



December 18, 2020

Dear Avondale School District Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2019-20 educational progress for The Diploma and Careers Institute (DCI), an alternative high school within the district. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Todd Biederwolf, DCI's Chief Academic Officer at Todd.Biederwolf@Avondaleschools.org for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the [MI School Data](#) website, or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2019-20 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given. DCI has not been assigned any of these labels.

However, as an alternative school, DCI works with a student population that has a history of inconsistent success in school. As a result, a high percent of DCI students are credit deficient and "out of step" (behind) their graduation class cohort. In addition, due to the granting of an "enrollment age exception" by the Michigan Department of Education, many DCI students are non-traditionally aged, with approximately 40% of our students in the 19-20 school year being between 19 & 22 years of age.

Given the unique characteristics of our students, the full virtual operational framework of the DCI alternative education program provides both a high-quality educational opportunity, as well as the needed "anytime, anyplace" flexibility to access the DCI curriculum, courseware and academic supports under various learning conditions. This flexibility is critical given the often unstable home environments and complex lives of older students who are often living independently, working full-time and/or raising families themselves.

The 20-21 DCI school improvement plan remains focused on supporting our students at an even higher level in the attainment of their graduation goal. In the ongoing 20-21 school year, DCI employs nearly double the number of certified teachers when compared to the 19-20 school year. These highly qualified staff support students with a wider range of content-area certifications and provide additional

supports in areas such as ESL and Special Education services, as well as social work services for eligible students.

With enrollment in 19-20 of approximately 185 students, and given our short, two-year history, only small numbers of students meet the “Full Academic Year” (FAY) and 3 consecutive count-period requirements. As a result, our reportable student cohorts do not meet the minimum number of reportable participants that result in standardized testing data being statistically valid and reportable.

While this “standardized data” isn’t available for analysis at this time, DCI “tracks” other performance indicators at the local and state level as part of our performance measurement and school improvement protocols.

As an alternative school, each student’s graduation is representative of a significant “bounce-back” by the graduating student. We are proud that our number of graduations rose from 37 in the 18-19 school year, our first year of operation, to 59 in the 19-20 school year. As State of Michigan agencies CEPI and Mi-School data reflect, a significant percentage of these graduates graduated under either the 5-year or the 6-year graduation cohort. While high numbers of graduates under such designations in traditional schools could be an indicator of concern, in alternative education, high percentages of graduates under these designations are indicators of success and are positive outcomes that align with our mission and our operational requirements.

An additional component of our School Improvement Plan implemented this year (20-21) enables DCI to monitor student engagement and academic progress on a “real time” basis. We “upload” student engagement data on a daily basis to enable our staff to intervene as needed with “immediacy” should a student begin to show evidence of less than adequate academic engagement and progress. This improvement in the “progress monitoring” of our students is creating improved student achievement outcomes in the number of classes completed and growth in the number of students “closing the credit gap” relative to graduation and their cohort graduating class. We believe these progress monitoring and intervention strategies will raise student achievement and graduation rates going forward.

DCI is excited about the future that our students are creating for themselves. While their participation in upper echelon classes such as AP classes and dual enrollment is limited, creating the ability of an alternative education student to complete classes with strong grades and ultimately achieve their high school graduation and high school diploma goals **IS** “high level success”, as well as being our primary responsibility. At DCI, we are proud of our students, proud of their hard work, and proud of their success! Further, we believe that they, and DCI, are just getting started!! We looked forward to the continued success of DCI students and of DCI itself going forward.

Sincerely,

Todd Biederwolf

Chief Academic Officer