

Inspire & Empower Connections Academy

Continuous Improvement Plan 2021-2022

Public charter school shall collaborate on the plan and engage students, parents, educators and the community as appropriate. The plan shall: Be data-driven, specifically in student outcomes, and shall include, but not be limited to, analyses of demographic data, student achievement and growth data, graduation rates, and college and career readiness; Set clear and measurable targets based on student outcomes; Include a clearly developed and articulated vision and mission; and Include key indicators for monitoring performance. Idaho Code 33-320

Inspire & Empower Connections Academy

Mission Statement

We will help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. Connections Academy is a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch “school without walls” that brings out the best in every student.

Vision Statement

All Inspire Students Can and Must Learn

We Will:

- Create a learning environment to achieve high student outcomes
- Challenge all students to succeed
- Commit to work together with our students, colleagues, and parents to make Inspire’s vision a reality

Overview of District

Opened in 2005, Inspire, the Idaho Connections Academy is a tuition-free, K–12 online public school that students attend from home. Inspire brings a fully accredited public education directly to your family’s door—anywhere in Idaho. Inspire, the Idaho Connections Academy, is authorized under state law by the Idaho Charter School Commission. The school is operated by Inspire Academics Inc., a nonprofit corporation, through a contract with Connections Academy, LLC, to provide its educational program and other services.

Additional achievement data and information can be obtained from the Report Card to the Public on Inspire’s website Disclosure page:

<https://www.connectionsacademy.com/idaho-online-school/overview/governance/notices>
<https://idahoschools.org/districts/457>

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Planning Committee

Inspire Connections Academy gathered key stakeholders to work on the Continuous Improvement Plan, which included both the Literacy Intervention Program and the College and Career Advising plans for the 2021-2022 school year. The committee reviewed student achievement data and affirmed the mission and vision statement of the school. The group conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and reviewed the goals set in the following areas: graduation, math, reading, student retention, student promotion, parent satisfaction, student growth, college readiness, as well as career & technical programs. We met in a hybrid with some attending in person and others attending virtually due to COVID-19.

Membership of committee included: Marcy Moore, Amber Pasker, Alaina Gilligan, Barbie Green, Beth Sampson, Beverly Wood, Brandi Bretz, Cook Jones, Danielle Ranko, Denise Allen, Diane Terhune, Eric Lichte, Eva Polizzi, Greg Stone, Heidi Crane, Jedediah Duquette, Brian Rosta, Karen Baker, Kelly Peters, Kenneth Hunter, Kenny McAlister, Leslie Albor, Mandolyn Garcia-Ruiz, Mark Plummer, Melissa Olson, Michael Burke, Molly O'Malley, Nikki Briggs, Richard Henry, Rick Nosik, Sarah Burke, Shelley Down, Sheri Billett, Stephanie Marsala, Susan Shock, Susan Whipple, Wendy Graham and Karen Haines.

Teachers and Administrators

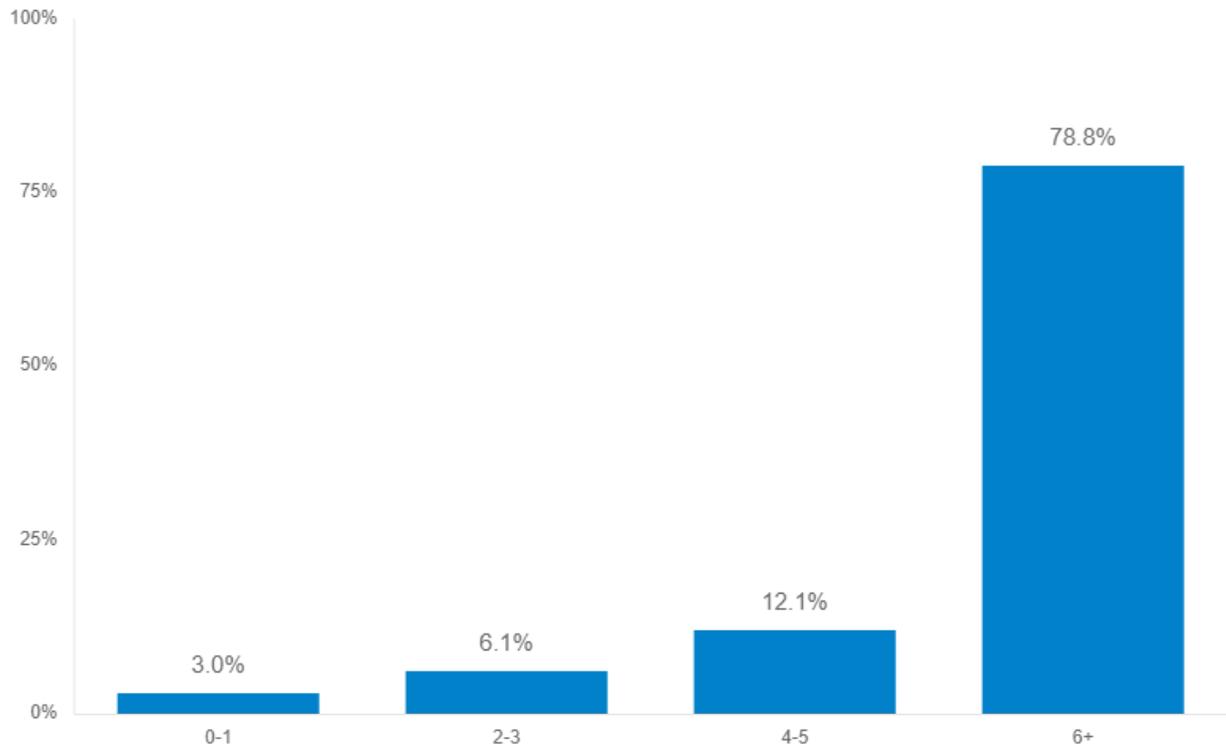
100% of Inspire teachers are highly qualified in core academic subjects. Each administrator holds current credentials and has completed all of the State of Idaho requirements.

Professional Qualifications of Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

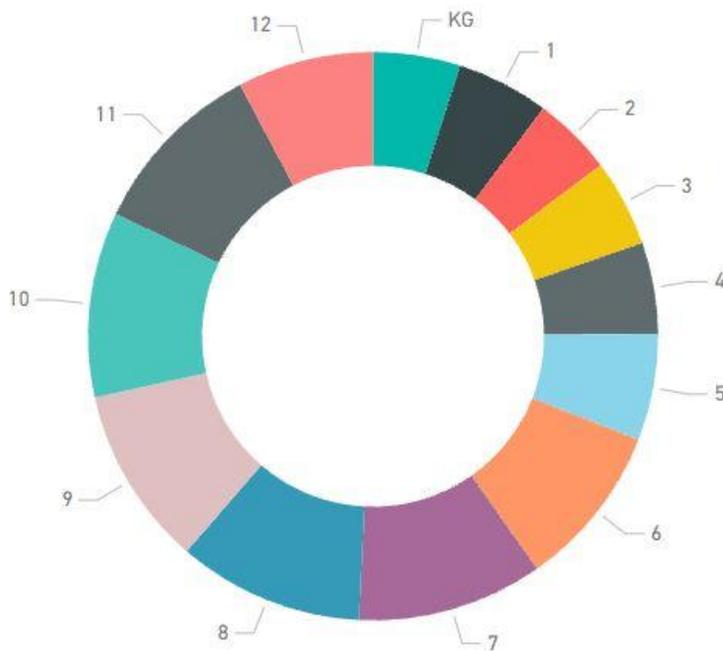
BA degree	BA +12 credits	BA +24 credits	MA degree	MA +12 credits	MA +24 credits	PhD degree or MA +36
3	3	17	6	2	1	16

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Percentage of Teachers by Years of Experience



Student Data - Enrolled by Grade



Clear and Measurable Targets

In comparing district leadership and student achievement, Waters and Marzano (2006) identified five specific district leadership responsibilities that positively correlated with student achievement:

- Establishing a collaborative process to set goals;
- Establishing “non-negotiable goals” (that is, goals all staff must act upon once set by the board) in at least areas: student achievement and classroom instruction;
- Having the board align with and support district goals;
- Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction;
- Using resources to support achievement and instruction goals.

See more at:

<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards.html#sthash.VhnirE6J.dpuf>

School Goals

Inspire will increase the 2021-2022 graduation cohort rate by 5 percentage points.

Inspire will increase math proficiency as measured by the ISAT by 12 percentage points by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

The percentage of K-3 students scoring Tier 1 (for their grade) will increase by 5% from the fall Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) administration to the spring IRI administration during the 2021-22 SY.

8% of K-3 students in Tier III will improve and move to Tier II or Tier I from the fall to spring assessment as measured by the IRI.

15% of K-3 students in Tier II will improve and move to Tier I from the fall to spring assessment as measured by the IRI.

College and Career Readiness

Inspire will use the ASCA National Model. College and career advising are integral in a comprehensive school counseling program based on ASCA standards. Inspire uses a variety of communication methods to reach students and their families. Phone calls, Webmails (internal email system), LiveLessons, counseling department website with detailed information on scholarship opportunities as well as upcoming events.

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Inspire is working to develop a Career & Technical Education program including for approval a Business Pathway during the 2021-2020 school year.

Courses are designed to help students make informed decisions and set postsecondary education and career goals:

- 9th Grade – Freshman Success course
- 11th Grade – College Prep with SAT and College Prep with ACT courses
- 12th Grade – Senior Success course

Also, 9-12th graders have the option of taking Career Explorations and Work Study / Internship, and some of our students with an IEP enroll in the Transitions course, which helps prepare students for a successful life after high school.

In addition, Inspire and Empower has a full time Social Emotional Learning Counselor to support students needs.

One-on-One 4-Year Plan Activities:

- 8th Grade – Meet with homeroom teacher and/or school counselor to devise 4-year plan
- 8-11th Grade – Meet with homeroom teacher and/or school counselor for end-of-year course placement and review of Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)

Senior Advising will offer assistance with the following:

- Scholarship research assistance
- Scholarship application support
- FAFSA completion assistance and support
- College application support
- Resume and job applications

Events:

- Connections Academy College Application Week – September
- Idaho College Virtual Fair LiveLesson – late September/early October
- Career Night - October
- Idaho College Application Month – mid October (activities planned throughout the week)
- Multiple college tours are scheduled around the state throughout the year

Literacy Plan

Program Summary 2020-2021

Inspire uses a variety of research-based interventions to support struggling readers in grades K-3. After the fall IRI, teachers of students who scored a 2 or 3 conducted further reading screeners,

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including DIBELS and Core Phonics to determine what students needed the most support with (i.e. phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension.) Interventions were assigned based on the area of greatest need. Teachers conducted phone conferences with parent/caretaker to discuss the student's needs and the best plan for the student. Many of the plans included an extended-day program for 20 minutes per day, 2-5 days per week with an additional 30 minutes of small group instruction for 30 weeks. Additionally, students were offered extended-year programs where they could continue working in a reading intervention for 90 minutes a week for 8 weeks over the summer. Total, students received 35-65 hours of intervention during the school year, depending on IRI score and needs and 12 hours during the summer.

Curriculum links provide case studies, research and efficacy reports:

- Reading Eggs: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, spelling, decoding
https://assets.readingeggssassets.com/research_reports/reading_eggs_research-fp-b6a3a4ba.pdf
- Reading Eggspress: fluency, spelling, comprehension, decoding
<https://readingeggsspress.com.au/assets/rex-comp-srb-2014.pdf>
- SuccessMaker Reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, spelling, writing, decoding
<https://www.pearsoned.com/wp-content/uploads/sm-reading-rct-report1.pdf>
- HELPS Program: repeated reading, fluency, comprehension
http://www.helpsprogram.org/about_research_s1.php
- Phonics for Reading: phonics, fluency, comprehension, spelling
<http://www.casamples.com/downloads/Phonics-2011-research.pdf>
- Istation: Istation's reading curriculum and assessments are based on data from scientific and independent research studies that have proven Istation's effectiveness in elevating reading fluency.
<https://www.istation.com/About/Studies>

In reviewing our program, one of our strengths is our screening process identifies students using multiple measures (i.e. IRI, DIBELS, and/or Core Phonics.) During the 2020-2021 school year, the school will add benchmark testing utilizing Star Early Literacy and Star Reading.

Another Inspire strength is utilizing various curriculum programs and methods to meet student needs. One of the areas of need is ensuring that students utilize the interventions that are provided. In an online setting, students are provided with the tools, encouraged to use them and monitored for participation and growth. When students aren't utilizing the interventions, phone calls and conferences are held to discuss the problems with parents/caregivers.

Program Summary 2021-2022

Inspire Connections Academy has numerous programs and strategies to implement support for struggling readers in grades K-3. After the fall IRI, teachers of students scoring a 2 or a 3 will conduct further reading screeners, such as Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, DIBELS and Core

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Phonics to determine what students need the most support with (i.e. fluency, phonics) and assign interventions based on the area of greatest need. Students who scored a 3 will receive at least 60 hours of intervention and students scoring a 2 will receive at least 30 hours of intervention. Inspire Connections Academy will measure fall to spring growth on the IRI, using the IStation Program and Renaissance Star Benchmark assessments.

Parent involvement--a team approach

The elementary interventionist will work with classroom teachers and parents/caregivers to develop an Individual Literacy Plan for each student which may incorporate several avenues for providing the appropriate number of intervention hours. The plans will utilize interventions within the school day, extended-day and extended-year, depending on grade and student needs. Communication will occur via webmail (our internal email system) to collect input from teachers. Phone calls to parent/caregiver will occur to collect input from parents and discuss options. A written follow up with the written plan will be sent to the parent/caregiver and teacher.

RTI to determine intervention needs

Inspire uses the Response to Intervention model to determine the level of intervention a student needs while providing the hours necessary for the state intervention plan. After students are screened using the IRI, Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, DIBELS and/or Core Phonics assessments, the data is compared. Students who scored a 2 or 3 and have had continuous enrollment from a previous year have additional data reviewed to determine if the student was responding to the interventions from the year before. Students who responded to the intervention from the previous year, but still need intervention as indicated by screenings are placed into an intervention similar to the previous year. Students who did not respond are moved to the next Tier in the intervention program and are assigned a different intervention, increased intensity or frequency of previous intervention. New students are given 30 days in the general curriculum with Tier I interventions (teacher led instructional sessions and a three times per week Supplemental Support Program--depending on IRI scores) and then they are rescreened using Star Reading, Star Early Literacy, DIBELS and/or Core Phonics. Students who have shown a positive response to the general curriculum with Tier I intervention continue at that level. Students who have not responded positively to the general curriculum and Tier I interventions are placed in Tier II and receive additional teacher led sessions and/or increased Supplemental Support Program assignments, or a different Supplemental Support Program. Progress is monitored throughout the process according to RTI protocol: Tier I, at least once each month; Tier II, every other week; Tier II, every week. A student can be exited from intervention and moved back to Tier I without intervention if a parent refuses intervention and has signed our form indicating that they are refusing intervention or if the student meets the Spring reading benchmark for their grade level on three consecutive measures and can demonstrate it with the interventionist and general education teacher.

General guidelines for Inspire's Literacy Intervention Program

To understand our intervention program, it's important to understand a bit about the delivery of education online. All students participate in a core curriculum, which includes Language Arts,

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Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Art and Educational Technology. These are delivered online with the guidance of a Learning Coach (parents, caretaker or parent designee.) Teachers provide targeted supplemental instruction via an online classroom (LiveLesson). These instructional sessions are designed to focus on student needs and are considered a supplement to the online curriculum that is provided to the student. The amount of supplemental instruction increases as the student's needs increase. Students who are making progress in the general curriculum, may not attend any of these supplemental instructional sessions. Students who need intervention attend these sessions on a regular basis. These supplemental sessions would be considered within the school day intervention.

In addition to providing these sessions, students requiring intervention are typically assigned a Supplemental Instructional Support Program (SISP). These are research-based computer instructional programs which students use independently. The student who scores a 2 on the IRI is typically assigned two 20 minutes sessions each week. The student who scores a 3 on the IRI is typically assigned five 20 minute sessions each week. These programs would be considered extended-day because they are in addition to the general curriculum that is provided to the students, requiring an additional 40-100 minutes of instruction each week.

All students who scored a 2 or 3 on the IRI are offered an intervention program during the summer. Students participate in the program 90 minutes each week for 8 weeks for a total of 12 hours of instruction and practice.

Kindergarten

At the Kindergarten level, we use the following Supplemental Instructional Support Programs and instructional resources:

- Reading Eggs: online SISP focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, sight words, decoding and fluency.
- Istation: Istation's reading curriculum and assessments are based on data from scientific and independent research studies that have proven Istation's effectiveness in elevating reading fluency. <https://www.istation.com/About/Studies>

Most Kindergartners who score a 2 or 3 on the IRI will start with Reading Eggs either two or five 20 minute sessions per week. They also attend a 30 minute LiveLesson session with the general education teacher or interventionist focusing on letter naming, letter sound fluency, phonemic awareness and basic phonics.

During school day instruction: 30 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 15 hours of instruction

Extended-day instruction: 40 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 20 hours of instruction or 100 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 50 hours of instruction

Totals:

- Students scoring a 2 will receive 30 hours of instruction during the school year

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- Students scoring a 3 (previously this was a 1) will receive 60 hours of instruction during the school year
- (Optional) Extended-year program: 90 minutes/week for 8 weeks = 12 hours instruction

1st and 2nd Grades (some 3rd graders depending on level of need)

Students in 1st and 2nd grades and those 3rd graders who are determined to have skills similar to students in 1st or 2nd grade will have further diagnostic testing completed. We are using and letter naming and letter sound mastery test, sight word mastery lists and Words Their Way placement test to help determine missing skills. Students will then be assigned to attend supplemental support lessons (LiveLessons) each week focused on that skill. Students will also be assigned specific practice to complete during the week and attend a 30 minute LiveLesson session with the general education teacher or interventionist focusing on letter naming, letter sound fluency, phonemic awareness and basic phonics. Once the student has demonstrated proficiency in the skill, he/she will be assessed for the next missing skill and assigned to the appropriate supplemental support lesson. Students will be monitored for overall progress towards their reading fluency goals on a regular basis depending on the RTI intervention level.

Students in these grades will also be assigned an appropriate Supplemental Instructional Support Program. We use the following SISPs and resources for 1st and 2nd grades.

- Reading Eggs: online SISP focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, sight words, decoding and fluency.
- Reading Eggspress: online SISP focusing on fluency, spelling, decoding, and comprehension.
- HELPS Program: individually administered repeated reading, fluency, comprehension. (When this program is used, the student meets with the teacher once a week in a one-on-one reading session. Parents/caretakers are trained in using the program each day during the remainder of the school week. This is often used as a more intensive instructional support for students who have not responded to the online SISPs focusing on fluency.)
- Istation: Istation's reading curriculum and assessments are based on data from scientific and independent research studies that have proven Istation's effectiveness in elevating reading fluency. <https://www.istation.com/About/Studies>

During school day instruction: 30 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 15 hours of instruction

Extended-day instruction: 40 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 20 hours of instruction or 100 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 50 hours of instruction

Totals:

- Students scoring a 2 will receive 30 hours of instruction during the school year
- Students scoring a 3 (previously this was a 1) will receive 60 hours of instruction during the school year
- (Optional) Extended-year program: 90 minutes/week for 8 weeks = 12 hours instruction

3rd Grade

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Students in 3rd grade who demonstrate a need for basic sound, phonics and sight word instruction will be placed in with our 1st and 2nd graders, following the same mastery based program. 3rd graders who have demonstrated a need for more advanced phonics, fluency and comprehension difficulties follow a different program. Students attend a 30 minute LiveLesson session each week with the general education teacher or intervention teacher. They are also assigned an appropriate SISP that is utilized 40-100 minutes/week depending on the IRI score.

We use the following SISPs and resources for students in 3rd grade who need advanced phonics, fluency and comprehension support:

- Reading Eggspress: online SISP focusing on fluency, spelling, decoding, and comprehension.
- HELPS Program: individually administered repeated reading, fluency, comprehension. (When this program is used, the student meets with the teacher once a week in a one-on-one reading session. Parents/caretakers are trained in using the program each day during the remainder of the school week. This is often used as a more intensive instructional support for students who have not responded to the online SISPs focusing on fluency.)
- Istation: Istation's reading curriculum and assessments are based on data from scientific and independent research studies that have proven Istation's effectiveness in elevating reading fluency. <https://www.istation.com/About/Studies>
- Phonics for Reading: individually administered program designed to remediate phonics, fluency, comprehension, and spelling skill deficits. (Students attend one LiveLesson each week and are assigned practice exercise to complete each week.)

During school day instruction: 30 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 15 hours of instruction

Extended-day instruction: 40 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 20 hours of instruction or 100 minutes/week for 30 weeks = 50 hours of instruction

Totals:

- Students scoring a 2 will receive 30 hours of instruction during the school year
- Students scoring a 3 (previously this was a 1) will receive 60 hours of instruction during the school year
- (Optional) Extended-year program: 90 minutes/week for 8 weeks = 12 hours instruction

Comprehensive Literacy Plan Alignment

Inspire's literacy intervention plan fulfills the requirements of the comprehensive literacy plan and focuses on teacher involvement in the students' literacy programs, professional development, and PLC work. Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development, offered multiple times per month, to continue developing their skills in relation to mindset, supplemental instructional support programs, collaboration, reflective practices, feedback, and data. The formative assessment, DIBELS and Star benchmark assessments, drives instruction and helps teachers determine which intervention is best for each student. The intervention

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program is focused on a collaborative effort between the teacher, parent, and student. The school principal and assistant principal attend one of the Elementary School PLC meetings each month in order to stay involved with the academic decisions and collaborations at the K-3 level. Vertical PLC teams meet monthly to discuss cross-curricular academic vocabulary and standards alignment. The elementary PLC leader is a part of the school's leadership team, which meets each week to discuss student data focused on monitoring school goals.

Parent Involvement

Five families reviewed and provided input for Inspire Connections Academy Literacy Plan.

Parents are notified within 3 weeks of Inspire receiving all of the IRI scores, as per Idaho code. This means that parents are notified within 21 days, giving the parents and school time to adjust individual literacy plans as needed.

Plans are created no more than 30 days after a student has been identified as needing an intervention based on the IRI scores. The elementary interventionist will work with grade level teachers to conduct phone conferences with each parent to determine which intervention program will meet the needs of the student. Parents will work with the classroom teacher to determine which intervention program works best while providing the appropriate number of hours for that student's grade level. The plans will utilize interventions within the school day, extended-day and extended-year. Teachers monitor student progress every two weeks and adjust the intervention based on each student's progress or lack thereof. The interventions are monitored by the school's Student Support Team. Specific student data is discussed in the weekly elementary PLC meetings.

Inspire Connections Academy continues to focus on ensuring every student has an individualized learning plan, specific to their educational goals and needs. We continue to commit to providing resources and support for each child to achieve high levels of academic success.