



2021 UMSL Annual Review Report: Part 2 The Biome School

Contents:

Summary Page (page 1)

Evaluation Standards: Ten Elements of school evaluation – Part 2:

IX. [Substantive Student Academic Achievement](#)

X. [Sound Financial Operations](#)

NOTE:

In the Evidence columns, under Required Documents:

- Documents in **bold blue** must be submitted to the Charter School Office.
- Documents in **bold black** must be on hand, but do not need to be submitted to the Charter School Office.

Summary of Findings

Please note that the comments in this report reflect our analysis as of the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Areas of Strength

- Established a strong fund balance
- Maintained healthy financial systems
- Some academic growth, despite the challenges of the pandemic

Area for Growth

- Ensuring all students make at least one year of growth annually

IX. Substantive Student Academic Achievement

Standards	Indicators	Evidence
<p>A. Sets and meets clear, meaningful, and measurable academic goals and student learning objectives as stated in the charter through an accountability plan (performance contract) with its sponsor.</p> <p>B. Demonstrates high expectations for student achievement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Articulates its curricular content and performance standards, including minimum student performance standards for advancement or graduation. 2) Student achievement targets in the accountability plan (performance contract) propel students towards proficient and advanced scores on state assessments and success in future educational and occupational settings. 3) Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth measures assessments, to inform instructional decision making. 4) Implements assessments that collect data about students' short-term acquisition and long-term mastery of essential knowledge. 5) Analyzes assessments to gauge students' progress towards meeting school performance goals and makes instructional adjustments, as needed, to improve student achievement. 6) Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm-referenced measures and state assessments. 7) Closes the achievement gap among sub-groups of students. 8) Complies with the accountability plan (performance contract) established with its sponsor. 9) Maintains an attendance rate that aligns with the school's performance contract. 10) Maintains a high graduation rate (secondary schools) that aligns with the school's performance contract. 	<p>Required Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performance Contract <hr/> <p>Other Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher and instructional coordinator interviews ● Internal formative and summative assessment data ● MSIP-5 student achievement, attendance and retention data

Element IX: Student Achievement	
Areas of Strength	Areas for Growth
<p>GENERAL NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the pandemic, the state of Missouri did not administer MAP tests in spring, 2020. Neither the state nor UMSL has current student achievement data to analyze for school performance in this area. 	
<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>The last 4 years have presented challenges in assessing student achievement on state assessments in comparison to previous years in the same school and in comparison to similar public schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SY 2018: DESE states, “A1 and E2 were excluded in 2017. New ELA and MA assessments in 2018. Direct comparison of MPI and proficiency rates across years is not advisable.” ● SY 2019: DESE states, “2018 and 2019 ELA and Math scores are not comparable to 2017 (and prior years) assessments.” For the first time, DESE did not compute a percentage in its APR reports for schools. The report provides information on three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Growth (ELA and Math only): Are individual students making achievement gains over time? ○ Status (ELA and Math only): Are all students achieving at high levels at this point in time? ○ Progress (ELA, Math and Science): Is the school, district or charter making improvements over prior years? ● SY 2020: DESE states, “On March 19, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) announced the spring 2020 Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) assessments would not be administered, including Grade-Level (GLA), End-Course (EOC) and Missouri Assessment Program-Alternate (MAP-A) exams. Assessment data is not available for the 2020 school year.” ● SY 2021: Statewide assessments were administered, but DESE advised that results were not to be used for accountability purposes. <p>Because state assessment data are not to be considered for accountability purposes in SY 2021, the UMSL CSO amended the charter Performance Contract, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>UMSL will not populate the cells in section E of its performance contracts with state assessment data from 2021 to compare against the performance targets listed in the 2021 column and will not hold The Biome School accountable for reaching these targets.</i> ● <i>Upon completion of the 2020-2021 school year, UMSL and The Biome School will determine the feasibility of adjusting the performance targets in section E for subsequent school years; allowing for the possibility that UMSL might not hold The Biome School accountable for reaching the performance targets listed in section E columns for 2022 and beyond.</i> 	

Internal Assessments

- *Regarding internal assessments of student achievement,*
 - *The Biome School will:*
 - *Within constraints arising from the pandemic and to the best of its ability:*
 - *Administer a nationally normed assessment for student achievement in ELA and math to all students at least twice during the 2020-21 school year.*
 - *Establish individual student growth targets based on data from the assessment(s).*
 - *Share the data from the assessment(s) with UMSL.*
 - *At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, share findings related to individual student annual growth outcomes with UMSL.*
 - *UMSL will NOT:*
 - *Hold The Biome School accountable for students reaching their individual growth targets based on data from the internal assessments administered in 2020-21.*
 - *UMSL will:*
 - *Incorporate internal assessment outcomes related to individual student growth in its 2021 annual review report; specifically, in the section on student academic achievement.*

Comparisons with SLPS Schools

- *UMSL may compare The Biome School's 2020-2021 state assessment outcomes with those of comparable schools within St. Louis Public Schools; with the understanding that the comparison will account for variance in the attendance models (in-person, fixed-blended and virtual) each school followed, including shifts between the models through the school year.*

After the assessments were administered in SY21, and DESE has revealed that LEA-level data will be made available publicly on December 1, 2021, but it is unlikely school-level data will be released, the UMSL CSO has determined only internal assessment data will be reported. Comparisons to SLPS schools will not be made because comparison data is not available.

Internal Data

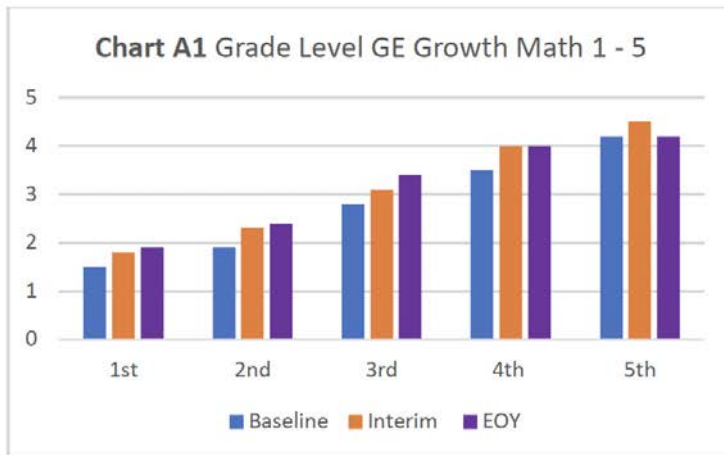
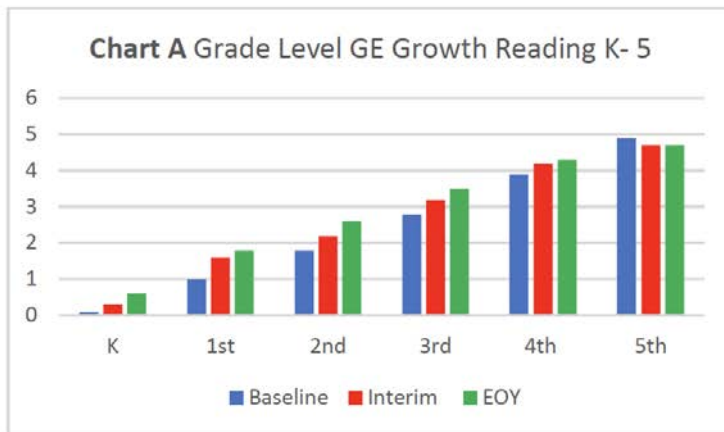
** Analysis is pulled directly from summative reports submitted by Bill Kent, of TBS*

Star Assessment Data

**GE = Grade Equivalency*

As measured by the GE score, all grade levels achieved reading growth, from the October 2020 baseline assessment to the May 2021 EOY assessment, except for the 5th-grade class (See Chart A). Additionally, math GE scores improved from the baseline to EOY in all grades except 5th grade. 4th-grade math GE scores remained flat from the interim through the end of year assessment.

- a. Schoolwide average GE literacy growth is 0.5 (5 months)
 - i. K – 3 Grade average GE literacy growth is 0.7 (7 months)
- b. Schoolwide average GE math growth is 0.4 (4 months)
 - i. 5th-grade math GE scores created a performance drag on schoolwide average GE scores



“The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) score compares a student's growth from one period to another with that of his or her academic peers nationwide—defined as students in the same grade with a similar scaled score history...” Learners who achieved high growth earned an SGP score ≥ 50 . An SGP score of 50 means the learner has shown more growth than 50 percent of academic peers (See Chart B and B1).

Chart B SGP Reading Performance K-5

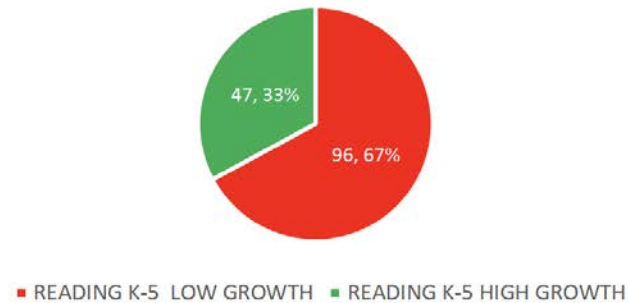
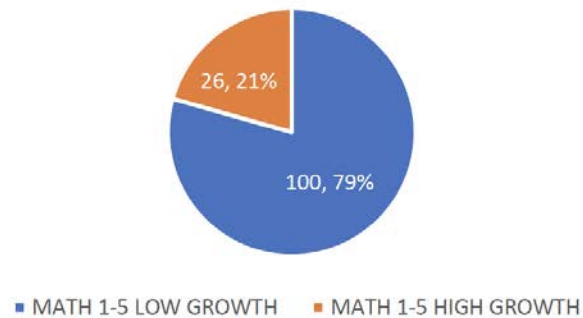


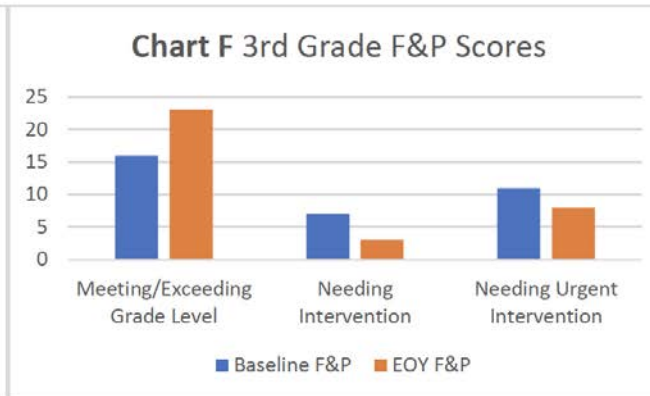
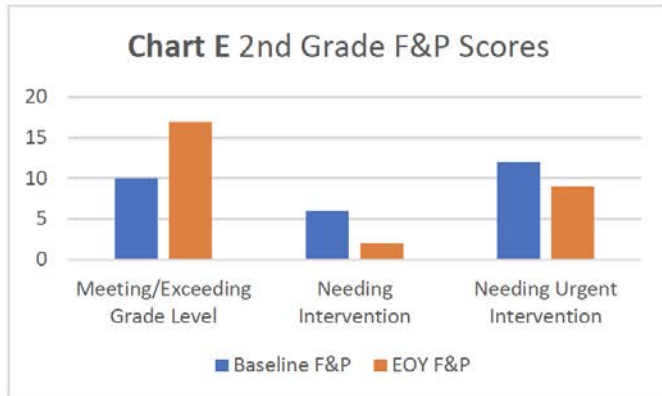
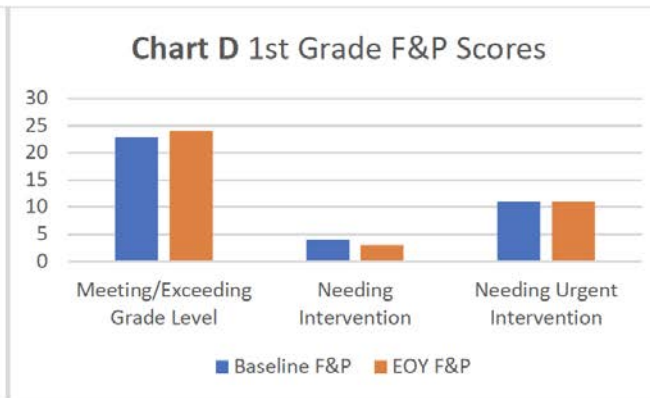
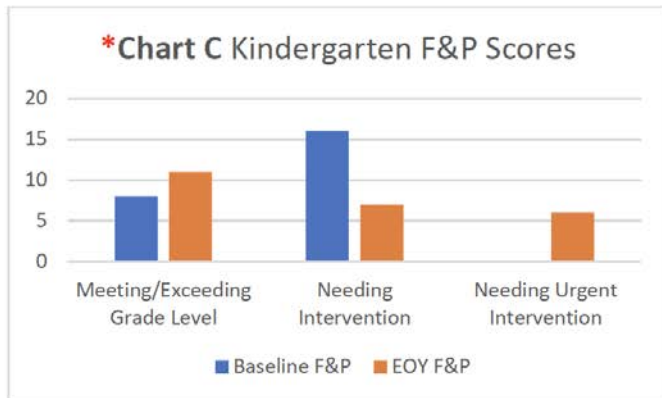
Chart B1 SGP Math Performance 1 - 5

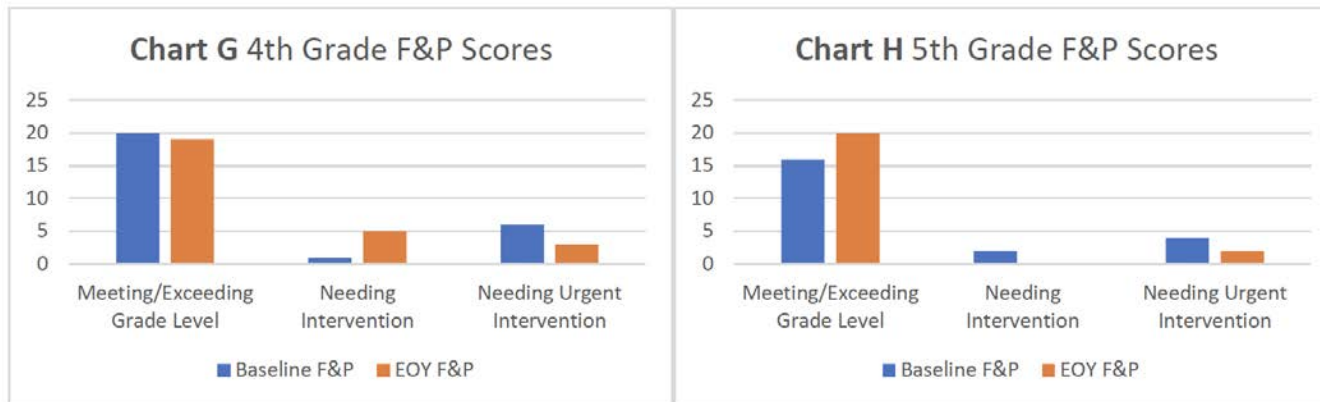


- a. 81% of learners (38 of 47) who achieved high growth were also students in the low-proficiency band – this is significant and positive.
- b. Low Growth, schoolwide, in literacy and math are concerning

Fountas & Pinnell

In four (4) out of six (6) grade levels, the number of learners requiring urgent intervention decreased. In 5 out of 6 of the grade levels, the number of learners in the meeting/exceeding expectations increased by one or more learners.





Findings:

- ELA
 - In Reading, TBS students made grade level equivalency growth in all but one grade level.
 - Schoolwide growth was 5 months growth.
 - In four (4) out of six (6) grade levels, the number of learners requiring urgent intervention decreased. In 5 out of 6 of the grade levels, the number of learners in the meeting/exceeding expectations increased by one or more learners.
- Math
 - In Math, TBS students made grade level equivalency growth in all but one grade level.
 - Schoolwide growth was 4 months growth.

Conclusion

The challenges of understanding student growth during the 2020-2021 school year were many, as schools adjusted to meet students' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conditions for administering assessments were less than ideal; platforms for learning were varied between virtual, on-site, and hybrid models; students and staff were operating with additional stressors and trauma.

Even with the challenges, students at The Biome Schools made growth, although the school is disappointed with the level of growth made.

IX. Sound Financial Operations

Standards	Indicators	Evidence
<p>A. Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds by ensuring the school operates in a fiscally sound and appropriate manner.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Preserves a minimum of three percent budget surplus. 2) Maintains accessible and appropriate fiscal records. 3) Core Data and other required school reporting is conducted in a timely and appropriate manner. 4) Conducts an annual financial audit. 5) Ensures that school business and expenses, including personnel, are made free of conflict of interest and directed toward meeting the mission of the school through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Board review of monthly check register b) Oversight of credit card expenses c) Oversight of cash management d) Monitoring attendance reporting e) Provision of insurance coverage including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Director and Officers ii) Employee Dishonesty iii) General Liability iv) Professional Liability v) Property vi) Workmen’s Compensation 	<p>Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Secretary to the Board Report (ASBR) • Independent Annual Audit • Cash Flow Projection and Analysis • Annual Debt Report • Tear Sheet and Invoice for Locally Published Annual Audit • Monthly Check Registers • Monthly Bank Statements and Cash Reconciliations • Quarterly Reports • Proof of Insurance Statements <p>Other Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with CFO • Payroll and retirement records • Core Data Reports • Evidence in board minutes that the check register has been reviewed and approved by the board.
<p>B. Establishes clear fiscal policies that use public funds appropriately</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Adhere to an adopted and board approved fiscal policy and procedures manual. 2) Ensure fiscal policies include procedures for the authorization of purchases and release of funds 3) Adopt a budget by June 30 for the upcoming fiscal year . 4) Ensure that the budgeting process maintains a direct focus on teaching and learning needs with a fiscal balance to cover expenses with revenue. 	<p>Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget • Monthly Financial Statements • Banking Information • Account Coding Data FED/LEA • Internal Control Policies and Procedures • Procurement Policy • Federally Funded Purchase Inventory <p>Other Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with CFO • Approved board meeting minutes

<p>C. Ensures financial resources are directly related to the school's purpose: student achievement and learning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ensure that the school's physical space, materials, and supplies are conducive to accomplishing the charter's school-wide learning goals as specified in the charter. 2) Establish policies to ensure that contracts reflect fair market value. 3) Determine compensation levels for employees that are appropriate for the positions and responsibilities and that are consistent with industry norms 	<p>Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff Salary Records (including average staff salary) <p>Other Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building walk-through ● Classroom observations ● Vendor contracts
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Element X: Financial Operations
<p>In review of information provided by Debbie Akins, the following is Shannon Spradling's analysis of The Biome financial picture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY17 ending fund balance reported on the ASBR was 10.28%; \$117,310 ● FY18 ending fund balance reported on the ASBR was 6.34%; \$110,324 ● FY19 ending fund balance reported on the ASBR was 9.66%; \$229,180 ● FY20 ending fund balance reported on the ASBR was 21.34%; \$584,792 ● FY21 ending fund balance reported on the ASBR was 43.03%; \$1,086,307 <p>Concerns - No concerns.</p> <p>Financial review</p> <p>Standard A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ASBR: The ASBR was filed on time. ● Independent Annual Audit: Complete. The FY20 Audit was approved by the Board and submitted to DESE on time. ● Cash Flow Projection and Analysis: School maintains a monthly cash flow document. ● Annual Debt Report: The school received SBA Forgiveness Loans in FY21 and FY22. Loans have been reported as such. ● Audit Published: FY20 was published in the St. Louis American. ● Evidence - Information provided by Debbie Akins. <p>Recommendations - None</p>

Standard B

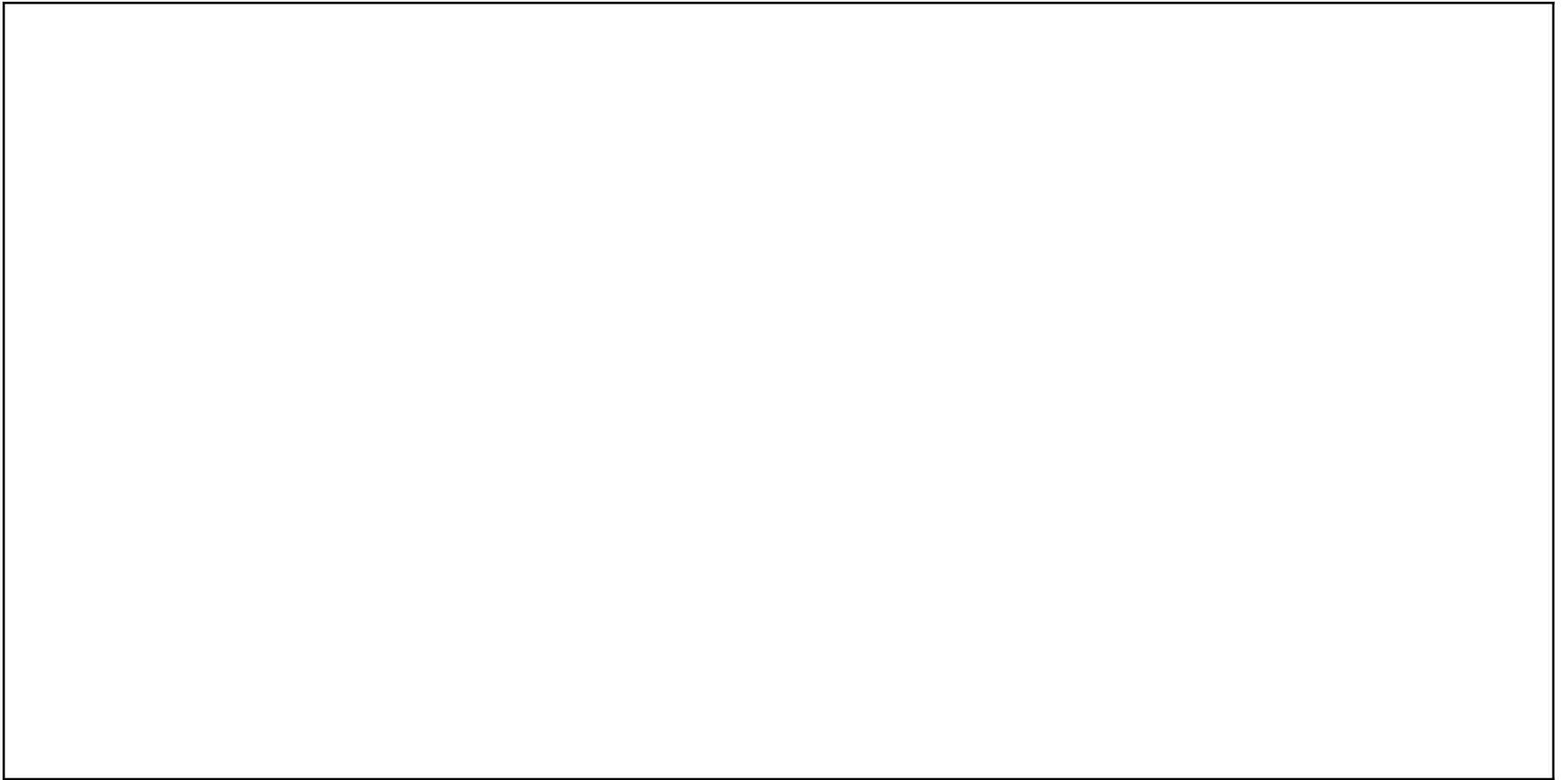
- Annual Budget: Board approved and amendments were made as presented for FY21 and current year FY22.
- Monthly Financial Statements: Reviewed by the board and approved.
- Banking Information: Funds are held in a financial institution. Funds in excess of \$250k are collateralized by government securities.
- Account Coding: Coding is in compliance with DESE Financial Accounting requirements

Recommendations - None

Standard C

- In 2019, the school added two modular buildings that provided 7 new classrooms and 1 bathroom. The additional space will allow the school to meet capacity needs for the foreseeable future.
- The average teaching salary in FY21 is \$51,523.
- For FY21, the principal, teachers and support staff were contracted as Full-Time or Part-Time positions. Teachers and support staff are provided a stipend for working summer school as well as professional development duties.

Recommendations - None



October 26, 2020 FINAL Form 200407 wlm 5