



# Building Minds... Changing Lives

## WELCOME!

We're so pleased to present this issue of USI's Advancement Journal, our way of sharing information about United Schools of Indianapolis (USI) and promoting the financial and volunteer opportunities available to assist USI schools. This journal is published three times a year in April, October, and December. As you browse through these pages, any questions or feedback are greatly appreciated.

Thank you, and enjoy!

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## AVONDALE MEADOWS MIDDLE SCHOOL RECEIVES AN "A" RATING!

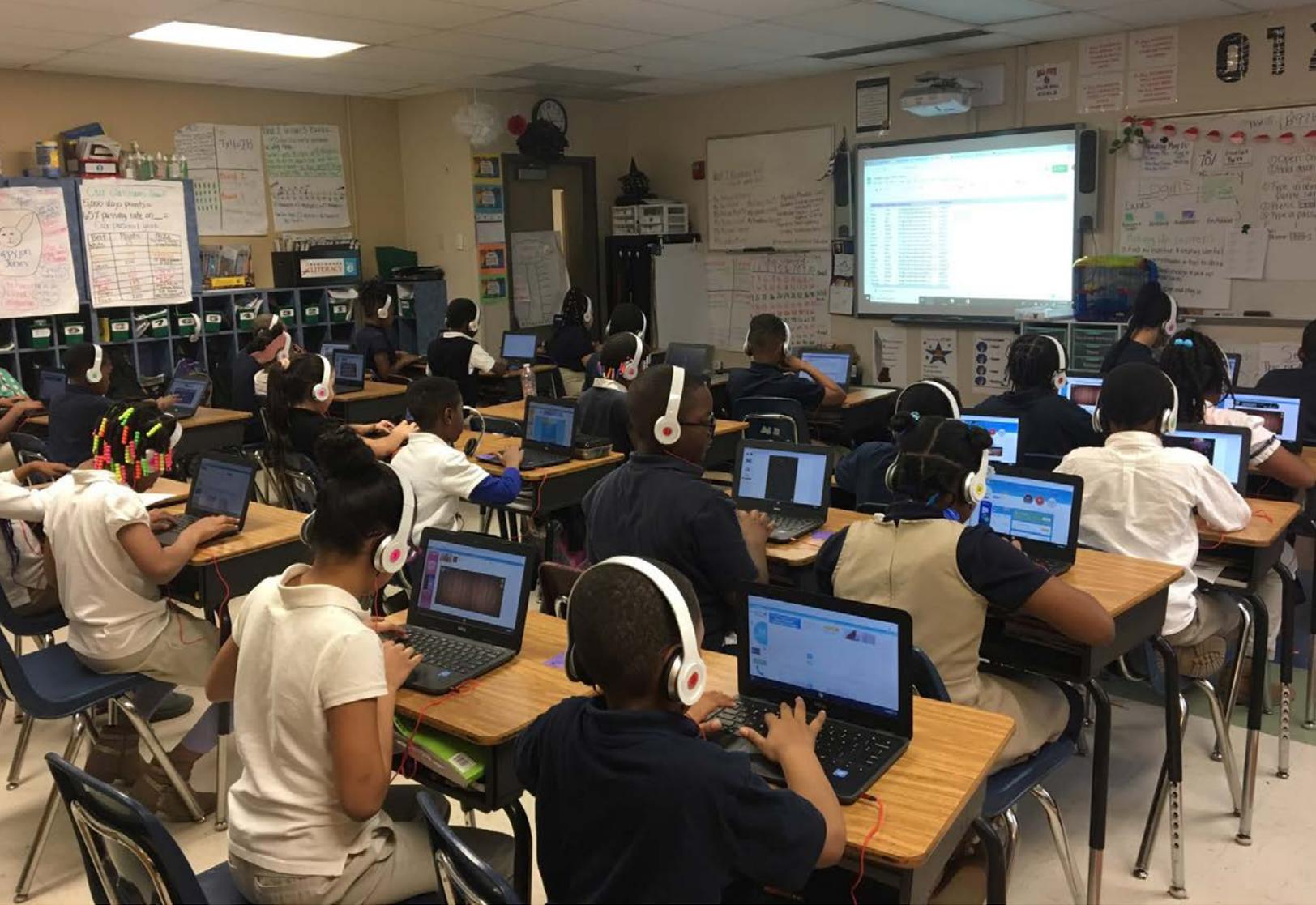
We are proud to announce Avondale Meadows Middle School received an A rating from the Indiana Department of Education for the 2018-2019 school year. We are truly excited that our scholars are growing at tremendous rates.

As a way of background, schools are placed in categories of performance by the following letter grades: A, B, C, D, and F. The overall framework of the student-centered accountability system includes three domains: performance, growth, and multiple measures. Each domain is comprised of indicators that make up the final score for each domain. The scores for each domain are then weighted accordingly to determine the final score.

Because Avondale Meadows Middle School opened in 2017, its rating is solely based on growth in student performance. This recognizes differences in individual student performance but values moving students in the right direction. Our A rating means that the school was judged to have done an excellent job of improving student performance as compared to past performance on student standardized tests.

**KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK AMMS!**





## ENHANCING AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Today in the United States, there are 20 million students that want to participate in an after-school program but aren't able to. Often, the problem is a lack of access and funding for great programs. At USI schools, we have found that students who are in after-school programs have better grades, improved behavior, and a sense of belonging at our school.

At Avondale Meadows Academy (AMA), after-school enrichment programs include clubs like Lego Building; Introduction to Japanese; Shock Fitness; and Science & Technology. Recently AMA partnered with AfterSchool HQ to add three innovative after school programs: The Blue House Film Club, Code Black Initiative Hour of Code (computer coding) and SOCA Speed Track Club. AfterSchool HQ is a community nonprofit with the mission to transform 3 to 6pm for all students everywhere. They do that by enabling schools to partner with great after school program providers in their communities.

The cost to add these new after-school programs

was \$3,000 or \$1,000 per club for each semester. Since the school didn't budget funds for these new clubs, it was decided to start a GoFundMe Charity campaign.

**The campaign started in late January with a goal of raising \$3,000 to fund these after-school clubs. Within one week, 49 donors contributed to the campaign and raised just over \$3,000.**

The campaign was a fantastic success as people responded to the fact that students get to participate in programs they choose, which creates additional incentives for better in-school performance.

While the effort was a great success, next semester we will need to raise funds for these clubs. If you want more information on how to support a specific after-school, please contact Sean Dunlavy at [sdunlavy@unitedschoolsindy.org](mailto:sdunlavy@unitedschoolsindy.org).

# IN RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

The United Schools of Indianapolis Board of Directors would like to acknowledge and extend its gratitude to Charlie Garcia for his distinguished service as a member of the Board of Directors.

**To commemorate his dedicated board service, he was presented with a framed resolution by Kelly Herron, Executive Director of United Schools of Indianapolis.**

Charlie Garcia is President of C Garcia & Associates a construction consulting firm based in Indianapolis. Charlie was a founding USI Board Member and served with distinction from 2005 to 2018 and he chaired the board from July 2013 through July 2017. He not only volunteered his time, but lent his construction expertise as Avondale Meadows Academy was built in 2006. Charlie was also instrumental in the construction of Vision Academy in 2014 and Avondale Meadows Middle School in 2017. Charlie's continued involvement with our schools helps USI accomplish its mission to provide high quality educational opportunities to families in underserved communities in Indianapolis.



# ANGELA COFFIN, VISION'S FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR



**Angela Abbott is a 7 & 8th grade English teacher at Vision Academy at Riverside.**

**Angela grew up in southern Indiana and completed her undergraduate studies at Ball State University, before receiving a Masters in Teaching from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Angela is one of our "founding teachers" at Vision Academy and recently received a Fulbright Scholarship.**

The Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program is a year-long professional development opportunity for U.S. elementary, middle, and high school teachers to develop skills for preparing students for a competitive global economy. Fulbright TGC equips teachers to bring an international perspective to their schools through targeted training, experience abroad, and global collaboration.

The program involves four phases including a graduate level course of study; a symposium in Washington D.C; field experience and a capstone project. For her field experience, Angela will be travelling to Morocco to guest lecture in a school for two and a half weeks. For her capstone project, Angela plans to examine the questions: "How do students value their education in Morocco and how is student engagement affected by parental involvement? And how does this compare to the community I serve."

Angela is already implementing the knowledge she has gained from her Fulbright experience in her classroom. In fact the entire middle school is implementing a global advisory class in which students study different "worldwide sustainable development goals" each week. Recently, after studying women's rights, the students were so inspired by the discussion that they wrote letters in support of women's rights to their congressional representatives.

**For more information on Angela's visit to Morocco, visit her trip blog at [wanderlustandlessonplans.weebly.com](http://wanderlustandlessonplans.weebly.com)**



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## AVONDALE MEADOWS | VISION ACADEMY

# HELP SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS WITH HOME LEARNING

Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb mandated that all Indiana schools will remain closed through the remainder of the school year. As a result, our administrators and teachers are working to provide a meaningful home learning experience for all of our students.

In preparation for implementing this learning strategy, teachers contacted our families to determine if they had a lap top, personal computer or tablet. We found that of our 1,000 students, approximately 30% don't have access to the technology required to participate in this plan.

To assist these students, we will lend out 300 school owned Chromebooks with the expectation that these tablets will be returned when our schools reopen in August. Realistically we believe that as many as 25% of the tablets will be returned damaged, inoperable or just not returned at all. As a result, we must order at least 150 Chromebooks today so that when school reopens, we are able to function normally as students use Chromebooks for most class assignments and test taking.

Each Chromebook costs \$250 and purchasing 150 will cost a total of \$37,500. We don't have the funding to buy these Chromebooks, so we must raise the money from our generous donors. Additionally, wouldn't it be nice if students were allowed to keep the borrowed Chromebooks and use them to communicate with school and complete assignments?

### **Help a student by contributing \$250!**

For every \$250 contributed, a Chromebook will be purchased. If you can help a student learn from home, please go to [www.unitedschoolsindy.org](http://www.unitedschoolsindy.org) and click on the donate button at the top of the page.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

For every  
**\$250**  
contributed, a  
Chromebook  
will be  
purchased so  
that a student  
can learn from  
home.