

The Ida B. Wells Community Academy

1180 Slosson Street
Akron, Ohio 44320-2370

COUNTY: Summit IRN: 133553



Annual Report for 2003-2004

October 20, 2004

Prepared by

Mrs. Angela M. Neeley, MBA
Chief Administrative and Fiscal Officer

Dr. Edward W. Crosby, PhD
Founder and Program Management Advisor

Introduction

History

THE IDA B. WELLS COMMUNITY ACADEMY (HEREINAFTER "THE ACADEMY") WAS CHARTERED BY THE Ohio Department of Education on May 4, 1999, and opened on August 30, 1999 as an independent, nonsectarian and public Community School in Akron, Ohio. It was incorporated as the Ida B. Wells Community Academy, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, on December 29, 1998, and was granted 501(c)(3) tax exempt status on May 19, 2000. On August 5, 2002, the Academy's Learning Center and administrative offices moved to Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 1180 Slosson Street. In this facility the Academy enjoyed adequate space to house its complete academic program – classrooms for grades K to 6, a cafeteria and multi-purpose room, staff and administrative offices.

In fiscal 2002-2003, the Board decided to make Ms. Anderson the Academy's permanent CAO and Fiscal Officer in which positions she has served superbly. Dr. Crosby's resignation as the Academy's Superintendent necessitated this administrative change and caused the elevation of Mrs. Kelly Pack Crosby to Business Manager. In 2003-2004, Ms. Anderson, in concert with her faculty and staff and Board members, successfully met the challenge of ODE's mandated fifth-year review. The Academy was accordingly approved for a continuing community school contract. Later, the Academy's founder, Dr. Crosby in collaboration with Ms. Anderson led the transition from the sponsorship of ODE's Office of Community Schools to that of the Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC). This transition was finalized on December 17, 2004 when Dr. Susan Tave Zelman signed the document assigning the Ida B. Wells Community Academy to the sponsorship of LCESC.

The transition to LCESC has allowed the Academy to reassess its entire administrative and program structure. The academic and programmatic results of this assessment will not be seen until the 2004-2005 academic year. It is the belief of the Board and the administration that changes in academic rigor, the installation of additional Governors, the activation of a middle school for grades 5, 6, 7 and 8, the addition of certified instructors and course work in Music, Art and Physical Education will uplift the education our students receive and also provide the stimu-

lation for the faculty to experience more teaching success with an energized student population.

Current Operational Developments

Original Mission

In 1999 the Academy's mission as stated in its founding document and maintained throughout the years is to educate young people in a year-round – 210-day academic year educational program. The Academy educates children in grades K to 6 using a comprehensive competency-based holistic curriculum that is personalized, problem-posing and problem-solving, centered in the humanities, natural sciences, language arts, social studies (citizenship), the musical and visual arts and African American culture studies. This mission was buttressed where possible with electronic technology and emphasized the establishment of a Learning Community designed to shift the traditional educational paradigm and thereby enhance its students' academic gains by reuniting the traditional subject areas and learning activities so that students are better able to understand the relationship of one subject area to another and education to their present and future lives.

As a regular consequence, the Academy's 210-day academic year ends in mid-July, say, between July 16 and July 22.

Mission Expansion

In its new contract with the Lucas County Educational Service Center, the Academy expanded the grade levels it would teach from K - 6 to K - 8, thus turning the Academy for the 2004-2005 academic year into a combined elementary and middle school. This expansion, however, necessitated the securing of a Middle School facility that would be close to the Elementary School. To effect this change, the Board assigned Dr. Crosby to investigate ways and means for acquiring another or, if possible, a larger facility. He and Ms. Anderson were able to secure a facility to house its middle school grades 5 through 8 – The Board approved Mt. Calvary Baptist Church located at 442 Bell Street, approximately 5 minutes away – and thereby release more appropriate classroom space in the Mt. Olive facility for the fourth grade and for staff offices. In addition, this move helped us to expand on and solidify the incorporation of Mt. Calvary's academic state certified support services – academic tutoring, behavioral and social counseling, and after-school programming – into the Academy's program structure on a quasi-permanent basis.

Educational Philosophy

Since its inception, the Academy has sought to provide an education that is nurturing, intellectually stimulating and that imbues in its students intellectual curiosity, a mutual respect for their classmates, and an eagerness to learn, academic competence and the resolve to attain knowledge of their history, culture, traditions and values. The Academy continues its drive to accomplish these aims and to establish a Learning Community and environment that is supported by a curriculum reliant in part on the learners' life experiences at home, in their neighborhood, in their city, and in the society at large. The Academy's programming structure has undergone some alterations that have been designed to produce measurable performance outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and the natural sciences.

To meet the Academy's learning objectives, we introduced during 2003-2004 a curricular program with commensurate activities that were (1) based on individual student interests, needs and abilities and (2) would allow students to grow intellectually and at their own pace. This program adjustment allowed faculty to sharpen their methods for attaining higher achievement expectations for themselves and their students. Students were assessed at the beginning of the school year to determine where they are academically, particularly in reading and math scores. The students were post-tested using the same or similar instruments later in the year to assess their progress over time.

"Meeting students where they are socially, culturally, physically and academically and then moving them to higher and to more advanced academic levels" is one of the essential curricular and procedural elements imbedded in the Academy's educational program. Of especial importance in this context is the programmatic notion that all children can learn. It is incumbent on the Academy to devise the means and to design the appropriate strategies to "lead that learning out," i.e., "make it happen."

The Academy's adjusted educational philosophy and curricular structure effectively augmented its program structure and instructional design. As oftentimes stressed, this structure must incorporate the following elements:

- A **required** 6-week extended academic year requiring students and faculty to be at the Learning Center for 210 days rather than the 180-day standard;
- Small classes (a 15 to 1 average student-teacher ratio) that are taught holistically and are culturally integrative; these classes must be designed to increase at all grade levels the amount students learn;
- A team-teaching emphasis, where appropriate, using parents, interns, student teachers, retired teachers, and professionals as part-time or auxiliary teachers;
- Individualized instruction, learning through doing (an active vs. passive instructional design);
- Meeting students where they are culturally, socially and academically and then moving them to more advanced educational levels and academic endeavors;
- Self learning projects that are student or teacher initiated and conducted first in-school and later, based on student maturity, assigned as out-of-school projects;
- A “*undisciplinary*,” i.e., holistic curricular model that allows students to experience how one set of basic skills directly relate to other basic skills, i.e., reading to mathematics, geography to social sciences, mathematics to science, culture to history, and how all these relate to being educated from a more culturally relevant point of view (see the following Web site at <http://www.pathsoflearning.com/themes.cfm>. When this Web page opens, under the “For what purpose are you seeking ideas or information,” choose the theme: *Teaching for Holistic Classrooms*. Here can be found 54 articles on holism. This Web page is an excellent resource for searching out information on other innovative issues and practices in education as well. Furthermore, faculty are referred to <http://www.pathsoflearning.com/library/holistic-educ-intro.cfm> where annotated information on curricular holism can be found.

Even though we are convinced our curricular process is correct, the process must be consistently, rigorously and regularly emphasized and evaluated. Given that many or all of our administrators and faculty have not in their previous training heard much about curricular holism, the Academy’s Governors must keep the concept alive in their minds, in their lesson and unit plans, and in their Individual Professional Development Plans.

Curricular Focus

The Academy’s faculty have been provided ODE’s *Academic Content Standards*, 4 Vols.: English Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies (2002). These curricular standards are met by the faculty’s choice, in grades K to 6, of textbooks such as *Literacy Place* (Scholastics Literacy Place, 2000), *Mathematics* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002), *Horizons People and Communities* (Harcourt Brace, 2003), and *Science* (Scots-Foresman Science Program - McGraw-Hill, 2000). Instructors also use a number of other commercial curricular materials, and the faculty’s innovative injections of their own teaching strategies.

The Ida B. Wells Community Academy’s curricular focus follows not only ODE’s standard competency-based school curriculum but also strives to infuse into its curriculum an emphasis on Africa, African America, the Caribbean, Native America, and Latin America. These elements, we believe, are vital to the correct and diversified education the Academy offers its enrollees even though we have not been able to do this as well as we would like. The curriculum is also designed to promote two cognitive styles, one analytical, the other relational.¹ Each style requires intensive professional development² for the Academy’s teachers, parents, and students so that they work as a well-orchestrated instructional team. We are still working on perfecting a student development process that satisfies us. Our teachers have been successful in producing students who share with them the responsibility for

¹For a detailed discussion of the relational and analytical aspects of education and African American learning styles, see Janice Hale-Benson’s *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles*. Revised Edition. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, pp. 21-44. Dr. Hale-Benson in this section cited relies heavily on the research of Asa Hilliard, III, the Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University. See Appendix I for tables itemizing the elements of the relational and analytical cognitive styles.

²“One thing that is clear is that the outstanding teacher and teacher educators share in an explicit or implicit view of the child quite unlike that held by so many successful educators. . . .

“Instead, they see students who are alive with minds hungry for intellectual activity and with their spirits starved for meaningful involvement in school and life. They view children as born learning and structured to learn. They recognize that outstanding learners can be crippled by exposures they encounter, but they also realize that teaching is a powerful tool that, when used appropriately, can awaken the genius in children.

“Virtually all teachers possess tremendous power which can also be released, given the proper exposure. We can’t get to that point by tinkering with a broken system. We must change our intellectual structures, definitions and assumptions; then we can release teacher power” (Asa Hilliard, III, “The Structure of Valid Staff Development” at <http://www.nsd.org/library/publications/jsd/jsds97hill.cfm>).

striving toward building a productive learning environment.

Administrative and Support Staff

Angela M. Neeley Chief Administrative and Fiscal Officer	Kelly Pack Crosby Business Manager / Human Resources	Synia L. Rodgers Secretary, EMIS Coord- inator, Registrar	Ella Mae Johnson Grant Specialist & Assistant Teacher	Doni M. Burrus Community Relations	Edward W. Crosby, Founder and Program Management Advisor
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Qualifications of the Academy's Administrative and Support Staff

- **Mrs. Angela M. Neeley (nee Anderson)**, MBA, is a graduate of Kent State University. She was among the Academy's original developers and is currently the Academy's Chief Administrative Officer & Board Treasurer. She began her employment at the Academy as its licensed Business Manager. Ms. Anderson now holds a School Treasurer / Fiscal Officer's license. She supervises, therefore, the Academy's total fiscal and academic financial operation. She is also an able manager of the Academy's No Child Left Behind (ESEA) Title I and other education related grants from the state.
- **Mrs. Kelly Pack Crosby** has a BA in Business Administration (Human Resources) and is responsible for the majority of the Academy's human resources tasks: payroll, personnel records, health, life and disability insurance, and property and indemnity insurance policies. She also manages the input of budget activity detail into NeoNet's computers and the State's financial computer system, and maintains the Academy's equipment inventory. She is also responsible for maintaining the financial data reported periodically as a standard part of EMIS.
- **Mrs. Synia L. Rodgers**, Executive Secretary and EMIS & Student Records Coordinator. Mrs. Rodgers also serves as Secretary to the Board of Governors. She has had considerable work experience in corporate and social service agencies. Mrs. Rodgers is the Academy's registrar, in which capacity she performs as the person who is the "first responder" to parents' questions concerning student registration, attendance and discipline regulations. Of great importance in this role is Mrs. Rodgers maintenance of accurate and up-to-date health records for all students.
- **Ms. Ella Mae Johnson** has an MA degree from Case-Western Reserve University's Mandel Center for Non-Profit Organizations. Ms. Johnson is an important addition to the Academy's staff in the area of grant writing. Since coming to the Academy, she has managed to write and have funded several grants from area corporations which support our science and math programs and physical education. Ms. Johnson also serves as an assistant teacher at times when faculty members are absent or are called away from their classrooms.
- **Mrs. Doni M. Burrus** started as a parent volunteer committed to the education of young people. Later, she became an Assistant Teacher. She now serves as the Academy's full time Community Relations Facilitator. In this capacity, she also works to recruit students, parents and volunteers to help promote and advance the Academy's learning objectives. Mrs. Burrus also serves as the Academy's Student Attendance and Discipline Officer, in which capacity she has to make regular visits to students homes to explain to parents how their children's absences and conduct have negative impacts on their learning potential. She also has the responsibility of informing parents of why the Academy has a 210-day academic year and is designed to enhance the quality of the education their children receive.
- **Dr. Edward W. Crosby**, PhD, received his BA and MA from Kent State University and his PhD from the University of Kansas in Lawrence. In 1993 he retired from Kent State University after having served for 25 years as the founder and Chairman of the Department of Pan-African Studies. In 1998, Dr. Crosby co-founded the Academy. From 1998 to 2003, he served as the Board's Chair and as the Academy's Superintendent. He is currently the Academy's Program Management Consultant and advisor to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Faculty and Assistant Teachers

Elementary School Campus: Michele C. Rumsfield, Principal (resigned at the start of academic year)

Nikita M. Tidwell Kindergarten Teacher	Melanie R. Fuller 1st Grade Teacher	Christine M. Madrigal 2nd Grade Teacher	Andrea K. Hirst 3rd Grade Teacher	Cynthia D. Colbert 4th Grade Teacher	Angela B. Bradley 5th Grade Teacher
Robert M. Singleton 6th Grade Teacher	Diana Kiehl Music	Mary K. Petric Title I Reading & Math	Stephanie B. Wood Title I Reading & Math	Peggy R. Romesberg Special Education	Amanda Carey Graphic Arts
		Justin Davis Assistant Teacher & Disciplinarian	Brooke B. Young Spec. Educ. Assistant		

Qualifications of Faculty and Assistant Teachers

- **Mrs. Nikita M. Tidwell**, a certified Kindergarten Teacher, is an Ohio State certified teacher and is currently teaches Academy's Kindergarten. Mrs. Tidwell has a BS in Early Childhood Education from the University of Akron. She started her teaching career in January 2003 after having taught previously in the Akron area. Since joining the Academy in 2003, she has received from ODE certification as a "Highly Qualified Teacher" through the State's Entry Year Program.
- **Ms. Melanie R. Fuller**, a certified 1st Grade Teacher, is a graduate of Kent State University and has a teaching certificate in elementary education (K-3). At the Academy she will teach the First Grade. She is a first-year teacher; however, her teaching credentials and commitment to teaching are impeccable. Her motto is: "Kids Are My Business!" Since joining the Academy in 2003, Ms. Fuller has received from ODE certification as a "Highly Qualified Teacher"

through the State's Entry Year Program.

- **Mrs. Christine M. Madrigal**, a certified 2nd Grade Teacher, has a BS in Early Childhood Education from Kent State University and is certified by the State of Ohio to teach the Academy's Second Grade students. Mrs. Madrigal started her full-time teaching career at the Academy. Since joining the Academy in 2003, she has received from ODE certification as a "Highly Qualified Teacher" through the State's Entry Year Program.
- **Mrs. Andrea K. Hirst** is the Academy's certified 3rd Grade Teacher. She has a BS in Elementary Education from Kent State University and has a K-8 teaching certificate from the State of Ohio. Prior to joining the Academy, she taught in the Ravenna, Streetsboro and Mantua, Ohio, schools. Mrs. Hirst helps to keep the Academy's educational program structure well organized.
- **Mrs. Cynthia D. Colbert**, a certified 4th Grade Teacher, has a BS in Elementary Education from Kent State University. Mrs. Colbert has taught for 14 years in the public schools of West Virginia. She is now teaching Fifth Graders at the Academy. Mrs. Colbert will also be responsible for assisting with the implementation and design of the Academy's infused African American curriculum.
- **Mrs. Angela R. Berry**, MBA, is a certified teacher who taught the Academy's 5th Grade. She is a graduate of Rutgers Graduate School of Management and earned a BA in Accounting at William Patterson University. Mrs. Berry was certified to teach in Ohio and New Jersey which certification permitted her to teach in the elementary and middle schools of Ohio and New Jersey.
- **Mr. Robert M. Singleton**, MEd, is an experienced teacher, is State certified and taught the Academy's 6th Grade. Mr. Singleton has taught in the public schools of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Cleveland, Ohio. He earned his MEd from Cheney State University in Pennsylvania and is certified in Special Education. Mr. Singleton has also earned several hours toward a PhD. He also helps with emphasizing self esteem and value development among the Academy's students.
- **Mrs. Mary K. Petric**, the Academy's Senior Title I Reading & Math, is a certified teacher with a BS in Elementary Education from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She has taught in the Academy's Title I - Reading and Math Program for two years. She also helps with the delivery of special education linguistic services offered to students. Mrs. Petric will supervise the Academy's overall student assessment process. She has also taught in the Kent, Hudson and Akron public and private schools. Mrs. Petric also serves on the Academy's Accountability and Student Performance Data Collection Committee. She is stationed at the Academy's Elementary School Campus.
- **Mrs. Stephanie B. Wood**, a Title I Reading & Math Instructor, is currently teaching in the Academy's Title I - Reading and Math Program. She is certified to teach K-8 by the State of Ohio. Ms. Wood has a BS in Early Childhood Education from Kent State University. She is starting her 2nd very successful year of teaching at the Academy.
- **Mrs. Peggy R. Romesberg** is the Academy's certified Special Education Specialist. She is a graduate of the University of Akron and is certified in Specific Learning Disabilities. Mrs. Romesberg had professional experiences in community schools in Akron, Lorain, Parma and Mansfield, Ohio. She currently works with Special Education students at the Academy's Elementary School Campus and will also manage the delivery of quality Special Education Services at the Middle School Campus.
- **Ms. Brooke Young** is a Paraprofessional Special Education Assistant Teacher whose work with students in and outside the classroom is closely monitored by Mrs. Romesberg. Ms. Young has registered at the University of Akron to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology.
- **Mrs. Amanda Carey**, a graduate of Kent State University, is a certified Visual Arts teacher. She has taught in pre-schools and elementary schools in Canton and Akron.
- **Mrs. Deanna Lyn Keihle** is a non-certified graduate of the University of Puget Sound. She has taught music in several Ohio traditional and public charter schools in Newberg Heights, Akron and Cuyahoga Falls as an employee of Musical Magic Studio in Norton, Ohio.
- **Berrenda Love-Lewis** has been a part of the Academy's teacher corps for four years. She began her career at the Academy teaching Third Grade students. She now serves as an Assistant Teacher. Previously, Mrs. Lewis substituted for a number of years in Akron's public schools after having worked at the University of Michigan.

Administrators, Faculty and Staff Demographics

Administrative and Support Staff								
Race	Male	Fem						
African Amer	1	5						
White	0	0						
Other	0	0						
Faculty and Assistant Teachers								
Race	Male	Fem	Certified		Highly Qualified		First Year	Paraprofessionals
			Yes	No	Yes	No		
African Amer	2	5	5	2*	6	--	--	2**
White	0	7	7	--	6	--	--	1**
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

*These are Assistant Teachers; **This is the classification given to Assistant Teachers who are involved in some

classroom teaching but are not certified and / or have little or no college training.

Student Demographics

The Academy was founded to serve low- and medium income African American, White, Native American, and Latino American students. Of the latter two groups, only members of the Latino community responded to our aggressive recruitment fliers, postcards, or advertisements. The Academy enrolled only 2 Latino and 1 Caucasian students. In short, the Academy was open to all school-aged youth residing within the Akron public school district and its surrounding metropolitan areas. The Academy, moreover, addressed its educational services to the needs of all underachieving and under-represented youths. The Academy has enrolled the following numbers of students during the past year:

Program Year	Registered	Enrolled	Retained	Grade Levels Served
Year Five: 2003-2004	141	126	111	Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th

Additional Student Demographic Characteristics:

- Ethnicity: 99 percent African American; 1 Caucasian; 2 Latinos
- Low / Middle Income: 100 percent
- Economically Disadvantaged: 44.2 percent
- Free and Reduced Meals Eligible: 98 percent
- Title I Reading and Math Eligible: 37
- Special Education Eligible: 13
- Withdrawals: 38
- Out-of-School Suspensions: 25 In-School Suspensions: 66
- Expulsions: None
- Cited for Chronic Absences: 4 (repetitive letters sent to parents and juvenile authorities)

Board of Governors

The Academy has, from the outset, installed and / or hired highly qualified Board members and administrators and has sought and retained a 100 percent certified teaching corps. The current Board members have MAs, BAs, BSs, MEds, CPAs, and PhDs. Three have considerable years of teaching experience ranging from 25 to 47 years (their resumes are found at <http://hierographics.org/AcademyIndex.shtml>); our teaching faculty also reflect a variety of degree levels ranging from BSs in Education to Master's degrees.

- **Dr. Marlene R. Dorsey, MEd, PhD, Chair of the Board, Chair of the Curriculum and Accountability Committee, Member of the Finance and Planning Committee, Member of the Personnel and Benefits Committee, and Dean, College of Continuing Studies, Kent State University** (Board member since May 4, 1999).

Dr. Dorsey is in charge of the general supervision, direction and control of the operation of all aspects of the Academy. Dr. Dorsey has from the Academy's inception chaired the Board's Curriculum and Accountability Committee where she and her committee are charged with overseeing the curriculum in all of its aspects. She also chairs the Finance and Planning Committee and is a member of the Personnel and Benefits Committee. These responsibilities call for her regular communication with the Board's Treasurer, the Chair of the PBC, and the Principal. Dr. Dorsey has had 25 or more years of teaching and administrative experience on both the public school and university levels.

- **Mrs. Geraldine Hayes Chavez, MEd, Vice Chair, Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Studies and Director, Upward Bound, Kent State University** (Board member since December 19, 2000)

Mrs. Hayes Chavez helps in conjunction with the Chair to oversee the overall operation of the Academy. She presides at all meetings of the Board of Governors when the Chair is not present. Mrs. Chavez also serves as an administrative and planning advisor to the Board of Governors. Before joining the Board she was instrumental in the Academy's acquisition of programming space in a Salvation Army Post. As a former public school educator she is relied on to study the Academy's academic program structure and curricular strategies and make critical suggestions for improvement.

- **Dr. Edward W. Crosby, PhD, Founder, Chair of the Personnel and Benefits Committee, member of the Finance and Planning Committee, Member of the Curriculum Committee, and Program Management Consultant. He is the Founder; Professor Emeritus, Department of Modern and Classical Languages - German; and Chair Emeritus, the Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University.** (Board member since May 4, 1999)

Dr. Crosby is a Co-Founder of the Academy and has served without remuneration as its Superintendent from its inception until 2002 when he resigned the position for health reasons. Dr. Crosby, as a member of the Board of Governors, chairs the Personnel and Benefits Committee which is in charge of all matters pertaining to personnel and recommends to the Board the hiring and termination of staff once he receives requests for such action from the Chief Administrative Officer. When Dr. Crosby resigned as the Academy's Superintendent and Chair of the Board of Governors in 2002, it was decided by the Board that he should maintain an advisory relationship with the Chief Administrative Officer who was appointed by the Board to assume Dr. Crosby's superintendence responsibilities. In this modestly remunerated advisory role he holds the title of Program Management Advisor and among other things has regular weekly program continuity meetings with the CAO and the newly appointed managers of both campuses (2004-2005) to discuss program initiatives, curriculum, faculty, student recruitment issues, space and / or facility needs, student discipline, program obstructions, etc. Each officer comes with his / her list of talking points. Dr. Crosby has amassed since 1957 47 years of administrative and teaching experience albeit on the university and college level.

- **Mr. Rick L. Owens, Community Relations and Publications Committee, Discipline and Grievance Committee, and President, Board of Deacons, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Akron** (Board member since April 2003)

Mr. Owens is a recently installed member of the Board of Governors. His primary function on the Board to date is the establishment and maintenance of viable community relations projects in collaboration with Mrs. Cooper. Mr. Owens will also serve on the Discipline and Grievance Committee.

- **Dr. Janice D. Taylor Heard, PhD, Director, Outreach and Retention, The University of Akron** (Board member since May 2003)

Dr. Heard joined the Board of Governors in May 2003. She has not yet selected a committee assignment. In all likelihood she will function on the Academy's Curriculum and Accountability Committee and the Discipline and Grievance Committee. During the short period of time Dr. Heard has been on the Board, she has demonstrated her value in the area of research and data analysis.

- **Mrs. Angela M. Neeley (née Anderson), MBA, Mrs. Neeley was a member of the Academy's original program planning committee organized in 1997 to establish the Ida B. Wells Community Academy. She was installed as Ex Officio member of the Board of Governors in FY 2003-2004**

Mrs. Neeley is responsible for reporting on a monthly basis the overall academic and financial condition of the Academy to Board members. As a member of the Board's Financial Affairs and Planning Committee, she is also responsible for reporting to the Board the progress made on planning objectives set at the monthly Financial Affairs and Planning Committee meetings. As the Board's Treasurer and the Academy's Chief Administrative and Fiscal Officer, Ms. Anderson also oversees the planning initiatives and the educational and financial operations of the Academy. Prior to Dr. Crosby's resignation as Superintendent, Ms. Anderson functioned as the Academy's State Licensed Business Manager. She was licensed by the State of Ohio in March 2003 as a School Treasurer / Fiscal Officer. However, with the admission of Mr. Thompson, a Certified Public Accountant, to the Board of Governors, Mrs. Neeley was relieved of the Board Treasurer functions so as to allow her to devote more of her attention to purely academic and related financial affairs.

- **Mr. Glenn A. Thompson, MA, CPA, Board Treasurer** (Newly Appointed)

Mr. Thompson is a graduate of Northwestern University (MBA) and Cleveland State University. He is a Certified Public Accountant and has accepted the role of Board Treasurer for as long as responsibilities managing his business venture.

- **Mrs. Phoebe P. Carter, MEd, Community Representative** (Newly Appointed)

Mrs. Carter is a long-time resident of Akron and public school teacher in Ravenna, Ohio and Akron. She has also been a staff member in Kent State University's Upward Bound Program. Mrs. Carter has accepted being assigned as one of the coordinators of the Academy's Advisory Board.

- **Mrs. Mariesa L. Boyer, Parent Representative** (Newly Appointed)

Mrs. Boyer is the mother of two Academy students. She was nominated for Board membership because of her active participation on the Academy's Advisory Board, on which she will serve as a coordinator. She has been an active resident in the Akron community's educational issues.

- **Mrs. Nikita M. Tidwell, Faculty Representative** (Newly Appointed)

Mrs. Tidwell was elected by the Academy's faculty and staff to represent them on the Board, which act also served to realize a membership objective the Academy has sought to accomplish since its inception. Mrs. Tidwell is a certified Kindergarten teacher and has also been certified as a highly qualified teacher by the State of Ohio's Entry Year Program. She will retain her seat on the Board for a year; however, the faculty may choose, should she agree, to elect her for an additional year.

- **Mrs. Synia Rodgers, Secretary to the Board**

Mrs. Rodgers takes the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Governors and maintains the official Record binder of Board documents, including resolutions, committee reports and other related attachments. She also prepares the daily business correspondence, maintains the student records and other files, drafts in collaboration with the Principal the Academy's academic year calendar and most importantly maintains the EMIS system.

Academic Strengths and Areas of Improvement

Academic Performance

One of the most significant academic strengths is the decision to maintain an average class size of 15 students per teacher and to extend its academic year to 210 class days. It was our belief, and still is that given the nature of the students we are enrolling -- low and middle income youngsters, who are primarily African American and have previously had deficient learning experiences in Ohio's public elementary schools. Perforce we had to develop an educational structure that would deliver educational services designed specifically to meet the needs of these students. Taking into consideration that the United States has become a very complex post-industrial, technological society, the Academy's leadership also implemented an educational process that would work toward answering these challenges and changes in American society by striving to create an educationally sound response.

In spite of these obstacles, the Academy has met the educational goals addressed in its mission statement, remained true to its contractual obligations from 1999 to the present, successfully met the challenge of educating a student body comprised of an "at risk" population of low and middle income African American young people beset by several educational obstructions -- low expectations; special behavioral problems; a paucity of appropriate role models; and a social environment not conducive to high aspirations. Those enrollees not impacted by these negatives are nonetheless impacted by having to learn with those students who are deserving of a quality education but are not yet equipped to take advantage of the opportunity. By lengthening the academic year, we gained the learning time needed to attempt bringing these students up to grade level using the six-week summer to provide intervention services and instruction in other subjects not adequately learned. The success of these strategies will be demonstrated below.

Student Academic Performance

The Academy has during the past year met with considerable academic success; we are, however, absolutely dissatisfied with student performance in Mathematics. We were able to show a modicum of academic progress as demonstrated by the following statements extracted from the Academy's 2003-2004 Report Card: "Met AYP in Reading," "Met AYP in Attendance," but failed to meet AYP in Mathematics (see Appendix II). Even though we met AYP in reading and attendance, we were, nevertheless, placed in "Academic Emergency" for deficiencies in other important performance areas. Acknowledging that we have not knocked down any performance doors, the Academy has been able to display progressive indices of academic success. On the March 2004 Third Grade Reading Achievement Test*, ODE posted the following preliminary Academy reading results in comparison with three other community schools in Akron (Summit County)

School District (Summit County)	Total Tested	Number Advanced	Percent Advanced	Number Acceler- ated	Percent Accelerat- ed
The Edge Academy (Elem)	18	0	0	5	20
Hope Academy - Brown Street Campus (Elem)	22	1	5	1	5
The Ida B. Wells Community Academy (Elem)	15	2	13	3	20
Summit Academy of Alternative Learners (Elem)	12	0	0	2	17

*October 2003 results were NOT reflected in March preliminary results.

These numbers admittedly are not earth shaking; they do, nevertheless, demonstrate that the Academy is holding its own among other community schools in the county at least in the elementary grades. The bar graph above, on p. 9, and in Appendix III show how individual students in all grades -- K to 6 -- performed on the Achievement, OPT and Terra Nova tests administered in Fall 2003 and Spring 2004.

The performance data documented in these graphs and those presented in Appendix II give a relatively true picture of how our students have progressed academically. They do not, however, reflect the inconsistency experienced in the Academy's student cohort. That is, our student population tends to change year to year. Therefore, we have had some difficulty tracking students longitudinally. Some of the reasons for this are (1) students' parents

have moved not only to other parts of the city and / or to other cities within the state; (2) some parents have simply exercised their right to choose and have enrolled their children in other public or private schools; (3) students transfer into the Academy after having been retained multiple times elsewhere, and when they are threatened with being retained again, are withdrawn; (4) parents and students, particularly recent enrollees, have not bought the Academy's year-round academic year and consequently refuse to attend during the summer and are asked to withdraw; and finally (5) parents of previously enrolled students attempt to re-register their children only after all available spaces have been filled.

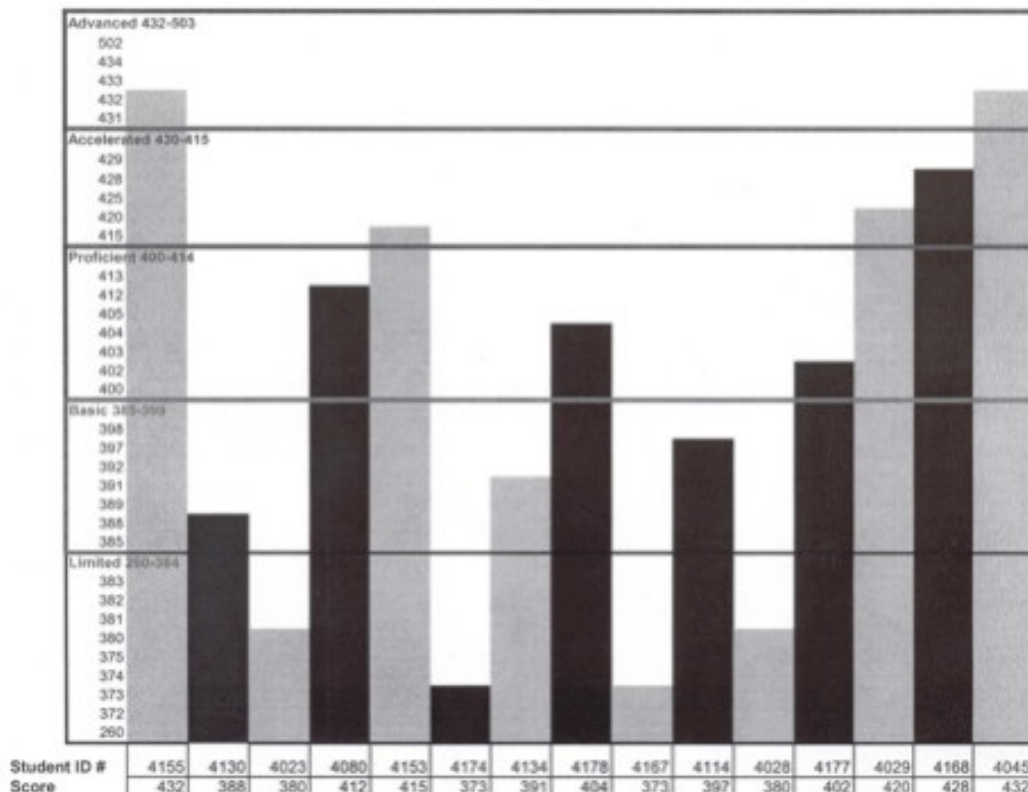
The data presented on these graphs do, however, indicate that, although not dramatic, intellectual value has been added to a considerable number of our students.

It is the job of every teacher at the Academy to help the students we teach find the connection and make it relevant to their community, their neighborhood, and most importantly to themselves. There are many ways that we promote achievement for our students. The Title I - Reading and Math program is one such method successfully making a difference. The students who qualify for Title I services are fortunate to have three teachers (we have included here the time the Special Ed Teacher devotes to reading and math) with more than 25 years of teaching experience provide them with daily small group instruction. This service has been a real support and success factor for the students served. In addition, we have applied for and received a small amount of money (\$2,000) to develop an Ohio Reads

**The Ida B. Wells Community Academy
Third Grade Achievement Test Scores
Fall 2003**



**The Ida B. Well Community Academy
Third Grade Achievement Test Scores
Spring 2004**



Program. With the assignment of an additional Title I - Math and Reading instructor, we have been able to assure all of our students can read by the end of the third grade. Our Special Education program has been helpful in these same areas. Typically, the students who have IEPs will see the Special Education Specialist for small group instruction, one-on-one sessions, and for inclusive services in the regular classrooms.

Areas Of and For Improvement

The Board of Governors, as has been its custom, insisted to the administrative staff and faculty that it is essential they institute methodologies that strengthen the Academy's delivery of its stated mission. The first thing the Board stressed was the employment of a fully state certified teaching cadre -- competent, creative and innovative. The Academy was without question secure in this regard and, with the hiring of new faculty for its sixth year, the CAO is convinced we have amplified our ability to deliver quality instruction to our students in the future. Secondly, the CAO has admonished her faculty to establish rigid educational quality standards and therewith assure our students, their parents, the community and the Lucas County Educational Service Center that the Academy has a quality and academically rigorous educational program in place.

The Board's chairperson listed five areas she wanted the faculty and staff to respond positively to . . .

- Appreciate the significance of the Academy's motto "Building Young Scholars for Their Future";
- Maintain the Academy's operational imperatives: (a) rigorous quality standards based on ODE's competency-based curricular standards;
- Holistically infuse into the curriculum African and African American history and culture;
- Prepare themselves professionally to teach a student population they were not trained to teach. This was considered critical since most, if not all of our teachers were ill-prepared to teach African and African American culture and history; and
- Become conscious of the Academy's need to track and document student performance in several categories: academics, social environment, behavioral methodologies, and hygienics.

The Academy's administration posted on the Academy's Web site a comprehensive bibliography of books and articles related to African, African American and World studies. This bibliography also contains a lengthy listing of relevant links to online curricular resources to support the Academy's emphasis on infusing African and African American history and culture into the curriculum. As mentioned earlier on, some difficulty was experienced getting faculty to infuse African American history and culture into the curriculum. That problem is being gradually eliminated.

In addition to having the state requirements in place that allow the faculty to meet these academic objectives, the faculty have also been trained on how to deliver the Academy's curriculum to our diverse student population. They have participated in several workshops this year pertaining to African American history and cultural awareness topics. Mrs. Gail Dudley of Highly Recommended (Oberlin, Ohio) conducted cultural awareness interviews with faculty, staff and Board members to ascertain their perspectives on cultural and curricular diversity workshops. They have attended workshops sponsored by The University of Akron, Lighthouse Community School, and Summit County Children Services. With these activities we have continued to work to expand the knowledge base regarding the infusion of African American culture into the daily curriculum.

Community Relations

The Academy communicates information to its students, parents, staff, Governors and the community as a whole through a variety of methods.

- the Academy's school calendar is passed out to all the parents, and Board members, and distributed throughout the community;
- One of the most common forms of communication used by the teachers is their letters home to inform their students' parents about what is going on at the Academy, in their classrooms and about any upcoming events. Faculty are also encouraged to make periodic visits to their students' homes;
- The primary form of communication utilized by the Academy's administration to inform the families has been accomplished with the hire of a full-time Community Relations Coordinator. Her basic role is to meet with parents and other community stakeholders and inform them of the Academy's learning process, registration, attendance and promotion policies;
- Any administrative information communicated to the families regarding any new policies, changes in the calendar, or special events goes out to them via the U.S. mail;
- Other information that needs to be communicated community wide is done through newspaper ads, flyers,

- billboards, news releases and the Internet;
- Another form of communication used to inform our parents, the community, LCESC and LOEO is our Annual Report. These reports are sent summarized to the parents of registered students and other stakeholders usually in October or November of the current academic year; and
- The general Akron and national communities are informed about the Academy through its comprehensive Website www.hierographics.org/AcademyIndex.shtml. The above referenced Web site gives a complete picture -- both literally and figuratively of the Academy's Board of Governors, its faculty, its administrators, its curriculum, its mission, its founding namesake -- Ida B. Wells Barnett, and many other items that define the Ida B. Wells Community Academy.

When communicating information from the administration to the Board, faculty and staff, it is usually done through . . .

- e-Mails, letters or memoranda. E-mails are also used to communicate to the Board things that come up between meetings that need to be addressed or to announce special Board meetings. This information is reinforced with faculty and staff through discussions during their weekly meetings;
- Each month standing committee reports and reports from the Chair, the CAO, and the Treasurer are the most direct way of communicating information to the Board of Governors; and
- These communications contain policy changes that must be made public, any current events, new policy recommendations, the financial status of the Academy, and any other pertinent situations that need to be communicated to the Board, to the community, to our parents, and to other Academy stakeholders.

The Academy and Accountability

The Academy's faculty and staff and individual members of the Board of Governors, are aware of and fully understand what their obligations are to their students, their students' parents, and to the Academy's stakeholders in general. To assure this awareness and understanding, the Board has resolved to reaffirm the Academy's adherence to its "Standards for Academic Governance and Leadership" as stipulated in ORC 3301-35-04 -- Student and Other Stakeholder Focus (see Appendix IV). The opening sentence in this document reads as follows:

Leaders, i.e., Governors, Chief Administrative Officer, Faculty and Staff set and communicate direction throughout the Academy . . . consistent with the Academy's Bylaws, the Academy's educational philosophy and mission, the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, and local, state, and federal mandates to improve classroom instruction and higher academic achievement for all students.

As indicated in the Academy's accountability plan, we center our attention on student assessment and related academic services. These include regular teacher driven testing regimes, in-house student achievement conferences, student portfolios, presentations, demonstrations, and the related provision of extra-classroom educational services to our students. Three outside service agencies used are Psychological Services Institute (PSI) (Speech, Hearing, Language and Psychological Therapy), MEO/SERRC (which provides the Academy with technical support, workshops, and presentations) and Neonet which provides electronic access to Ohio's financial and EMIS data resources and other computer-based services. We are currently served by the American Red Cross and the Portage County Educational Service Center with which we have contracted to provide the Academy with general special education, personnel acquisition, and other academic support services.

Each Fall, continuing students are required to re-register. New students have file folders made for their medical records, emergency contact phone numbers, IEP records, attendance records, free or reduced price meal applications, etc. During the first week of classes, we administer the Terra Nova and other diagnostic achievement tools to assess the current level of performance for students in grades K - 6. These instruments provide baseline indications of where each student is academically so that, in combination with other information provided by his or her medical or school records, a determination of the best educational course of action can be planned. For example, it is determined whether students should be referred to the Title I reading and math instructors or to the Special Education Specialist. The Terra Nova is administered again in the Spring or earlier to determine if there has been any measurable improvement over the course of time or if the learning path needs to be revised upward or downward. The Title I instructors are examining a number of other instruments to use in their assessment regime.

All teachers at the Academy keep portfolios for each child. The portfolios include a wide variety of items intended to provide a detailed account of the child's academic progress. Various items are placed in the portfolios: tests, stories, assignments, reports, art work, audio and / or video tapes, report cards, midterm progress reports, and other documentation. Teachers also have students make graded presentations during Kwanzaa, Black History Month, or

during the Malcolm X Memorial or on Ida B. Wells' Birthday or participate in essay contests held during Black History Month and the June 'Teenth Celebration. Each month individual students are highlighted as "Student of the Month" in the corridor. Teachers include a short summary of the child's current goals and objectives and areas needing improvement. At the close of each of the five 8-week grading periods, a public academic awards ceremony is held. The instructional system in place is helping us achieve the goals we outlined in our mission, namely, having our students show competence in the five learning proficiency areas -- Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Citizenship (Social Studies), and Science. Currently faculty are preparing themselves to administer the new diagnostic achievement test regime mandated by the Federal NCLB Act and the Ohio Department of Education.

Maintaining Quality in Teaching and Administrative Cadres

The quality of teaching is evaluated by the Academy's CAO and her designee on a regular basis (see Appendix V). Teachers are observed three times per year formally, and informally weekly. All new hires -- administrative support staff and teachers -- must serve a 90-day probationary period, after which they are evaluated using a standard Academy devised evaluation form to determine whether they should be retained in their current positions or transferred to another position or terminated. This form is completed by the CAP and is then gone over with the teacher. The teacher is allowed to make comments or provide feedback on said form, sign and return it to the CAO. This form is then filed in the teacher's personnel file. Secondly, a more formal observation is then planned, where the CAO can observe a lesson being taught, and provide feedback to the teacher on components of the lesson. Teacher and CAO meet again after the lesson has been observed to go over the findings, and make some suggestions for teaching improvement. The teacher is again provided with a copy of this for his / her records, and the original goes in the teacher's personnel file. At the end of this probation evaluation, the CAO reports the results of the evaluation and a retention recommendation to the Chair of the Board's Personnel and Benefits Committee. A letter is then sent to the faculty or staff member notifying him or her of the results of the evaluation (see Appendix VI for a copy of the Academy's "Teaching Methods and Classroom Management Evaluation Report"). If the recommendation is for termination, the Personnel Committee chair forwards it with his own pro- or con recommendation for the Board's advice and consent.

Teachers are also required to develop an in-house, ad hoc individual professional development plan (IPDP). This plan is supposed to correlate with the Academy's Mission Statement and the personal goals and objectives of the teacher. It is reviewed by the CAO and then submitted to the LCESC that has the primary control of the Academy's professional development process. These professional development goals should include specific areas that the teacher would like to improve, e.g., classroom management or, they may be related to a specific content area, say, African American history. The chairperson of the internal ad hoc LPDC then uses the plan to help the teacher find and participate in related workshops or seminars or university course(s). The Academy's Teaching Methods and Classroom Management Evaluation Report and its "Faculty and Staff Employment and Performance Expectations Manual" (see Appendix VII). Not only is the quality of teaching evaluated on a regular basis, so, too, is the CAO's overall performance.

As observed above, the Academy will relinquish of its professional development autonomy to the LCESC. The Academy will, however, continue to evaluate its faculty and staff and monitor how its faculty and staff professionally develop their ability to deliver cultural diversity, particularly African and African American history and culture in its classrooms. The Academy will also continue to evaluate how its faculty develops its skills to deliver its competency-based curriculum to its student stakeholders. Moreover, the Academy will continue to have its faculty research those pedagogical issues that specifically attend educating and directly relate to disciplining African American youth.

The Board of Governors evaluates the Chief Administrative Officer annually through its Personnel and Benefits Committee Chair who reports his recommendations to the Board and receives their advice and consent. Furthermore, the Board's By Laws stipulate that its Chair and Vice Chair as well as the chairs of its Standing Committees must each stand for reelection when their terms expire. They may decline to be reconsidered and / or new candidates can be proposed to stand for election. The Board's Bylaws can be read on the Academy's Website at <http://members.tripod.com/~HieroGraphics/IdaBWells-Barnett/IBWCA--BylawsandGovernanceHandbook-2.htm>.

State and Federal Financial Resources

General Discussion

At the end of each fiscal year, usually in late September or October, the Academy is audited by the State Auditor's Office. The Management letter resulting from FY 2003-2004 is in Appendix VIII. Moreover, at the end of each fiscal year, the Board of Governors approves the budget for the next fiscal that is prepared and presented by the

Treasurer / Fiscal Officer. This budget will have been reviewed already by the Financial Affairs and Planning Committee and revised if necessary to meet the known and anticipated financial needs of the Academy. At this review meeting the critical mass of student recruits is determined and the number of faculty that would be required to service them. Since the budget is student head count driven, students are of primary importance to our overall operation. The Academy, therefore, devotes the major portion of its financial resources to those elements designed to produce value added intellectual growth in its student body. We are constantly adding supplemental materials that will help reinforce the lessons taught by the teachers.

Specific Discussion

State Foundation Support Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Formula all-day Kindergarten	\$ 40,844.22
Formula Grades 1-12	\$ 522,870.00
DPIA all-day Kindergarten	\$ 44,346.51
DPIA Safety and Security	\$ 0.00
DPIA Classroom Size Reduction	\$ 53,707.49
DPIA Guarantee	\$ 0.00
Special Education Weighted Amount	\$ 43,138.20
Amount Added by Spec. Ed. Weighted	\$ 0.00
Gifed Aid	\$ 0.00
CTA	\$ 0.00
Parity Aid	\$ 30,686.58

Total State Foundation Support \$ 735,593.00

State Foundation Program Deductions

State Teachers Retirement	\$ (44,268.00)
School Employees Retirement	\$ (25,210.00)
JV 44 FY 03 FTE for SERS	\$ (6,348.78)

Total State Foundation Deductions \$ (75,826.78)

Net State Foundation Support \$ 659,766.22

Other State Support Funding

OneNet	\$ 0.00
EMIS FY 03 Funds Received in FY 04	\$ 600.00
EMIS FY 04	\$ 1,200.00
SchoolNet	\$ 0.00
Ohio Reads	\$ 2,060.00
Student Intervention	\$ 1,623.16

Total Funding from Other State Support \$ 5,483.16

Federal Financial Support Sources FY 2002-2003

U.S. Department of Agriculture School Breakfast and Lunch Program	\$ 44,714.06
Professional Development	\$ 0.00
IDEA Part B - Special Education	\$ 12,786.79
Title I 2003 (received in FY 04)	\$ 36,513.42
Title I 2004	\$ 56,001.40
Title VI	\$ 0.00
Title V	\$ 96.74
Special Education 2004	\$ 224.41
Title II A	\$ 6,282.49

Title II D (Technology C)	\$ 678.17
Total Federal Allocation	\$ 99,796.63
Donations	
Dr. William Schiavone, Cardiologist with the Heart Group, Akron, Ohio	\$ 500.00
Dr. Edward W. Crosby, Founder	
1. Student Honor / Merit / Perfect Attendance Awards Stipends	\$ 275.00
2. XO and Tripod Online Website Hosting Charges (per year)	\$ 87.96
3. Faculty and Staff Appreciation Night	\$ 90.00
Mrs. Hattie Mae Langdon, (Parent Contributor)	\$ 30.00
Dr. Luna	\$ 13.80
Total Donations	\$ 996.76
Grand Total	\$ 766,042.77

Addressing Needed Improvements

One of the most significant priorities the Academy has is that of creating an educational environment in which all of our students are reading, writing, and comprehending at grade level. Another significant priority is the development of an educational process that takes into consideration the student development framework and findings of Rossi and Montgomery referenced in "An Alternative Model of Student Performance" (Appendix IX). This article was excerpted from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap5c.html>. The specific reference to the complete report is <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/index.html>. For the students who are not at grade level, we concentrate as much attention as possible on the provision of opportunities to excel and to move on to higher levels of competency at their own rate. Unfortunately, rigid scheduling of the OPTs by the State obviates our ability to do this as well as we would like before our students take the battery of five tests. Our primary goal is, nevertheless, to meet each and every student where they are currently, both academically and socially, and take them to higher levels. We do this by setting goals and objectives for the students, parents, faculty and staff, and the Governing Board. Every aspect of the Academy must be functioning at an acceptable level of performance in order to create an educational environment that the students can achieve in. Therefore, new policies are implemented from time to time. We also prioritize our educational goal and objectives through the hiring of fully qualified faculty and staff. The criteria for hiring teachers become more and more strict each year as we look to employ those who can help create the educational environment desired and contribute to the overall learning process established at the Academy.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Program Management Advisor and the Chief Administrative Officer meet on a weekly basis to discuss the work objectives of past weeks and the current week, the academic programming issues that need attention and other equally important matters. Each year and sometimes earlier, the administration assesses the Academy on its different levels of operation -- finances, facility needs, staffing, student recruitment, and academic performance. This assessment process is initiated by the Financial Affairs and Planning Committee which usually develops multiple year program improvement timelines. These timelines provide the administrative leadership with an idea of the areas within the program that need to be improved and the length of time each improvement should take. Once an area has been identified as needing improvement, we then come together as groups (the Board, administration, faculty and staff) and brainstorm about various solutions that will strengthen the areas needing improvement. The end result is usually a plan of action to remedy the situation, or a set of objectives that need to be met in order to resolve the problem.

Student Recruitment

The Academy has experienced difficulty enrolling and retaining students as pointed out earlier in this report. Obviously we have had to respond to this problem because of its impact on our financial strength. Our response has been multifaceted. We directed our newly appointed Community Relations Coordinator to look into possible ways to augment the Academy's standard recruitment practices. She proposed the renting of large bill board space in various sections of the city, particularly those areas from which we believe recruits will be attracted. She also suggested placing fliers on car windshields in parking lots in malls, movie theaters, churches, parks,

etc. We contracted with PAX, a television channel viewed in the community, to tape and present a thirty second infomercial highlighting the Academy, its faculty, staff and educational programs. This infomercial air at various times during the day, primarily during the evening hours. As stated the Academy employed a number of methods to get our story told through out our catchment area. Appendix X displays several examples of these methods many of which made a real difference, however, not enough to alleviate our concern. Some of the methods used were designed to get students so excited about being useful to *their school* they would eagerly work hard to recruit their friends and playmates. The Academy is now working on alternative recruitment strategies designated as Incentive Builders.

We have also alluded to another issue that might be negatively affecting our ability to recruit and retain students. That issue is our year-round academic year. It has been brought to our attention that many of our students' parents have to honor court custody rulings that award during the summer months custody of a child or children to another parent who may be living in another city or state, or who, for obvious loss-of-time-with-his-child-reasons, just doesn't want to honor the child's need to attend the Academy during the summer months. This presents us with an obvious dilemma; one that forces us to threaten grade reduction, retention or de-registration. Most often de-registration is the result. We believe our year-round educational program is based on sound pedagogical research. We are a member of NAYRE, the National Association for Year-Round Education and we have compiled a lengthy bibliography on year-round schools to better inform our Governors and administrative staff as well as provide professional development materials for our faculty and staff. We hope in the new academic year to engage a NAYRE "House Call" and have them provide ideas that will help us overcome this problem.

Student Discipline

It has been recommended that the Academy hire a full-time person to handle the disciplining of students and the in-school suspension process. That recommendation is now in process. In-school suspensions, and suspensions / expulsions in general are resorted to when nothing else will seemingly work. We have gleaned from workshop attendance that the teachers came away with an understanding of how they could work better with troublesome students. But that certainly was not enough. Some faculty members, who were experiencing problems managing their classes, were asked to attend a workshops on classroom management. This academic year we will emphasize classroom management and the development of a reliable and effective discipline procedures.

The Central Role of Stakeholders and Partners

From the outset the Academy has worked with a variety of community organizations. For instance, to organize the Academy the two co-founders of the Academy worked with a team of 23 community residents and organizations to help develop a working plan for the establishment of an educational institution that would relate to the community's educational needs. The organizations to which some of these persons belonged were the Akron Public Schools, the African American Cultural Association, The University of Akron, Kent State University, the City of Akron's Department of Community Development, Jamaica Mall, university students, community residents, attorneys, social workers, hospital staff, etc. Since 1998 we have added to this list religious organizations, community recreational and service centers, the Summit County Public Libraries -- the Wooster (now Vernon Odom Blvd) and the Maple Valley Branches, the Summit County Services Center and Urban League, and the Summit County Children Services.

Even though the Academy worked with these organizations, we have not considered them to be partners as such, for they have not been as integral as the Academy's partnership with the Ohio Charter Schools Association based in Columbus, the Association for Better Community Development, Inc., in Canton, NeoNet and MEO/SERRC in Cuyahoga Falls, and the Portage County Educational Service Center and other unaffiliated others in Akron, Cleveland, Lorain, and Canton.

Challenges Encountered and Overcome

The Academy has experienced many challenges. Two of these challenges concerned the development of proficient at risk students and the recruiting of the active participation of an Advisory Board composed of parents and other members of the community. The first challenge was handled in part by the hiring of a qualified cadre of faculty and staff (see pp. 4 and 5 above. The second was addressed with the creation of the full-time Community

Relations Coordinator position. This person was assigned among other things to work with parents in their homes and to meet with community organization and business leaders to involve them as partners. These two assignments were incorporated into the community relations function of the Academy's Advisory Board.

Over the years preceding this fiscal, the Academy drafted and submitted funding proposals. Some of these proposals were funded, for example the \$15,000 SchoolNet Technology Grant. Funding for the others were denied. This fiscal the Academy was fortunate to hire an individual with an MA in Non-profit Organizations who has had considerable experience as a grant writer. In addition to a grant writer we have also managed to add to our Board of Governors several individuals who will be instrumental in enhancing the Boards ability to meet the expectations of its stakeholders. We have now increased the number of seasoned academics on the Board from two to five (this number includes the recent installation of Dr. Bridgie A. Ford, a professor of Education at the University of Akron who will be installed in FY 2004-2005). We augmented our ability to better manage effectively our finances when Mr. Glenn A. Thompson, a CPA, joined the Board. We will enter the next academic year with 11 Board members.

Music, Physical Education and Art instructors have not been a regular part of the Academy's curriculum. This year we did manage to hire an art and a music teacher. The plan is to retain a physical education instructor in 2004-2005. This year these instructors will teach in the elementary school. Next year, when the Academy offers both an elementary and middle school, these three instructors will teach on both campuses and offer a area of our curriculum that will afford our students with a long awaited curricular diversion.

We have been functioning in cramped programming space. In August 2002, we moved into the Mt. Olive Baptist Church facility (1180 Slosson Street) and brought our overcrowded existence to a temporary end. We gained much more space for all of our current educational activities, for we enjoyed programming space on the three -- 1st, 2nd and basement -- floors of the church's educational wing.

Although the Academy litigated the Akron Board of Education's refusal to transport our students in 1999 and won, the Akron Board of Education continued to refuse to transport those students attending its extended 6-week summer session or fifth grading period until September 2004, when the Academy retained the law firm Slater, Zurz & Gilbert to reopen the matter. Shortly after having announced renewed litigation of the issue, the Akron City School District relented and agreed to transport our students; however, they steadfastly refused to relieve the Academy of the \$19,000 busing expense we incurred during the June to July summer session.

The Academy has been concerned with keeping its students, faculty and staff safe. We have as a consequence employed various methods over the years to maintain a safe learning and working environment. This year the Academy's Program Management Advisor drafted a very comprehensive Crisis Management and Response Policy Manual for the Academy (see Appendix XI). This manual serves as an upgrade of the Academy's earlier but less comprehensive "Fire, Tornado, and Emergency Safety Manual," which is now to be widely distributed to faculty, staff, our host churches, and significant others. We installed at Mt. Olive a video camera and monitor with a buzzing device that allows the Academy's secretary to see the person(s) trying to gain access, and then let them enter with the push of a button. All visitors are granted access and are instructed to come directly to the office where they must then sign in and wear a badge. If a person is found in the hallways without a badge, he / she is questioned by staff to discover who they are and why they are in the learning center. If their presence is legitimate, they are directed to their destination.

The students' whereabouts are constantly monitored by the teachers and hall passes from the teacher are required for every student leaving the room. The hall passes note on them the destination of the student -- an administrator's office, restroom, another classroom, or Special Education Office. All classrooms have placed in a conspicuous location near the door the escape route from the building in case of fire and the safe collection place in case of a tornado alert. The Academy has on occasion invited the Akron Fire Department to conduct a Fire Safety Program for students. The Akron Police Department has also introduced students to its D.A.R.E program to inform them of their need to say "No" to drugs.

Since we view ourselves as Institution Builders and our faculty and staff as partners in that enterprise, we try to impress on all members of our learning team -- Board members, administrative and support staff, faculty and parents -- that as the Academy grows so, too, grows their professional and future careers and the quality of the education their students receive. Of especial importance is the Academy's bold intention to help reform the schooling process in the United States. Our intention does not in any way involve putting the nation's public or

private school systems, for that matter, out of business, for that would be counterproductive. We take our lead from Buckminster Fuller who advised: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." Our intention, if we can become good enough, is to become in time a "new model," a laboratory school. A school that is an aider and abettor for introducing, developing methodologies for the education of African American and other under-represented youth who are "at risk" in the nation's schools.

The Academy's requirement that there be infused into curricular designs African and African American history and culture presents us with another real challenge. This challenge was addressed earlier on so we won't reiterate it here. Another challenge for the Academy is coming up with an effective method for inducing African American parents to take charge of the education of their children receive. The Academy has, of course, benefitted from parents' exercising their right to choose where and who will educate their children. We have, however, found it difficult to engage a critical mass of these parents in meaningful ways on meaningful tasks. We envisioned at the outset having a coterie of parents and others participating in the management of the Academy through its Advisory Board or Site-Based Management Council. The proposed workings of the Advisory Board are outlined in the Academy's ODE contract. Its structure has undergone some operational modifications made to strengthen how it is to function. It was felt the Advisory Board should have the Board assume, as was originally thought, the oversight of the Advisory Board's program on a day to day basis. To that end we revised the position of an Assistant Teacher making her the Academy's Community Relations Coordinator whose duties included working with parents and other community residents emphasizing the building of firm relationships. This initially worked, but there was no consistency in the involvement of those who joined. In spite of this, we have increased our efforts in this area. With the installation of two community representatives on the Board, there has been created an Advisory Board standing committee which these two Governors will co-chair.

Another challenge for the Academy is coming up with an appropriate discipline system. During 2003 and 2004 we suspended students 37+ times and these students lost approximately 111 class days.. In a survey of faculty, many said the Academy should be more strict in disciplining students and holding their parents responsible. In our contract we stated we would develop an innovative discipline procedure. Correcting the problem was, is a huge undertaking. Suspending and expelling students is, in the Founder's view, counterproductive in that it was a zero sum game. Removing students from their classes has consequences the Academy cannot afford, that is, the students we are committed to educate lose precious and scarce learning time; and parents as a result of the suspension may withdraw the student, and the Academy suffers. Our Founder's position in this matter is our students need to be in school not at home where no learning activity will be conducted. Moreover, suspensions would ultimately damage our relations with the community we serve. In "Catalyst for Cleveland Schools" (June / July 2003), it was reported (pp. 16-17) that the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) suspended in 2002 some 15,000 students which was down from 18,000 the previous year. In order to meet the AYP attendance goal in spite of the suspensions, Cleveland, with state approval, listed the students as present because suspended students are sent home with the school work they will miss during their suspension. This is a travesty of no minor proportions. CMSD enrolls 50,902 African American students out of a total of 71,671 students. It is obvious that the majority of the students suspended are African American. Is it any wonder that only 39 percent of Cleveland's 50,902 African American students graduate? We must not follow Cleveland's lead and come up with our own well thought out policies and methodologies that keep even those students resistant to learning *IN* a positive learning environment and not *on the OUTSIDE* learning nothing at all.

Finally, We were correct in 1999 proposing that we would develop a discipline process that would be student and learning centered, but, in order to set up a meaningful process, we need to better inform ourselves. Fortunately, we had already decided to use the Rossi-Montgomery "Conceptual Framework" and their work on school reform as a guide. From our reading we also learned that discipline was a problem throughout the state and the nation. We also learned there were no sure shot methods we can borrow and employ. Our first internal corrective action was to receive from teachers first hand information on the in-class nature of the problem. Their suggestions on how best to handle the situation was in-school suspension as the best alternative to sending students home for one, two, or three days or more in some worse case scenarios. But that, too, is not enough. It means hiring more staff and acquiring additional programming space. Both of these suggestions mean an additional outlay of funds which we do not now have. With that the circle has again been joined.