



# **Executive Summary**

**Iroquois High**

**Jefferson County**

Christopher Perkins, Principal  
4615 Taylor Blvd  
Louisville, KY 40215

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	6
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	10
Additional Information .....	13

### Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

The story of Iroquois must begin with our students.

Meet Muhammed. Muhammed grew up in the shadows of militant detention camps of Somalia. He and his family moved from village to village in an attempt to evade the violence plaguing so many families in the camps and trying to find enough food to survive. After years of hiding and waiting, Muhammed and his mother were taken in through a refugee ministry and brought to the U.S. His family settled in the Iroquois neighborhood. Young Muhammed walked into Iroquois High School, which was the first school he had been to in his life, and didn't speak a word of English. He took advantage of his newly found freedom and every academic opportunity he could involve himself with through the English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) program. Three years later, Muhammed was elected Senior Class president and received a scholarship to the University of Louisville.

Meet Sara. Sara began her high school experience at, what most would consider, a high performing school in our community. Sara grew up with an alcoholic mother and a revolving door of abusive "fatherly" figures. Sara did her best to compartmentalize her abusive home life and her high achieving aspirations for her academics, but the emotional and physical toll of trying to overcome adversity while hiding it from everyone eventually impacted her school performance. Sara's attendance became sporadic; her classroom focus began to dissolve; and her hope for a bright future drifted further away each time she came home. At the end of her Freshman year, with only half the required credits needed to be promoted to sophomore status, Sara was exited from the Blue-Ribbon school and encouraged to enroll in her neighborhood school. Sara entered Iroquois High School as a "Freshman repeater" and was quickly adopted by her teachers and peers. She was plugged-in with the credit recovery program at Iroquois and got back on track for graduation. Sara joined the soccer team and helped to establish and lead the Pep Club. Sara graduated in the top ten percent of her class and received a scholarship to Western Kentucky University.

Meet Demarcus. Demarcus has lived in four foster homes and has had several instances where he has been involved with the juvenile justice system. Demarcus could not go home in the afternoons until his mom's ex-boyfriend (with whom he lived) got home to remove the padlock on the front door. With nothing to do after school, Demarcus started running around with a neighborhood gang. He began selling drugs to earn some money for his mom who, eventually lost custody of him due to her inability to provide a stable home for the family. An assistant principal, a coach, and a security guard took him under their wings to serve as mentors, role models, and too often, a parental figure. Demarcus found his home at Iroquois and for three and a half years, took to extended school services and basketball instead of taking to the streets of inner city Louisville. The only "run-in" with the law Demarcus has seen in the last two years occurred when he and the school resource office partnered together to serve the community during the annual "Mayor's Give-A-Day" community service project. Demarcus graduated in May, meeting all of his college-ready benchmarks. He enrolled at Jefferson Community and Technical College in August of this year to study Chemistry.

What has made these three students successful? Why is it that at Iroquois, time and time again, students from the toughest situations are successful? The answer is resilience; resilience from the students and resilience from a dedicated staff. Muhammed, Sara, and Demarcus are tough. They are going to survive because they have the grit to make it happen. The staff at Iroquois has a mission to work with these tough students to find the vulnerable boy or girl that is underneath the exterior, and to support that student to become the adult that reaches

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

his or her full potential to be an active citizen of our community. This combination of students who have a will to be successful and staff who demand it is creating a culture where our mission and vision can be a reality.

Muhammed, Sara, and Demarcus are not the exceptions at Iroquois. They are typical. Of the approximate 1200 students, 437 are either receiving special education services or are receiving English-as-a-Second Language services. Iroquois embraces the diversity and creativity of both the staff and students as a strength and capitalizes on it. How did Iroquois become the home for the most diverse student body in the state? Let's look at some history.

Iroquois High School is an urban high school, located approximately 5 miles south from the heart of downtown Louisville. The school sits at the epicenter of several Louisville landmarks: Churchill Downs; the architecturally celebrated "Old Louisville"; the University of Louisville; Frederick Law Olmstead-designed Iroquois Park; the Louisville Zoo; the infamous Waverly Hills Sanitarium; the Ford Motor Truck Plant; the Louisville International Airport and UPS. Unfortunately, social circumstance has significantly limited most of our students' exposure to our community's rich history. Many of our students have rarely (if ever) experienced life beyond the poverty in which they have been immersed since birth. Our school community and our community at large are metaphorically worlds apart.

The odyssey of Iroquois began in August of 1965 when Gottschalk Junior High School was converted into Iroquois High School. The conversion was a result of (what was then) an affluent community's demand for a new school to be built to in their own neighborhood and to prepare their teenage children for college and the growing needs of the Louisville workforce. When the doors first opened in August of 1965, our school served a predominantly upper-middle class student body, most of whom came from a two-parent homes. Iroquois sits directly beside Southern Parkway, the main thoroughfare connecting Downtown Louisville to the Iroquois Park Area, which is still lined with some of the oldest, largest, and most beautiful homes that (at the time) belonged to doctors, lawyers, engineers, successful business executives, and college professors.

From the late 1980s to the early 2000s the culture of the neighboring community changed, affecting the demographics of the school. The concentration of poverty grew throughout the area surrounding Iroquois. The affluent families moved toward the east end of the county, while the metropolitan developers built and expanded Section 8 low-income rental housing in the school's vicinity. In addition to the influx of poverty, an increase in the cultural diversity, brought forth by the refugee support in the community, increased exponentially. Louisville is nationally known for the plethora of refugee services provided for the community to serve the large influx of immigrants. Louisville's foreign-born population has grown 242% since 2000; many of these immigrants have settled in the Iroquois community. Remember Muhammed? When he came to Louisville with his mom, they lived in the Americana Community filled with African-born immigrants near the airport. There were ten relatives living in a two bedroom apartment. The family was tight-knit and supported each other emotionally and financially as much as they could. Many of them worked at menial jobs in hotels and supermarkets, and because the demand for employment fluctuates, there were tough times throughout the year.

The rapidly changing community demographics, the expansion of magnet/traditional schools and their selective enrollment criteria (which is not shared by all JCPS schools), and the instructional inconsistency resulting from a rapid and consistent turnover of principals and teachers created a fragile learning environment that was not prepared to withstand the increasing presence of school accountability brought forth through the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

In the fall of 2010, KCCT state test scores were released to the public and, for the fourth consecutive year, Iroquois failed to meet adequate yearly progress. Our school was then labeled a "Persistently Low Achieving" School (PLA). Based on state accountability measures, it was hard to argue with the "low achieving" moniker. Our staff at Iroquois was devastated by it, as it completely overshadowed the dedication and commitment we had all invested into our school. To add insult to injury, we were also labeled by local media as a "drop-out factory" due to a consistently low graduation rate. The staff had to work through their personal devastation. They knew there were good things happening at their school but they also knew that they needed to turn some of the numbers around so that everyone could see the progress that most

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

students were making.

In March 2011, the JCPS Board of Education elected to adopt the "Restaffing Model" for Iroquois' turnaround framework. Our newly appointed principal, Chris Perkins, had served as an assistant principal at Iroquois for five years prior to the Leadership Assessment. His first challenge was interviewing the entire certified and instructional support staff to meet the requirements of the restaffing model (50% of the staff had to be removed). His second priority was interviewing over 200 potential candidates for all of the vacant positions resulting from the overstaffed employees. As a result, over 30 new teachers were hired, with more than 20 of them being first year teachers. The administrative staff was also rebuilt, with the addition of three first-year assistant principals and a counselor, instructional coach, and CCR resource interventionist, also all in their first year. The state adopted a new curriculum, the Kentucky Core Academic Standards, to align with the Common Core State Standards. With a young and inexperienced staff, Iroquois was tasked with integrating the KCAS curriculum with the ACT Quality Core Curriculum to prepare students for the new End-of-Course examinations for the Next Generation of Learners Accountability model, as well as to prepare them for the ACT. These changes in school personnel and curriculum occurred in the midst of district restructuring implemented as a result of newly hired superintendent Dr. Donna Hargens, who organized district support into K-12 achievement areas, rather than grades served. Instead of all high school administrators reporting to a high school assistant superintendent at the district, Iroquois leadership now worked with a newly appointed Assistant Superintendent, who oversees management and improvement in elementary, middle, and high schools within our regional cluster.

While adjusting to the impact of all the changes detailed above, Iroquois has been evolving into one of the most diverse and multicultural schools in the state. Students engage in daily course work that strengthens their mind and character. Iroquois High School currently serves 1205 students, which has increased from 1003 (2010-2011). Our students are comprised of 31.3% Caucasian (compared to JCPS-49.2%); 51.6% African American (JCPS-36.1%); 6.8% Hispanic (JCPS-8.2%); 8.8% Asian (JCPS-3.4%); 2.5% Other (JCPS-3.2%).

Iroquois has the largest population of students (212) with disabilities (Iroquois has 18.4% compared to the JCPS high school average 9.7%) ranging from Mild-mental Disabilities (64), Other-Health Impairment (54), Specific Learning Disability (43), Functional-Mental Disability (14), Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (25), Multiple Disabilities (5), Autism (6), Speech Impairment (1).

Iroquois is also home to more than 314 students (27.5%) that speak English as a second language (ESL) and in 2014, we added an International Academy to serve the needs our community for ESL students with Significantly Interrupted (or Zero) Formal Education (SIFE). These students speak over 27 languages representing as many ethnicities and nationalities. Approximately 150 ESL students (12% of the school) come to us, illiterate in their own native language.

While we genuinely embrace the diverse needs of our students, we are presented with unique challenges and obstacles that are not experienced in such magnitude at other schools in our district. The effects of poverty cannot be overlooked. The median household income for our zip code is \$26,888.00. The district average number of students receiving free/reduced lunch is 63%, while Iroquois serves F/R lunch to 91% of our students. This number has grown steadily, each year since 2005 (74%). Last year, we served 177 homeless students. We have the 3rd lowest stability rate (the number of students who finish a school year and enroll at the same school the following year compared to the total finishing at that school) among all comprehensive high schools in our district.

While often presented with challenges, Iroquois is ripe with opportunities. Our staff is passionate about our commitment to teach our students the thinking, communication and social skills that are vital to success beyond high school. Although we still have a relatively young and inexperienced staff, turnover has continued to decline each year since 2011. We have a faculty of exactly 100 certified educators. It deserves to be noted that since the first Leadership Audit in 2011, only nine core-content teachers, 14 elective teachers, and one ECE teacher are still on staff (24 out of 100 certified employees). That means that 75% of our staff has been hired during this three and a half year turnaround journey. Since 2011, we have averaged nine KTIP teacher interns each year. Sustainability continues to present challenges to our efforts when, each year we must start over to indoctrinate our new teachers and administrators. This means we must

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

continually communicate and support our new staff about the shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning at Iroquois. Our staff is considered 100% highly qualified. 40.4% hold a Masters Degree and 30.8% hold a Rank 1. We are proud that many of the staff who leave us have received promotions. In the past few months, we had an AP leave to pursue the dream of being an elementary school principal, another AP is now the district ESL Director, our CART was just selected as an AP at a local elementary school and a teacher is now a behavior coach at a neighboring school. The effective programs and systems that we are putting in place make our employees good prospects for other jobs and they have learned it all here.

In the last two years, we have also experienced significant turnover in our administrative positions; seven brand-new assistant principals have been hired into three different positions. Five counselors have filled and vacated three counseling positions. Only the principal and one counselor were here for the second leadership diagnostic in 2013. In four years, we have had four different College & Career Readiness Assessment and Intervention Coordinator (CCRC) to supervise and lead our efforts to get all students ready for college and career.

Challenges are nothing new to our school and our community, but we continue to adapt and overcome because we believe in our mission: Building hope for each child by providing pathways to success at the next level. Remember Demarcus? His mother had been in jail several times throughout his childhood and during those periods he had been passed from grandmothers, to aunts, to foster homes to finally landing in a home with his mom's ex-boyfriend. When his mother was out of jail, she tried to re-engage in he and his brother's lives, but often the challenges that she faced were overwhelming. Demarcus could have easily been a statistic by dropping out and landing in jail, but he did not. The staff at Iroquois knows and embraces that students like Demarcus can and do make it. Their demands of him, which were a constant balance of coaxing and pushing, would not allow him to make excuses. He is prepared for success at the next level because of the hope instilled in him at Iroquois.

## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Our purpose is defined by our mission statement, "Building hope for each child by providing pathways to success at the next level." Simply put, it is the reason we do what we do; it is why we serve the student population at our school. Many of us have experienced career-defining moments where we were confronted with the harsh reality that we genuinely may be the ONLY HOPE many of our students have for a better future. We recognize that many of our students come to us with little-to-no hope of ever realizing a brighter reality for their futures. We also recognized early on, that Iroquois will never be a "one-size-fits-all" type of school and that each student isn't just a unique child, but also had unique needs. We are fully aware that it is never enough to simply give a student a picture of their destination, but that we have to map and plot a unique pathway for them to get there.

Let's go back to Muhammed that you met earlier. When Muhammed and his mother moved to Louisville, his mother had to work many hours. Muhammed was a dedicated student, but neither him nor his family had any idea how to navigate a huge educational system. His ESL teacher saw his potential and worked with him to complete homework, fill out college applications, and complete scholarship forms. Muhammed's needs, however, were completely different than Demarcus's. One of the football coaches knew that Demarcus needed an adult to spend time with him to set some limits. This coach and his family took time to support Demarcus both during and after school to ensure that he had structures in his life to allow him to be on the right path.

Both our mission and vision statements reference our overarching objective to prepare students for success beyond high school (e.g., "providing pathways to success at the next level" and "each graduate will be college and career ready"). We all believe that the true measure of success for a child is ultimately how successful he/she becomes after we have taught, coached, mentored, and prepared them. For example, if a student passes Freshman English because he/she is a nice child, participates compliantly in class, and achieves the bare minimum academically, but then the student fails his/her Sophomore English class because of increased instructional rigor, then we have, ultimately failed that child. We intentionally work to set students up for "next-level success." These are statements of commitment that we review, reflect upon, and recommit to each year.

The creation of an INITIAL vision statement for Iroquois was written by the instructional leadership team in the immediate wake of our 2011 Leadership Assessment deficiencies being shared, "At Iroquois, we will serve our diverse student body and community with high expectations by building citizenship and integrity. We will function as a team of professional learning communities, engaging each student through standards-based, rigorous instruction. We will monitor and assess for learning, ensuring that each child succeeds, in a safe and student-centered learning environment."

Our leadership team REVISED the vision statement in 2012. With our purpose defined through our mission statement and a confident vision of where we wanted to take our school, we committed to a clearly defined direction. Our vision statement proclaims the "ideal Iroquois" towards which we continue to make strides, "Through collaborative ownership, each Iroquois graduate will be college and career ready; each stakeholder will engage in cultivating student citizenship; each classroom will be defined by rigorous instruction and proficient learning." Everything we value is defined through our vision statement. In 2012, we realigned our efforts into four "Big Rock Turnaround" initiatives. We rebranded them as our Focus Teams (Rigorous Instruction & Proficient Learning; Stakeholder Engagement; Citizenship; College & Career Readiness). If you re-read our vision statement, you will see the obvious correlation to our focus areas.



## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

Our vision statement begins with the phrase "through collaborative ownership" and thus everything we embark upon, we do as a team. We value data-driven collaboration (e.g., "collaborative ownership"). With the goal of continuous improvement, our collaborative teams meet by horizontal course alignment (grade-level and content specific), vertical course alignment (department-wide content across all grade levels), by leadership teams (Administration, SBDM, Department Chairs, Instructional Leadership Team, CCR Team) , and by Focus Teams (Program Review Teams, Stakeholder Engagement Team, Positive Behavior Intervention Support & Student Response Team, Technology Team, Advisor/Advisee Team, RTI Team). All of our teams function as professional learning communities (PLCs) and formally collaborate at least once per month to review plans, analyze data, and revise next steps for improvement. We own our successes and our failures.

We strive to ensure that students engage in daily course work that strengthens their mind and character. We continue to accept our challenges and face our realities, knowing that higher classroom expectations will ultimately yield higher student achievement. We believe that if and when all of our classrooms are consistently defined by the elements of rigorous instruction, we will see an increase in proficient and distinguished learning. We are working fervently to increase the frequency and consistency of higher levels of rigor in our classrooms, but we are humble enough to acknowledge the barriers we must overcome to get there. Young and inexperienced teachers are lacking an "instructional toolbox" that most educators develop over time, yet they are genuinely ready to add to their repertoire. That being said, we are committed to supporting our classroom teachers with the intent to improve instruction and increase student learning through the creation of challenging lessons and common formative assessments; ensuring that both their instructional plans and assessments align to the appropriate curriculum standards.

The first three years of turnaround, we experimented with four or five different platforms for Classroom Walk-throughs (also referred to as Learning Walks). This year, however, the instructional leadership team and the principal were introduced to a book by Sean Cain, called The Fundamental Five that looked at the common elements of consistent and effective classroom instruction through the lens of five fundamental practices (Framing the Lesson, Providing Reinforcement and Recognition, Working in the Power Zone, Frequent, Small-Group, Purposeful Talk, and Critical Writing). This instructional framework was shared with the Instructional Leadership Team and agreed upon as the focus that Iroquois needed to ensure our instructional alignment. To support this instructional point of view, the ILT agreed to purchase a copy of the book for each faculty member, as well as the web-based, walk-through platform by Lead Your School called "PowerWalks. " The walk-through data gathered throughout the 14-15 school year is aligned with the Fundamental 5 instructional practices and the data gathered and used to inform professional development serves as a liaison between theory and practice. School leaders use data to monitor progress and make informed decisions about master scheduling, intervention offerings, staffing assignments, financial allocations, instructional needs, professional development needs and offerings... all to increase academic proficiency.

Regarding students, we are intentional about not making broad statements about "all kids" or "every student"; we value each child. Teachers and PLCs work to differentiate instruction for the unique needs of each child. We also believe students must have multiple opportunities to demonstrate success. Several of our teachers have implemented standards-based grading. This grading philosophy is a more accurate representation of what part of the content a student knows and allows students multiple opportunities to practice and improve upon content acquisition prior to a final grade being reported. We offer a multitude of "Extended School Day Services" each day to meet the Tier II/III intervention needs of our students. We provide weekly, embedded flexible interventions to students every Thursday for students needing Tier II core-content remediation and enrichments to those who don't.

We also provide a plethora of Special Education Services as warranted through our 220+ students' IEP accommodations. We offer mainstream classes, collaborative co-teaching classes, and resource (self-contained) classes to meet the unique learning needs of our students. We provide dynamic support to our Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL) including language support with Bilingual Associate Instructors, Foundational language acquisition skills, social and emotional support to assist with cultural changes, etc.

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

We also offer Advance Program, Honors Program, Advance Placement, and Dual Credit classes for several of our accelerated learners. We know the only way to fulfill our mission is to have high expectations for ourselves as educators and for our students. We believe we can and will build hope for each child by providing pathways to success at the next level.

We believe our school has the responsibility of meeting several non-academic needs of students. Acknowledging the concentration of poverty in our school community, we have the responsibility of providing services, programs, and support to meet several needs of our students. Poverty also increases the multitude of "at-risk" indicators of single income homes, single parent homes, and low education attainment of parents. That being said, we recognize that it is our school's responsibility to work harder than other schools may have to in order to meet the needs of our students. Two of our nine Focus teams have been empowered to increase stakeholder engagement. One team has been charged with raising student and staff engagement factors like improving daily attendance, extracurricular involvement, and the sense of unity and pride, etc. Another team has focused their energies on increasing family and community engagement activities like increasing participants who volunteer, mentor, and advocate for our students. Initially, the priority was to increase presence/involvement in the school and community, but it has evolved into purposefully aligning our needs with specific activities to progress towards a commonly agreed upon objective.

We connect with our students through a variety of offerings. Advisory groups meet every Wednesday where every student is paired with an Advisor (12-17 students per adult). These Advisory/Advisee meetings provide students a forum to build relationships to with an adult who advocates for their learning. Our Youth Service Center coordinates services designed to meet students' physical, social, and emotional needs in a partnership with the student's family. We also host an In-house Community School that offers classes/activities for parents, students, and community members. We offer student school-to-career support through our Louisville Education Employment Partnership (LEEP) as well as Transition Services for all of our Low-Incident (Functional-Mental Disabilities) students. We also work in collaboration with a Home-School Coordinator who facilitates family involvement when circumstances may prevent the family from being present at school for collaborative conversations.

Career and Technical Education Magnet Academy is a smaller learning community that offers a multitude of career and technical classes that provide students pathway to an immediate, sustainable career upon graduation in the fields of Plumbing, HVAC, Welding, Carpentry, Electricity, Masonry, Robotic, and Engineering/ Architecture. We also offer multiple elective courses, clubs, activities, and sports that provide students ongoing opportunities to engage in the school community and develop their interests.

To facilitate the transition from middle school to high school we provide a Freshman Academy (another smaller learning community) for all incoming freshmen. The F.A strives to assist our 9th grade students with adapting and acclimating to higher rigor and standards-based instruction to prepare them for college and career readiness. In addition to a more structured learning environment, the Freshman Academy also provides greater capacity for social and emotional transitioning into high school. One of the changes we have experienced in the past two years, stems from the influx of students from our non-feeder schools. In 2012, nearly 75% of our incoming freshmen came from either Olmstead North Academy (Priority School) or Olmstead South Academy (Focus School). Now we are only receiving less than 50% of our freshmen from the Olmstead middle schools. Drawing from so many schools that are spread across our city, has impeded our sense of community that was developed in vertical collaboration with our neighboring feeder schools over the last four years. This has realigned our efforts in the Freshman Academy to ensure that efforts are embedded into every classroom to indoctrinate our 9th grade students into values surrounding respect, pride, responsibility and integrity.

Our teachers are overwhelmed but passionate; they are inexperienced but coachable; they are exhausted, but committed. Our teachers are receptive to redefining the age-old paradigms of effective classroom instruction, but struggle with the ever-present realities of maintaining a conducive learning environment where respect, responsibility, pride, and integrity have not been consistently demonstrated by all of our students. Too often, we are forced to sacrifice academic instruction at the expense teaching social skills and code switching. As a result of these realities, we have redefined our student "discipline" framework to include a Student-Teacher Response Team (SRT) that reviews behavior and culture/climate data to target specific intervention efforts to address students, teachers and school community needs. We also

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

have a Positive Behavior Intervention Support Team (PBIS) to look at promoting and recognizing a positive culture and higher expectations for student achievement (academic and non-academic).

In supporting and connecting with our students, one of our most important overall objectives is to promote and immerse all stakeholders in the ideal of Iroquois Citizenship. We impress upon our students and families that we are not just "tourists or visitors" in this Iroquois school community; we are Citizens of Iroquois. As citizens, we have a moral obligation to contribute to our success, protect our mission, and defend against our challenges. That element of our vision statement is echoed throughout our school and riddled throughout our school literature and media. We often quote Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book" to capture the essence of our collaborative efforts, engage stakeholders and promote citizenship... "For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." It just so happens that our school mascot is a wolf. We work together and we own our results, whether they be successes or failures.

These are all the ways we are committed to developing, implementing, and improving upon an actionable plan to achieve our mission and create our vision for Iroquois. Because of this mission, and the realization of our vision, Muhammed has gone from the detention camps in Somalia, through the halls and classrooms at Iroquois, and is now a Communications major at Eastern Kentucky University.

## Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

Despite the changes and challenges described in the previous narratives, we continue to see success and improvement in all aspects of our school. Our overall index has increased from 34.1 to 58.5 in two years, which means we have exceeded our AMO for two consecutive years. Additionally, we have moved from the 1st percentile to the 15th percentile in two years. We have met 2 of the 3 requirements to progress from a priority school, as determined by the KDE school report, to a Progressing School, and only missed the graduation rate requirement by half a percentage point, which equates to one student.

On the most recent school report card, we are one of only two JCPS schools to have shown growth in 5 of 6 K-PREP achievement and gap accountability indexes, and would have shown growth in all six if scores from "track-back" students at non-A1 schools had not been applied to our accountability. This means that for the students who attend our school every academic exam saw increased levels of proficient/distinguished performances last year.

How did we do this? Ask Mr. Hammond. Mr. Hammond completed his student-teaching with one of our most veteran teachers, an eighth-year Social Studies department chair, who saw promise in Mr. Hammond's content knowledge, enthusiasm, and connection with kids. When Mr. Hammond graduated and started looking for jobs, he looked no farther than Iroquois. As part of the US History PLC that focused on integrating literacy strategies into their instruction, Mr. Hammond and the veteran US History teacher raised the proficiency level from 10.7% to 39.6% in one year and met their delivery target while doing so. He did this as a first year teacher, in one of the most challenging schools in the state. He and his PLC aligned instruction with curriculum, created rigorous assessments, analyzed the data, made instructional improvements, and planned and delivered targeted interventions. And the results are nothing short of remarkable.

Specifically, the school report card reflects the following increases in achievement this year:

English End-of-Course Scores increased from 19.4% P/D (2013) to 24.3% P/D (2014).

Math End-of-Course Scores increased from 17% P/D (2013) to 21.3% P/D (2014).

Science End-of-Course Scores increased from 12.4% P/D (2013) to 26.7% P/D (2014).

Social Studies End-of-Course Scores increased from 10.7% P/D (2013) to 39.6% P/D (2014)

Language Mechanics PLAN scores increased from 11.9% P/D (2013) to 16.1% P/D (2014).

\*On-demand writing scores would have increased from 22.8% P/D (2013) to 23.1% P/D until the scores from students who attended non-A1 schools "tracked back" to our report card for accountability purposes. However, the report card rating reflected a slight decline from 22.8% P/D (2013) to 21.2% P/D (2014). All of this goes to show that we can sustain growth when given the capacity to keep "our students" in our building in our classrooms.

In addition to the overall increase in each of these five areas, the same five areas also improved gap student performance.

English End-of-Course gap scores increased from 18.1% P/D (2013) to 22.7% P/D (2014).

Math End-of-Course gap scores increased from 17.5% P/D (2013) to 20.8% P/D (2014).

Science End-of-Course gap scores increased from 22.7% P/D (2013) to 26.4% P/D (2014).

Social Studies End-of-Course gap scores increased from 18.6% P/D (2013) to 39.4% P/D (2014)

Language Mechanics PLAN gap scores increased from 10.6% P/D (2013) to 15.3% P/D (2014).

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

Although our Growth component of our accountability (measured by looking at typical growth from student scores on the sophomore PLAN test to the state-wide junior ACT test) showed decline when Math and Reading were combined, the percentage of students who showed typical or better growth on the ACT reading improved from 40.6% (2013) to 44.1% (2014).

In addition to the widespread improvement in academic assessments, our program Review increased (overall) from 19.9/23 (2013) to 21.3/23 (2014), with every component improving from the prior year.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have seen the following areas of improvement in the past three years. Our graduation rate has risen from 40.5% (2011) to 69.5% (2014). When the five-year cohort is used to calculate our graduation rate from 2014, it soars to 78.5%. This is significant because our population of ECE and ESL students may take extra time to graduate, but they are still persevering and earning their diplomas at a rate that is comparable to our district average for 2014.

Not only are we producing more graduates than ever before, the number of them who leave Iroquois college and/or career ready is also increasing at a remarkable rate. In 2011, before the new leadership took over, only 16 graduates (9%) earned the distinction of college or career ready. In 2014, 105 graduates were CCR. This represented 47.5% of the graduating class. Once the bonus points for students who were college AND career ready was applied, 52% of seniors were considered CCR, which means we exceeded our annual CCR goal.

Let's take a minute to get to know Derico. Derico was struggling in school. Poor attendance naturally led to low grades, and eventually to decreased motivation. That is, until Derico made the basketball team as junior. Coach Morrow realized how much Derico needed basketball early on, but knew he had to invoke some help to keep him eligible. Coach reached out to Derico's father. His dad got involved in his son's education and his basketball season and ensured he showed up to school, studied for tests, and practiced hard. Because of the teamwork between dad, coach, and Derico, he graduated from Iroquois and went on to play for Jacksonville State University on scholarship.

You see? In addition to the KDE school report card data improving, we have numerous other areas of anecdotal improvement in the past three years.

We have implemented the Fundamental Five as a common, school-wide instructional framework to ensure research-based practices are being implemented into daily lessons and to provide consistency among our staff and students as to what effective instruction includes. In addition to requiring professional development regarding the implementation of the Fundamental Five, we have enacted an ambitious walkthrough schedule that has resulted in more than 1,000 classroom observations in the first three months of school and focused those observations solely on looking for evidence of the Fundamental Five in learning environments. This focus has allowed us to develop a more targeted professional development plan that is differentiated for the individual needs of each teacher. For example, at our first Gold Day, teachers attended a Professional Development session based on their lesson framing data that was targeted for their specific needs. Some attended a session on the fundamentals of why and how to frame a lesson, while others simply needed to revise existing frames they had already created.

We have improved the PDSA work of the PLC by creating a more specific and thorough standard deconstruction tool, which also allows teachers to track student progress towards those standards and plans more targeted interventions accordingly.

We have developed and implemented an embedded intervention program instead of relying only on after-school time as a means of remediating content. By adjusting our bell schedule to add a weekly intervention period, maximizing our trimester scheduling to allow for daytime interventionists, and using ESS funds during the daytime, we are able to intervene with students during the school day to ensure we are keeping students on track in core content courses. In addition to the embedded interventions, we have an Extended School Program that allows students to stay after when they need to recover standards in core content classes or need help becoming CCR and, when they do, JCPS has provided them an evening meal and transportation home.

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

We have created a Transition Academy for students who were not making adequate academic progress in the regular setting and provided them with resources to recover credits using technology and small group instruction tailored to their specific needs. This initiative has been adopted by our district who developed several other Transition Academies for other sites based on our model.

In order to have more academic control over the ESL students we would eventually enroll, we have added an in-house ESL International Academy for students with limited or interrupted education.

We have refined the work of our focus teams into more specific, actionable teams who are having a direct impact on our school. For example, the Instruction and Learning team has been broken down into an RTI team, a Literacy team, and an Advisory team. The Engagement team has been broken down into a student engagement team & staff engagement team, and parent/community engagement team.

We have refined the work of our Instructional Leadership team (ILT) to differentiate it from the department chairperson committee. ILT is now in charge of professional development and the department chairpersons are responsible for data analysis instead of one team trying to do it all.

As a result of a pre-Diagnostic review conducted in October of 2014, we reviewed and reflected upon our ELEOT walk-through data provided by team of volunteers to prescribe next steps for instructional leadership. Based on the data they compiled using the ELEOT tool during their classrooms visits, we will continue to work on establishing and clearly communicating high learning expectations for all students and increasing the instructional rigor in all classrooms. We will look for greater opportunities to model and demonstrate exemplar work in our classrooms and include higher-order thinking assignments and inquiry. One of the ways we will improve these areas is through our community partnerships. For example, we have partnered with Ford NGL project to improve our capacity for project-based learning in collaborative partnerships between core-content teachers and Career & Technical Education teachers. We will continue to support our teachers through authentic professional development offerings to foster more frequent effective, student-centered classrooms.

In the next three years, we will continue to improve our instructional process, PLC work, and intervention plans to increase the achievement of our students even more. We will need to focus on improving the rate of learning for students in our ESL International Academy, as those students will impact our school report card data. We will also work to find solutions to some of the most detrimental barriers to student learning: perennial absenteeism and frequent disciplinary disruptions. Despite the fact that we have worked to change the culture and image of Iroquois, we continue to be plagued by some of the same problems that contributed to our PLA status. Most notably, these include students who come into 9th grade below grade level in math and literacy, teacher and administrator turnover due to workload and stress, high rates of mobility among our student population, truancy, disruption in education due to disciplinary infractions, etc.

These are snapshots of areas in which we have improved over the past three and a half years, based not only on school report card data, but on improving stakeholder involvement and effectiveness, as well. We can show you all the numerical data at our disposal, but our growth lies in the growth of Mr. Hammond, and all the teachers and support personnel who embrace the challenge of our mission, and work tirelessly and effectively to achieve it; and, in stories like Derico's, where students, teachers, coaches, and families work together to improve the education and lives of our students.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

There are more areas of improvement, focus, and influence than the previous narratives prompted us to respond. Therefore, below are several more important points to consider when analyzing and evaluating the progress at Iroquois over the last several years.

To begin with, we experienced attendance gains from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 and again from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. These gains in attendance were not only the result of the work of the focus teams, but they also played an integral role towards our overall success. We cannot impact a student until we can get him or her to attend school. Once they're in our doors, we can begin to implement the supports, commitments, and expectations that will result in their progress and success during and after their high school career.

In 2013 we were selected as only the second recipient of the Louisville Rotary Club's Promise Scholarship. This means that all incoming freshmen (from 2013 and beyond) who maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA, 90% or better attendance, and no major disciplinary infractions will receive a two-year scholarship to Jefferson Community and Technical College and an additional one-year scholarship to the University of Louisville. This partnership with Louisville Rotary Club has led to a group of Rotarians volunteering their time each month to mentor 15-20 of our freshmen students and as serving as a community advocate for them. We have also embarked upon a partnership with United Parcel Services (UPS) to initiate a mentoring program for our Robotics students who have committed to a year-long project to create a miniature, scaled model of the UPS World-Port sorting system to identify target areas for improved efficiency.

The students and teachers in our Career-Technical Education program have partnered with ACE Mentors of Louisville to design, plan, create, and build an outdoor classroom/amphitheater on a property next door to our school. Our students convinced the school district to purchase the property based on their development proposal to turn into community green space and to provide our school and our neighboring middle school with a venue to conduct outdoor activities promoting community collaboration. Our Robotics and Engineering students won the Skills USA state championship for designing and building a bomb-diffusing robot that was remote-controlled and field tested by the Louisville Metro Police Bomb Squad.

We have also had the benefit of working one-on-one with distinguished educational consultants through our multi-year collaboration with Solution Tree. The first two years we worked with Dr. Peter Noonan who advised leadership on how to develop, implement, and monitor improvement plans, while working with PLCs on how to analyze data, raise the level of rigor, and provide interventions. Last year, the district provided us a Solution Tree math consultant, Dr. Linda Fulmore, who has worked with our math PLCs regularly for two years to improve collaboration, instruction, assessment, and learning in the math classrooms. Finally, we were honored to be approached by Dr. Rick DuFour who volunteered his time to follow-up on the math PLC work by visiting Iroquois and make recommendations both to the math teams, as well as to the Instructional Leadership team and Administration, about next steps that should drive our PLC work and improve student learning.

For the past several years, we regularly provided our tested areas PLCs with full days devoted to data analysis and curricular, instructional, and assessment review in order to improve instruction and interventions. By completing a gap analysis between the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of each tested area, we were able to anticipate and plan for learning gaps prior to their end-of-year assessments. For years ago, we simply asked our PLCs to answer the three questions for PLC work(1. What do we want students to know/do? 2. How will we know when they know it? 3. What will we do if they don't?). The next year we added the fourth question, "what will we do when they do know it?" That framework for PLC collaboration was expanded into more specific and in-depth steps within the PDSA framework (Plan, Do, Study, Act) last year like deconstructing standards, identifying pre-requisite and essential skills/vocab/concepts, targeting interventions for learning

## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

objectives and not standards, etc.

Since the beginning of our turn-around journey, we have been confronted with the question of how to sustain our efforts and initiatives. Sustainability has been a factor that has caused us significant anxiety from the onset because of the continually increasing and evolving multitude of masters we serve, in contrast to the diminishing fiscal resources and the limitations of how those resources could be allocated. It cannot be overlooked how significant our progress is when measured against the staffing realities we continue struggling to overcome. We had little-to-no experience in the majority of our classrooms and administrative positions from day one. Minimal teaching and administrative experience coupled with significant personnel turnover each year, makes for a continual pattern of taking two steps forward and a step (or two) back at every turn. We compare our work to building a ship while we are trying to fly it... while surrounded by ever-changing weather conditions, with frequent changes to our itinerary, an ever-changing flight crew, guidance from multiple aerospace design engineers, and the expectations to sustain improved performance of the plane.

Our strategic action plan (30-60-90 plan for turnaround) evolved into an authentic comprehensive school improvement plan that aligned with our quarterly report monitoring instrument. Our plan has always been to create the capacity to sustain systemic change, resulting in increased student achievement. It cannot be overstated how challenging sustainability is when so many of the services that improved the instruction, assessment, and learning conditions were financially unsustainable. We also cannot ignore the negative impact of continually losing key personnel who led the work and having to not only find qualified and suitable replacements, but also having to coach leaders on what they are leading and how to lead the work.

Despite helping Iroquois initiate the process of school turnaround, we knew eventually we would have to maintain the workload with diminishing resources, both human and financial. Just in the last two years, we have had to eliminate the following positions: smaller learning community coordinator, an advisory (mentor/mentee program) coordinator, a credit-recovery instructor, a school technology coordinator, two Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) responders, a full-time Math interventionist; an in-school alternative-placement instructor, two assistant principals, and a special education Re-Evaluation & Recess Coordinator. Because of the reduction in personnel, much of their work was absorbed by the current administration, consisting of seven resource teachers (five of whom are first year R.T.s), two counselors (we had to sell part of a third counseling position to purchase an additional ECE teacher and behavior interventionist), three assistant principals (we had to sell 1.5 teacher positions to purchase the third assistant principal).

Currently, we have a vacant assistant principal position (due to an AP accepting a promotion to a district level administrative position), a second-year A.P., and a newly hired (as of October 27th) first-year A.P. In fact, in the past three years, seven different assistant principals have filled three positions, all of them serving as first-year A.P.s. We have also had five counselors in three positions in the same amount of time. In short, due to the overwhelming nature of the work of a PLA school, we have experienced significant administrative turnover.

In addition to the turnover in administration, the position that has experienced the most significant turnover is the College/Career Readiness Assessment and Intervention Coordinator (CCRC). In the past four years, there has been a brand-new CCRC each year. The CCRC duties include administering PLAN, ACT, COMPASS, KYOTE, On-Demand Writing, End-of-Course, Alternate K-PREP, AP, ESL-ACCESS, KOSSA, ASVAB, and ACT WorkKeys testing at varying points of throughout the school year, in addition to planning, supervising all intervention efforts and tracking individual student progress towards benchmarking. Due to the overwhelming demands and broad spectrum of responsibility for conducting an ethical and comprehensive system of testing while coordinating the oversight of all the differentiated intervention plans for each of the college/career readiness assessments, each CCRC has resigned at the end of each year. Our fourth CCRC accepted a promotion as an assistant principal at another school (effective 11/21) putting us in a position to hire a fifth CCRC in four years. This means a new CCRC must be indoctrinated and caught up to speed on a multitude of testing systems and practices as well as becoming adept at all structures for intervention. As one can imagine, having a trained and effective CCRC is vital to improvement in all tested areas.

Not only have we have been short-handed in our administrative ranks, we continue to have staffing inadequacies in regards to the pool of



## Executive Summary

Iroquois High

---

hirable teachers. This year alone, we were unable to fill two English openings, one ECE, one ESL, and one bilingual instructor prior to the beginning of the school year. In addition to those vacancies, we also had a Chinese teacher and Science teacher resign in September without prior notice, due to relocating to other states. The Chinese class had to be dissolved eventually because there were not Chinese certified candidates and the science position was unable to be filled for more than a month due to unqualified candidates. New teachers are always being added to our staff as applicants become available, thus creating a constant need to play catch up with both teachers and students affected by the unfilled positions.

Since beginning of our 2011 turnaround efforts, the only constant we have experienced is continual change. The Next Generation Learners model has added a Program Review component since its initial rollout (for Arts & humanities, Practical Living & Career Studies, and Writing), which now accounts for 23% of the overall accountability and this year, they will also include a program review for World Languages. Although End-of Course (EOC) tests initially included a Constructed Response (CR) component, it was decided after 2011-2012 that they would no longer be included in the administration or score. This made analyzing data for decision-making purposes from EOCs with the CR and those without it more difficult- both in planning for and response. Graduation Rate formulas have changed from the "average freshman graduation rate" model to a "four-year cohort model" and now, for certain components of the accountability, a "five-year cohort model", although some of the accountability still reflects the four-year model.

As a result of being a Priority school, our teachers are also challenged with balancing their instructional responsibilities, their focus team commitments, and additional data tracking/reporting like the CSIP, Quarterly Report, mandatory Plus-Deltas, maintaining public data-boards, regularly submitting PLC artifacts. Plus, they experience the challenges of serving the magnitude of differentiated needs our students bring with them (20% ECE; 20% ESL; 92% F/RL; etc). Most of our teachers are also young, newly married (or soon to be), have just started (or are planning to start) their own families, or are just beginning their graduate degrees, all of which impact their capacity to sustain their commitments in their classrooms and PLCs.

On top of this abundance of demands on our time and energy, we are also expected to implement a new professional evaluation system (TPGES, OPGES), as well as major disciplinary procedures and philosophies, as outlined in the revised Code of Conduct, new ECE policies regarding suspensions, PBIS, and SRT teams.

In spite of our challenges, we are still moving forward and making notable strides towards turnaround. If one considers the students' performance levels in our feeder middle schools, it becomes apparent that we are increasing the percentage of students scoring proficient or distinguished on Reading, Language Mechanics, and Writing KPREP tests between the beginning of their sophomore year and end of their junior year.

Let's go back to Muhammed, Sara, Demarcus, and Derico. Last year on an evening in early June, the entire community came to the Iroquois amphitheater to watch the class of 2014 graduate. As Mr. Perkins stood at the podium and invited the students who were college-ready to stand up, and then invited the students who were career ready to stand up, and then asked the staff who supported these students to stand up, and then turned to the "standing-room only" crowd and asked all who had supported these students in their success to stand up, there was an entire community on their feet. All understanding the commitment these resilient students had fulfilled. Most understanding that without the dedicated staff at Iroquois, there would be a number of students not crossing that stage. It was an gratifying evening. And there will be another such event this June and the next and the next. Our students are resilient. Our staff is resilient. We will continue to make improvements and support our students to be who they are meant to be.