2012-13 School Quality Snapshot
Academia Avance Charter
Los Angeles County Office of Education
115 North Avenue 53, Highland Park, CA 90042

California Department of Education
Report (v2.a) Generated: February 20, 2014

Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Grades Offered: 6-12
Enrollment: 470
Charter: Yes
Title I Funded: Yes
CDS Code: 19-10199-0109926

California's Academic Performance Index (API)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2013 Growth API</th>
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<th>All Student Groups Met Target</th>
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2012-13 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

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<tr>
<td>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</td>
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<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
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2012-13 Subgroup Enrollment

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<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2012 Base API Similar Schools Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Learners</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Average Class Size

CHART LEGEND:
- School
- District
- State
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School and/or district information will not be displayed when data are not available or when data are representing fewer than 11 students.

* Only three years of data are available
CAHSEE: CA High School Exit Examination
CST: CA Standards Test

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Please visit the following Web page for more information: http://www.cde.ca.gov/snapshot/
Single Plan for Student Achievement for 2013-2014

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CDS: 19-10199-0109926

Submitted to:
Charter Schools Office
Los Angeles County Office of Education
12830 Columbia Way
Downey, CA 90242

Submission:
DRAFT December 20, 2013
Single Plan for Student Achievement for 2013-2014

Academia Avance did not meet its 2013 API Growth Targets, and did not meet its 2013 AYP criteria. This document presents an analysis of these outcomes, and presents a plan for how student achievement will be improved in the 2013-2014 academic year.

This document has these components:

1. **What is the need**: An analysis of the 2013 STAR and AYP results with an identification of the specific areas where API targets and AYP criteria were met or not met.
2. **What are the goals**: A presentation of the specific goals for 2014 that match the above analysis for 2013.
3. **How will the goals be achieved**: A description of the action steps with the changes to curriculum, instruction, assessment, governance, and organization.
4. **How will the staff be prepared for the action steps**: A description of the professional development plan for teachers and support staff that lead towards achievement of the above identified goals and action steps to improve performance in targeted areas.
5. **How progress will be monitored**: The methods and tools used in 2013-2014 for regular examination of student achievement data across grade levels, by subject matter, by significant subgroups, and schoolwide.
6. **What evidence will be used to gauge effectiveness**: A description of the diagnostic assessments that will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the proposed actions.

The plan is specific to the 2013-2014 school year, and describes actions taken in the Summer and Fall of 2013, as well as actions planned for Spring 2014. This plan will be used to inform the planning in the Spring and Summer of 2014 for the 2014-2015 year.

This plan is presented for review by the Los Angeles County Office of Education. It is hoped that the review will provide insight on how to improve the plan.
1. What is the Need

The 2013 STAR results and 694 schoolwide API represent an 18 point drop in overall performance from 2012. Following an 89 point jump in 2007-2008, Avance has maintained an API in the 700 range during its doubling of enrollment since then. The historical trend is presented in Appendix A: 2013 Avance Academic Performance Summary.

This plan aims to regain momentum up from the plateau held over the last six years. The 2013 target growth API for Avance was 717. Avance missed the target by 23 points.

The single most significant statistic the API for the English Learner sub-group. This area of need was identified as the biggest goal for 2013-2014, followed by the goal of increasing math proficiency. As described below, it has now been confirmed, as was previously speculated, that a data anomaly is the main factor for this outcome for this sub-group.

This plan seeks to leverage the strong gains in the non-academic facets of Avance. These include:

- strengthening of the Avance Instructional Leadership Team, newly formed in 2012-2013 under the direction of the Principal
- strengthening the role of the Avance Instructional Coach, a new position for 2012-2013 under the direction of the Principal
- the efforts of all the Avance stakeholders groups in preparation for the final site visit of the WASC Visiting Committee, which led to a six year accreditation
- continued implementation of the of the highly regarded Thinking Maps strategies for all subjects at every grade-level
- the evolution the Avance House model for teacher/parent communications
- the strong parent participation (all Fall and Spring parent conferences for the last four years have had an over 90% participation rate)
All of these have worked together to create a strong academic focused school culture. These points of evidence support this statement:

• a college acceptance rate of 100% for all three graduating class (84 total alumni), with 100% for the Class of 2012 (26), and 93% for the Class of 2013 (42)
• expansion of participation in the Avance Workplace Education Experience
• a sustained ADA of over 96% overall for the past three years
• lower rates of discipline issues relative to earlier in the first charter
• participation rates for the Fall and Spring parent conferences for all grades of over 90% for the last four years

In other words, Avance students want to come to school, and they come eager to learn, their parents are engaged in their learning, and students are graduating college and career readiness in alignment with the goals of the charter.

The Strategic Planning sessions of the Avance Executive Board in the Summer of 2011 and again in the Summer of 2013, following the WASC accreditation report, set key initiatives to address these five questions for the balance of the second charter:

1. **Curriculum/Instruction**: *What challenges and success are there to dealing in a high-stakes testing context?* Avance will focus on moving “highly qualified” (NCLB) teachers to be “highly EFFECTIVE” teachers, in alignment with the Obama Education objectives, by fully implementing data driven instruction strategies to reduce the student/teacher/parent feedback cycle to less than four weeks via modern communication tools linking parents to teachers, and assisting the Principal with management of the teachers.

2. **Technology**: *How can new technologies improve stakeholder communications to support student achievement?* Avance will standardize the teacher/instruction documentation (e.g. lesson plans, homework rubrics) and post via the internet so as to streamline the communication of lesson expectations to parents.

3. **Workplace Education Experiences**: *What more do Avance students need to know beyond college to succeed in the modern US professional job market?* Avance will expand the Avance Life Prep program Workplace Education placements and the program mentor orientations.

4. **Facilities**: *What is Avance doing to gain facilities efficiencies?* Avance will increase the number classroom spaces at the Highland Park campus to accommodate all grades, and increase the exterior spaces for recreation with enhance campus security.

5. **Financing**: *What sustainable strategies will be implemented to overcome the state fiscal crisis?* Avance will launch the Avance Foundation to support Avance Schools, Inc., consolidating the various facilities leases under the Foundation and leverage the facilities to secure financing for expansion and
At the start of each academic year, specific implementation strategies aligned to these are macro goals are established upon reflection on the outcomes of the previous year. This plan presents those for 2013-2014.

The analysis below will reveal the areas of need, which is followed by a statement of the goals for 2013-2014. The implemented strategies and evidence for the Fall 2013 semester shows that the 2013-2014 goals are attainable. The subsequent sections will present:

- how the goals will be achieved
- how progress will be monitored
- how effectiveness will be gauged

**Analysis of 2013 STAR Outcomes**

The charts in Appendix A: 2013 Avance Academic Performance Summary present the analysis used to determine the goals for 2013-2014.

**Summary of 2013 Growth**

1. Avance continued made the modest gains in Algebra I for the 9th grade, with stronger results for the 6th grade.
2. Avance sustained similar achievement levels as in the past in Language Arts and History, and for Physical Science and Life Science.

**Summary of Critical Areas of Need for 2013**

1. Avance must extend the gains in Algebra I to Geometry to Algebra II
2. The statistics for the English Learners sub-group fell dramatically, but is speculated to be related to a data anomaly now confirmed.
3. Good performance in lower grade science must be extended to Biology and Chemistry.
4. Avance 10th grade CAHSEE pass rate and proficiency performance decreased.
Uncertainties for Measures of Accountability for 2013-2014

New for 2013-2014 are the changes to state code and regulation resulting from the adoption of AB 484, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and its related Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

One significant change is the proposed suspension of the determination of API, or at least the use of a methodology for the 2014 API that would make it difficult to compare to that of prior years. The new California Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress (CalMAPP), yet to be fully defined, changes the measure for schools.

"The State Superintendent may elect to suspend the calculation of the API for 2013-14 and 2014-15 if he determines the API would be an invalid measure of performance due to the impact transitioning to new standard-based assessments might have on the comparability of results across schools and districts."
(From communication on OCT 2, 2013 from Marci Perry to Margarita Sandoval shared with LACOE charter schools by Joaquin Hernandez)

Even if the 2014 API is issued, it will be a different calculation, to "include achievement test results, attendance rates and 4-year, 5-year and 6-year graduation rates"... In other words, it will NOT be comparable to the previous API calculation, thus does not help us with the renewal review.

Also, under the new rules, in 2013-2014 "all California LEAs will be required to participate in the [SmarterBalanced] Field Test." But what I believe the biggest area of confusion is schools can NOT choose which subject area will be used for each grade in 2014. Which schools/grades/students will test in ELA, and which in Math will be assigned, is still to be announced. Individual student, school, or district score reports will NOT be generated from the 2014 Field Test, so it will NOT help us with the renewal review.

Thus, off paramount importance to schools that will be under formal renewal consideration 2014-2015, like Avance, is that the changes from AB 484 seem to conflict with Ed Code 47607. The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) made this statement on OCT 3rd:

CCSA was concerned that the possible testing suspension proposed in this bill would have a significant impact on statutory charter renewal criteria, which was closely tied to API [Ed Code 47607(b) sometimes referred to as AB 1137]. CCSA moved to a neutral position after our concern was addressed with the addition of language that allows an authorizer to consider other demonstrations of academic achievement among students
However, concrete specific renewal criteria under the AB 484 have yet to be announced. Thus, it will be critical for Avance to collaborate closely with the LACOE Charter Schools Office to use Criteria (4)(B) of Ed. Code 47607(b) for the upcoming renewal consideration. In essence AB 484 forces this.

Ed Code 47607 has five renewal criteria options. But Criteria (5) is only for school that have "qualified as an ASAM School" (Alternative Schools Accountability Model) which Avance is not.

The first three 47607 criteria are based on the soon-to-be-defunct API:
1. Attained its API growth target in the prior year or in two of the last three years, or in the aggregate for the prior three years.
2. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API in the prior year or in two of the last three years.
3. Ranked in deciles 4 to 10, inclusive, on the API for a demographically comparable school in the prior year or in two of the last three years.

**Possibility of using 47607 Criteria 3**

Criteria 3 offers one possible opportunity, given that the 2013 API Similar School Ranking has yet to be determined, and will be published in the Spring of 2014. The challenge is that while Avance achieved a 4 API SSR in 2010, the ranking fell to 3, then to 1 by 2012. It has now been determined that this is primarily the result of the erroneous data for RFEP students in the Schools Characteristics Index used to determine the “demographically comparable schools.” The data anomaly was mitigated with the data correction window. What is needed at this time is to work with CDE to ensure that the corrected data is used for the 2013 API SSR determination. If it is, this will dramatically alter the school's compared to.

Should the 2013 API SSR be a 4 or higher, Avance will meet the 47607 renewal criteria with the sole index yet to be published that remains unchanged by AB 484. If Avance does not attain a 4 (but it seems difficult to imagine how it would have another SSR of 1), at a minimum it will provide completing evidence that the data anomalies strongly qualify interpretations of the 2011 and 2012 API SSR, as well of the interpretations of the statistical outlying data related to the Avance EL sub-group.

An analysis of the 2012 SSR schools list points to some of the problems that stem from the erroneous EL/RFEP counts for Avance (reported as 7% for the 2012 Base API -- down from 60+% in prior years). The 2012 list of LAUSD "Similar Schools" has 3 charter schools, 2 magnets schools, and 1 traditional school:
• The magnet schools, are not an open enrollment school, thus should be discarded from a comparison: Math Science & Technology Magnet Academy at Roosevelt High School (2013 API of 732); Daniel Pearl Journalism & Communications Magnet High School (2013 API of 823)

• The non charter/magnet traditional school is William Howard Taft Senior High (2013 API of 791), with an enrollment of 2,450, with only 35% Latino, and a far lower Socioeconomically Disadvantaged demographic - 61% to our 88% (reported as 99% for the API).

This would only leaves only the 3 LAUSD charter schools in our 2012 comparison list as viable for comparison. But these also have issues for comparison:
• Alliance Environmental Science and Technology HS (2013 API of 871) – this school is in NE-LA, and is 89% Latino, and has a 87% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged share... BUT it is part of the best funded CMO in Los Angeles. We will ask LACOE to account for this fact in its consideration.

• CALS Early College High (2013 API of 787) – this school also is in NE-LA and is demographically similar, BUT this school is now co-sited with CALS Middle School. It has been dramatically downsized (enrollment of 324 in 2010-2011, to 224 in 2012-2013). The enrollment for this year has yet to be confirmed, and they might not even be around by next Fall.

• Port of Los Angeles High School (840) -- This charter school is not in a similar neighborhood (San Pedro) and has a school demographic that is very dis-similar (35% SES, 66% Latino). It will be easy to argue to LACOE that this is not a comparable school to Avance.

Reliance on E.C. 47607 Criteria 4

Thus, it is Criteria (4) which will serve as the primary renewal criteria that LACOE can use with Avance. Avance must align with Criteria (4), which has two parts. Here is the first:

(A) The entity that granted the charter [LACOE] determines that the academic performance of the charter school is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend [Franklin HS and Burbank MS], as well as the academic performance of the schools in the school district in which the charter school is located, taking into account the composition of the pupil population that is served at the charter school [the LAUSD schools in our "100 Similar Schools List].

That, too, will not work following the AB 484 changes...because there is no comparable 2014 API. It will be difficult for LACOE to access 2013-2014 comparable data for Franklin HS and Burbank MS, the charter defined local comparison schools, and for LAUSD schools in Avance's Similar Schools Ranking.
group (which we will know in the Spring).

That leave only Ed Code 47607(b)(4)(B) as the main legal framework for LACOE's renewal consideration:

(i) Documented and clear and convincing data.
(ii) Pupil achievement data from assessments, including, but not limited to, the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program established by Article 4 (commencing with Section 60640) for demographically similar pupil populations in the comparison schools.
(iii) Information submitted by the charter school.

**Option of Use of STAR for 2014 to Provide Comparable Data**

Item ii offers a possible solutions given that it relies on "assessments... established under Section 60640" which is STAR. The 2014 testing regime DOES allow for school to voluntarily use STAR/CST based exams. Avance will use this option as described in a later section.

Important from this Criteria, however, is the emphasis on the "demographically similar pupil populations", ie. the sub-groups. For Avance these are:

- Latinos
- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (ie FRPM)
- English Learners (which needs to account fo RFEPs)
- Students with Disabilities -- this is new under LCFF, which lowers the count threshold to 30 students

Regardless, it is only the Criteria 4(B) items that LACOE can work with. In other words, Avance must work with LACOE to define the measures.

In other words, we keep going as if there was no AB 484, as a way to help LACOE and us with the renewal review. Yes, there would be no API calculation (and probably no way to estimate it either. BUT, we can still show the percentage of students in each of the grade/subject areas that change performance levels, ie show how we increased those at Proficient/Advanced and how we reduced those at FFB/BB. Out RTI Tier "reduction" strategy is aligned with this. Using the CST test just provides a readily accepted method of measuring the outcomes.

This approach has an additional advantage in that all the Avance stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, AEB) already are familiar with the CST/STAR system.

Additionally, we still must administer CELDT, CAHSEE and PFT, so we also have these comparable longitudinal data.
Other Strategies to "Documented and clear and convincing data"

Considering the above issues, Avance will as much as possible present data together with the partial STAR results. Three key strategies will be these:
1. the CCSA Academic Growth over Time (AGT) analysis
2. continuing trend data results from the use of CST aligned benchmark data (via Data Director)
3. strategies aligned with the Safe Harbor methodology, that is, increase the share of Proficient/Advanced students by 10%, which is an outcome of our RTI Tier "reduction" strategy
4. provide measures aligned with the new 8 priorities for the new LCAP, specifically those for college and career readiness (outlined above)

2013 Outcomes and AYP Criteria Requirements

There are four AYP Criteria Requirements (Source: CDE 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress Report Information Guide, published August 2011):
   Requirement 1: Participation Rate (with 95% as minimum)
   Requirement 2: Percent Proficient AMOs (Annual Measurable Objectives)
   Requirement 3: API as an Additional Indicator (710 Minimum)
   Requirement 4: Graduation Rate (not applicable to Avance for 2011 nor 2013)

Requirements 1 and 2 are applied school-wide, and to the student subgroup cohorts. The CDE has established three numerically significant sub-groups for the Avance:
   • Latinos (99%)
   • Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (97%)
   • English Learners (24%)*

Note that the last sub-group should does not include the count of RFEPs. This issues is described below.

The table below presents the 2013 API Growth data, and 2013 AYP criteria data schoolwide, and for the three Avance cohorts (17 total criteria).
Avance did not meet the 2013 Proficiency AMOs, neither directly, nor via the Safe Harbor alternative methodology.

The API growth target was not met for the three subgroups: Latinos, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and English Learner sub-group, dropping by 18, for the first two sub-groups.

The most glaring statistic, however, is that for the English Learners sub-group, which dropped by 89 points. The cause, described else, is the impact of the RFEP data anomaly.

**Spring 2014 Assessments and AYP Requirements**

The California State Superintendent has announced that the California STAR tests will not be required for Spring 2014, to allow for the California Measures of Academic Progress (CalMAPS) which will include the Field Tests of the new Smarter Balanced assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Avance will participate in all the required tests as established by the CDE for Spring 2014. The school has also committed to voluntarily issuing the STAR tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics in all grades in May of 2014. Avance will use the outcomes per subject and grade to evaluate progress on this plan.

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<th>Cohort</th>
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</table>

API Additional Indicator for AYP: Not Met (2013 Growth API greater than 713)
In every year, Avance has easily surpassed the 95% minimum participation rate specified with the AYP Requirement 1, for both ELA and Math for every cohort.

Requirement 3 represent the California “Additional Indicator for AYP” allowed under the current ESEA Federal Act (NCLB) guidelines. For 2013, Avance did not surpassed the 715 minimum API score used for this indicator. Because of the AB 484 changes, it is not clear if this measure will be used for 2014, nor how the Growth Target will be set.

Requirement 4 pertains to the minimum graduation requirement for schools serving the 12th grade. This requirement should not be applied to Avance for 2013, given that the “Graduation rate determinations use data only when there are 50 or more [grade twelve] students in both the prior and current year.” (Source: 2011 AYP Report Information Guide). 2013-2014 would be the first year when we pass this threshold.

Requirement 2 presents a huge obstacle to Avance meeting the 2013 AYP criteria. This is an obstacle for the vast majority of public schools in the state. The issue is the steep annual rise in the Proficiency Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). But the changes resulting from AB 484 make it unknown at this time how this measures will be determined.

**Leveraging the AYP Safe Harbor Provision**

The prior AYP Requirement 2 regime did provide for an alternative method of meeting the requirement: the “safe harbor” provision. Avance seeks to use the fact that CDE assigned “No distinction... regarding how schools and LEAs make AYP, only whether or not AYP is met.” as evidence of the weight of value hed by CDE for the use of the safe harbor provision, namely: on par with having achieved Requirement 2 via the AMOs, ie. CDE considers Safe Harbor as a significant indicator.

Avance will present this logic to LACOE with the argument that should Avance attain Safe Harbor indices for ELA and Math, it would stand as a proxy for evidence of significant progress of academic achievement.

The CDE 2011 AYP Report Information Guide describes that a school will be deemed to have met Requirement 2 of the AYP criteria, if it meets Requirement 1, 3 and 4, AND if:

- The percentage of students in the school, LEA, or subgroup performing below the proficient level in either ELA or mathematics decreased by at least 10 percent of that percentage from the preceding school year;
The CDE provides a Safe Harbor Calculator. Using the estimation tool with the 2013 STAR outcomes, Avance can provide evidence of having met (or not met) the Safe Harbor thresholds.

**Summary: 2013 Critical Focus Areas for 2014 Goals**

1. the needs of the English Learner sub-group, specifically RFEPs.
2. meet the “Safe Harbor” thresholds

**2. What are the 2014 Primary Goals**

From the Critical Focus Areas for 2013, the following goals are prioritized for 2014:

1. Reach Safe Harbor targets for ELA and Math for the schoolwide cohort
2. Reach Safe Harbor targets for ELA and Math for the English Learner sub-group

**3. Schoolwide Strategies to Achieve the 2014 Goals**

The school is using the positive momentum gain from the close collaboration of all the stakeholders for the WASC Committee visit of APR 2013 that lead to our six year accreditation. With this momentum, the outcomes of the strategic planning of the Avance Executive Board, the summer work of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and the reflections of the 2013 data, lead to the goals of the August staff in-services, and the SEP 23 Faculty Retreat. This multi-stakeholder process defined these strategies for 2013-2014:

1. Avance will continue with the use of the four round benchmark assessment strategy fully implemented in 2012-2013. Assessments are issued in every course at all grades in OCT, DEC, MAR and JUN utilizing the CST aligned question bank of Data Director. The results of the benchmarks are used to differentiate instruction via the RTI model (see below), and are presented to parents with the context of prior year STAR results, course grades and teacher observations.
2. Avance will issue the STAR ELA and Math tests in 2014 so as to have easily and continued goals for the students, parents and teachers, and for additional comparable academic data to support our preparations for charter renewal.
3. Avance will use the evidence-proven and widely recognized Response To
Interventions (RTI) model to define specific instructional strategies for each student. The model uses three levels of need. The faculty used the 2013 STAR results and Spring (and for some Summer) grades to identify the RTI level for each student. A goal was set on SEP 23 to advance at least 10% of the Level 1 students to Level 2, with 20% moved to by MAR.

4. The RTI goals align with the above described Safe Harbor goals by moving students towards proficiency. Thus, the individual student RTI goals will contribute to the school-wide Safe Harbor goal.

5. A major initiative in the Fall of 2013 will be the identification of the CALPADS data anomalies with our English Learner data, specifically the RFEP counts. The incentive is to have CDE recognize the corrected accurate counts so as to maximize the Avance SSR (as described above) in the hopes of meeting Criteria 3 of the E.C. 47607.

6. Avance will leverage the expanded services for 120 high school students to be provided by the Youth Policy Institute (YPI), given that the federally sourced 21st Century Community Learning Center grant was renewed for YPI for the Avance site. Additionally, YPI was awarded a state funded After School Education and Safety (ASES) grant for Avance to provide SES to 120 middle school students.

7. Avance will work with the California Charter School Association to provide their longitudinal “value added” analysis as external evidence of academic results. The Academic Growth over Time (AGT) completed in the Fall of 2013 show that Avance students, over time, have results that are higher than the predicted outcomes of similar students in the state using a sophisticated regression model.

**Action Specific to the EL Sub-group**

A detailed review of the Avance demographic data, revealed that CALPADS had erroneous English Learner classification data for 2011 and 2012. This coincides with the dramatic shift in the API results and rankings for those years. The problem was related to the tracking of students moved from EL status to Recently Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). For the two years in question, CALPADS, because of an error with our data systems or a problem affecting many school – or both – designated RFEP students were designated as proficient or advanced on the ELA CST for 3 prior years regardless of their actual outcomes.

We have contacted the CALPADS help desk to correct this information, along the way learning that there are a number of LEAs in similar situations as ours. Unfortunately due to the nature of the Student Information File data, there is no efficient way to correct prior records in batch. We will need to manually correct each student's data one by one. The data corrections for the current year have
Using Data to Guide Intervention

Students are assessed on a quarterly basis to monitor academic progress. Teachers use Data Director to put together their assessments using the data bank provided by Data Director. All questions are in CST format and are specifically designed to meet the California Content Standards. Using the results, students are grouped based on the level of intervention required. Academia Avance use the **Response to Intervention Pyramid** as the model for intervention design. Students are grouped into the following 3 groups:

- **Tier 3- Universal Intervention** - 60 to 70 percent of our students fall under this category and the intervention can be provided as a whole large group.

- **Tier 2- Small Group Intervention** - 15 to 25 percent of our students fall under this category. These students receive the Universal Intervention and in addition would receive small group intervention after school or Saturday School.

- **Tier 1- Intensive Intervention** - 10 to 15 percent of our students placed in this category receive the aforementioned intervention as well as individual assistance provided by the resource teacher. Most, if not all of these students receive special education services.

Strategies for English Learners

The results of CST/STAR testing reflect an overall need to continue strategies for English Learners, emphasis in reading comprehension, and writing. A concentration on Mathematical skills to be used in both Algebra and Geometry. In addition to the schoolwide strategies described below, it is expected that the Thinking Maps strategies will have great impact for the English Learner Sub-group, as will the **Hands-On Equations** tools, described below.

The Thinking Maps materials have include **Path to Proficiency**, designed to provide adaptations and extensions in the use of Thinking Maps to assist teachers in building bridges to academic excellence and success for English Language Learners. The EL specific materials that will be implemented in the Spring of 2013. See [http://www.thinkingmaps.com/englanglearn.php](http://www.thinkingmaps.com/englanglearn.php)
Writing Strategies

Students write coherent and focused essays that convey well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students’ awareness of the audience and purpose. Student progress through the stages of the writing process will be focused on.

Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)

Students read and understand grade level appropriate materials. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and position advanced. The selections in Recommended Literature outlined by the California Department of Education Kindergarten through Grade Twelve illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, by grade twelve, students read two million words annually on their own, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information. All students need to find the love of reading.

Algebra

Students solve multi-step problems, including word problems, involving linear equations and linear inequalities in one variable and provide justification for each step.

Specifications, which follow the examination of student data, which Academia Avance will take to improve student achievement in the area, identified as needing improvement, including changes to curriculum, instruction, assessment, governance, and organization.

Hands-On Equations

The training previously provided to 6-8 grade teachers on the use of Hands On Equations was reinforced in the summer of 2013. The Hands-On Equations gives students a concrete representation of the symbols and processes utilized in solving algebra problems. The symbols are represented by game pieces and a representation of a balance scale. The processes are represented by physical actions upon these pieces. As the algebra problems are solved students are actually seeing, touching and moving the pieces. The concepts are being learned at a deep bodily level. This materials are produced by Borenson based on extensive research. This strategy will be targeted to the English Learner sub-group. (See http://www.borenson.com/ )
Tools to Support Monitoring of Data-Driven Instruction

Avance uses several information systems to support the operations. The primary systems are:

- Centre - Student Information System (SIS)
- Data Director – student performance database and reporting tool
- Connect5 (formerly Teleparent) – communication tool linking teachers and parents
- the school web-site with school focused collaboration tools
- Google Apps – open platform for deployment of teacher and student web tools

The main Student Information System (SIS) used at Avance is Centre. This system provides teacher, staff and parents’ access to student attendance, daily assignments and student scores/grades, progress reports, semester reports, transcripts, behavior information and other individual student information.

Data Director, previously described, is the primary data store for longitudinal data for every student. The annual STAR scores are combined with the formative and summative assessment developed by the teachers to provide a rich set of indicators to monitor with. The benchmark test questions are aligned with the state standards.

The analysis of data (student, school-wide, support services, professional development) is part of the ongoing program monitoring and evaluation. When results are not as expected, the Principal works with the Avance House instructor and parent to discuss these questions:

- How are performance targets and activities based on student performance and factual assessment of current educational practice?
- How educationally sound is our plan to help reach the targets?
- How timely and effectively is our plan being implemented?
- If the plan has not been implemented as written, what were the obstacles to implementation?
- What are the options in regards to recommended changes?
- How will these changes be measured?
**Standardized Curriculum Pacing Plans**

All Avance faculty develop and implementing curriculum guides (pacing guides) aligned to the California State Standards, and now being also aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. For high school courses, the guides are directly connected to the A-G course descriptions. The curriculum guides allow Avance to set concrete goals for content mastery. For the 2013-2014 school year, the Principal is evaluating the guides as presented via the Avance Edlio online teacher collaboration tools. The Edlio tools ensure that a standard format is used by all of the teachers, and also provides greater information for the parents to monitor their child's academic progress.

The pacing guides, together with the Data Director data and VAT evaluations will guide teacher in specific teaching and re-teaching opportunities to ensure student mastery of content. Furthermore, the use of the Avance House Advisory will develop and foster students’ habits of mind to attain academic achievement.

**Standard Schoolwide Instruction Strategies**

The 2013-2014 Instructional Leadership Team have collaborated to designate these academic strategies for the school year, as presented in the Fall retreat held on SEP 23, 2013:

- Application of the 8 Thinking Map maps in all subjects and grade-levels
- Use of the Hands-On Equations strategies to enhance the Algebra Project strategies of in the Algebra and pre-Algebra curriculum.
- Standardized School-wide Academic Focus: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics (Essential skills are linked and integrated)
- Reading content includes high interest reading (i.e. popular culture, music, current events, etc.)
- Frequent and ongoing formative assessment data identifying emerging areas of need
- Development of an Individual Learning Plan for each student in collaboration with parents to set academic goals for the year
- Promote independent reading, and monitor reading comprehension through Reading Logs, responding in writing to what has been read, and continued support in achievement
- Grade-reporting and portfolio conferences
- Weekly Academic Self-Reflections
Also among these strategies Avance will use the following as outlined in A-G Course Descriptions:

- Key Assignments
- Students will answer questions at the end of each unit. Writing assignments will include responses to critical thinking questions, primary documents, case studies, etc.
- Written exams in addition to multiple choice/True-False exams

Students will also write a report that critically examines a major event in the areas they are studying. This assignment is equivalent to a term paper. In this project, students will need to use both primary and secondary sources. This project will consist of a 5-7 page report, with a bibliography including six sources.

4. How will Staff be Prepared for the Action Steps

The development of the faculty and staff is of primary importance to the Avance community. As the school has progressed, student learning needs have been primarily addressed through the formal faculty meetings, leadership meetings, and assessment of student achievement data. For example, Avance recognized that due to the low proficiency rates for incoming students in English Language Arts, the school staff needed assistance with strategies specific for English Learners. Avance has had the good fortune of receiving professional development funding from NCLR (National Council of La Raza) in every year of operations. However, the school recognizes that it must be strategic and allocate sufficient funding to ensure ongoing professional development.

Continuous Professional Development

The initiation of ongoing professional development follows from mid-year and end of the year assessments. Reflective data taken from leadership, faculty, staff, and parents helps develop the planning for professional development. As stated above, the school has focused much of the professional development toward strengthening of instructional strategies.

The school has adopted an instructional model that focuses on the following strategies:
- collaborative learning
- writing to learn
- literacy groups
- questioning strategies
- scaffolding texts
- academic classroom talk
This instructional model was adopted from the model implemented at University Park High School (UPHS) in Worcester, Massachusetts. UPHS is nationally recognized for demonstrating significant gains with English Language Learners.

**NCLR Partnership for Professional Development**

Many of the Avance Professional Development components since the start of the school have been made possible via our partnership with NCLR. For 2013-2014, the Executive Director follows the Principal's participation the previous year with the NCLR National Institute for Latino School Leaders started, one of 10 to receive the coaching. The best practices observed via this program will guide the Avance leadership in its oversight of the professional development of the entire faculty via the weekly meetings available on the Wednesday early dismissal schedule.

Every professional development session will focus on one particular strategy as outlined in the Avance instructional model. The goal is to provide the teachers the necessary information regarding the particular strategy being presented so as to allow the teacher to develop a confident and efficacious use of the strategy in the classroom. Once one strategy has been competently adopted the professional development meetings shift their focus on to a different strategy. For 2013-2014 Avance continues with the strategy of have recognized experts work with the Principal to fully implement the instructional strategies, such as with Thinking Maps and RTI.

A main component of the teacher induction process is the Avance Teacher Summer Preparation session. This is a two week teacher led orientation prior to the start of the academic school year. New teachers attend various meetings and workshops to acquaint them with procedures and processes relative to the operation of the school and culture of the campus. Teachers are introduced to the Avance instructional model and workshops are presented by Avance veteran teachers.

All Avance teachers take part in the weekly teacher meeting that focuses on operations and instruction. These meetings are held every other Wednesday from 2:20 p.m to 4:00 p.m. The initiation of ongoing professional development follows from mid-year and end of the year assessments. Reflective data taken from leadership, faculty, staff, and parents helps develop the planning for professional development. As stated above, the school has focused much of the professional development towards strengthening of instructional strategies.

Avance will provide trainings and access to workshops in support of on-going standards based alignment for instructional delivery to provide for successful
student academic achievements. Teachers, administrators and staff will participate in the training process to identify activities that will provide:

- Teachers with the subject matter knowledge and teaching skills to provide all students the opportunity to meet challenging state academic achievement standards, and
- Instructional leadership with educational skills to help teachers provide all students the opportunity to meet the state’s academic achievement standards.

**Professional Staff Development Plan is Aligned with NCLB**

Staff professional development is aimed at closing the achievement gap. Orientation begins two week before the school year begins. This time is used not only to express in detail the values and expectations of the school, but also allows the teachers the time necessary to collaborate and learn about each other. All teachers attend professional development in-services offered by the administration twice every semester.

Faculty meetings are held on designated Wednesdays from 2:30 pm until 4:00 pm. Teachers are offered the opportunity to observe their colleagues teach, be observed by staff or education consultants; as well as other stakeholders. Teachers have been provided with weekly, individual planning time to be used to plan, reflect, and improve their quality of teaching. All teachers have specific planning time. Avance’s Block Schedule allows for teacher to prepare, observe other classroom, research, and work on individual student plans.

Teachers have the opportunity to review benchmarks, assessments, progress of each of their students in their classroom and progress in other classes. They also can gain knowledge from observed trends in data collected, data analysis, strategies that work, challenges and strategize to meet student needs. Staff is encouraged to attend workshops and professional development seminars throughout the year.

In-service themes include: Special Education-Teaching strategies, Student Study Team (SST), effective school-wide study practices, and is an opportunity for teachers to collectively reflect and assess individual student academic achievement. These faculty meetings and in-services are facilitated by experienced staff members, educational consultants or professional experts. Staff development is models the quality of teaching that occurs at Avance and assist teachers with planning and implementing a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum that is research-based and aligned to the California State Standards. Professional development also provides teachers with resources and strategies to collaborate and share their expertise.
Collaboration and Integration

Avance also uses professional development time to assist teachers accentuate key concepts school-wide, make cross-curricular connections, coordinate units, and integrate content areas. Avance ensures that teachers of related subjects (i.e. science and math) meet for common planning time during the week. This time has been built into teachers’ schedules as part of the school day. This time is used to plan strategically and build units around “big ideas” or knowledge networks. This time has also been used to refine schoolwide writing rubrics and other instructional tools. During their weekly collaborative, cross-curricular planning times, teachers builds on the school-wide projects and concepts that have been introduced.

5. How Progress will be Monitored

Avance Assessments

The following is a sample of the kinds of standardized reports available to the school community for analysis:

- Academia Avance Data Dashboard: Two page snap-shot of school performance. Information includes attendance, enrollment, demographics, curriculum embedded assessments, and CST data.
- STAR Test Results are mailed to our school, and in turn Academia Avance mails individual data results home to the student’s parents. Parents and others can also access CST school data by using the California Department of Education website.
- Each House Advisory instructor reviews the STAR data with each student and with parents during Parent-Teacher conferences.
- Individual Learning Plans are monitored by their House instructor. Regular meetings (two times a quarter) are held with each student, to monitor the student’s academic and social progress. As needed, new goals are set with clear benchmarks identified for yearly growth.
- Curriculum Embedded Assessments: quarterly teacher/ department tests.

CELDT-- the California English Learners Development Test, is another standardized test generated by the state to look at the progress of students who are developing proficiency in English. All EL students take this in the fall of every school year. API, the Academic Performance Index, is determined by the state. Our students’ scores on the STAR and additional demographic statistical information are used by the state to determine our API according to the state formula. This statistical data includes sub-group reports on meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

On the department level, teachers have developed standards-based curriculum
Academia Avance Single Plan for Student Achievement

and are in the process of developing or testing common assessments that enable the instructional staff to assess, on an on-going basis, student competency in key content-area standards. Teachers share their analyses of student performance and suitability of the benchmarks for assessing student

Student Grades: Reports are mailed home frequently (every 5 weeks) during the year to indicate student progress. Parents may contact teachers or meet with House Advisor on a regular basis.

Connect5 (previously TeleParent): Phone communication tool used to provide parents with up-to-date information about their students’ attendance, class performance and test scores, as well as school events and upcoming activities.

State Assessments

As is required by the California Department of Education, students will also participate in the STAR (CST, CAT6, SABE) and all other mandated accountability programs (CELDT, CAHSEE, etc.). Academia Avance will meet all statewide standards and conduct the pupil assessments required pursuant to Section 60602.5 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. We firmly believe that the academic program will fully prepare students for success in these statewide assessment programs. Additional support structures (i.e., after-school tutoring, summer enrichment programs, mentoring programs, peer study groups, etc.) will be in place to ensure that students surpass the performance of their peers in comparable high school settings.

If the Avance issues the state assessments independently of the District, Avance will grant authority to the state of California to provide a copy of all test results directly to the District as well as the Charter School.

Ongoing Assessment of Pupil Outcome Goals

Student Performance and Assessment will take into account several assessment methods, specifically based upon the assessment program created and researched by Richard J. Stiggins, author of Student Involved Classroom Assessment, 3rded., 2001. Stiggins' work is based on the idea that effective assessment must directly correspond to specific achievement targets that have been made apparent to students as part of the instructional program. This method has been included based on proven successful use in secondary educational settings, and includes such assessments as selected response, essays, performances, and products.
In the context of the assessments described above, Avance will use the Zoom!/Data Director tools. This system will allow teachers to generate standards-based assessments, and upload and analyze data in real time. Staff will use all pieces of the assessment system in an ongoing effort to examine student performance and revise instructional practices to address student needs. At no time will Avance become complacent with the examination of assessment findings. Staff will continuously be challenged to rethink current pedagogical practices to meet the changing needs of new and existing student populations.

Student interaction with teachers around data is a vital component of Avance. The use of Zoom!/Data Director will assist in the qualitative assessment will assist in the qualitative assessment of student growth in relation to the school goal of establishing a college-going culture.

6. Gauging Effectiveness

A key strategy for 2013-2014 is the continued full implementation of a data driven instruction methodology, possible via expanded use of Zoom/Data Director. The 2010-2011 academic year marked the beginning of the use of Data Director by all teachers. For 2013-2014, all teachers have developed and implemented benchmarks assessments in alignment with the state standards for the October, December and March Progress Reports. (Assessments will also be taken in June to use as calibration to the STAR results.) The data from these assessments was was to refine the instructional goals in the Individual Learning Plans for every student, discussed with the parents of the students (90%) at the October parent-teacher conferences. All teachers are on track to implement new benchmarks via Data Director for the end of the Fall Semester, and again for the March parent-teacher conferences.

The reports available via Data Director support the oversight of the school via the review of data between different stakeholder groups. This was coordinated as part of the school’s WASC accreditation process. All stakeholders groups were involved in the preparations for the final WASC visit of April 2013 that lead to a six year accreditation.

Survey instruments will be used in January 2014 to document how the process and information was experienced, with the outcomes used to modify the school-wide plan.

Copies of the progress reports for these stake holders will be provided to LACOE for guidance on improvement. Feedback from LACOE in 2013-2014 will be critical for our preparations for subsequent charter renewal review.