, Simon	STEM Team Lead
Terlik, Theresa	Director of Operations
Williams, Matt	VP of Education & Head of Schools

Resources

Resource	Source	Amount
IDEA Special Education	Federal	\$23,156
Local Funds	Local	
FSP Funds	State	\$988,938
High School Allotment	State	\$44,284
Instructional Materials Allotment	State	\$114,314.95
State Compensatory Education	State	\$278.48
Title I, Part C Carl D Perkins (CTE)	State	\$150

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 1. Decrease dropout rate by 15% for the 2016-17 school year.

Objective 1. Develop an intake program to provide wrap-around supports and increase options & supports to remain enrolled in lieu of dropping out.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Hire & train Intake Coach. (CSFs: 5,6)	Director of Operations	August 2017	(L)Local Funds	
2. Revise iExcel program. (CSFs: 5,6)	Campus Leadership Team, Intake Coach	October 2017	(L)Staff Time	
3. Develop & implement student commitment partner program. (CSFs: 5,6)	Campus Leadership Team, Learning Team-Attendance & Retention	November 2017	(L)Staff Time	
4. New student lunch during 1st week of the term. (CSFs: 5,6)	Campus Leadership Team, Learning Team-Attendance & Retention	November 2017	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	
5. Life Coach Meeting post-iExcel/prior to 1st day. (CSFs: 5,6)	Campus Leadership Team, Intake Coach, Life Coaches	March 2018	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time, (S)State Compensatory Education	

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 1. Decrease dropout rate by 15% for the 2016-17 school year.

Objective 2. Increase the number of students taking CTE courses and earning industry certifications.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Create a CTE Academy planning committee & schedule regular meetings. (Strategic Priorities: 3) (CSFs: 6)	Campus Leadership Team	November 2017	(L)Staff Time	
2. Develop a programmatic CTE Academy model with course sequencing, cross-curricular alignment, and scheduled industry certifications. (Target Group: All) (Strategic Priorities: 3) (CSFs: 6)	CTE Planning Committee	August 2018	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds	

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 1. Decrease dropout rate by 15% for the 2016-17 school year.

Objective 3. Increase educator proficiency to respond to our diverse community of learners.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Ensure literacy curriculum reflects all elements of the curriculum and a balanced literacy approach. (Strategic Priorities: 2) (CSFs: 1,4,7)	Campus Leadership Team, Core Subject Teachers, ESL Program Team	May 2018	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds, (S)Instructional Materials Allotment	
2. Embed ELL strategies into the curriculum. (CSFs: 1)	Campus Leadership Team, Director of Special Programs, ESL Program Team, Lead Teacher	April 2018	(L)Learning Team Plans, (L)Professional Development Plans, (L)Staff Time, (S)Instructional Materials Allotment	
3. Embed college-readiness standards into the curriculum. (CSFs: 1)	Campus Leadership Team, Learning Teams, Life Coaches, Teacher(s), Team Leads	August 2018	(L)Local Funds, (L)Professional Development Plans, (L)Staff Time, (S)Instructional Materials Allotment	

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 1. Decrease dropout rate by 15% for the 2016-17 school year.

Objective 4. Provide transitional student supports.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Embed college readiness skills into the curriculum. (Strategic Priorities: 3)	Campus Leadership Team, Lead Teacher, Teacher(s)	August 2018	(L)Staff Time, (S)Instructional Materials Allotment	
2. Provide targeted professional learning to Life Coaching team and Instructional staff to support secondary to post-secondary bridging to build college readiness skills, provide a plan for college completion, and ensure transition counseling. (Strategic Priorities: 3)	Campus Leadership Team, Director of Student Supports, Lead Life Coach, Life Coaches, Teacher(s)	August 2018	(L)Professional Development Plans, (L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds	
3. Provide professional learning to Life Coaching team for connecting students to dual credit opportunities. (Strategic Priorities: 3)	Director of Operations, Director of Student Supports	August 2018	(L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds	

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 2. Decrease dropout rate for ESL population by 15% for the 2016-17 school year.

Objective 1. Develop an ESL Academy that provides the scaffolding necessary for successful transition of ESL students into their core academic courses.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Develop ESL Program team & establish set meeting times.	Campus Leadership Team, Coordinator of Special Programs	August 2017	(L)Staff Time	
2. Review current ESL course options & scheduling trends.	ESL Program Team	October 2017	(L)Staff Time	
3. Develop course sequence plan for the ESL Academy & determine resource needs.	ESL Program Team	November 2017	(L)Staff Time	
4. Develop diagnostic testing for entry into each ESL Academy course.	ESL Program Team	November 2017	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds	
5. Schedule students accordingly into the ESL Academy.	Intake Coach, Life Coaches	January 2018	(L)Staff Time	
6. Review ESL Academy student data (dropout rate, attendance, proficiency level gains).	Campus Leadership Team, ESL Program Team	May 2018	(L)Local Data, (L)Staff Time	

THE EXCEL CENTER

Goal 3. Increase attendance to 65% for the 17/18 school year

Objective 1. Develop a campus-wide approach to promoting daily attendance at school and in each classroom.

Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Provide weekly and term attendance reports by life coach.	Life Coaches	August 2017	(L)Staff Time	
2. Recognize Life Coach with highest attendance percentage.	Campus Leadership Team	September 2017	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	
3. Recognize student "best attenders" each week.	Life Coaches	August 2017	(L)Local Data, (L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	
4. Recognize student "best attenders" following each term.	Life Coaches	September 2017	(L)Local Data, (L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	
5. Train teachers to use School Messenger system to contact students.	Director of Operations	September 2017	(L)Staff Time	
6. Mid-term revitalize student breakfast served by staff.	Campus Leadership Team, Life Coaches, Teacher(s)	November 2017	(L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	
7. Provide weekly and term attendance reports by teacher/class.	Director of Operations, PEIMS Coordinator, Registrar	March 2018	(L)Staff Time, (S)FSP Funds	
8. Recognize Teacher with highest attendance percentage.	Campus Leadership Team	May 2018	(L)Local Data, (L)Local Funds, (L)Staff Time	

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Demographics

Demographics Weaknesses

With the increase in ESL students the current ESL programming is not adequately meeting student needs.

Demographics Needs

Student and community feedback identify the need for a South Excel Center Campus.

Demographics Summary

The campus overall enrollment is expected to increase. Overall enrollment was 595 for the 2016/17 school year. Enrollment has reached 573 for Term 2 of the 2017/18 school year. Student to Teacher ratios are increasing due to the increase in enrollment.

Interest in the school is very high from the local community with more than 100 applications every 6 week period.

The average age of students during the 2015/16 school year was 20 years. The average age during the 2016/17 school year was 19 years. It's expected that greater numbers of students age 17 and 18 will be seeking to enroll during the 2017/18 school year.

Students who are identified as At-Risk have increased to 100% during the 2016/17 school year. Additionally, students who receive special education, section 504, and ESL services have increased from year to year.

Student Achievement

Student Achievement Strengths

STAAR US History passing rates consistently achieve 80% or higher. STAAR Algebra I passing rates achieved greater than 80% passing rates during the most recent administration.

Student Achievement Weaknesses

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

2016/17 ELL student STAAR performance led to 45% approaching grade level standards. Passing rates for English I and English II have decreased specifically among ELLs.

Student Achievement Needs

Enhancements to courses offered for English Language Learners.

Student Achievement Summary

2016/17 student STAAR performance led to 57% approaching grade level standards. TAKS testers are achieving 81% or higher passing rates for English Language Arts and Social Studies. Math and Science TAKS passing rates are around 40%.

School Culture and Climate

School Culture and Climate Strengths

Student and staff describe the school climate in a positive manner. 91% of students agree that teachers connect learning to real life and 88% agree that teachers are providing instructional materials that represent their culture. Staff feedback was also very positive and 90% agree that the school inspires them to do their best at their job and that students are provided opportunities to take a lead role in organizing programs.

School Culture and Climate Weaknesses

Teachers report that only 63% agree that administrators involve staff in decision making and 30% do not feel okay with the level of staff involvement. An additional 37% feel that once a new program is started we do not follow up to make sure it's working. Students reported that 50% disagree that they have opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and 23% do not feel they have opportunities to be involved.

School Culture and Climate Needs

Opportunities for students to become more involved in the school community. Staff need additional opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

School Culture and Climate Summary

Overall school culture and climate is positive among students and staff. Students and staff both identified a desire to become more involved in decision-making and the school community.

Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention

Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention Strengths

Excel Center teacher retention is over 85% from year to year. Teachers are passionate about the work and mission of The Excel Center.

Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention Weaknesses

Lack of formal professional development plans among individual teachers and departments.

Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention Needs

In previous years a locally developed teacher appraisal system was utilized. This system was not successful in setting a plan for continuous improvement among individual teachers and departments. A formal system needs to be adopted.

Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention Summary

As a new district we have been working with a local teacher appraisal system. For the 2017/18 school year we are utilizing the state approved T-TESS system.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Strengths

Teachers are flexible and able to differentiate instruction among students in their classrooms.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Weaknesses

Standardized curriculum is needed among all departments to clarify scope and sequence.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Needs

Standardized curriculum is needed among all departments to clarify scope and sequence.

Family and Community Involvement

Family and Community Involvement Strengths

The adult student community is engaged with building school culture through end of term celebrations.

Family and Community Involvement Weaknesses

Adult students wish to involve their families more in school activities.

Family and Community Involvement Summary

Students would like to have more opportunities for engaging in school activities alongside their families.

School Context and Organization

School Context and Organization Summary

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Students come to The Excel Center with a wide variety of needs for scheduling. Meeting all of these needs has been challenging with a focus on live instruction.

For the 2017/18 school year Learning Teams have been developed to engage staff in the decision-making and continuous improvement process.

Technology

Technology Summary

Teachers are utilizing classroom technology on a regular basis. Students could benefit from additional training on using school technology resources.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Data Sources

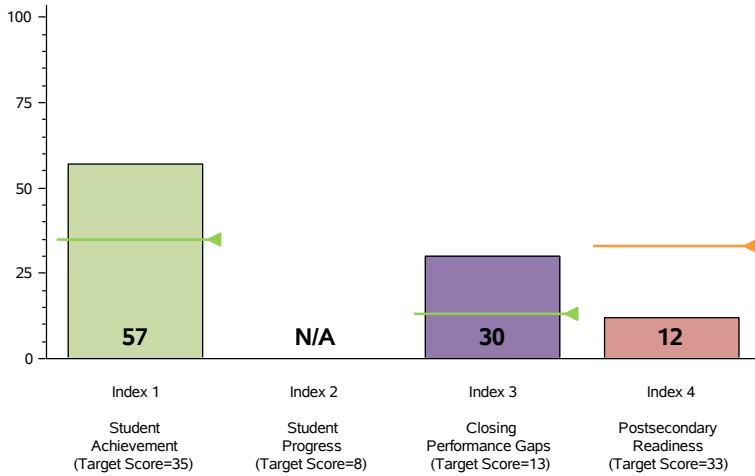
- Community Demographics
- Disaggregated STAAR Data
- Drop-out Rates
- Failure Lists
- Graduation Records
- PEIMS Reports
- Report Card Grades
- SCE Policy
- Special Student Populations
- Staff Development
- Standardized Tests
- Summary of Student Progress (not taking STAAR)
- Survey and Interviews of Students/Staff/Parents

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY 2017 Accountability Summary THE EXCEL CENTER (227828)

Accountability Rating Improvement Required

Met Standards on - Student Achievement - Closing Performance Gaps	Did Not Meet Standards on - Postsecondary Readiness
In 2017, to receive a Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet targets on three indexes: Index 1 or Index 2 and Index 3 and Index 4.	

Performance Index Report



Distinction Designation

Postsecondary Readiness
NOT ELIGIBLE

Performance Index Summary

Index	Points Earned	Maximum Points	Index Score
1 - Student Achievement	33	58	57
2 - Student Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 - Closing Performance Gaps	118	400	30
4 - Postsecondary Readiness			12*
STAAR Score	10.0		
Graduation Rate Score	0.0		
Graduation Plan Score	N/A		
Postsecondary Component Score	N/A		

* Includes bonus points that may have been added to the Index 4 Score.

System Safeguards

Number and Percentage of Indicators Met	
Performance Rates	3 out of 4 = 75%
Participation Rates	1 out of 6 = 17%
Graduation Rates	N/A
Met Federal Limits on Alternative Assessments	1 out of 1 = 100%
Total	5 out of 11 = 45%

For further information about this report, please see the Performance Reporting website at <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/2017/index.html>



Dear Commissioner Morath,

This is an appeal of the 2017 accountability rating of Improvement Required issued for The Excel Center Charter High School (CDN 227828001) within The Excel Center Charter School District (227828).

Specifically, I am appealing the dropout rating for this campus which impacted the rating for Index 4. This is the only indicator preventing The Excel Center from achieving a rating of *Met Standard*. I am requesting a review of the special circumstances of the data that may result in a rating of *Met Standard* or *Not Rated*.

I respectfully request consideration based on the information that follows:

Non-Traditional Educational Charter for Adults

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas is the Charter holder for both The Excel Center (CND 227828 – age 17 to 26) and The Excel Center for Adults (CDN 227827-age 19-50). This allows for a unique partnership between the two school districts that ensures students have the opportunity to continue working towards their high school diploma up to the age of 50. Goodwill is the **ONLY** charter holder in Texas to operate this type of unique program. Goodwill's mission is to generate a lifelong connection to work. This mission extends to both Districts and provides a robust and holistic approach to working with young adult and adult students who are seeking to earn their high school diploma. Goodwill provides substantial financial support for both Districts that allows for the provision of ongoing, wrap-around services to students that begin at the time of application, extend throughout the student's enrollment, and continue beyond graduation to career advancement. When students withdraw they continue to receive services to address their issues and engage them to ensure their return to school. Wrap-around services for all Excel Center and Excel Center for Adults students include:

- Coaching Services:
 - Intake Coach - Assignment upon indicating interest in applying. The Intake Coach guides those who are interested in applying to successfully complete their enrollment.
 - Life Coach - Assignment upon enrollment. The Life Coach stays with the student for the duration of their time enrolled at The Excel Center. They work with students to address any and all barriers to successfully completing their high school diploma.
 - Career Coach – Assignment upon enrollment. The Career Coach works with students to identify and work on a path towards a sustainable and meaningful career.
 - Alumni Coach – Assignment upon withdrawal (including graduation). The Alumni Coach follows all inactive Excel Center students. They track and assist graduates in their post-secondary endeavors, and they also track and assist any student who has withdrawn to keep them engaged with the school environment.
- Family Services:
 - Free, On-site child-care – The Exploration Center enrolls children of Excel Center students.
 - Pregnancy Related Services – These include pre- & post-natal referral services, counseling, and parenting education classes.
 - Compensatory Education Homebound Instruction (CEHI)-On-Site Waiver – New mothers may continue their enrollment and progress on courses through a modified schedule that reduces required attendance to 1 day (4 hours) per week.
 - Community Learning Initiative for Moms & Babies (CLIMB) – New mothers may choose to continue coursework while also bonding and caring for their newborns. The CLIMB classroom integrates counseling services and programming for new mothers.

- Services for overcoming other barriers:
 - Academics: Direct, live instruction closes learning gaps and allow students to become engaged in their learning. Teachers create individualized learning plans with each student in their class to best meet their needs. Students also have access to computer-based credit recovery courses if they wish to further accelerate their progress.
 - ESL Academy – Specialized courses for new English Language Learners
 - Special Education & Section 504 – Many Excel Center students have “aged out” of special education and the funding that provides those services. Goodwill provides funding to continue to provide additional support within the classroom to allow these students to succeed.
 - Flexible Scheduling:
 - Optional Flexible School Day
 - Classes are held 8:00 AM to 9:35 PM
 - Transportation – Free bus passes
 - Food Pantry – operated in partnership with the Food Bank of Central Texas.
 - Clothing Closet
 - Student Community Groups:
 - Student Council
 - Men at Work
 - Ladies in Leadership
 - Student Ambassadors
 - Goodwill Services:
 - Workforce Advancement Services – Case management; Internships; Job Placement
 - Career & Technical Academy – High demand career training and certifications; Job Placement

The breadth and length of services sponsored by Goodwill enables The Excel Center and The Excel Center for Adults to provide is un-matched anywhere in Texas. Students who seek out enrollment at The Excel Center and The Excel Center for Adults have been unable to complete their secondary education within all other educational settings. Many of these students have gone from school to school, homeschool to virtual school, and back again without progressing towards graduation. These ultra-high-risk students who are not on track to graduate with their cohort have increasingly limited enrollment options as they continue to age. By enrolling with The Excel Center and Excel Center for Adults they have tapped into a level of support they have never experienced and will be given the opportunity to continue working towards their goal on a timeline that can adapt to their ever-changing needs. Goodwill operates the **ONLY** high school for adults in Texas and works with students up to the age of 50 to help them achieve their goal of earning a high school diploma.

Respectfully, I request that The Excel Center District and all Campuses within that District be recognized as a special circumstance setting for the unique students and the unique services we provide. Current campuses include:

- The Excel Center – co-operated with The Excel Center for Adults
- The Excel Center Lockhart – operated within the Lockhart Women’s Correctional Facility in partnership with MTC and TDCJ.

Index 4: Grade 9-12 Annual Dropout Rate

The Excel Center (227828001) did not meet the alternative accountability standard for 2017. This rating was based on the 2015/2016 Annual dropout list.

Attached is the 2015/2016 Annual dropout list that includes students who were attributed to The Excel Center as dropouts. Students who enroll in The Excel Center and The Excel Center Adults are not traditional students. They are young adult and adult learners who have unique educational histories. A student enrolling in The Excel Center is seeking out our unique environment designed for the success of adult students. We exist to recover these students and put them back on the path to earn a diploma.

The schools these students previously attended attribute the withdrawal code they deem most appropriate. The way in which a dropout is attributed is based primarily on the withdrawal code assigned by the previous school and the window in which the student re-enrolls in school. We cannot correct a previous school's withdrawal code, nor the window in which a student is recovered and should not be penalized for these codes and dates. We are the only District in Texas that is able to commit to these students and work with them for as long as necessary to earn their diploma.

The list includes the following reasons for exclusion:

- Eligible to Enroll in The Excel Center for Adults – These students met the age requirement to enroll in The Excel Center for Adults. This District is not rated under current Accountability or Alternative Accountability as it is a one-of-a-kind pilot program in Texas. During the 2015/2016 school year there was a 150 cap on enrollment. In order to serve the greatest number of adult students within that District students age 19-25 were enrolled in The Excel Center. These two Districts share a campus, classrooms, and staff at 1015 Norwood Park Blvd. Austin, Texas. In addition, they have a history of inconsistent enrollment.
- History of inconsistent enrollment – These students have attended multiple schools and have gaps in periods of enrollment. Some students on the list have an enrollment at a previous campus for less than a month before they withdrew and found another school. When a student moves from school to school with gaps of instruction they aren't making progress towards graduation and it becomes more and more difficult for them to pick up where they left off. Even a gap in enrollment for a couple of weeks can result in the student being unable to earn credits for that semester. This is a snowball effect and it becomes increasingly more difficult for the student to be successful within most educational environments. Example include:
 - History of Multiple High School Enrollments & Gaps in Enrollment History
 - History of Juvenile Detention or other Disciplinary Alternative Educational Settings
 - Middle school dropouts

Included below the list of students is the updated calculation for Index 4 based on the updated list of excluded students that results in a Met Standard rating.

We recognize the appeal process as the mechanism to address these special circumstances and unique issues. By my signature below, I certify that all information included in this appeal is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sincerely,

Traci Berry
Superintendent for The Excel Center and The Excel Center for Adults

Attachments

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1. Recruit, support, and retain teachers and principals

Priority 2. Build a foundation of reading and math

Priority 3. Connect high school to career and college

Priority 4. Improving low-performing schools