

The Ida B. Wells Community Academy

1180 Slosson Street
Akron, Ohio 44320-2370

COUNTY: Summit IRN: 133553



Annual Report for 2004-2005

October 15, 2005

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Introduction

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 2003-2004, the Academy was 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 allowed the Academy to reassess its entire administrative and program structure. The academic and programmatic results of this assessment were seen in the just completed 2004-2005 academic year. The Board and the administration sought changes in its 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 & Health. Of greatest importance was the Academy's resolve to restructure how it went about conducting its educational business. All of these changes were implemented to augment the education our students would receive and provide the stimulation for the faculty to experience more teaching success with an energized student population. More on these points will be addressed elsewhere in this 2004-2005 Annual Report.

Current Operational Developments

Mission

The Academy's mission as stated in its founding document is to educate young people in a year-round – 210-day academic year educational program. The Academy's 210-day academic year, therefore, begins on, say, August 27 and ends in mid-July, between July 16 and July 22. The Academy educates children in grades K to 8 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), buttressed by the musical and visual arts and African American culture studies. This mission was strengthened where possible with electronic technology and with emphasizing the establishment of a Learning Community designed to shift the traditional educational paradigm and enhancing its students' academic gains.

In its contract with the Lucas County Educational Service Center, the Academy expanded its mission in terms of the grade levels it would teach from K - 6 to K - 8. The Academy in the 2004-2005 academic year become an elementary and middle school combined, but housed in two facilities five minutes apart. The Board approved Mt. Calvary Baptist Church located at 442 Bell Street. The 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. However, before the year was out, the addition of two grade levels necessitated a search for a facility large enough to house both the elementary and intermediate learning centers in one facility and thereby solve not only increased space needs but also potential logistics and administrative problems.

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, an eagerness to learn, academic competence, and the resolve to attain knowledge of their history, culture, traditions and values. The Academy strives to accomplish these aims and 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 underwent some critical alterations towards the end of the academic year. These alterations were designed to produce quality educational results, measurable performance outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and the natural sciences, effective teaching practices, elimination of behavior problem, etc. Students were assessed at the beginning of the academic 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. Moreover, we introduced during the 2004-2005 extended fifth grading period a curricular program with activities that were (1) based on individual student interests, needs and abilities and that (2) allowed students to grow at their own pace. This program also asked faculty to sharpen their methods for attaining higher achievement expectations from themselves and their students through the utilization of learning projects they designed for themselves..

"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 not only can learn, but rather *WILL 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 aligned its program structure and instructional design. As 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 18 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 "*unidisciplinary*," 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> and choose the theme: *Teaching for Holistic Classrooms*. Here can be found 54 articles on holism). 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 heard in their previous training much about curricular holism, the Academy's faculty, staff and administrators must keep the concept alive 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 striving toward building a productive learning environment.

The Academy's Board of Governors³

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.

- **Dr. Edward W. Crosby** assumed the Board Chair on January, 2005, upon the resignation of Dr. Dorsey, by unanimous vote. 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 founded the Academy. From 1998 to 2003, he served as the Board's Chair and as the Academy's Superintendent. He is currently the chair of the Board's Faculty and Student Personnel and Grievance Committee. Dr. Crosby has amassed since 1957 47 years of administrative and teaching experience albeit on the university and college level.

- **Mrs. Geraldine Hayes Nelson, MEd, Vice Chair, Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Studies and Director, Upward**

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>).

³All Board members and faculty and staff have valid BCI (background check) certifications on file.

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. 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 (nee 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**

Ms. Anderson 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.

- **Mrs. Phoebe P. Carter, MEd, Community Representative**

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**

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**

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 not choose to elect her for an additional year.

- **Mrs. Cynthia Y. Shotwell, Secretary to the Board**

Mrs. Shotwell 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 serves as the Secretary / Receptionist for the Intermediate Center and maintains the student records and other files, drafts in collaboration with the Center's Instructional Leader

The Academy's Administrative and Support Staff

- **Chief Administrative Officer:** 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.
- **Business Manager / Human Resources Officer:** 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.

- **Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development:** Mrs. Mozella M. Cottingham Watts is a certified school principal. She has retired after serving as the Principal of a public middle and elementary school in the Akron (Ohio) School District. She was brought aboard toward middle of the academic year to design and implement the Academy's reorganization and academic accountability plan.
- **Intermediate Learning Center Instructional Leader:** Mr. Robert M. Singleton, MEd, is an experienced teacher, is State certified and taught the Academy's 6th Grade. He serves now as the Instructional Leader of the Academy's Intermediate Center. 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.
- **Elementary Learning Center Instructional Leader:** Mrs. Christiana A. Fenn is the Instructional Leader of the Academy's Elementary Center. She is a graduate of the University of Akron and certified to teach the first thru eighth grades. Mrs. Fenn has taught at public schools in Akron, Springfield, and Northfield. She has worked as the Director of Education at the Sylvan Learning Center in which position she supervised instruction, organized staff evaluations and assessed student performance, developed routine communication with students, parents, teachers and community stakeholders.
- **Executive Secretary and EMIS & Student Records Coordinator:** Mrs. Synia L. Rodgers has had considerable work experience in corporate and social service agencies. Mrs. Rodgers is the Academy's registrar and student records keeper, in which capacity she performs as 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.
- **Intermediate Center Secretary / Receptionist:** Mrs. Cynthia Y. Shotwell serves as the Secretary / Receptionist for the Intermediate Center, performs various secretarial duties and maintains the student records and other files, drafts letters, reports, etc. in collaboration with the Center's Instructional Leader, Mr. Robert M. Singleton.
- **Extra-Mural Funding Grants Writer:** 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.
- **Community Relations Facilitator and Student Discipline Officer:** 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.

Faculty and Assistant Teachers

- **Mrs. Nikita M. Tidwell**, a certified Kindergarten Teacher, is an Ohio State certified teacher and 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. After returning from maternity leave, she became the Title I Reading and Math instructor for the newly opened Middle School.
- **Ms. Sheila J. Zeidrich**, a certified 3rd Grade Teacher, replaced Mrs. Hirst. She is a graduate of Kent State University with a degree in Early Childhood Education. Even though this is her first full-time teaching assignment, she has had some positive teaching experiences in North Canton and Akron.
- **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. Chelaise Burton** is the Intermediate Center's certified Fifth Grade Teacher. She is a graduate of Kent State University. The Academy is her first full-time teaching assignment. Her degree is in Integrated Social Studies so she should be a great asset to the Academy's emphasis on infusing African and African American history and culture into its competency-based curriculum.
- **Mr. Samuel T. Muhammad** is the Academy's highly qualified state certified Sixth and Seventh Grade Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher. Mr. Muhammad graduated from Kent State University. He has taught in community and traditional schools in Canton, Ohio. Since graduating from High School, and undoubtedly before he left High School, he has been interested in teaching, along with Ohio's mandated standards, African American history and culture.
- **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 current 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.
- **Mrs. Judith A. Armstrong** is a graduate of Kent State University. She is a state certified specialist in Special Education at the Intermediate Center. She has teaching experiences in the public schools of Rootstown, Maple Heights, Akron, Cleveland Heights, Ravenna and Stow. She has also worked with adults at the Oriania House in Akron and Town Hall II in Kent.
- **Ms. 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.
- **Mr. Anthony Gamblin** is a graduate of the University of Southern California. and joins the Academy as an instructor of Physical Education and Health. He has taught at various public and private schools in Akron. Most of his teaching assignments have been as a track or football coach.

Administrators, Faculty and Staff Demographics

Administrative and Support Staff								
Race	Male	Fem						
African Amer	1	7						
White	0	1						
Other	0	0						
Faculty and Assistant Teachers								
Race	Male	Fem	Certified		Highly Qualified		First Year	Paraprofessional
			Yes	No	Yes	No		
African Amer	1	5	6	0	6	0	1	NA
White	0	8	8	0	8	0	NA	NA
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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 Taught
Year Six: 2004-2005	159	124	NA	Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th

Additional Student Demographic Characteristics:

- Ethnicity: 97 percent African American; 1 Caucasian; 2 Latinos, Multi-Racial
- Gender: 54 percent Female; 46 percent Male
- Low / Middle Income: 70 percent
- Economically Disadvantaged: 44.2 percent
- Free and Reduced Meals Eligible: 70 percent
- Title I Reading and Math Eligible: 27
- Special Education Eligible: 21
- Withdrawals / No Shows: 35
- Out-of-School Suspensions: 115 In-School Suspensions: 206
- Expulsions: None
- Cited for Chronic Absences: 4 (repetitive letters sent to parents and juvenile authorities)

Academic Strengths and Areas of Improvement

Academic Performance

A significant academic strength was the decision to maintain an average class size of 15 students per teacher and to extend its academic year to 210 class days. (In 2005-2006 this average class size will increase to 18 students on average per class. The reason behind this change will be discussed below.) 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, we had to develop an educational structure that would deliver educational services designed specifically to meet the needs of these students.

In spite of these obstacles, the Academy strove to meet 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 a so-called "at risk" population of low and middle income African American young people beset by several educational obstructions -- low expectations; 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 excellent performance using the additional 30 days in the summer to provide along with the formal curriculum intervention services and instruction in those subjects not adequately learned.

The Academy has during the past year met with some academic success; we are, however, absolutely dissatisfied with student performance in Mathematics and Reading. We were able to show appreciable academic progress as demonstrated by the following statements extracted from the Academy's 2004-2005 Report Card: "Met AYP in Reading Participation," "Met AYP in Mathematics Participation," "Met AYP in Attendance," but failed to meet AYP in Mathematics and in Reading (see Appendix II). The Academy, in spite of meeting participation goals, is still in "Academic Emergency" for deficiencies in important performance areas. Our 2004-2005 Report Card documents most effectively how proficiently our students have not been performing (see the attached copy of this Report Card). This report seems to make useless the presentation of additional performance data. Acknowledging that we have not knocked down any performance doors, the Academy has been able to display individual student indices of academic success. But that is absolutely not good enough. Indeed, it was for this very reason that we retained the services of Mrs. Mozella Watts, a highly regarded former principal of Hotchkiss Elementary and Perkins Middle School in Akron. It is Mrs. Watts' responsibility to bring the Academy up to the high educational standards at which we expect both our faculty, staff and students to perform. Mrs. Watts's restructuring objectives are briefly outlined below under "Addressing Areas Needing Critical Improvements."

The focus of our work this current academic year is to make manifest the critical educational responsibilities every teacher and staff member at the Academy has. The students we teach must find the connection that makes education relevant to their community, their neighborhood, their nation and most importantly to themselves. There are many ways we can promote achievement for our students; we just need to get on the case. Where necessary we need to develop the supporting interventions that will make higher achievement possible.

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 phone calls and 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;
- 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, the Internet and regularly disseminated Academy newsletters;
- The general Akron and national communities are informed about the Academy through its comprehensive Website www.hierographics.org/AcademyIndex.shtml. This 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 -- Mrs. Ida B. Wells Barnett, and many other items of information that define the Ida B. Wells Community Academy.

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" based on ORC 3301-35-04 -- Student and Other Stakeholder Focus. 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 plans outlined in the "Faculty and Staff Handbook of Employment, Teaching and Professional Performance Expectations" and the "Parents and Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook," we center our attention on student assessment and behavior and related academic and employment practices and benefits. 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. We are currently partnered with the Lucas County and the Portage County Educational Service Centers with which we have contracted for the provision of special education personnel acquisition, curricular in-service workshops and other academic support services.

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 - 8. 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.

As pointed out in previous Annual Reports, all teachers in both Learning Centers keep portfolios for each student. These 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, report cards, mid-term progress reports, and other documentation. Some teachers 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 of each center. Students compose and recite their educational mission statements; teachers include these mission statements and a summary of the child's areas needing improvement. At the close of each of the five 8-week grading periods, a public academic awards ceremony is held.

Maintaining Quality in Teaching and Administrative Cadres

The quality of teaching is evaluated by the Academy's Instructional Leaders, the CAO and the Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development on a regular schedule. Teachers are with the start of the 2005-2006 academic year observed twice daily and evaluated at the end of each grading period. All faculty and staff are hired at the will of the Board of Governors. An annual evaluation is conducted to determine whether individual staff contracts should be renewed. 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, transferred to another position or terminated. This form is completed by the CAO in collaboration with her administrative staff, is then gone over with the faculty member or staff person. The teacher is allowed to make comments or provide contrary evidentiary documentation, sign and return the form to the CAO. If the recommendation is for retention, the Personnel and Grievance Committee chair sends the staff member a letter confirming the retention decision. If the recommendation is for termination, the Personnel and Grievance Committee chair forwards the negative evaluation form with his own or his designee's pro or con recommendation to the Board for their advice and consent.

Faculty and administrative staff 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 or administrator. It is reviewed by the CAO and in the case of faculty then submitted to the LCESC that has the primary control of the Academy's professional development process. Administrative and support staff submit their IPDPs to the CAO or to the Personnel and Grievance Committee Chair for review and approval. These professional development goals should include specific areas that the staff member or teacher would like to improve, e.g., classroom management or, they may be related to a specific content area, say, African American history. The Academy jealously guards its need to evaluate its faculty and staff and monitor how they professionally develop their ability to deliver cultural diversity throughout its educational structure, particularly African and African American history and culture in its classrooms. The Academy will also continue to evaluate how its faculty develops their 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 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. 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 2004-2005

Formula all-day Kindergarten	\$ 47,571.17
Formula Grades 1-12	\$ 586,711.04
DPIA	\$ 121,216.04
DPIA Guarantee	\$ 0.00
Special Education Weighted Amount	\$ 38,448.37

Amount Added by Spec. Ed. Weighted	\$	0.00
Gifed Aid	\$	0.00
CTA	\$	0.00
Parity Aid	\$	45,850.73

Total State Foundation Support **\$ 839,797.35**

Other State Support Funding

OneNet	\$	0.00
EMIS	\$	5,000.00
Entry Year Teacher	\$	1,100.00
SchoolNet	\$	0.00
Student Intervention	\$	2,195.00
Funds left over from FY 2004	\$	2,348.98

Total Funding from Other State Support **\$ 10,643.98**

Federal Financial Support Sources FY 2002-2003

U.S. Department of Agriculture School Breakfast and Lunch Program	\$	70,158.25
Professional Development	\$	0.00
IDEA Part B	\$	2,348.98
Title I - FY 2004)	\$	26,505.27
Title I - FY 2005	\$	60,290.27
Title VI	\$	0.00
Title V Innovative Programs	\$	27.33
Special Education	\$	29,848.56
Drug Free - FY 2004	\$	2,901.56
Title II A - FY 2004	\$	1,257.36
Title II A - FY 2005	\$	20,582.95
Title II D - FY 2004	\$	761.81
Title II D - FY 2005	\$	3,535.57

Total Federal Allocation **\$ 218,217.91**

Grants from Private Sources

Wal-Mart	\$	1,000.00
Dominion	\$	2,500.00
Key Bank	\$	4,000.00
First Energy	\$	500.00
Omnova	\$	1,000.00
Magenti	\$	1,700.00

Total Grants from Private Sources **\$ 10,700.00**

Grand Total **\$ 1,079,359.20**

Areas of Improvement

The Board of Governors, as has been its custom, insisted on the employment of a fully state certified teaching cadre -- competent, creative and innovative. Secondly, the CAO has admonished her faculty to establish rigid educational quality standards and innovative teaching and disciplinary methodologies and thereby 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 he 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 that are buttressed with quality and rigorous teaching methods;
- 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 is objective critical since most, if not all of our teachers were ill-prepared to teach African American students in general and African and African American culture and history in particular; and
- Become conscious of the Academy's need to track and document student performance in several categories: academics, social environment, corrective behavior 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. It also contains a number of references to how to eliminate the so-called achievement gap among African American Students. 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.

Addressing Areas Needing Critical Improvements

A comprehensive continuous improvement plan is in the developmental stages based on the Needs Assessment identifying the following areas on which we will focus: reading, writing, math / problem solving and behaviors. A committee comprised of faculty / staff, parents and community persons has been formed to achieve this task. The school improvement and action plans will follow the rubric established by the state addressing CCIP's. The Academy will implement its CCIP during the 2005-06 school year.

To support the CCIP, it was necessary to revise the administrative and teaching assessment tools to address the concern for accountability in the areas of classroom instruction, student achievement and behavior management. Daily walk-throughs and walk-through feedback information to the staff has been an effective informal monitoring process to observe curriculum progression and classroom management. Lesson planning has been revised to support standard-based instruction, data analysis, technology, and African / African American infusion.

The staff has received professional development which supports the areas of reading / writing, math / problem solving and classroom management. The following professional development has been provided and will continue to be provided during the 2005-06 school year: Effective Schools In-service, participating in selected workshop sessions at the Ohio Charter Schools Conference, MEO/SERRC: Raising Achievement for All Students (standards-based instruction), Teaching Children of Poverty (Ruby Payne), Teaching the African American Child, Blooms Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Using Test Data to Plan Instruction and Standards-Based Instruction (Curriculum Mapping). In addition, selected staff has attended professional development sessions to improve instructional skills within the content areas.

To date, parental and community involvement has been sought primarily through the Parent Advisory Board. The Parent Advisory Board will expand during the 2005-06 school year and include opportunities for parents and community persons to volunteer on a daily basis in various in-school operations – lunch duty, playground monitoring, after-school programming, etc. In addition, those parents and community persons who prefer to volunteer for more substantial special academics related activities and / or events will be able to offer their services.

Student incentives were designed to improve student achievement and to enhance their character development. The following programs were successfully implemented during the 2004-05 school year: Black Achievers, Girls' Circle, i.e., rites-of-passage into womanhood. Intermediate Center girls discuss how they can be a team players; cooperate in the learning process; develop into successful woman- and motherhood; Honor's Math (provided opportunities for students on grade level or above grade level in math to apply their math skills to real-life activities / projects). Boys Scouts (Pathways, provided opportunities for elementary center boys to work as a team and develop positive characters); Students Recognition Assemblies (these were assemblies held each grading period to honor and recognize students who were Honor / Merit Roll students, most improved, perfect attendance, good citizenship). Faculty and staff are currently working on the establishment of an Afrocentric Rites of Passage Program for Intermediate Center males and meeting in committee to suggest and implement other incentive programs into the Academy's "Ida B After Three" after-school program that will be implemented in the 2005-2006 academic year (funded by the Akron Community Service Foundation).

A significant improvement priority of the Academy was 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 a process utilizes all of parts of the student development framework "An Alternative Model of Student Performance" (see Rossi & Montgomery @ <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap5c.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. We propose accomplishing this by setting goals and objectives for the students, parents, faculty and staff, and the Governing Board. As mentioned elsewhere, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chair of the Student / Faculty Personnel and Grievance Committee, the Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, and the Instructional Leaders (formerly titled Site Managers) of the Elementary and Intermediate Learning Centers meet weekly to discuss academic programming issues that need attention along other equally important matters, such as student department and faculty assignments. At the end of the year, 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 Board and implemented by its Financial Affairs and Planning Committee. Once an area has been identified as needing improvement, the Board, administration, faculty and staff brainstorm various solutions that will strengthen the areas needing improvement.

Student Recruitment

The Academy has experienced difficulty enrolling and retaining students as pointed out earlier in this report. The Board in collaboration with the administration, the Financial Affairs and Planning Committee, and the Student / Faculty Personnel and Grievance Committee after assessing the problem concluded our retention problem beyond the natural attrition caused by socioeconomic conditions was being exacerbated by other factors within our control. These factors were (1) uncomfortable learning environment, (2) an uneven and poorly administered discipline policy, and (3) our inability to effect a well-organized process for attracting parental involvement. To address these and attendant factors, the Academy, with the help of a Board member, entered into an agreement to purchase a much larger facility (16,660 sq. ft) located in its programming area only 5 minutes or less distant from either of the two churches currently housing the Learning Centers. Indeed, the cramped facilities these churches provided was, we determined, the root cause of the loss of students, increased student behavior problems, and most importantly, the diminishing return experienced in teaching effectiveness. As mentioned above, the Academy then turned to revamping our discipline policy. We felt among other things that even with a larger facility in the offing, an uneven and poorly administered policy would continue to produce negative results. We asked the administrative officers including the Instructional Leaders to read an article from Theresa Perry's *Young Gifted and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African-American Students*⁴; the specific article was Asa G. Hilliard's "No Mystery: Closing the Achievement Gap between Africans and Excellence." In his article Dr. Hilliard makes patently clear that achievement AND student behavior are inextricably dependent on QUALITY teaching, that is teaching that is "live," "fresh," active and rigorous. We therefore tightened up the accountability mechanisms needed to monitor and require effective teaching and classroom management.

The Academy has hired a full-time person to handle the disciplining of students and the in-school suspension process. In-school suspensions, and suspensions in general are resorted to when nothing else will seem to work. We believe in-service classroom management methodology workshops will provide our teachers with an understanding of how they manage troublesome students. The 2005-2006 academic year will emphasize classroom management and the development of reliable and effective discipline procedures.

Finally, we decided to upgrade the use to which we put our Parent Advisory Committee as outlined above. In conjunction with this we decided on the establishment during the 2005-2006 parent involvement committee that will explore additional mechanisms for attracting parental involvement. This committee will also interface with the Parent Advisory Committee. One area we want to have parents engaged in is student recruitment.

In this Annual Report year we decided to go beyond our standard recruitment practices of renting large bill board spaces in various sections of the city, placing fliers on car windshields in parking lots in malls, movie theaters, churches, parks, etc. We placed recruitment signs on the lawns of our parents and willing others throughout the community. As stated the Academy employed a number of methods to get our story told through out our catchment area. Some of the methods used were designed to get students and their parents so excited about being useful to *their school* they would eagerly work hard to recruit their friends and playmates. The Academy is now

⁴Boston: Beacon Press, 2003, pp. 131-165.

working on alternative recruitment strategies designated as Student Incentive Builders.

We have also isolated 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. 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, if funds are available, to arrange a NAYRE "House Call" and have them provide ideas that will help us overcome this situation.

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 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 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 Urban League and Community Services Center, and the Summit County Children Services agency.

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 former 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 unaffiliated others in Akron, Cleveland, Lorain, and Canton.

Six Challenges Encountered and Procedures to Overcome Them

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 Board members, faculty and staff (see pp. 3, 4 and 5 above). The **second challenge** 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.

The **third challenge** was the search for and acquisition of 16,660 sq. ft. facility that will open in the 2005-2006 academic year and house more comfortably the entire Ida B. Wells Community Academy educational operation. 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. In 2004-2005 we expanded our operation into another church, Mt. Calvary Baptist. This facility would relieve the pressure on Mt. Olive and also allow for the addition of the seventh and eighth grades. We soon outgrew the space afforded us by Mt. Calvary. The new and much more spacious facility located at 815 Copley Road is not being completely renovated and should be ready for our occupation in January 2006.

The **fourth challenge** was and remains the Academy's requirement that there be infused into all 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. At the outset we envisioned having parents and others participating in the management of the Academy through its Advisory Board (or Site-Based Management Council). We are still working on strengthening the participation of parents in aspects of the Academy

The **fifth challenge** for the Academy is coming up with an appropriate discipline system. During 2004 and 2005 we suspended students who lost approximately 115 class days. Faculty believe 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. Sending students home several days in the administration's opinion is counterproductive and expelling them is to participate in a zero sum game. Removing students from their classes has consequences neither the Academy nor Akorn's African American community afford, that is, the students we are committed to educate lose precious and scarce learning time and the Academy and the community 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. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) suspended in 2002 some 15,000 students which was down from 18,000 the previous year. 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. We must 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.⁵

Finally, the **sixth challenge** centers on building and following a framework designed expressly for the Academy's student body. 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. Visit <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdReforms/chap5c.html> and study the graphic and description of the "Conceptual Framework" that should guide our developmental task. 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.

⁵See *A Curriculum Management Audit of the Akron Public Schools, Ohio*, Conducted Under the Auspices of the International Curriculum Management Audit Center / Phi Delta Kappa, August 1998, pp. 204-209, 210-211, 212-219. Even though these data are 7 or 8 years old, they do present a rather clear picture of what was happening to African American students in at least two urban school districts when it comes to retention, special education, suspension, expulsion and assignment to gifted programs. We believe it is fair to suppose that, if the Academy does not develop a process for rehabilitating those students presenting behavioral problems, we cannot claim to be members of the Educational Reform Movement.