
UNIVERSAL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT & WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE PLAN: 2023-24

Farhiya Einte, *Executive Director*

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www.uacsmn.org



ISD # 4225-07

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I. School Information

Address:

2912 28th Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(P) 651.340.5994
(F) 612.259.8952
(W) www.uacsmn.org

Grades Served: PreK-10 (during 2023-24 school year – will serve PreK-12 by 2025-26)

Year Opened: 2014-15

Mission Statement

Universal Academy will provide success for all students with high quality learning, empowerment and support from a caring and nurturing staff.

Vision Statement

Universal Academy will be recognized as an academically superior public school for accelerating the learning of all students so that they will be fully prepared to thrive and contribute in today's diverse and ever changing communities.

Authorizer Information

NEO Charter School Authorizer
3432 Denmark Ave #130
Eagan, MN 55123
612.889.2103
<http://www.neoauthorizer.org>

Wendy Swanson-Choi, Executive Director of Charter School Authorizing

Universal Academy's authorizer contract with Novation Education Opportunities (NEO) began on January 24, 2014. The school is authorized until June 30, 2029 by its current contract with NEO.

NEO ensures that Universal Academy is accountable and responsible in 4 key areas: (1) governance, (2) student and school performance, (3) operational performance, and (4) financial management. The 2023-24 school year was Universal Academy's ninth year of operation as a charter school.

Statutory Purposes

Universal Academy's primary purpose is to (1) *improve pupil learning and student achievement by accelerating student learning* through an aligned framework of Data-Driven Instruction in conjunction with Response to Intervention (RtI), Responsive Classroom, Direct and Differentiated Instruction, and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in a results-oriented culture that fosters a growth mindset. Additional purposes are to (2) *increase learning opportunities for pupils by ensuring that teachers are receiving professional development for and utilizing research-based effective instructional techniques* as reported in Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* and to (3) *encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods* through weekly data analysis in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to ensure teaching techniques are monitored and adjusted to accelerate student learning. Universal Academy will meet high standards across content areas by setting goals and comparing progress in improving student learning to the highest performing charter schools in the state and nation using the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academy Progress (NWEA MAP) results as a benchmark for success. Universal Academy will utilize a study visit protocol during a visit to these high performing charter schools as a strategy for meeting high standards across content areas.

II. Student Enrollment

Number of Students Enrolled

Below is a table of enrollment covering the past five years of enrollment at Universal Academy Charter School. Figures are based on the MN Department of Education's data as of October 1. Universal Academy opened serving grades K-5, growing to serve grades K-8 by the 2017-18 year added a pre-Kindergarten program beginning in 2019-20. In 2021, Universal Academy was approved to expand grade levels through 12th grade and made plans during 2021-22 to begin its high school program, with 9th grade starting in the fall of 2022 and 10th grade starting in the fall of 2023.

Universal Academy Charter School Total Oct. 1 Enrollment, 2019-2024					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Pre-K	28	30	27	31	37
Kindergarten	61	49	54	51	56
1st Grade	52	62	55	58	59
2nd Grade	51	53	54	59	57
3rd Grade	46	49	53	58	60
4th Grade	41	47	50	48	56
5th Grade	36	42	51	48	51
6 th Grade	43	35	34	51	47

7 th Grade	25	38	31	41	48
8 th Grade	26	22	29	31	34
9 th Grade	-	-	-	22	18
10 th Grade	-	-	-	-	14
Total	409	427	438	498	537

Characteristics/Demographics

Ethnicity	Percentage	Special Population	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	English Learner	58%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	Special Education	5%
Hispanic	1.5%	Free/Reduced Lunch	82%
Black	96.7%		
White	.22%		
Multi Ethnic	1%		

The above table summarizes Universal Academy’s student demographics for the 2023-24 school year. Most students are immigrants from East Africa, or children of immigrants, categorized as Black. 58% of Universal Academy’s students qualify as English Learners. This is consistent with the fall 2022 number, although the fall 2022 figure of 56% represents a decline from the previous fall’s figure of 67%, a continued decline from 82% as of fall 2020. The large majority of students continue to qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Total enrollment, as of October 1, 2023 was 537, an increase compared to the previous year.

III. Student Attendance, Attrition, & Mobility

Student Attendance

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Overall Attendance Rate	98%	99%	96.5%	96.3%	96.7%

Student attendance has remained high throughout the past five years, as shown in the table above. Attendance rate for the 2023-24 school year was 96.7%.

Student Attrition

Percentage of students* who are continuously enrolled between the end of	
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the 2022-23 school year and October 1 of 2023-24 school year: 80% had re-enrolled for the 2023-24 year by October 1, 2023.	20%
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**Do not include graduating students or those who have completed your school program, i.e., if your school is K-6, do not include students who have completed 6th grade.*

Student Mobility

Year	Students Transferring Out After October 1	Total Students Enrolled October 1	Mobility Percent
2018-2019	45	413	10.9%
2019-2020	41	415	9.9%
2020-2021	26	517	5.0%
2021-2022	56	446	12.6%
2022-2023	25	467	5.4%
2023-2024	36	534	6.74%

Mobility increased in 2023-24, as shown in the table above. UACS had 36 students transferring out after October 1st and a total enrollment of 534 students in grades K-8 as of October 1st. This mobility rate moved from 9.9% in 2019-20, considered in the school’s Performance Framework as the baseline year, to 6.74% in 2023-24.

IV. Governance and Management

UA Board of Directors

Name	Email Address	Teacher Lic. (if applicable)	Position	Term*
Amiin Harun	Amiin.harun@gmail.com		Chair and Treasurer; Community	2023-2026
Maylum Mohamed	Maylummohamed@uacsmn.org	510482; expires 2026	Secretary Teacher	2023-2024
Marianne Mlambe	mbanda@uacsmn.org	330039; expires 2026	Member; Teacher	2022-2024
Abdulkadir	aksosman@yahoo.com		Vice Chair;	2023-2026

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Osman			Community	
Randa Roushdy	rroushdy@uacsmn.org	487270; expires 2025	Member; Teacher	2022-2024

*All Board terms begin and end in April. Universal Academy Board of Directors members have expertise in the following areas:

- School Mission and educational programming: all five members
- Finance: Amiin Harun and Abdulkadir Osman
- Legan Compliance: Amiin Harun and Abdulkadir Osman
- Marketing / Enrollment: Amiin Harun, and Abdulkadir Osman
- Education/Teaching: Maylum Mohamed, Marianne Mlambe, and Randa Roushdy

V. Training Board Members Attended

Universal Academy materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract and school bylaws relating to:

- 1) school board composition and the board demonstrates the capacity to govern an effective charter school;
- 2) board member training: provided by Designs for Learning, covering the three mandated areas of Governance, Personnel, and Finances; took place most recently on May 20, 2023 and August of 2024
- 3) effectively and transparently conducting board meetings:
 - a) A discernible method for conducting meetings (i.e. Robert’s Rules)
 - b) Complying with MN Open Meeting Law
 - c) Timely distribution of board materials prior to meetings to board members and authorizer
 - d) Appropriate documentation of board and committee meetings
- 4) board decision-making and oversight, including but not limited to:
 - a. Establishing, reviewing and implementing policy
 - b. Establishing performance expectations that are in alignment with charter contract
 - c. Regularly reviewing academic, financial and operational data
 - d. Overseeing school improvement plans as necessary
 - e. Conducting timely review and approval of key organizational documents including the budget, contracts for service, facility lease, annual reports and financial audits

VI. Professional Development Plan of School Leader

The Director of Universal Academy Charter School is Farhiya Einte. She holds two Bachelor’s degrees in Elementary Education and High School Programming, a Master’s of Education in Elementary Ed, and a license in Elementary Education. She is working towards Principal Licensure at Hamline University. During the year she participated in the same professional development activities as the Universal Academy teachers.

Professional development was provided for Universal Academy teaching staff for two weeks in August, before the beginning of the school year, and then on Fridays throughout the school year. The PD calendar for the 2022-23 school year is included below. Trainings were generally led by Universal Academy staff, such as the Assistant Director and veteran teachers. Universal Academy’s Professional Development calendar for 2023-24 was as follows, first for the two weeks in August, then for the remainder of the school year.

Professional Development for Teacher Orientation 23-24

<u>Monday 8/14</u> <u>8:00-3:30pm</u>	<u>Tuesday 8/15</u> <u>8:00-3:30pm</u>	<u>Wednesday 8/16</u> <u>8:00-3:30pm</u>	<u>Thursday 8/17</u> <u>8:00-3:30pm</u>	<u>Friday 8/18</u> <u>8:00-3:30pm</u>
Welcome (Crosby + Einte) -Teacher/EA Introduction to whole group (Crosby/Weinmann/Essler) -EA/One-on-ones/Teacher Pairings (Ayub) -Teachers Manual (Essler) -Keys (Chromebook Cart + School) -Paperwork (Ayub + Abas) -Laptops (IT) -Schedules (Academic Excellence Team)	Welcome (Crosby + Einte) Ice Breaker (Crosby) -HR (Ayub) -School Supplies -Pacing Guide (Due: 8/22) -Lesson Plan (First 2 weeks Due: 8/22) -Sub Binder (Due: 8/24) -NWEA Schedule & Sign-Up (Due: 8/24) -Field Trips (Schedule with Place due 8/18) -Reading Log (Crosby) -MMM/FMM (Crosby/Essler/Salah)	Welcome (Crosby + Einte) Ice Breaker (Crosby) -Committee Sign Up (Due: 8/18) (Weinmann) 8:30: Behavior and JMC Logging New Teachers Only (Jehnah-Elementary, Salah-Middle) 8:30 Returning Teachers with Academic Excellence Leaders Review Pacing Guide Expectations 9:00-11:00: Lesson Plan- Gradual Release “I DO” (Weinmann/Essler)	Welcome (Crosby + Einte) Ice Breaker (Crosby) CPI Training EAs and Teachers LUNCH 11:30-12:30	Welcome (Crosby + Einte) Ice Breaker: Friendship Bracelets (Crosby) 9:00-10:00 First Day Logistics (Crosby) -Arrival and Dismissal Logistics -Data Meeting Expectations/Schedule 10:00-11:30 Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment + Teacher Presence (Weinmann/Essler) LUNCH 11:30-12:30 12:30-1:30 PreK-5 DI + DI Pacing Guide (Bieszk) 1:30-3:30 Lesson Planning and Pacing Guides Prek-2 Crosby 3-5 Weinmann
9:30-11:00 Somali Culture (Dr. Abdullahi Mohamed)	10:00-11:30 Benefits with Kara *Check for EaseCentral Portal log in	LUNCH 11:00-12:00 12:00-2:00: Lesson Plan- Gradual Release “ We Do/You Do” (Weinmann/Essler)		
LUNCH 12:00-1:00 3rd Teacher Expectations and Plans: Crosby (K-2), Weinmann (3-5), Essler (6)	LUNCH 11:30-12:30 Distribute Curriculum (teacher’s guides + 1 text and 1 workbook)	2:00-3:30 Classroom Time		
2:00-3:30 Classroom Time	1:00-2:00 HR (Liza + Ayub)			

*Share Pacing Guides, Lesson Plan folders, JMC Logins (Crosby)	2:30-3:30 RTI Lisa Greenberg			6-8 Essler 9-10 Salah
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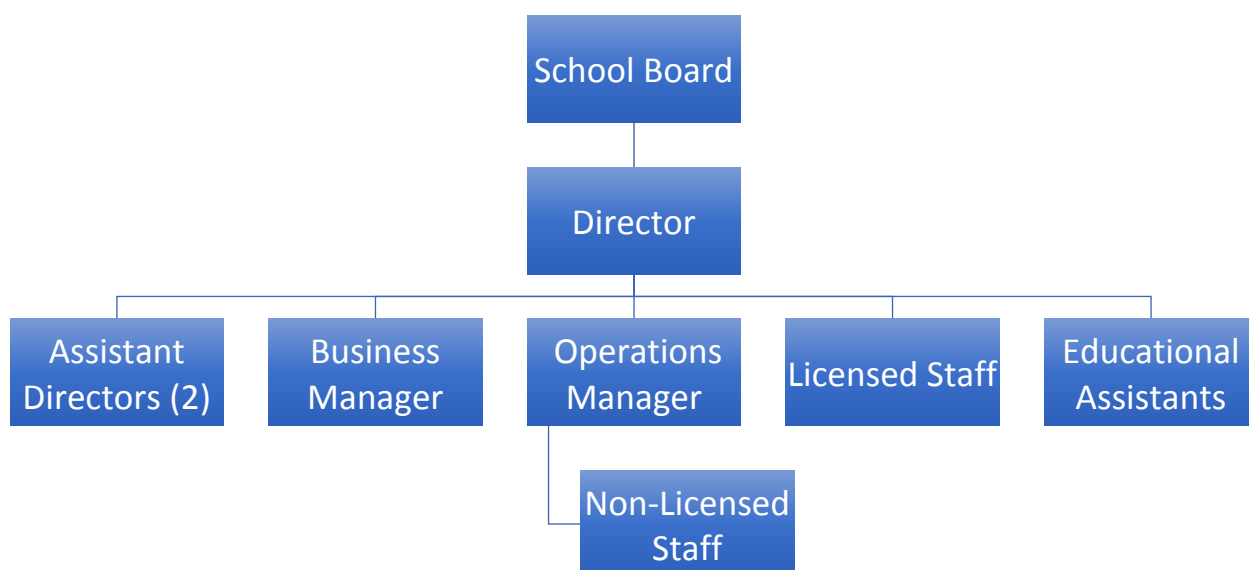
<u>Monday 8/21</u>	<u>Tuesday 8/22</u>	<u>Wednesday 8/23</u>	<u>Thursday 8/24</u>	<u>Friday 8/25</u>
8:00-3:30pm	8:00-3:30pm	8:00-3:30pm	8:00-3:30pm	8:00-3:00pm
Writing: 6/MS (new teachers only) (8:00-11:00, 12:00-3:00)	Writing: 3/4/5/Weinmann (new teachers only) (8:00-11:00, 12:00-3:00)	Writing: K/1 (new teachers only) (8:00-11:00, 12:00-3:00)	Steve Check-In: Laurence (8:00-9:00) Madison (9:00-10:00) Rania (10:00-11:00) Jackie (12:00-1:00) Skinner (1:00-2:00) Maiers (2:00-3:00)	Steve Check-in: Lucy (8:00-9:00) K-8 Coaches (9:00-11:00, 12:00-2:00) Huss (2:00-3:00)
Welcome Ice Breaker Open House Logistics	Welcome Ice Breaker	Welcome Ice Breaker		
Work in Classroom	LUNCH 11:30-12:30	LUNCH 11:30-12:30	Welcome Ice Breaker Revisit Open House Logistics	Open House 4:00-6:00pm (arrive at 3:00pm)
LUNCH 11:30-12:30	12:30-1:30 Intervention / RTI expectations	12:30-2:00 Creating a Purposeful Classroom -Classroom Environment -Teacher Language -Logical Consequences (Weinmann/Essler)	LUNCH 11:30-12:30	
Lesson Planning and Pacing Guides: PreK-2 Crosby 7-8 Essler 9-10 Salah	1:30-3:30 Grade level teams w/ a 3rd teacher meet with their coach (pre-scheduled time)	2:00-3:30 Classroom Time	Lesson Planning and Pacing Guides: PreK-2 Crosby 3-5 Weinmann 7-8 Essler 9-10 Salah	
Weinmann out on PTO	Lesson Planning and Pacing Guides: PreK-2 Crosby 9-10 Salah			

Universal Academy Professional Development, 2023-24

September	October
1. NWEA Info & Goal Setting (New Teachers) 8. Kickball Team Building 15. School-wide reading and math strategies (Whole Group) 22. ADMIN 29. Sentence Frames (New Teachers)	6. Teaching Vocabulary (New Teachers) 13. Preventing Teacher Burnout (Whole Group) 20. NO PD (MEAs) 27. ADMIN
November	December

<p>3. NO PD (Data Day)</p> <p>10. NO PD (Conferences)</p> <p>17. Basic Academic Convos (New Teachers)</p> <p>24. NO PD (Thanksgiving Break)</p>	<p>1. Trauma Informed Teaching + Social Emotional Learning (Whole Group)</p> <p>8. NO PD (Comp Time-Conferences)</p> <p>15. ADMIN</p> <p>22. NO PD (Winter Break)</p> <p>29. NO PD (Winter Break)</p>
January	February
<p>5. ADMIN</p> <p>12. Sentence Frames (New Teachers)</p> <p>19. WIDA Schedule & Information</p> <p>26. Trauma Informed Teaching + Social Emotional Learning (Whole Group)</p>	<p>2. NO PD (Data Day)</p> <p>9. NO PD (Conferences)</p> <p>16. NO PD (Comp Time-Conferences)</p> <p>23. ADMIN</p>
March	April
<p>1. Preventing Teacher Burnout (Whole Group)</p> <p>8. Teaching Vocabulary (New Teachers)</p> <p>15. Bowling (Whole Group)</p> <p>22. Basic Academic Convos (New Teachers)</p> <p>29. MCA/Expectations (+ Training)</p>	<p>5. NO PD (Data Day)</p> <p>12. NO PD (Spring Break)</p> <p>19. NO PD (Conferences)</p> <p>26. Revisit NWEA Goals/Post MCA Math & Reading Re-teach (Whole Group)</p>
May	
<p>3. NO PD (Comp Time-Conferences)</p> <p>10. Teacher Appreciation Lunch</p> <p>17. End of the Year Logistics</p> <p>24. Teacher Check-Out Logistics</p> <p>31. Last Day of School- say goodbyes in the gym</p>	

Universal Academy’s management structure during 2023-24 was as shown in the organization chart above.



Universal Academy does not contract with a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The school contracts with Designs for Learning for special education services including the Special Education Director, and for finance and human resources support.

VII. UA Staffing

Universal Academy’s staffing during 2023-24 was as shown in the tables below

Administration	
Name	Position
Abdulle, Nawal M.	MARSS Coordinator & Lunch Director
Ayub, Mahvash	Human Resources
Benalshaikh, Jehnah	Elementary Dean of Students & Parent Liaison
Chino Morales, Harmony	Front Desk
Crosby, Lucy	Elementary Assistant Director
Einte, Farhiya	School Director & Principal
Moallim, Abdikarim Mohamed	District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
Nur, Hodan M.	Admin. / Front Desk
Salah, Mohamed Shoke	Middle & High School Dean of Students & Parent Liaison
Weinmann, Nicole	ELL Coordinator

Woods, Alana	Middle & High School Assistant Director
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Teachers		
Name	File Folder #	Position
Alhuniti, April	385142	Library
Bieszk, Jackie	484954	Second Grade Teacher
Elmi, Abdiqani	498715	Special Education Teacher
Essler, Rachael	1000160	Instructional Coach
Farah, Ubah	1012575	Kindergarten Teacher
Felizarte, Brenda B	443754	Third Grade Teacher
Francis, Sameul	494307	Seventh & Eighth Grade Social Studies Teacher
Gesdir, Halima	1029057	PreSchool Teacher
Gharib, Rania	507458	Second Grade Teacher
Haile, Marian	1012372	Seventh & Eighth Grade Language Arts Teacher
Huss, Christopher	1013096	Building Sub
Huss, Timothy John	1000786	Fourth Grade Teacher
Islam, Abu	1027628	Middle and High School Math
Kirelik, Katie	1023737	Third Grade Teacher
Kriewaldt, Brock	1005207	Sixth Grade Teacher
Maghdaoui, Fatima	496564	Arabic Teacher
Maiers, Shayla	1011955	Kindergarten Teacher
Mushtaq, Muhammad Haris	1012568	Success Teacher
Richardson, Laura	513970	High School Social Studies Teacher
Rislove, Ellen	385908	Building Sub
Roushdy, Randa	487270	Special Education Teacher
Skinner, Isabelle	1008221	First Grade Teacher
Odi, Junneil	1027882	Fifth Grade Teacher
Webb, Corey S	505472	Physical Education Teacher
Weinmann, Nicole	491931	Instructional Coach, ELL Coordinator
Carter, Annetta	470714	Fourth Grade Teacher
Wang, Qifan	1028432	Building Sub / Small Group
Yang, Maoqing	1028434	Sixth Grade Teacher

Uanan, Arisell	1027604	First Grade Teacher
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Non-licensed Staff	
Name	Position
Farah, Hassan	2 nd Grade EA
Mohamed, Sheikh Ruweyada	2 nd Grade EA
Ali, Yaasir	1 st Grade EA
Muhumed, Abdulwasa	1:1
Yusuf, Samiya	1:1
Mohamud, Wiilo	1:1
Mohamed, Ladan	1:1
Ayan, Abdullah	1:1
Adam, Amina	Pre-K EA
Yusuf, Muna	1:1
Issa, Ilas	1:1
Mohamed, Amal	1 st grade EA
Ali, Mano	Hallway Monitor
Ali, Zhara	3 rd Grade EA
Naji, Nooralain	1:1
Abas, Sulekha	3 rd Grade EA
Nuh, Ahmed	4 th Grade EA
Mahamed, Betria	5 th Grade EA
Ahmed, Lul	5 th Grade EA
Ali, Naema	Building Sub / Small Group
Mire, Mustafa	EA Middle School
Ali, Mohamed	1:1
Huss, Chris	Substitute Building Sub
Hersi, Fahmo	Kindergarten EA
Amin, Nuh	1:1
Morales, Angela	Food Service

During the 2023-24 school year, Universal Academy employed 27 licensed teachers, three administrators, two deans, and other staff as listed above. All teachers hold a valid Minnesota license in the area(s) for which

they teach. A teacher-heavy staff with solid support from instructional aides contributes to Universal’s overall model of intensive support for students and high levels of instruction.

VIII. Finances

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2023-24 and/or an organizational budget for Fiscal 2024, contact:

Name: Ann Yang
 Position: Finance Director
 Contact info: Designs for Learning
 Phone: 651-645-0200
 Email: ayang@designlearn.net

Designs for Learning Financial Service Provider provides accounting services for Universal Charter School.

Information presented below is derived from preliminary audit figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to the Minnesota Department of Education and Novation Education Opportunities no later than December 31, 2024.

	Fund 1	Fund 2
Total Revenues	8,498,236	*537,431
Total Expenditures	8,274,780	570,946
Net Income	223,456	0
Total Unrestricted Fund Balance	5,160,215	0
Total Restricted Fund Balance	2,203,065	

*include the permanent fund transfer fr Fd01 \$53,204 to cover the FNS program deficit.

General Fund 01 Overview:

UACS received \$8,498,236 in general fund revenue, 97% of the revised budget. State aid revenue was paid based on enrollment of 513.9 average daily memberships and/or 535.79 pupil units.

UACS general fund expenditure totaled \$8,274,780, which is 96% of the revised budget. Total expenditure included a permanent fund transfer to the FNS program \$53,204.

UACS set aside a budget spend down of its fund balance for the facility build-out during the fiscal year.

Total fund balance increased by \$223,456 in fiscal year 2024 bringing the unrestricted fund balance to \$5,160,215; 62% of fund 01 operating expenditure.

IX. Academic Performance

MCA-II Data

MATH	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percent of students testing Proficient	26.8%	-	12.1%	25.9%	23.4%	33.6%
Percent of students making High, Medium, and Low Growth						
Achievement level Improved	22.6%	-	12.1%	30.1%	18.3%	30.9%
Achievement level maintained	39.5%	-	22.7%	19.9%	22.5%	30.9%
Achievement level decreased or remained “does not meet standards”	37.9%	-	65.2%	50.0%	59.2%	47.8%

Reading	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percent of students testing	34.8%	-	30.3%	41.9%	36.2%	48.5%

Proficient						
Percent of students making High, Medium, and Low Growth						
Achievement level Improved	-	30.3%	30.3%	35.4%	17.7%	33.3%
Achievement level maintained			20.2%	29.3%	39.6%	31.1%
Achievement level decreased or remained “does not meet standards”	-	30.3%	49.5%	35.4%	42.7%	35.6%

As in previous years, Universal Academy’s English Learner students outperformed the state in terms of proficiency shown on the MCA in 2024:

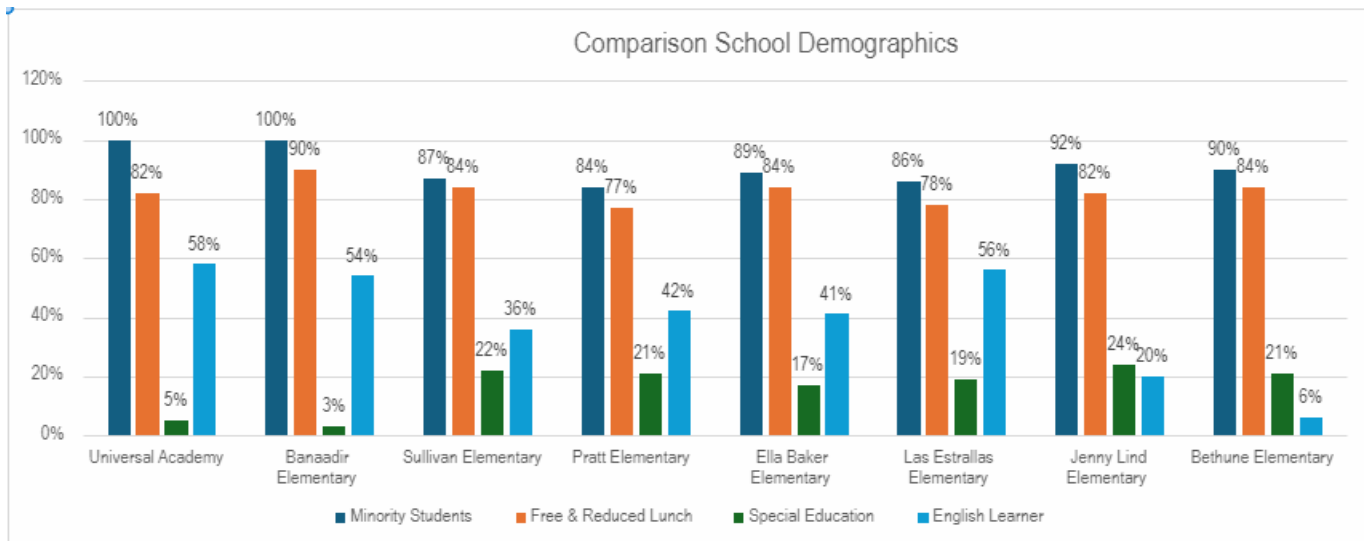
	English Learners – Statewide	English Learners – UACS
MCA – Reading, % Proficient	21.7%	40.9%
MCA – Mathematics, % Proficient	19.4%	26.9%

MCA academic achievement and growth data is as reported in MDE’s School Report card:

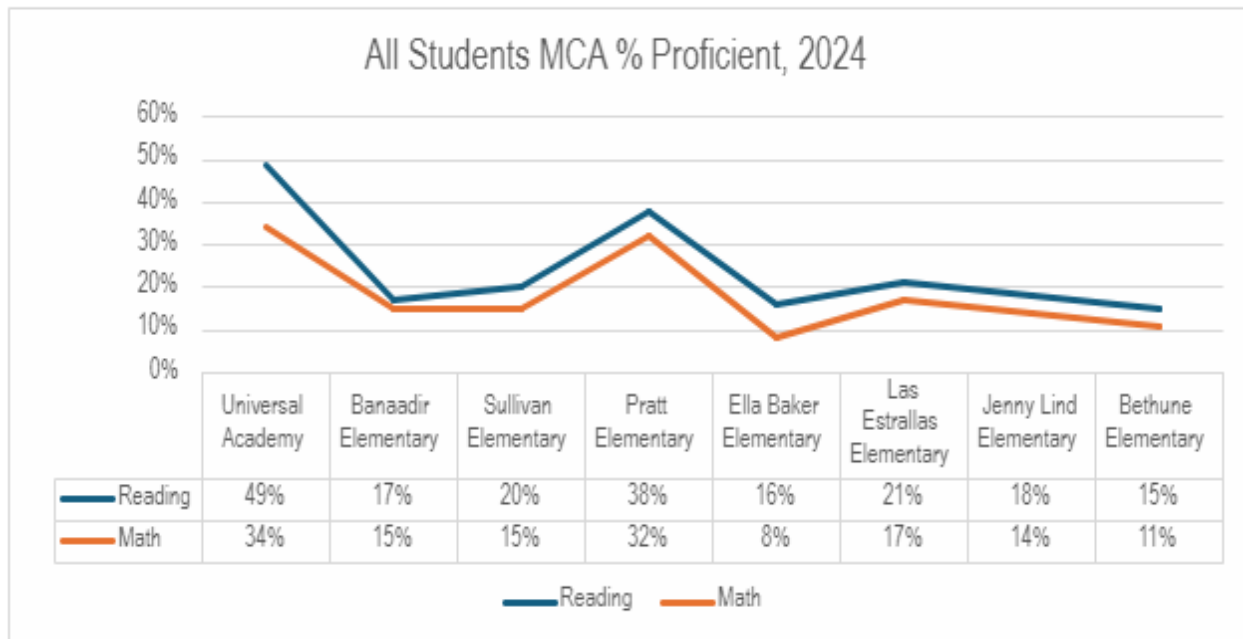
<http://rc.education.state.mn.us/>.

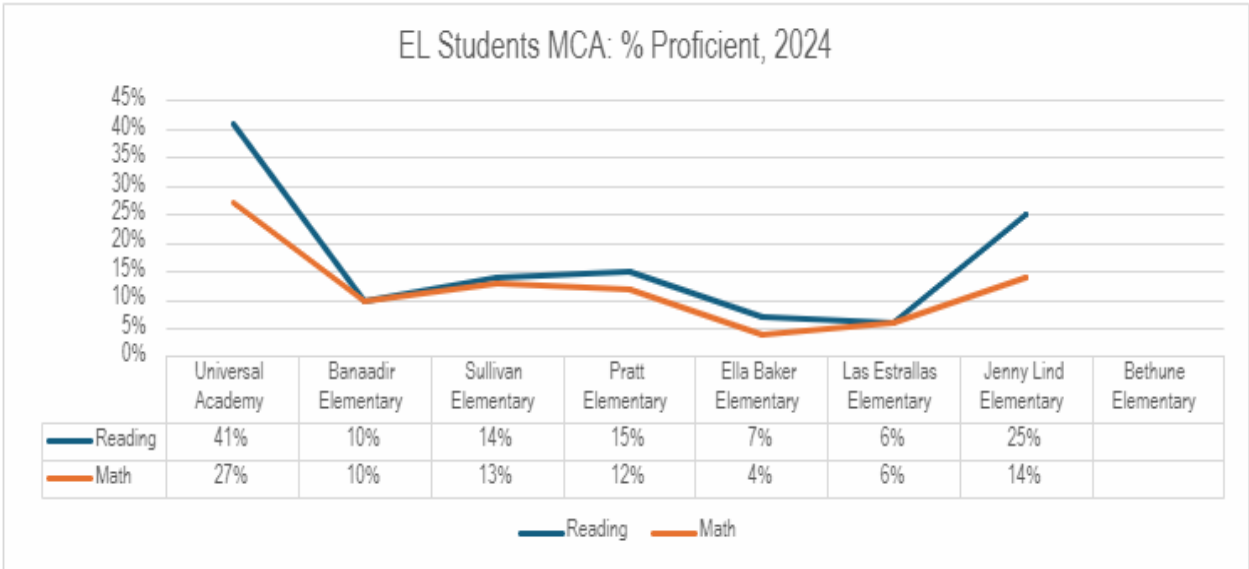
Comparison schools were chosen based on student demographics and their neighborhoods proximity to Universal Academy. Most of the comparison schools have a very similar student population. All schools chosen had a minority student percentage of 80% or higher and were within 10 miles of Universal Academy

Charter School.

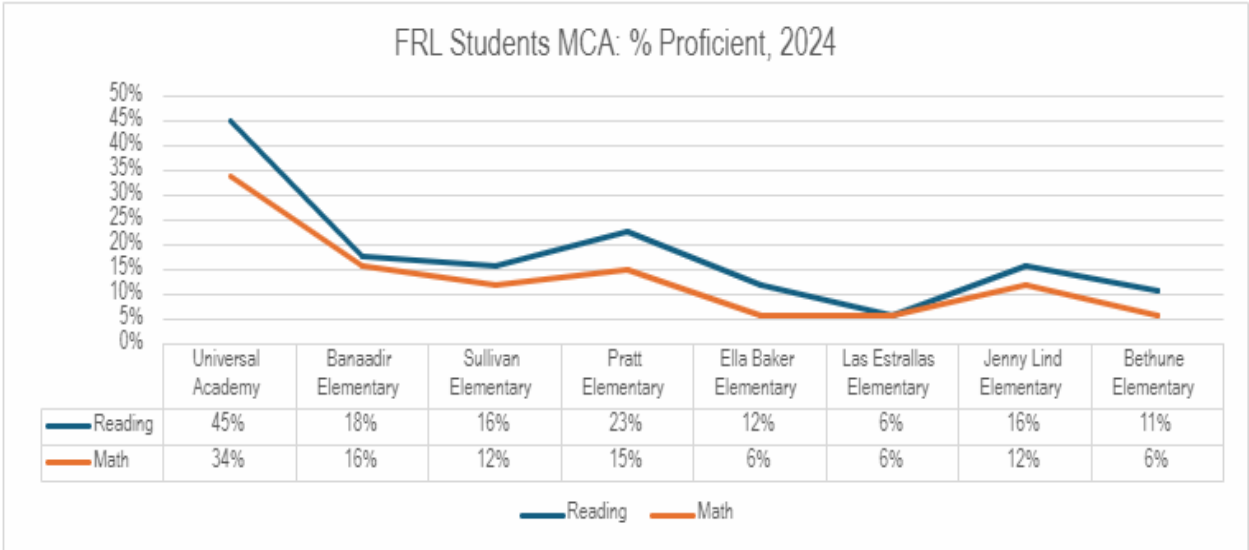


Proficiency data for Universal Academy and for the seven comparison schools is shown in the charts below, for all students; then for EL students and for Free and Reduced Lunch-eligible students. Universal Academy results continues to compare well with this set of demographically-similar schools.





* Note Bethune Elementary's EL percentage is too low to report proficiency.



ACCESS FOR ELLs

WIDA test results from 2024 indicate that Universal Academy students are making strides towards English language proficiency, in this year slightly outperforming statewide averages. On average, English Learners at Universal Academy progressed 53% (up from 49.0% in 2023) of the way toward their English Language

Proficiency targets, compared with 46.4% average statewide. Also, 31.0% of UACS students are meeting their target, compared to 28.3% of EL students statewide.

X. Improvement Plans and Worlds' Best Workforce

Educational Approach and Curriculum / Instructional Philosophy

Universal Academy Charter School's instructional philosophy is that multiple curricula and resources must be available along with a learning program responsive to student needs to accelerate the learning of the state standards for all students. It is essential to:

- Analyze data to identify each student's strengths and needs in mastering the state standards in addition to each class as a whole
- Engage students in setting individual goals as well as collective class goals
- Monitor individual and collective progress toward meeting the goals
- Increase focus on math small groups and increased math instructional time. This will allow small group instruction and time for the teacher to meet every student's needs through differentiation.
- Adjust instruction and select resources to accelerate learning. For example, if one teaching technique in math doesn't work for a few students, then it is necessary to modify the approach in re-teaching and use additional techniques and resources. UACS makes a commitment to each student to identify what works to accelerate his or her learning as monitored through weekly data analysis. UACS implements aligned strategies of Responsive Classroom, Direct and Differentiated Instruction, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and Response to Intervention (RtI) in a results-oriented culture that fosters a growth mindset.

The educational program aims to enable all students to meet challenging academic achievement standards by implementing the following school wide strategies:

- Data-driven Instruction (DDI) in conjunction with Response to Intervention (RtI),
- Embedding professional development into daily instruction utilizing instructional coaching and instructional techniques from *Teach Like a Champion* and SIOP.
- Each Friday, in professional learning communities organized by grade level clusters, teachers will use the following resources:

- 1.0 *Driven By Data: A practice to improve Instruction*, by Paul Bambrick Santoyo. This book serves as a resource to teachers for selecting strategies that can be implemented based on student needs and goals that the teachers identify.
- 2.0 *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College*, by Doug Lemov. Lemov carefully observed teachers whose inner-city students perform at dramatically high levels. Then he broke down what they do into carefully described techniques that all teachers can put into practice. This book also serves as a valuable resource to teachers for selecting strategies that can be implemented based on student needs and goals that the teachers identify.
- 3.0 *Using the SIOP Model with Pre-K and Kindergarten English Learners*, by Jana Echevarria, Deborah Short, and Carla Peterson; and *Making Content Comprehensible for Elementary English Learners: The SIOP Model, 2nd Edition*, by Echevarria, Vogt and Short; and *99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners with the SIOP Model* by Vogt and Echevarria. These books also provide strategies that can be implemented depending on student needs to meet goals that the teachers set.
- 4.0 “I Do” – Teacher models learning target and expectations, and a strategy for the new concept.
 “We Do” – Teacher and students work together to practice the strategy modeled
 “You Do” – Students model the learning target independent of the teacher. They are divided into small groups for the teacher to refine the learning goals.

Curriculum used in core academic areas includes the following:

- Reading: MyView curriculum provided by Savvas
- Math: Envision 2.0 from Savvas and Reveal Math by McGraw Hill
- Science: iScience and Inspire Science by McGraw Hill
- Social Studies: McGraw Hill
- Writing: Steve Dunn’s Writers Workshop

Universal Academy aims to meet high standards across content areas by setting goals and comparing progress in improving student learning to the highest performing charter schools in the state and nation using the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) results as a benchmark for success. Universal Academy utilizes a study visit protocol during a visit to these high performing charter schools as a strategy for meeting high standards across content areas.

Universal Academy Performance Framework Goals and Results

Universal Academy’s authorizer, Novation Education Opportunities, has a Performance Framework which specifies Academic Performance Indicators in four areas. There are also Indicators in school Climate,

Operations, and Finance. The Academic and Climate indicators are summarized below, along with the various Performance Ratings for each. The complete Performance Framework is available for review if needed.

Universal Academy Performance Framework Goals and Results, 2023-24		
I: All Children are Ready for School		
I.A: Early Literacy and Early Numeracy Goals		
Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
NWEA MAP for Primary Math Targets (Grade K)	60-70 percent of kindergarten students will reach the ready for first grade RIT target score of 159 for math AND/OR improves by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	<p>The Spring 2024 NWEA MAPs test shows that we have met this goal with 64.8% (35/54) of students meeting or exceeded the 159 score.</p> <p>From the baseline years rate of 42.71% the school’s proficiency increased to 64.81%, an increase of 22.11 percentage points.</p> <p>An additional 16.6% (9/54) met their growth goals with a 50 percentile score or above on the fall to spring conditional growth percentile score.</p>
NWEA MAP for Primary Reading Targets (Grade K)	60-69 percent of kindergarten students will reach the ready for first grade RIT target score of 158 for reading AND/OR improves by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	<p>The spring 23-24 NWEA MAPs results show that 48% (26/54) Kindergarten students are at the ready for first grade RIT score of 158 or higher.</p> <p>From the baseline years rate of 23.28% the school’s proficiency increased to 48.15%, an increase of 24.87 percentage points. meeting the second measurement of this goal.</p> <p>In addition, 25.9% of students not reaching their goal made their expected growth.</p>
II: All Students are Ready for Career and College, Including Third Grade Literacy (As Measured by Grade Level Proficiency, MCA Grades 3-8)		
II.A: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- All Students State Comparison		
II.B: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- All Students Resident District (Minneapolis) Comparison		

Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
MCA Math proficiency (state comparison)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	The school's proficiency rate of 34.89% is 12.71 percentage points lower than the state's proficiency rate of 47.61%. From the baseline years rate of 26.32% the school's proficiency increased to 34.89%, an increase of 8.58 percentage points.
MCA Reading proficiency (state comparison)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	The school's proficiency rate of 50.81% is 0.21 percentage points higher than the state's proficiency rate of 50.60%. From the baseline years rate of 38.30% the school's proficiency increased to 50.81%, an increase of 12.52 percentage points.
MCA Math proficiency (district comparison)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	The school's proficiency rate of 34.89% is 3.77 percentage points lower than the resident district's proficiency rate of 38.66%.
MCA Reading proficiency (district comparison)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year	The school's proficiency rate of 50.81% is 6.81 percentage points higher than the resident district's proficiency rate of 44.00%.
III: All Racial and Economic Achievement Gaps Between Students are Closed (As Measured by Grade Level Focus Proficiency, MCA Grades 3-10)		
III.A: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- FRP Focus Group State Comparison		
III.B: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- FRP Focus Group Resident District Comparison		

Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
MCA Math proficiency, Free/Reduced (state)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 39.75% is 10.99 percentage points higher than the state's proficiency rate of 28.77%. From the baseline years rate of 25.47% the school's proficiency increased to 39.75%, an increase of 14.29 percentage points.
MCA Reading proficiency, Free/Reduced (state)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 52.66% is 18.46 percentage points higher than the state's proficiency rate of 34.20%. From the baseline years rate of 37.52% the school's proficiency increased to 52.66%, an increase of 15.14 percentage points.
MCA Math proficiency, Free/Reduced (district)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 39.75% is 25.30 percentage points higher than the resident district's proficiency rate of 14.45%.
MCA Reading proficiency, Free/Reduced (district)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 52.66% is 32.76 percentage points higher than the resident district's proficiency rate of 19.90%.
III.C: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- EL Focus Group State Comparison		
III.D: Attain Grade-level Proficiency- EL Focus Group Resident District Comparison		
Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
MCA Math proficiency, English	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district	The school's proficiency rate of 17.24% is 3.18 percentage points higher than the state's

Learners (state)	average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	proficiency rate of 14.06%. From the baseline years rate of 20.77% the school's proficiency decreased to 17.24%, a decrease of 3.52 percentage points.
MCA Reading proficiency, English Learners (state)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 29.03% is 17.93 percentage points higher than the state's proficiency rate of 11.10%. From the baseline years rate of 28.07% the school's proficiency increased to 29.03%, a decrease of 0.96 percentage points.
MCA Math proficiency, English Learners (district)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 17.24% is 10.00 percentage points higher than the resident district's proficiency rate of 7.24%.
MCA Reading proficiency, English Learners (district)	The school's proficiency rate exceeds the state / resident district average by up to 10 percentage points AND/OR the school improves its proficiency rate by at least 10 percentage points from the baseline year.	The school's proficiency rate of 29.03% is 23.63 percentage points higher than the resident district's proficiency rate of 5.40%.
IV: All Students are Ready for Career and College (as Measured by Growth)		
IV.A: Meet or Exceed National Growth Norms- Students Below Grade Level Making High Growth		
IV.B: Meet or Exceed National Growth Norms- Students at or Above Grade Level Making Medium or High Growth		
Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
NWEA MAP Growth in Math, Grades 1-8	Students will achieve a combined growth of 120-150 percent of the	The school's combined average growth on NWEA MAP is 140.86%.

Students below grade level	average NWEA growth target for the students below grade level AND/OR improve from the baseline year by at least 20 percentage points as measured by the NWEA MAP Fall-Spring assessment.	From the baseline rate of 102.18%, the percent of growth made increased to 140.86%, an increase of 38.68 percentage points.
NWEA MAP Growth in Reading, Grades 1-8 Students below grade level	Students will achieve a combined growth of 120-150 percent of the average NWEA growth target for the students below grade level AND/OR improve from the baseline year by at least 20 percentage points as measured by the NWEA MAP Fall-Spring assessment.	The school's combined average growth on NWEA MAP is 129.49%. From the baseline rate of 87.96%, the percent of growth made increased to 129.49%, an increase of 41.53 percentage points.
Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
NWEA MAP Growth in Math, Grades 1-8 Students at or above grade level	Students will achieve a combined growth of 100-120 percent of the average NWEA growth target for the students at or above grade level AND/OR improve from the baseline year by at least 20 percentage points as measured by the NWEA MAP Fall-Spring assessment.	The school's combined average growth on NWEA MAP is 109.53%. From the baseline rate of 105.35%, the percent of growth made increased to 109.53%, an increase of 4.18 percentage points.
NWEA MAP Growth in Reading, Grades 1-8 Students at or above grade level	Students will achieve a combined growth of 100-120 percent of the average NWEA growth target for the students at or above grade level AND/OR improve from the baseline year by at least 20 percentage points as measured by the NWEA MAP Fall-Spring assessment.	The school's combined average growth on NWEA MAP is 95.04%. From the baseline rate of 91.93%, the percent of growth made increased to 95.04%, an increase of 3.12 percentage points.
V: The School Conditions Promote a Climate of Engagement		
Performance Rating	Required for Satisfactory	2024 Results and Analysis
V.A: Attendance Rates, Grades K-8	90-94% Attendance Rate	2023-24 attendance rate of 96.7% earns Exemplary rating

V.B: 5-Point Parent Satisfaction Survey	60-80% of parents agree (4) or strongly agree (5) that they are satisfied with the school.	parent satisfaction; earns Exemplary rating
V.C: Mobility, Grades K-8	10-15% of students transfer out of school after October 1	2023-24 mobility rate was 6.74%; earns Exemplary rating

Additional World’s Best Workforce Data

Universal Academy has a population, 96.3% of whom are categorized as Black or African American students. While this is not ideal from a diversity standpoint, it has allowed the school to understand and cater to the unique needs of the student body. As a large percentage of the school are first generation East African Immigrants, the school has developed relationships with the community to comprehensively support families and enhance student learning.

Universal Academy is implementing a thorough Literacy Plan. In all subject areas, Universal Academy strives to implement best-practices instructional strategies as described above in the section on Our Instructional Philosophy and Focus, so that all students can reach grade level standards.

By ensuring that students are literate and on track for education success from an early age, Universal Academy contributes to students’ lifelong learning success. Collaboration with students in developing their academic goals gives them a sense of ownership over their education and provides them with investment in their learning. This sense of ownership and personal investment will enable students to continue setting and achieving goals throughout their life. Early development of academic responsibility and an understanding of how a High School diploma will impact life-long success with the expectation that students can achieve great things with their lives will go a long way in ensuring students graduate from high school and pursue college or employment.

Parent Survey Results

A total of 60 parents participated in Universal Academy’s survey regarding satisfaction level at the school. The scale was a 1 to 5 rating with 1 being disappointing and 5 being exceptional. Of those who answered the survey 58 parents gave an exceptional rating (5). The other two surveys gave the school a 4 rating.

XI. Innovative Practices & Implementation

Instruction at Universal Academy is intentionally designed to begin the first day of school to meet student needs to ensure students meet Minnesota academic grade level standards. After a student is enrolled and before school begins, student assessment data is collected and formatted for analysis. The teachers analyze

this data and map the curriculum based on student performance relative to the state standards for each grade level during their two-week preparation time prior to the first day of school. Teachers identify and prioritize the student needs and strengths and set goals for the students based on the Minnesota state standards for each grade level for each subject area. According to the student needs, teachers start backward planning from the Minnesota standards. During the two weeks of professional development before school begins, the teachers are trained to use a pacing guide and backward planning to plan instruction to ensure that students remain on track to meet the Minnesota Academic Standards. Then the teachers design specific interventions to meet student needs. These are considered Tier One interventions because teachers design them to be implemented during whole class instruction. Students receive 120 minutes of daily reading instruction and 120 minutes of math in the general education setting. Students who are at risk for failure in reading or math as identified by the results of the assessments that students take prior to the first day of school receive additional tiered interventions. Students identified as needing additional intervention in Tier II receive the same instruction as Tier I but receive an additional 30- minute block in reading or math in small homogeneous groups for 6 to 8 weeks. Students identified as needing additional intervention beyond Tiers I and II, receive the same instruction as Tier I, but receive 2 additional 30- minute instructional blocks with one-on-one instruction for the duration of the 6 to 8 weeks. Every six weeks student academic performance data is analyzed, and progress monitored to ensure that the intervention is accelerating learning for each student to meet the grade level standards.

Teachers clearly communicate to each student his or her areas of strength and needs, and then identify goals, and strategies for reaching the goals. In addition, students also learn to examine their own work to identify strengths and needs to set goals and monitor their progress toward reaching their goals. According to John Hattie's *Visible Learning A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (2009), the strategies that have the greatest measurable effect on student learning include 1) student self-assessment/self-grading, 2) data-driven instruction, 3) response to intervention, 4) providing formative assessments, 5) teacher clarity, and 6) feedback. Universal Academy ensures teachers and students get prompt, specific feedback on learning with time focused on analyzing and using the data each week to effectively meet student needs and that teachers receive job- embedded professional development for effectively implementing specific instructional best practices that they implement from *Teach Like a Champion* and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). In addition to utilizing the principles of data-driven instruction, Response to Intervention, and job embedded professional development in the use of teaching techniques from *Teach Like a Champion* and from SIOP.

Peer study visits are organized in a train-the-trainer model where teacher leaders who participate in the site visit will train the other teachers and paraprofessionals at Universal Academy. The teacher leaders provide leadership in their grade level teams to monitor the impact of the implementation of the

strategy on student learning so that teachers can observe whether the adjustments to instruction are accelerating student learning. There are also peer visits every quarter: each teacher is required to visit another teacher's class, and comment on positive aspects of instruction. This promotes teacher cooperation and learning from each other to build an effective academic culture.

Consistency of quality instruction across all classrooms is also supported through quarterly learning walks carried out by school administrators; the quarterly learning walk will focus on a particular aspect of instruction such as small group processes, student engagement, or Whiteboard configuration including visible learning targets. There is also an annual learning walk carried out by the Authorizer, where other NEO authorized school leaders and personnel from NEO visit UACS to observe particular aspects of classroom operations, then provide feedback.

Universal Academy's schedule incorporates half-days for students on Fridays throughout the school year. Students in K-1 spend an hour in Direct Instruction for reading. All students participate in academic classes and activities, such as quizzes in reading, writing, spelling practice, and math, and are dismissed early. Teachers remain for professional development on Friday afternoons, based on pre-planned guidelines for the whole year, with revisions to the schedule as needed depending on developments as the year progresses.

Parent Empowerment continues to be critical at Universal Academy, though most parents lack capacity to directly support their students' learning due to language barriers and lack of educational attainment themselves. There is a parent orientation in August before school starts, including different events for new and returning parents. During this orientation we discuss the World's Best Workforce. Also, during the school year, at least 8 Parent Empowerment Nights are held the second Thursday of each month. Topics addressed included:

- How parents can help their children / academic resources that are available for support
- Online security / how to protect your children from cyber-bullying
- Special education and how it can benefit students (also covering RTI / intervention strategies used at Universal Academy)
- English Learner supports – what the school does and how the family can support its students by keeping students' literacy strong in their native language
- Universal Academy's grading system
- Uniforms, school-family communication and conferences
- Importance of school attendance
- Resources available for families
- Ideas for family schedules and homework routines to support student success
- Health and wellness to include nutrition, mental health, and fitness routines

To publicize parent nights, notice is sent out through weekly newsletters distributed on Wednesdays, and there is a robo-call and text message to all parents. In addition, Universal Academy staff make in-person calls to families of students who are at-risk to request that their parents attend the Parent Empowerment Nights.

XII. Instructional Program and Curriculum

Universal Academy's overall instructional program and practices are described below, followed by a summary of curriculum and instructional practices designed around five areas of coaching which are being utilized to help all teachers succeed in supporting their students and ensuring student progress in all areas. Finally, there is a brief discussion of successes and challenges the school experienced during 2023-24.

Goals and benchmarks for instruction and student achievement for all student subgroups.

Seventy-five percent continuously enrolled students will demonstrate at least one year's progress on NWEA Growth measures.

Process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards.

Students are assessed weekly, monthly, and by NWEA tests three times yearly and MCA tests once yearly. All of this data is analyzed by teaching staff to evaluate student progress.

Process to review and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum.

Universal Academy utilizes standards modelled from Q-Comp to evaluate teachers and has applied to join Q-Comp in the future. The curriculum will be evaluated based on teacher feedback, student progress, and parent satisfaction.

Remediation and acceleration practices or programming.

As 80% of the student body are English Learners, UACS does not have a remediation program. Students are given additional supports to support their learning until they no longer need them. Students with a firmer grasp on the curriculum are given more challenging coursework to complete.

Special Education Program

The charter school complies with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education as follows: Universal Academy welcomes and enrolls students regardless of any disabilities or learning challenges. Universal Academy contracts with Designs for Learning for appropriately licensed Director of Special Education, School Psychologist, and related services personnel. Universal Academy employs or contracts with appropriately licensed special education teachers and specialists.

Universal Academy appropriately serves students with IEPs in the least restrictive environment by scheduling time for the Special Education Teacher to teach alongside the classroom teachers and train the classroom teachers on the methods for providing classroom adaptations, accommodations, and modifications. In addition, the Special Education Teacher takes part in the weekly professional learning community in order to promote collaboration among all teachers in order to ensure student inclusion in classroom instruction.

The Child Find process is implemented as follows. Universal Academy's Child Find Process includes collecting data through assessments as well as indirect means, including assessing a child's academic, gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language skills, vision, and cognitive skills. Universal Academy's Child Find Process is designed to facilitate discussion, collaboration, problem solving, and the sharing related to the delivery of instruction and behavior management. School staff, parents, and /or agency representatives have the right to refer the students to the Child Find Team (RtI team) with appropriate evidence, as determined by our contracted Special Education Director and the team.

The RtI Team ensures that interventions are identified and documented, and progress is monitored. After intensive intervention and evaluation (if necessary), final identification of the student will occur and, if appropriate, an IEP will be developed. In developing IEP's Universal Academy seeks to provide instruction in the least restrictive environment. Special Education teachers teach alongside classroom teachers to model effective strategies for ensuring that all students have instruction on grade level standards and with school wide strategies. In addition, Special Education teachers are part of the weekly, interdisciplinary grade level cluster Professional Learning Communities where they share effective strategies, learn from other teachers and monitor progress with school wide strategies.

English Learner Program

All incoming and returning students take the Home Language Questionnaire upon enrollment or at the beginning of each school year. Students whose families identify as speaking a different language at home either take a WIDA test or their WIDA record is requested from their prior school. During the 2022-23 school year, 56% of the student body was identified as EL, as recorded by the primary language spoken in the home.

Pull out and push in support is offered to students who need more intensive instruction in the English language. SIOP is a research-based approach to improving access to content for English learners, as noted above. SIOP strategies are utilized by all general education teachers in their lesson planning and instruction.

Universal Academy's writing curriculum by Steve Dunn is tailored to provide specific support for English Language Learners. The strategies are used across subject areas to provide support with word choice, phonics, academic vocabulary, and creativity.

Universal Academy contracts with outside experts for ongoing training for teachers in the areas of SIOP and use of WIDA resources and teachers will learn to monitor their progress with implementing the SIOP strategies in the weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on Fridays. The leadership team and the external expert conduct ongoing teacher observations to provide ongoing feedback and monitor student progress to ensure that the SIOP strategies are implemented effectively.

The curriculum and instructional practices used focus on fostering a positive classroom environment, structured instructional methods, and data-driven teaching strategies.

1. **Classroom Environment:** Teacher presence is established through tone, body language, and attitude, creating focus, inspiration, and community. Greeting students and utilizing word walls enhance connection and resources for learning. Professionalism and designated classroom stations further contribute to a structured environment. We use Responsive Classroom to support the class environment.
2. **Instructional Procedures:** Lessons follow the "I Do, We Do, You Do" model, emphasizing gradual release of responsibility to students. Small group instruction is used to target different student needs, starting with the highest-needs group.
3. **Curriculum:** A designated curriculum for reading, math, and writing is provided, along with science for grades 3-5. Lesson plans must be completed in advance, and pacing guides help ensure all material is covered by year's end.
4. **Assessment and Feedback:** Weekly quizzes and trackers are used to assess student progress. Data meetings and data days help teachers adjust lesson plans and address students who need additional support or challenge.
5. **Testing and Growth:** Students take the NWEA and MCA tests to track growth and achievement. Results are analyzed to guide instruction and shared with parents during conferences.

Successes of the Universal Academy program during 2023-24 included the following:

- Teacher/Parent communication is essential to maintaining students' learning throughout the year. This was facilitated during 2023-24 by creating WhatsApp chat groups for classes and using the SeeSaw app to translate texts from English into Somali, successfully breaking down the language barrier. Also, parent empowerment nights continued during 2023-24 in person. Universal Academy benefited from high attendance at parent nights.
- Universal Academy continued to focus on building a positive school culture through k-6th grade Monday Morning Meeting, and 7-9th grade Friday Morning Meetings. These large weekly assemblies focus on Character Education at the appropriate age level, include student and staff shout outs for positive reinforcement, and go over weekly calendar events and classroom highlights. These meetings are a fantastic way to build school community and make sure that everyone is on the same page.

- *Data-meetings among teachers and administration continued to be successful and beneficial. These weekly meetings helped staff stay current on student successes and challenges, so that interventions could be relevant and rigorous. They helped staff analyze data together and decide the best path for reteach and retest when needed.*
- Parent satisfaction remained high, as seen in Parent Survey results as well as communicated from parents to staff. Parent Empowerment Meetings returning to in person was a huge success. Parents enjoyed coming safely into the building and seeing staff as well as the opportunity to share a meal with admin and discuss their student's progress.
- This past year we increased the instructional time for math class in order for teachers to differentiate for student needs and to work with small groups.
- Our 10th grade students traveled to Morocco to study the Arabic language. They attended schools where the students were learning English. This experience allowed our students to be immersed in the Arabic language, help others learn English and share cultural experiences.

Challenges

Challenges which the Universal Academy program continues to address include the following:

- Over half of the students Universal Academy serves are below grade level in basic academic skills upon entering the school. The program is designed to serve these students, and seeks to build their academic skills while supporting language acquisition at the same time, but this remains challenging.
- Parents have difficulty helping students academically due to language barriers, low educational achievement themselves, and lack of knowledge of the American educational system. Moreover, most students don't go directly home after school but go to daycare at various sites, often staying late into the evening as parents are working. Students may lose items sent home from school, and the daycare sites are typically not conducive to doing homework.
- Effectively implementing technology use at home has continued to be a struggle for UACS. Parents access to effective internet and quality devices continues to be a challenge.
- Attracting and recruiting high-quality, experienced teachers remains a struggle for UACS. Recruitment and retention of Title I and EL teachers is particularly challenging. This seemed to be a common occurrence for schools across Minneapolis.
- Regulating issues caused by Social Media use is becoming more of a challenge for UACS. Students are bringing their social media issues to school, and it is causing more arguments and challenges in the classroom than in years past. UACS has a strict no phone policy so we do not see those issues coming from students using their phones in school, only from issues after school hours that they bring back up when they see each other. Students are staying up late and using their phones more than in the past and we hear this as a complaint from parents as well.

- The widespread use of after school daycares is proving to be a challenge for UACS families. A good amount of students spend a long time after school at daycare where they may not have adequate space to complete homework, rest, and effectively communicate with their peers. There are many times that we discover that our students who are struggling behaviorally or academically are students who spend their entire afternoon and evening at daycare and don't return home until bedtime.
- The lack of affordable stable housing in the area has been a struggle for our families. This has created a mobility issue with our students. Mobility in our student population makes it hard to make long-term growth with students.
- Universal Academy has an extensive Child Find process, however, we find that parents find a stigma related to the process and Individualized Education Plans. Due to this stigma families are declining services for their students, which limits the schools ability to provide comprehensive services for these students.

School Calendar

During the 2023-24 school year, UACS served students in grades pK-10. Classes operated for 174 days, and 1148.25 hours¹. A snapshot of the school's school year calendar that includes total annual instructional days is included as Attachment 1.

XIII. Equitable Distribution of Diverse, Effective, and In-field Teachers

Universal Academy strives to recruit and retain diverse, effective, and appropriately licensed teachers. The school seeks teachers who are committed to serving our particular student population, and provides professional development to support all teachers in improving their practice. For a single-site charter school, the issue of distribution of teachers does not apply as it would in a school district operating multiple schools.

XIV. Future Plans







- 1) Universal Academy is in the process of expanding. Grade 10 was added for the 2023-24 school year, juniors will be served beginning 2024-25, and the school will graduate its first class of seniors in the spring of 2026.

¹ This calculation is based on 143 regular learning days and 31 Fridays; regular days include 7 hours, Fridays 4.75 hours.

- 2) Universal Academy has an extensive waitlist estimated to be around 800 students. We hope to continue to seek expansion opportunities to serve these families while not impacting our educational effectiveness for our current families.

Attachment 1: School Calendar

2023-2024 Universal Academy Charter School Calendar

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