

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: May 20, 2008

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON CROSSROADS CENTER**

ORIGINATOR:

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INFORMATION

That the Board of Education receives an update on the progress of the Crossroads Center.

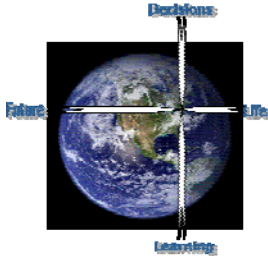
Baltimore County Public Schools CROSSROADS CENTER

Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM) An Alternative Educational Program Midyear Program Overview Executive Summary

Crossroads Center, a Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM), is the fifth alternative center within the Baltimore County Public School (BCPS) system and provides a unique alternative learning program for students in Grades 6 to 10. The enrollment on September 30, 2007, was 380 students with the highest concentration of students in Grades 8 and 9. The student body, while 66 percent male, is ethnically diverse, evenly divided between Caucasian and minority students, and it serves the Central, Southeast, and Northeast areas of Baltimore County. The highest concentration of enrolled students are from the Northeast area (52 percent), followed by the Southeast (37 percent). The model focuses on academic and behavioral interventions to address the needs of low-performing and disruptive students. These are secondary students performing at basic level on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA) or High School Assessments (HSA) in reading and mathematics and who are at greatest risk of not graduating from high school. Approximately 30 percent of the students have identified special needs. Of these, 22 percent are special education service students with IEPs and 8 percent are students with 504 Plans. Eligibility for free or reduced meals is at 60 percent.

The academic program aligned with the Voluntary State Curriculum, Core Learning Goals, focuses on reading and mathematics in the four core subject areas, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Behaviorally, the focus is on improving deportment through the use of a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports based program (PBIS). Unlike other alternative program models within BCPS, Crossroads Center is a one-year, full-day program. The program is centered on the belief that it is critical for low-performing, disruptive students to have every opportunity to gain necessary skills to be successful when returning to the home school. To increase each student's focus on achievement, the facility consists of five smaller learning communities which are uniquely designed to minimize opportunities for distractions and barriers to learning. Students remain within the community for the entire school day. Each community is staffed with at least ten adults that support the academic program and the social and emotional learning of each student. Research suggests that positive outcomes associated with smaller learning communities stem from the ability to create close, personal environments in which teachers can work collaboratively with each other and with small sets of students to challenge and support student learning. The academic program is delivered by teachers who are highly qualified and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) certified. Additional support is rendered through school counselors, social workers, a nurse, a school resource officer (SRO), and administrative team members. Data for semester two should reflect a decrease in the suspension rate of 48.2 percent given the addition of 12 staff positions, implementation of a restructured schoolwide behavior plan, the enhancement of teacher-student relationships, and a 50 percent decrease in the number of students referred to the office.

Most importantly, the program appears to be meeting the goal of increasing the academic capacity of students in reading and mathematics. The results from STAR computer adaptive reading and mathematics tests administered in September 2007 and February 2008 indicate that students are making gains and achieving. Overall, gains in reading averaged 1.2 years growth, while mathematics gains averaged 0.8 months' growth. Our affiliation with the University of Maryland will provide us with an external evaluation and review of the Crossroads Center program with surveys of teachers, students, and families to be completed in late May 2008 by Dr. Kathryn Wentzel. With continued systemwide support, the Crossroads Center will grow professionally and effectively meet its established goals of improved student achievement.



Baltimore County Public Schools
CROSSROADS CENTER
Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM)
An Alternative Educational Program
Midyear Program Review

Crossroads Center

Connecting a student's positive decisions with life, learning, and the future

We are pleased to provide this Interim Report on the Crossroads Center, Baltimore County Public Schools', *Secondary Academic Intervention Model (SAIM)*, alternative educational program. This report provides background information, detailed demographics about participating students, program review, and midyear assessment data results.

BACKGROUND

History of the Program: No Child Left Behind and the Bridge to Excellence/Master Plan have set standards that Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) will need to meet. BCPS has a need to provide a continuum of Alternative Programs for students who are at risk for academic failure, chronic disruptive behaviors, and/or dropping out of school. The comprehensive schools are seeking relief from the pressures of students: 1) who are not academically able to achieve with their peers; 2) who are disruptive to the classroom environment or the school; and 3) who are not meeting success in school and dropping out, which reduces the graduation rate. In most large school districts, approximately 30 percent of the students who begin high school do not graduate. One out of every three ninth graders has repeated at least one grade.

Low-performing disruptive students are often responsible for compromising the learning process of other students who wish to learn. A SAIM model offered possibilities for giving these students a fresh start, the attention required to get them back on track for academic success, and ultimately focused on graduation while relieving the district's teachers of students who take time away from the learning process because of low skills and disruptive behavior. The model proposed a method to assist Baltimore County Public Schools to:

- Improve the reading and mathematics level from basic to proficient after 180 days.
- Improve scores on state skills tests (MSA and HSA).
- Improve grade promotion.
- Improve safety and student behavior.
- Give principals another option when working with families and students to most effectively address the needs of the student.

The *Secondary Academic Intervention Model* proposal asked each feeder secondary school to transfer students, with parent and student participating in the decision process, to an alternative program to gain academic and behavioral support. These students were not to be suspended or disciplinarily removed due to violations of the behavior code. Rather, the proposal provided an academic option to families prior to student behaviors escalating to the level of suspension/expulsion.

BCPS data between 2002 and 2005 supported the design of an alternative program to provide services to students in Grades 6-10 to enhance basic reading and mathematics' skills while addressing disruptive behavior. These data indicate that on average 3,700 students per year at Grades 6-10 would fall into this category. About 24 percent of the 3,700 could be expected to qualify as special education students. The SAIM alternative program proposed was to focus on reading and mathematics while offering only the four core academic courses of English (reading), mathematics, science, and social studies. The program was designed to meet the IEP needs of fully included students who required special education services. Statistically, the Southwest/Northwest and the Northeast/Southeast were seen as likely targets for the SAIM type program. Central area students would be able to access either site depending on the proximity to the location of the center.

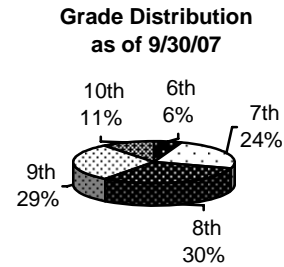
Program Launch: Between the late fall of 2006 and early winter of 2007, under the direction and guidance of Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education of Baltimore County, and with the support of Mr. Jim Smith, County Executive, the Baltimore County Council, Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Dale R. Rauenzahn, Acting Assistant Superintendent, STEM, (Executive Director, Student Support Services), an appropriate site was sought in the Northeast/ Southeast area for a SAIM program. Through a partnership with St. John's Properties the site was located within the complex Baltimore Crossroads at I95. Within seven months the project went from design and ground breaking to the opening of the Crossroads Center for teaching and learning. The impediments that challenged student progress in the traditional school setting were removed and the center was strategically designed to minimize opportunities for distractions. Students work within a smaller learning community model where each student is known by 12 or more adults with whom he/she interacts daily. A vision became a reality for the Baltimore County Public Schools.

On August 20, 2007, the center opened to faculty and staff. On August 27, the first day of the 2007-2008 school year began for 408 students from 26 middle and high feeder schools when they entered the Crossroads Center. As with the opening of any new program or venture, there were many expected and unexpected challenges. Using a common sense approach, along with the skills and talents of others within the Baltimore County Public School system and reaching into the community, each obstacle was met and resolved.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Enrollment: The table below shows the grade distribution of the students at the Crossroads Center. Students were recommended to the program from comprehensive middle and high schools. The greatest concentration of students is found in Grades 8 and 9. Many schools elected to begin grade 6 students at the home school for ease of transition from elementary Grade 5 to middle school.

Enrollment 1/26/08						
<i>Grade Level</i>	6	7	8	9	10	<i>Grand Total</i>
Enrollment 9/30/07	21	93	115	111	40	380
Withdrawn	6	22	28	46	13	115
Total	15	71	87	65	27	265

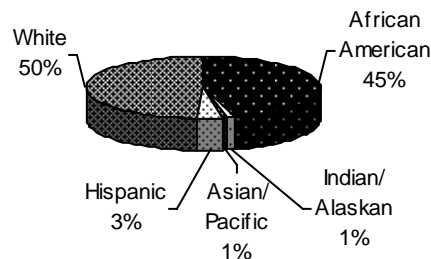


The enrollment table also includes an accounting of students who have withdrawn from Crossroads Center, which total 115 as of January 26, 2008. The reasons for withdrawal include “life changes” (for example, a move out of the district or lack of interest). The percentages of students falling into each of these reasons for withdrawal are shown.

<i>Students Withdrawn as of January 26, 2008</i>		
<i>Reason</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
IEP Return to Home School	36	31%
Rosedale Center	30	26%
Evening High School	25	22%
Life Changes	18	16%
Health	5	4%
Immunization non-compliance	1	1%
Total	115	100%

Demographics: The students participating in the Crossroads Center program are ethnically diverse, representing a fair cross-section of the county. The student body is evenly divided between Caucasian and minority students (50 percent and 50 percent respectively).

Race and Ethnicity 1/26/08



The gender breakdown on Crossroads Center students shows a concentration of males (66 percent) to females (34 percent).

Approximately 60 percent of students are low-income, as documented by family income forms indicating qualification for free or reduced lunch. Of these 60 percent, 47 percent qualify for free lunch while an additional 13 percent qualify for reduced price lunch. It should be noted that all students attending Crossroads Center receive both free breakfast and lunch daily.

Enrolled students are distributed across the three areas (Central, Northeast, and Central) served by this program.

**Crossroads Center
Student Enrollment by Area and by School**

Area	Home School	Grade Level					Total	% of Students Enrolled by Area
		6	7	8	9	10		
Central	Cockeysville Middle		1	3			4	11%
	Dulaney High				3		3	
	Dumbarton Middle			2			2	
	Hereford Middle		1	1			2	
	Loch Raven High				1	1	2	
	Loch Raven Tech Academy		11	3			14	
	Towson High				3		3	
TOTAL # STUDENTS						30		

Area	Home School	Grade Level					Total	% of Students Enrolled by Area
		6	7	8	9	10		
Northeast	Golden Ring Middle	1	7	7			15	52%
	Kenwood High				17	6	23	
	Middle River Middle	1	7	8			16	
	Overlea High				13	1	14	
	Parkville High				10	5	15	
	Parkville Middle		5	4			9	
	Perry Hall High				3	2	5	
	Perry Hall Middle	3	3	3			9	
	Pine Grove Middle	1	1	6			8	
	Stemmers Run Middle	4	9	10			23	
TOTAL # STUDENTS						137		

Area	Home School	Grade Level					Total	% of Students Enrolled by Area
		6	7	8	9	10		
Southeast	Chesapeake High				3	7	10	37%
	Deep Creek Middle	1	3	5			9	
	Dundalk High				8		8	
	Dundalk Middle		4	9			13	
	General John Stricker Middle	2	8	12			22	
	Holabird Middle		7	13			20	
	Patapsco High				3	5	8	
	Sparrows Point Middle	3	1	4			8	
TOTAL # STUDENTS						98		

Special Learning Needs: In the Crossroads Center population, 30 percent of the students have identified special needs. Of these, 22 percent are special education students with IEPs and 8 percent are students with 504 Plans. The special education students have been identified with the following handicapping conditions: Specific Learning Disability, 37 percent, Emotional Disturbance, 9 percent, and Other Health Impairment, 54 percent. The percentage of enrolled students with identified special needs is consistent with other BCPS alternative school programs but above the typical comprehensive secondary school average. All identified student needs are met within an inclusive classroom setting with the support of a special educator. Collaboration between a student's home school and the Crossroads Center ensures that review is ongoing and identified needs are met. The addition of two special educators enables a collaborative and comprehensive service to students.

Teachers: The Crossroads Center is staffed by BCPS' employed, highly qualified, certified professional teachers working under the direction of an experienced secondary school principal and two assistant principals. The program is facilitated by 51 FTEs including 28 classroom teachers (two are special educators), five community leaders, eight itinerant teachers, three school counselors, one behavior interventionist, five social workers, and a school nurse. Additionally, the center is serviced by a full-time pupil personnel worker (PPW) and a school resource officer (SRO from BCPD). Twenty-eight highly qualified paraprofessionals bring additional classroom support to students. It should be noted in late September the original staffing allocation for classroom teachers was increased by the superintendent in support of teaching and learning. The numbers shown above include the additional positions (three math, three reading, two special educators, one behavior interventionist, and three paraeducators).

Of the 28 classroom teachers at the center, 20 are nontenured and completing their first year in the Baltimore County Public Schools. Of these teachers, nine taught in other systems for more than two years and eleven are first-year professionals. Four faculty members are retired-rehired teachers. Professional development opportunities for all faculty and staff members are ongoing and differentiated toward system initiatives, needs of the center/teachers including meeting student needs, behavior management, use of technology for enhanced student learning, content-specific topics and general team building. Intra-center learning has proved valuable and utilizes the expertise of the professionals among us each day.

Program: This one-year, full-day program was designed to assist low performing and disruptive students increase proficiency in reading and mathematics. All curricula are aligned with the Voluntary State Curriculum and other BCPS' standards. The curriculum offered reflects courses of study to accelerate achievement and to meet the requirements needed for graduation from high school. The instructional focus is on the four core academic classes of English/language arts (reading), mathematics, science, and social studies within a technologically enhanced learning environment. Each classroom is appointed with sound enhancement, visual projection tools and computers (laptops and PCs) to assist in meeting the varied learning styles of each student. Crossroads administers required state and local assessments in compliance with systemwide regulations. Students work within a smaller learning community model with enhanced adult attention and avoid unnecessary distractions faced within a larger traditional schoolhouse environment. During semester one, 8 percent of Crossroads Center students achieved honor roll status. Overall, grades are improving because of positive teacher-student relationships and student effort. Daily students participate in a personal development class to address social, emotional, societal and other affected needs. Behaviorally, the focus is on improving deportment through positive interventions and supports.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS): Within the first month it was recognized that the original behavior plan needed revision. The behavior committee took corrective action, and at the beginning of semester two a revised plan was implemented. Crossroads Center's PBIS based model is a schoolwide structured behavior management system of points and levels that provides positive feedback and reinforcement to students throughout the day. The level system supports our Code of Conduct (respect, responsibility and safety) and promotes appropriate behavior in the classroom and other school settings. There are four levels within the process. Each level requires students to exhibit higher levels of appropriate behavior while earning additional privileges. Points may be earned in each class during the day for demonstrating positive behavior in the areas of respect, responsibility, communication, compliance and an individual's personal goal. Privileges include choices of activities during lunch and participation in in-school and out-of-school activities. Weekly trips to the neighboring Police Athletic League Center (PAL) supported by the Baltimore County Police Department (PCPD), area parks, community venues, soon to be initiated reading to students at Chase Elementary School, game time including chess instruction and play, and more snack choices during lunch are examples of the earned privileges.

As a result of implementing the new schoolwide behavior plan, it is predicted that the suspension rate of 52.5 percent during quarter one and 48 percent during quarter two will show an appreciable decline for the remainder of the year. Administrators noted a 50 percent decrease in student behavior referrals to the office during quarter three.

To further enhance the safety of our learning environment, our school resource officer daily greets and interacts with students during lunch and at other times throughout the school day. His positive relationship with all members of Crossroads Center enhances our safe and orderly environment. Additionally, the SRO may be found in the classrooms as he instructs students drawing on Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT). This program encourages positive choices and decision making combined with community awareness.

Health Services: A full-time nurse functions as a partner within the school's interdisciplinary team working to promote optimal wellness in order to ensure attendance and academic success for each student. The school nurse acts to identify, assess, plan and evaluate the health needs of the school community. The nurse assists parents to access health care and serves as a liaison between parent and physician including assuring immunization compliance and securing vouchers for vision exams and glasses. Crossroads Center's nurse secured \$1,000 from the Tobacco Restitution Grant to provide materials for a tobacco prevention program.

Attendance: Data suggest that many students enrolled in alternative programs have developed a habit of poor attendance. During semester one, 8.5 percent of Crossroads Center students maintained "perfect attendance" but on average the daily attendance rate for all students was 85.3 percent. While this rate is consistent with other BCPS alternative programs, it is well below the county and state standard of 94 percent. In an effort to reverse the pattern of poor attendance, an aggressive plan of action is utilized. Daily personal phone calls are made by community leaders, followed by an evening ConnectEd callout system message identifying absence. Social workers, in tandem with other student support services personnel, work with individual students and families to reverse the trend. Our pupil personnel worker is aggressive when working with students and families, not hesitating as a last resort to involve the judicial system when families refuse to comply with school attendance regulations. Parents are consistently reminded that students must be in school to learn, improve, and graduate.

Transition to Comprehensive Schools: Students will return to home schools at the end of the year. In May and June, each home school will participate in “out-take” informational meetings at Crossroads Center where center staff will present home-school representatives with specific summary information relative to each student returning to that school. Home schools are encouraged to meet with their transitioning students and to include them in appropriate activities. Students will be prepared for the move through personal development classes. A parent night sponsored by the social workers will discuss dealing with change and adolescent students. During the coming school year, each comprehensive school will have social workers and itinerant teachers assigned to continue to work with former Crossroads Center students, families, and receiving staff to promote a successful return to a comprehensive school setting and to ensure academic and behavioral supports are in place for continued positive growth.

External Review: Dr. Kathryn Wentzel, Professor of Human Development, in the College of Education, Institute for Child Study, at the University of Maryland, along with graduate assistants, will examine student outcomes associated with a student’s enrollment at Crossroads Center. These outcomes include academic grades, attendance, and behavior. This study is designed to identify key predictors of student success at Crossroads Center. Students currently enrolled and those identified as incoming students for fall 2008, will be the target sample. Researchers will survey and interview a sample group of students and teachers. The results of this research will extend an understanding of the role of the classroom climate, student motivation, and teacher motivation in predicting success of students when they attend Crossroads Center. Data from this project should be useful in identifying factors that contribute to student success in this program and in developing more formal evaluation procedures.

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF BASELINE (SEPTEMBER 2007) AND INTERIM (FEBRUARY 2008) STANDARDIZED TESTING AT CROSSROADS CENTER

In order to present quantitative data relative to the program goal of increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and mathematics, Dr. Gary Brager, Supervisor of Research, in the Office of Research, Accountability, and Assessment prepared the following report.

Purpose of the Report

The current report describes the results of student achievement variables in the assessed areas of reading and mathematics. The data were obtained in September 2007 and in February 2008. The initial testing served as baseline while the second assessment provided interim status. The baseline to interim changes may be used to gauge student gains as compared with national peers. Students will be tested again at the close of the school year, after which an updated report will be prepared.

Method

Crossroads Center students with baseline and interim tests in Grades 6 through 10 constituted the sample of data used in this report. There were 214 students with complete paired scores. The STAR computer adaptive reading and math tests were administered to the students in September 2007 and again in February 2008. STAR is a nationally normed standardized test and the grade equivalent (GE) normative score was the measure used to compute gains. GE scores estimate students’ ranking in reading and math using the school calendar as a referent. A GE score of 7.3 places a student’s achievement comparable to the average national peer at the third month (November, since September is the zero month and June is the ninth month of the school year) of the 7th grade. If the student is in 7th grade and the test was taken near November (usually within

three months), the score is considered average. Were the student in fifth grade, the scoring 7.3 GE would place the child above average, while a student in 9th grade with a 7.3 GE might be considered below average. Gains between two testing points can be reported in months or fractions of a year and need to be compared with the time elapsed between the two assessments. In this report, five months or 0.5 GE elapsed between the baseline and interim tests.

Results

Tables 1-5 show the mean gains in GE scores for reading from the baseline to the interim administrations of the STAR made by 214 Crossroads Center students in Grades 6-10. Growth is reported separately by grade to assist with interpreting the GE metric. Standard deviations in GE units are also displayed to help judge the stability of the average achievement levels. Table 1 shows the total group, tables 2 and 3 display the data separately by gender, and tables 4 and 5, by race (only African American and Caucasian students had sufficient numbers of test takers. Tables 6-10 show the same results for the STAR math test.

Table 1 Crossroads Center STAR Reading Test Grade Equivalents (GE) by Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	14	3.5	4.8	1.3	0.5	1.6	1.6
7	61	3.6	4.7	1.1	0.5	1.6	2.0
8	71	3.8	4.9	1.1	0.5	1.9	2.0
9	50	5.8	7.3	1.5	0.5	2.2	2.5
10	18	4.9	6.6	1.7	0.5	2.0	2.7

Table 2 Crossroads Center STAR Reading Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Females within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	0	--	--	--	0.5	--	--
7	13	3.3	4.1	0.8	0.5	1.6	1.8
8	26	4.2	4.9	0.7	0.5	2.0	1.9
9	22	6.4	7.1	0.7	0.5	2.0	1.9
10	10	4.6	6.6	2.0	0.5	1.6	2.8

Table 3 Crossroads Center STAR Reading Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Males within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	14	3.5	4.8	1.3	0.5	1.6	1.6
7	48	3.7	4.9	1.2	0.5	1.7	2.1
8	45	3.6	5.0	1.4	0.5	1.9	2.1
9	28	5.4	7.4	2.0	0.5	2.3	2.9
10	8	5.2	6.7	1.5	0.5	2.4	2.9

Table 4 Crossroads Center STAR Reading Test Grade Equivalents (GE) African American Students within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	4	2.6	2.3	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.4
7	31	3.2	4.0	0.8	0.5	1.4	1.5
8	40	3.8	4.6	0.8	0.5	1.7	1.6
9	22	5.6	7.2	1.6	0.5	2.4	2.7
10	9	4.2	6.2	2.0	0.5	2.2	3.1

Table 5 Crossroads Center STAR Reading Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Caucasian Students within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	9	4.0	5.1	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.3
7	26	4.3	5.6	1.3	0.5	1.8	2.3
8	28	3.9	5.5	1.6	0.5	2.2	2.3
9	24	5.9	7.4	1.5	0.5	1.5	2.2
10	8	5.6	7.2	1.6	0.5	1.7	2.6

The STAR reading test scores show that between the baseline and interim assessments Crossroads students (tables 1-5):

- Consistently gained at an accelerated pace as compared with the elapsed instructional time.
- Tended to begin the year behind their normative peers by two to five years of GE, depending upon the grade. By the interim testing, five months later, the same students lagged by one to three years.
- Males tended to begin the year with lower scores than females, but by the interim administration had passed the female reading levels. Both genders grew more than the elapsed instructional time at each grade level.
- African American and Caucasian students gained more than the elapsed instructional time between baseline and interim tests at each grade level. Caucasian students began the year with higher reading levels than African American students and maintained or increased their edge at the interim assessments.

Table 6 Crossroads Center STAR Math Test Grade Equivalents (GE) by Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	16	3.7	4.9	1.2	0.5	1.2	1.0
7	64	4.0	4.9	0.9	0.5	1.5	1.7
8	64	4.2	4.9	0.7	0.5	1.6	2.0
9	39	5.0	6.2	1.2	0.5	2.2	2.6
10	16	4.3	5.6	1.3	0.5	1.6	3.3

Table 7 Crossroads Center STAR Math Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Females within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	0	--	--	--	0.5	--	--
7	11	3.8	4.2	0.4	0.5	1.2	1.1
8	23	3.9	4.7	0.8	0.5	1.3	2.2
9	15	4.0	5.4	1.4	0.5	0.9	1.4
10	7	3.9	5.7	1.8	0.5	0.9	3.3

Table 8 Crossroads Center STAR Math Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Males within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	16	3.7	4.9	1.2	0.5	1.2	1.0
7	53	4.1	5.0	0.9	0.5	1.6	1.8
8	41	4.4	5.1	0.7	0.5	1.7	1.9
9	24	5.6	6.7	1.1	0.5	2.5	3.0
10	9	4.6	5.6	1.0	0.5	2.0	3.5

Table 9 Crossroads Center STAR Math Test Grade Equivalents (GE) African American Students within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	4	3.6	4.2	0.6	0.5	1.3	1.3
7	27	4.0	4.6	0.6	0.5	1.7	1.9
8	33	4.1	5.0	0.9	0.5	1.5	2.1
9	16	4.1	5.3	1.2	0.5	1.5	2.4
10	10	3.9	5.0	1.1	0.5	1.1	3.0

Table 10 Crossroads Center STAR Math Test Grade Equivalents (GE) Caucasian Students within Grade

Grade	N	Mean GE			Time between Baseline and Interim	Std Dev GE	
		Base	Interim	Gain		Base	Interim
6	11	3.8	4.9	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.6
7	32	4.1	5.1	1.0	0.5	1.4	1.6
8	28	4.4	5.0	0.6	0.5	1.7	2.0
9	19	5.8	7.3	1.5	0.5	2.5	2.5
10	6	5.0	6.6	1.6	0.5	2.2	3.9

The STAR math test scores show that between the baseline and interim assessments Crossroads students (tables 6-10):

- Consistently gained at a faster pace as compared with the elapsed instructional time, although the gains were not as large as with the reading test.
- Tended to begin the year behind their normative peers by two to nearly six years of GE, depending upon the grade. By the interim testing, five months later, the same students lagged by 1.6 to five years.
- Both genders gained more than the elapsed instructional time. Males tended to begin the year ahead of the female students and maintain their advantage at the interim testing five months later. In 10th grade, however, females jumped past the males, although the number of students tested was below ten for each gender.
- African American and Caucasian students gained by a larger amount than the five months interval between the two tests. African American scores were lower than Caucasian scores at the baseline test and remained lower at the interim testing. An exception, however, was 8th grade, where African American students began the year 0.3 GE behind their Caucasian peers, but caught up to the Caucasian students at the interim administration.

Implications from STAR Assessments

The review of data suggests the program at Crossroads Center is meeting its intended goals of improving the reading and mathematics skills of enrolled students.

The instructional program will continue to be monitored in order to increase rigor in all curricular areas to promote enhanced academic growth for all students.

Instructional attention and interim assessments will focus on the achievement of minority students to ensure each student maximizes learning potential and reaches increased academic success.

Increased opportunities will be created to instill student pride in daily academic accomplishments, and promote individual efforts as an attribute needed for success whether in school or at work.

OVERALL PROGRAM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The opening of the Crossroads Center presented a variety of challenges. Initially, the target student profile was not clearly understood by all referring constituencies. To address this challenge for the coming school year, clarity has been added to the identification of students and the referral process. The new referral process is a multi-step procedure which begins with an orientation to the process for all relevant personnel at the feeder schools. The process continues with a student support team meeting at the home school. The student support team meeting includes representatives from the referring school, Crossroads Center personnel, the parent/guardian and the student. The final step in the process is a site visit by family and students to Crossroads Center. It is anticipated that this invitational and inclusive process will eliminate many of the misunderstandings that occurred in the referral process this first year.

In order to meet student achievement needs, additional staffing was required. The superintendent recognized the need and allocated twelve positions, which included math, reading, special education teachers, a behavior interventionist, and paraprofessionals. These additional positions allowed us to be in compliance with BACE and TABCO contracts and most importantly allowed the staff to better meet the unique needs of the student population at the center.

The student behavior plan as originally designed, did not adequately address the needs of the student body. A more highly structured plan of points and levels with positive rewards and incentives was formulated and reviewed by all constituencies, including families and students. The newly designed plan is a PBIS based program that is working well with the students.

Crossroads Center covers three of the five areas of Baltimore County, the Northeast, Southeast, and Central areas. This presents some very long rides for the behaviorally challenged student population. This challenge was addressed by creating a number of staff development activities for bus drivers and attendants serving the Crossroads Center and increasing communication between the three area transportation supervisors. Plans for the coming year include utilizing existing technology to improve transportation assignments for students and continued staff development opportunities for drivers and attendants who serve high risk populations.

Crossroads Center is a wireless environment that utilizes laptop computers for students. We have experienced challenges with the server, charging of laptop units, and responsible interaction with technology by behaviorally challenged students. The BCPS' Department of Technology has been working with Crossroads Center staff to address all of these issues.

The Crossroads Center is a new and exciting program that is meeting its intended goals of increasing the academic capacity of students. Much progress has been made in building the program this year and much remains to be done. With continued systemwide support, the Crossroads Center will grow and effectively meet its established goals.