

## SECTION 4 – Student Goals

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*(Scored by External Review Panel)*

- a) Other than the indicators of the state accountability rating and accreditation systems, outline and discuss specific measurable student goals in each of the following areas:
- Student progress over time;
  - Student engagement (i.e., attendance, continuous enrollment in school); and
  - Readiness for postsecondary success.

### ***STUDENT PROGRESS OVER TIME***

As a college-preparatory school, UME Prep has three major student goals: by the time they graduate, all of our students will have acquired

- A strong work ethic,
- A strong background in core academic content,<sup>1</sup> and
- Major intellectual, life, and career skills.

UME Prep recognizes that these major student goals must be defined with greater precision in order to allow us to objectively measure student progress with regard to each. These definitions follow below.

#### ***Strong Work Ethic:***

While not demeaning the value of native intelligence, specific academic skills, or core content knowledge, UME Prep believes that the development of **a strong work ethic** is one of the (often missing) keys to both academic and vocational success. Broadly speaking, we define “work ethic” in terms of **self-controlled effort willingly invested in fruitful labor toward the achievement of worthwhile and morally-sound goals**. As such, it includes as key elements

- Integrity,
- Diligence,
- Responsibility,
- Respect,
- Cooperation,
- Humility,
- Initiative,
- Creativity, and
- Perseverance.

UME Prep affirms that all students, regardless of background, can acquire these elements, and acquire them in increasing measure over time, in response to both the precepts and examples of good role models. These elements, and the degree to which

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<sup>1</sup> The TEKS form the foundation for our core academic content. Academic content for honors level courses, should they be developed, will incorporate but also exceed (in terms of breadth, depth, or rigor) the TEKS.

they are present in the life of the student can be assessed purposefully, for example, by measuring student consistency in completing assigned work, and, on occasion, indirectly (e.g., through inference, since academic success is often associated with conscientiousness). In addition, we may use **self-assessments, parent surveys, and similar tools to provide us with a richer collection of data with which we can work.** Our approach to measuring the growth and development of students' work ethic is discussed in greater detail in sub-section "b" below.

***Strong Background in Core Academic Content:***

In addition to a strong work ethic, our graduates will need **a strong background in core academic content** in order to enjoy greater opportunities for post-secondary and vocational success. This core content is defined first and foremost by the TEKS, which will serve as our foundational curriculum and will define the minimum graduation requirements for all students (except as may be stipulated otherwise by law). This curriculum is vertically aligned and progressively more rigorous so **continuing student success in mastering the TEKS is a broad measure of academic growth over time.** **Approved state test scores**, from one year to the next, can also provide us with valuable data that we can use to measure our own growth as a teaching institution. The intellectual, life, and career skills identified and described in greater detail below also have a profound influence on the shape of the academic program, as will the optional honors courses we hope to develop and offer to secondary students once the basic program is well established.

One of the primary means that UME Prep will employ to measure student progress in core academic content will be the state accountability system. Another will be the broad collection of both **institution- and teacher- developed instruments** designed to provide formative feedback regarding student progress relative to mastering the TEKS. In addition to the state accountability measures and school-developed assessments, at the secondary level UME Prep intends to employ externally developed and widely recognized measurement instruments, such as the **EPAS<sup>®</sup>** Educational Planning and Assessment System (based on the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT tests) or similar instruments available from the College Board (e.g., **PSAT, SAT, and AP exams**) to help us measure student growth and achievement over time.

The various means by which both individual student and institutional achievement of these academic content goals can be measured are identified and described in greater detail in sub-section "b" below.

***Major Intellectual, Life, and Career Skills:***

Finally, our graduates will need **major intellectual, life, and career skills** in order to enjoy optimal success in both post-secondary studies and vocation. These skills are directly applicable to academic endeavors specifically and so are regarded also as **an integral component of our second major goal, the acquisition of a strong background in core academic content.** UME Prep has identified **five major intellectual, life, and career skills** which in turn are defined in more readily-measurable sub-skills. Specifically, every student graduating from UME Prep will be able to

1. Communicate effectively,
2. Reason well,
3. Conduct fruitful research,
4. Employ effectively and efficiently various tools, especially including data processing and telecommunications technology, and
5. Exercise effective civil, vocational, and academic leadership.

These **skills**, stated immediately above as general goals, are defined operationally in terms of **major student performance objectives** that are derived from them, from the TEKS, and from other selected benchmarks (such as ACT's College Readiness Standards<sup>®</sup>). These major student performance objectives govern and give form to the instructional program from the earliest levels through graduation. In practice, they are expressed through course-specific student performance objectives which integrate these various student performance standards into the instructional program. In turn they are vertically aligned in all disciplines and horizontally aligned across the core disciplines. Their vertical alignment, more than any other feature, allows UME Prep to measure **student progress over time**.

By **communicate effectively**, we mean that our graduates will be able to

1. Interpret accurately and critically complex texts spoken or written in standard American English;
2. Express themselves by creating concise, complete, structurally coherent, and thematically unified oral and written texts of varying lengths using language appropriate to a selected target audience;
3. Use grammatically correct structures, well constructed and well supported arguments, proper American English orthographic conventions, and appropriate organizing and transitional devices in producing written texts;
4. Communicate effectively with instructors and fellow students in the context of collaborative activities;
5. Recognize and account for the impact of presuppositions (i.e., worldviews, metanarratives, or biases) on both the content and form of messages;
6. Decipher complex mathematical expressions, state ideas using complex mathematical symbols and expressions, as may be appropriate, and translate accurately and precisely between mathematics and natural language;
7. Explain the nature and ethical and academic implications of proper attribution (and plagiarism) and employ properly accepted conventions for acknowledging the words and ideas of others; and
8. Communicate in a non-native natural language at a rudimentary level.

All of these **effective communication objectives** can be achieved through the progressive mastery of age- and grade-level appropriate sub-skills defined in terms of increasingly specific student performance objectives. For example, growth in reading comprehension skills (**Major Objective 1**) can be readily seen and measured as students move from basic decoding skills in the earliest grades to skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing in the middle grades to critical analysis and evaluation skills in the most advanced grades. Each of these, in turn, can be reduced to even more specific knowledge

and skills components, such as those identified by the appropriate TEKS in Chapter 110, English Language Arts and Reading or Chapter 111, Mathematics. Some of the envisioned objectives for upper-division courses, however, exceed the TEKS, approximating more closely some of the skills identified by the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) or other rigorous measures such as AP and IB exams. Student success in attaining such skills will be measured by standards derived from or modeled on these measures or on others developed by instructors of honors courses.

In order to demonstrate **the ability to reason well**, UME Prep graduates will be able to

1. Identify and explain both the utility and limitations of discipline-specific assumptions and methodologies in the reasoning process (especially as they apply to the disciplines in question);
2. Use linguistic and non-linguistic (e.g., mathematical, graphic, etc.) tools to solve a variety of novel, open-ended problems;
3. Use deductive and inductive logic to evaluate information and arguments;
4. Solve fairly complex mathematical problems at a reasonable rate;
5. Describe the nature of worldviews (presuppositions, metanarratives, etc.) in general, identify the major questions addressed by all worldviews, and explain impact of worldviews on human reasoning; and
6. Analyze problems from and suggest solutions rooted in differing (and often contrasting) perspectives and presuppositions, evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of those approaches, determine which approach(es) are superior (in terms of their ability to explain and resolve the problem in question), and plausibly justify their position.

As was the case with the **effective communication objectives**, these **reasoning objectives** also can be achieved through the progressive mastery of age- and grade-level appropriate sub-skills defined in terms of specific student performance objectives which increase in depth and complexity over time. Some, such as **Major Objective 4**, are more discipline-specific while others, like Major Objective 2, are trans-disciplinary. Because of the evaluation and problem-solving emphases in this area's objectives, they address components in essentially all areas of the TEKS including those addressing areas such as Physical Education and Fine Arts.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as the TEKS represent a **progressive mastery of critical sub-skills**, the use of both the TEKS and similar age- and grade-appropriate component student performance objectives will assure that we can track student progress over time. Our purposes here, however, are not limited to the TEKS but include instruction in matters rarely or only implicitly addressed in the TEKS, such as the nature and impact of worldviews (**Major Objective 5**). All such objectives beyond the TEKS will, like the TEKS, be vertically aligned across the grade levels in which they are addressed and will progress from the relatively simple to the more complex.

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<sup>2</sup> TEKS for §116.52. Foundations of Personal Fitness include several evaluation or problem-solving objectives, including, for example, (c) (2) (B): “[The student is expected to] *recognize* and *resolve* conflicts during physical activity and (c) (4) (G): “[The student is expected to] *design* and *implement* a personal fitness program” (emphases added).

UME Prep graduates will demonstrate their **skills in conducting fruitful research** by being able to

1. Develop meaningful questions that can be resolved through research;
2. Identify and define valid research objectives;
3. Find and utilize information effectively and efficiently;
4. Identify and control relevant variables;
5. Formulate valid and adequate hypotheses;
6. Distinguish between results and conclusions;
7. Identify applications for research findings;
8. Identify, describe, and properly account for biases and presuppositions in both information and research processes;
9. Employ appropriately various research methods to resolve problems and questions within specific disciplines and across two or more disciplines; and
10. Complete research projects both as individuals and as members of teams.

As before, these **fruitful research objectives** define capstone skills held by graduates. **Progress toward their achievement**, however, can be monitored and measured throughout the curriculum, first as students demonstrate mastery of an increasing number of discreet component sub-skills (ranging from the relatively simple at the elementary level to the complex at the high school level) and then as they show growing refinement in their ability not only to employ these sub-skills but to do so in an increasingly coherent, integrated manner. In addition, research objectives are found throughout the TEKS in a variety of disciplines and at a variety of levels. They are seen at all levels in the ELA TEKS,<sup>3</sup> at all secondary levels of the Science TEKS,<sup>4</sup> from grade 3 forward in the Social Studies TEKS,<sup>5</sup> and even in the TEKS for Fine Arts (first mentioned at the fifth-grade level<sup>6</sup>) and P.E. (high school level<sup>7</sup>). Because of this, measuring progress in the relevant TEKS will permit us to measure student growth in acquiring the targeted research skills. As is the case with the ELA objectives, some of the envisioned objectives for upper-division courses exceed the TEKS, again approximating more closely some of the skills identified by the Texas Performance Standards Project.

In order to demonstrate the **ability to employ various tools**, UME Prep graduates will be able to

1. Use simple, traditional tools such as pen and paper to manage and communicate information;
2. Use appropriate laboratory tools and equipment to conduct research in the natural sciences;
3. Employ a wide range of library-based resources, including digital databases, to gather information;
4. Use generally available internet resources with discernment, which includes at a minimum skillfully evaluating the relative credibility of information gained

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. §110.11 (b) (19) and (20) for an example of research objectives at the kindergarten level.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. §112.18 (b) (3) (D) for an example of research objectives at the sixth-grade level.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. §113.14 (b) (23) (C).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. §117.59 (c) (4) (B).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. §116.55 (c) (3) (D).

- thereby, for gathering information;
5. Use internet resources effectively and efficiently for communicating with others;
  6. Employ commonly available data processing technologies (including widely-available open source software, such as the various Linux systems), including word processing, spreadsheet, and database applications, for managing and reporting information, analyses, and conclusions; and
  7. Utilize all technologies available to them in an ethically and academically acceptable manner.

Many aspects of these **tools objectives** are also addressed as progressively acquired and increasingly mastered sub-skills in the TEKS in a variety of disciplines and so, as with the previous sets of major objectives, provide ample opportunities to measure student progress in this area over time. Additional sub-skills not identified by the TEKS, such as those relating to the use of open-source software (Major Tools Objective 6), will also be taught and student progress measured in a progressive fashion by introducing basic skills first and then extending them and introducing more complex skills later.

UME Prep graduates will demonstrate **leadership skills** by

1. Accepting full responsibility for their own choices and behaviors;
2. Fulfilling their own conduct and academic performance responsibilities in a timely and appropriate manner with minimal oversight;
3. Treating others with deferential courtesy, as appropriate in a given situation;
4. Recognizing and respecting the existence and value of differing perspectives and worldviews and being able to discuss or debate such differences in a civil and respectful manner;
5. Recognizing the proper spheres of various legitimate authority structures and respecting and submitting to those authorities as they operate appropriately;
6. Participating effectively in both leadership and support roles in various curricular and co-curricular group projects;
7. Being able to describe and explain their responsibilities as citizen-governors in representative, law-based political systems that operate at all levels of civil government in the United States;
8. Identifying and responding appropriately to unspoken assumptions or values, poor reasoning and argumentation, and manipulative behaviors in civic discourse; and
9. Being able to identify and describe ethically appropriate conduct relative to a given set of circumstances and choosing to behave ethically at all times.

Because of UME Prep's unique approach, these **leadership objectives** also lend themselves to being understood in terms of progressively mastered sub-skills. They will be defined operationally in terms of both the relevant TEKS in a variety of disciplines and internally developed course-specific student performance objectives. In addition, they help define some aspects of the work ethic elements, such as personal diligence and personal responsibility (leadership objectives 1 and 2) and so provide the school with one means for measuring growth in this area. Some of these skills (such as the second listed above) can be measured as an aspect of student academic performance simply by tracking how consistently students complete assigned work by relevant deadlines. Others, such as

those relating to personal responsibility and interpersonal conduct (e.g., 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9), can be assessed, at least in part, through student conduct records, and still others, such as those addressing primarily knowledge or intellectual skill (e.g., 7-9), can be assessed in much the same way as other academic content, through tests, projects, and so forth. Thus, as with the previous sets of major objectives, they will provide ample opportunities to measure student progress in this area over time.

In summary, **the identified characteristics of a sound work ethic, core academic content (the TEKS), and course-specific objectives (derived from both the TEKS and the five major skills) govern and give form to the instructional program** from the earliest levels through graduation. We expect the targeted character qualities to become progressively more evident as students grow in maturity. The academic and skills objectives are vertically aligned in all disciplines and horizontally aligned across the core disciplines. **Observed student behavior relative to these identified conduct and academic performance goals will provide UME Prep with ample opportunities to measure and monitor student progress over time.**

### ***STUDENT ENGAGEMENT GOALS***

UME Prep's student engagement goals are straightforward and simple: we desire that every student

1. Consistently attend all scheduled classes and other instructional activities for which he or she is registered,
2. Consistently complete all instructional assignments regardless of the venue in which they are to be done,
3. Consistently participate in optional student activities which he or she has elected to pursue, and
4. Remain enrolled in the school's educational program until he or she graduates.

Our student engagement objectives are operational expressions of these goals: Every student at UME Prep will

1. Meet or exceed state attendance requirements, beginning with his or her first day enrolled,
2. Complete at least 80% of all assigned instructional activities in each major instructional venue, including the classroom itself, guided, semi-independent, or independent laboratory activities, including internet- or other computer-based laboratories, and homework assignments, during his or her first semester as a student in the school, and at least 90% of all assigned instructional activities from the beginning of his second semester forward, and
3. Participate in 95% or more of the mandatory activities and 60% or more of the optional activities of any optional student activities, such as clubs, athletics, and academic or artistic competitions, in which he or she has elected to participate.

UME Prep has one major continuous enrollment objective: Each year, 90% of UME Prep students who maintain good standing in the school will remain enrolled from one year to the next until they graduate (a 90% student retention rate). As an open-enrollment

charter school, UME Prep understands all students enrolled in the current school year can attend the following school year and confirms that only those students who commit an expellable offense, after being afforded due process, can be barred from reenrollment.

### ***POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS READINESS GOALS***

As a college-preparatory academy, **all of our major school goals are, effectively, all postsecondary success readiness goals.** These goals are listed and described in greater detail above under “Student Progress over Time” (Section 4. a.). Specifically, our postsecondary success readiness goals are that, upon graduating from UME Prep, every student will have

1. A strong work ethic,
2. A strong background in core academic content, and
3. Major intellectual, life, and career skills.

Possibly the **most innovative feature of UME Prep is the way we combine a unique scheduling format with an emphasis on student responsibility and work ethic;** indeed, the term by which we identify this model—the “University Model of Education”—highlights this feature. Because our class schedule is similar to that of a college or university, students spend less time (relative to conventional models) under the direct supervision of a professional instructor and so must learn to develop and exercise greater executive control—and invest more discretionary time—to complete required instructional activities. **This approach is specifically designed to help us implement the first of our major goals: to inculcate in students a strong work ethic and a sense of personal responsibility so that they are better prepared for success in college or the workplace, when they are no longer under the constant supervision of teachers, parents, or other supervisors.**

**Readiness for postsecondary success is also a major emphasis of the instructional program, which addresses both core academic content and major intellectual, life, and career skills.** Indeed, this is one of the main reasons that one of the three major student goals is defined in terms of transdisciplinary skills. The five major intellectual, life, and career skills all target the major abilities, habits, and aptitudes associated with success in postsecondary studies. ACT and other independent organizations have highlighted the disconnect between many state standards and college-readiness standards. UME Prep is committed to, and passionate about, building an academic program that bridges that gap by integrating our major objectives with not only the TEKS but also, especially at the secondary level, with well-respected benchmarks such as ACT’s College Readiness Standards®.

#### **b) Describe methods used to measure success toward each goal.**

UME Prep plans to measure two major attributes of student progress over time: **student work ethic and academic knowledge and skills.**



In order to assess **student work ethic**, UME Prep will measure the primary components of **diligence, responsibility, and cooperation** by assessing:

- School attendance (an indicator of both responsibility and diligence),
- The extent to which a student does his or her work in a timely, focused, and sustained manner, and
- The consistency with which he or she does what is reasonably required while avoiding disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behavior.

**All students** will be expected to meet minimum state attendance requirements for all classes in which they are enrolled.

Student **responsibility** and **diligence** will be measured by tracking the consistency with which a student completes work both in and out of the classroom. Cooperation will be measured primarily by tracking student conduct.

- **First-year students** (students who have entered the school for the first time, regardless of grade level) will be expected to demonstrate the targeted behaviors (responsibility, diligence, and cooperation) at **least 70% of the time**.
- **Students who have been continuously enrolled in the school for more than one year** will be expected to demonstrate the targeted behaviors **at least 80% of the time**.

Progress over time in **academic knowledge and skills** will be measured with the following instruments:

- **All grades and courses to which they apply:** State accountability instruments.
- **Grades K-8:** The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).
- **Grades 9-11:** The PSAT.
- **Exit:** The SAT.

*In all cases, UMEP confirms its understanding that students cannot incur any cost for taking a required assessment exam including but not limited to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, PSAT, SAT, or any other assessment instrument used for the purpose of meeting the measurement goals stated in this response.*

The relevant achievement levels are again defined primarily in terms of how long a given student has been continuously enrolled in the school.

- For **first year students** (students who have been continuously enrolled in the school less than one full year at the time of the test administration), all relevant instruments will be used to establish a general baseline; there will be no minimum achievement standard set for these students.
- Second year students (students who have been continuously enrolled in the school for at least one but less than two full years at the time of testing) will be expected to
  - Meet the **minimum passing standard** on the state accountability instrument and

- Achieve the **4th stanine** (low average) or higher in the core academic areas on the **ITBS** or a **minimum target score** on the **major subsections of the PSAT or SAT**. Minimum target scores for the PSAT and SAT subsections will be determined each year in light of the most current state and national averages for the relevant instrument and may fluctuate somewhat in response to these averages. Our current **minimum target score for second-year freshmen will be 35 in all three subsections of the PSA T**. Current target scores for other second-year high school students have not yet been established, since we will have no such students until our third year of operations.
- **Third year students** (students who have been continuously enrolled in the school for at least two full years at the time of testing) will be expected to
  - Meet the **minimum passing standard** on the state accountability instrument and
  - Achieve the **6th stanine** (high average) or higher in the core academic areas on the **ITBS** or a **minimum target score on the major subsections of the PSAT or SAT**. Minimum target scores for the PSA T and SAT subsections will be determined each year in light of the most current state and national averages for the relevant instrument and may fluctuate somewhat in response to these averages. Current PSAT minimum target scores for third-year high school students have not yet been established, since we will have no such students until our third year of operations, but will likely be in the range of
    - 38 in all major subsections for third-year freshmen,
    - 44 in all major sUbjections for third-year sophomores, and
    - 50 in all major subsections for third-year juniors.

Current **SAT minimum target scores** for the major SAT sections are **590 for the SAT Verbal and 610 for the SAT Mathematics**.

### ***ASSESSING PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG WORK ETHIC***

Various methods will be employed for assessing the growth of students' work ethic. Diligence, responsibility, and perseverance will be evaluated through both **direct observation in the classroom** (basically noting the degree to which students stay on task) and by **tracking the record of student completion of assignments done in venues other than the classroom**. Traditionally this data has often been confused with academic performance data by being combined with such data (for example, in the form of "class participation grades") to generate a student's grade in a given discipline. UME Prep will track what amounts to course participation data as a means for measuring these work ethic characteristics, but will not confuse such data with academic performance data.

Respect, cooperation, humility, initiative, and creativity also lend themselves to being measured through **direct observation**. In addition, initiative and creativity can be measured **indirectly through student performance in completing assignments, especially those oriented toward the resolution of novel problems**.

From time to time, UME Prep will also use **surveys to measure student understandings and attitudes** relative to the identified character qualities. While such measures are somewhat more subjective (and therefore more imprecise) than some of the

other measures identified above, they can still provide another perspective for assessing student growth in the area of work ethic.

Finally, all of these sound work ethic characteristics can be assessed to a greater or lesser degree in terms of **the absence of negative evidence**. Integrity, especially, will be assumed in the absence of credible evidence (namely, dishonesty of any sort) to the contrary.

### ***ASSESSING ACADEMIC AND MAJOR SKILLS PROGRESS***

Methods for assessing the acquisition of critical academic content and the major intellectual, life, and career skills will vary according to the nature of the objective being measured. Student mastery of the TEKS, for example, will be regularly assessed through the use of **state-mandated accountability testing procedures** (whether TAKS, STAAR, EOC, or other current measures) and through formative measures including **benchmarks, departmental exams, and individual teacher assessments** such as

- traditional tests (e.g., to assess the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills),
- portfolios (e.g., containing research components not directly evident in a final term paper),
- public performance (e.g., speeches and presentations), or
- direct observation (e.g., of the exercise of leadership functions in the context of small-group projects).

**In short, assessment of student growth in academic content and major skills will be aligned with the relevant objectives and will be flexibly designed and applied according to the specific content or skills being assessed.** Because vertically-aligned objectives demand the acquisition and use of increasingly large and complex knowledge bases and the application of progressively more complex skills for their successful mastery, **they predispose the assessment system toward measuring student progress over time.**

In addition to the state accountability measures (currently TAKS) and school-developed assessments, as described briefly above, at the secondary level UME Prep intends to employ **externally developed and widely recognized measurement instruments**, such as the EPAS<sup>®</sup> Educational Planning and Assessment System (based on the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT tests) or similar instruments available from the College Board (e.g., PSAT, SAT, and AP exams). Such instruments not only measure student growth and achievement over time (the testing systems offer integrated assessment over a multi-year period of time) but to do so in a manner that allows us to determine how our students are performing relative to similar students in schools across the nation. This will help us evaluate our effectiveness in light of a much broader sample using externally validated measures.

Finally, in order to better enable teachers to properly assess the academic performance of their students, recognize areas of weaknesses and strengths, and then determine how to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of their students, **UME Prep teachers will be trained to use assessment data to improve both course design and instructional**

**practices.** They will be trained to analyze test data and how it is correlated to the TEKS, so that they can pinpoint what areas of misunderstanding students may have. Teachers will learn how to track student success based on student demographics to ensure that their instruction is meeting the needs of all student sub-groups (i.e. African American, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, At-Risk, etc.). Teachers will also be trained to reflect on the data to determine causes for student underperformance and to develop action plans for addressing such causes in future lessons. UME Prep believes that assessments used throughout the year should be formative, and that teachers should not use such assessments simply for a grade, but as a way to gauge the level of student learning and adjust accordingly using **data-driven instructional decision making.**

### ***ASSESSING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT***

Student engagement will be measured primarily through the **collection and evaluation of student participation data.** This data includes information regarding **regular attendance** to scheduled classes (students will be expected to meet state attendance requirements). One of the most unique features of our educational model, however, is the emphasis it places on the development of student work ethic and independence. Because the school emphasizes the importance of the work the student completes on his or her own (whether in a laboratory or at home), we plan to **collect and evaluate data** regarding required **participation in academic activities that take place away from the central classroom.** Also, several of our key leadership objectives involve the cultivation of a strong work ethic and a high level of personal responsibility, so information regarding these matters will be a major concern to the school and could become a factor in determining academic advancement (a strong work ethic—or its absence—will certainly have a profound impact on student success in this model).

Increased student engagement produces increased student success as realized in mastery of content. This applies to activities both within and outside the classroom. Engagement also helps students to acquire skills to be successful in life and so supports our third major student goal of developing major intellectual, life, and career skills. At UME Preparatory Academy, we desire to equip our students by providing opportunities that help them:

- Develop leadership skills,
- Develop athletic and/or artistic skills,
- Participate in campus life activities,
- Be exposed to an ethnically and culturally diverse environment,
- Engage in real-world learning situations, and
- Serve in their community

UME Prep can measure the degree of success of these opportunities by utilizing various tools to determine students' and parents' perceptions of campus offerings. Annual analysis of student performance on student engagement goals will be compared and recorded and used to measure annual improvement in engagement for whole school results.

Engagement will be measured by observing the degree to which a student complies with school rules, attends class regularly, and completes required tasks. Specifically, we will measure the primary components of diligence, responsibility, and cooperation by assessing:

- School attendance (an indicator of both responsibility and diligence),
- The extent to which a student does his or her work in a timely, focused, and sustained manner, and
- The consistency with which he or she does what is reasonably required while avoiding disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behavior.

**Specific goals used to measure student engagement include the following:**

- **All students** will attend regularly scheduled classes at least 95% of the time. In addition,
- **First-year students** (students who have entered the school for the first time, regardless of grade level) will be expected to demonstrate "engaged" behaviors (responsibility, diligence, and cooperation) **at least 70% of the time** and
- **Students who have been continuously enrolled in the school for more than one year** will be expected to demonstrate the engaged behaviors **at least 80% of the time.**

**These same measures will be used to measure progress in student reengagement** when such a need exists, although the school may use an intervention approach that employs intermediate progress goals (e.g., demonstrating engaged behaviors at least 50% of the time, then 60%, then 70%, etc.) established according to an individualized timeline to measure reengagement progress. In such cases, however, the ultimate standard – the targeted goals, as described above – remains the same.

UME Prep has the goal of re-enrolling at least 90% of its students from one year to the next (exclusive of graduating seniors). **Annual enrollment data** will allow us to assess the degree to which we achieve this goal. append

### ***ASSESSING READINESS FOR POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS***

**Because our entire program, as summarized in the three major objectives identified under both “Student Progress Over Time” and “Postsecondary Success Readiness Goals” above (Section 4. a.), is geared toward preparing students for postsecondary success, assessing student achievement relative to these three goals (also described above) is tantamount to assessing student readiness for postsecondary success.**

UME Prep will be measuring two basic attributes to assess student readiness for postsecondary success: student work ethic and academic knowledge and skills.

In order to assess **student work ethic**, UME Prep will measure the primary components of **diligence, responsibility, and cooperation** by assessing

- School attendance (an indicator of both responsibility and diligence),
- The extent to which a student does his or her work in a timely, focused, and sustained manner, and
- The consistency with which he or she does what is reasonably required while avoiding disruptive or otherwise unacceptable behavior.

All students will be expected to meet minimum state attendance requirements for all classes in which they are enrolled.

Student **responsibility** and **diligence** will be measured by tracking the consistency with which a student completes work both in and out of the classroom. **Cooperation** will be measured primarily by tracking student conduct.

- **First-year students** (students who have entered the school for the first time, regardless of grade level) will be expected to demonstrate the targeted behaviors (responsibility, diligence, and cooperation) at **least 70% of the time**.
- **Students who have been continuously enrolled in the school for more than one year** will be expected to demonstrate the targeted behaviors **at least 80% of the time**.

Students will be deemed **ready for postsecondary success in the area of work ethic if they achieve or exceed the 80% performance standard throughout their four years in high school**.

The academic knowledge and skills component of "readiness for postsecondary success" will be measured primarily through student performance on the SAT. Students will be required to take the SAT either the spring semester of their junior year or the fall semester of their senior year as a requirement for graduation. Students who achieve or exceed minimum target scores on the SAT subsections will be deemed ready for postsecondary success in the area of academic content and skills. These minimum target scores may change over time, depending on state and national averages and expectations. Current minimum scores for the SAT subsections are

- **590 for the SAT Verbal and**
- **610 for the SAT Mathematics.**

**Progress toward achieving this goal will be regularly assessed using the school's standard approach for measuring student progress over time** as described above. Effectively, **regular, adequate, and measurable progress on PSAT performances during the high school years will be deemed acceptable progress toward readiness for postsecondary success**.

*In all cases, UMEP confirms its understanding that students cannot incur any cost for taking a required assessment exam including but not limited to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, PSAT, SAT, or any other assessment instrument used for the purpose of meeting the measurement goals stated in this response.*

**c) Describe the ways in which the school and community members will work together to ensure continuous academic growth for all students.**

Because UME Preparatory Academy highlights the personal responsibility of the student to a greater extent than do more conventional approaches, and employs a somewhat more compressed course schedule, the University Model utilized by UME Prep **naturally emphasizes and encourages a high level of cooperation between the school and other stakeholders, especially parents.** In this model, the parent acts as **a learning coach** at home. In order to assist parents in fulfilling that responsibility more confidently, effectively, and efficiently, the school will offer a **Parent Equipping Program.** This program will assist *interested* parents (it is not required) by providing them with practical help regarding the kind of home environment that most encourages academic achievement, specific ways in which they can coach their child in various disciplines and types of projects without, in effect, taking over the child's work and learning responsibilities, and productive ways of working with teachers and other school staff.

UME Prep will not require parent participation in the Parent Equipping Program (PEP), understanding **and** confirming that all such activity by parents or legal guardians is completely optional and voluntary.

In addition to helping students develop a stronger academic work ethic, this close cooperation between school and parents will also facilitate

1. Earlier intervention when academic or conduct problems surface,
2. Greater coordination between school and parent efforts to address special student needs or interests, and
3. Greater parent and student independence in using community resources to amplify and extend the total educational experience since our schedule structure provides the family with more time to do so.

UME Prep will also utilize the resources of other public education institutions and community organizations, as may be appropriate, advantageous, or necessary, to fulfill its mission. We may, for example, consult with other local public schools for assistance with special needs students and to regional education service centers for training and technical assistance. We may likewise use the facilities or services of organizations such as the YMCA, museums, or nature centers to help us fulfill institutional goals and objectives, including student service objectives that are expressions of leadership skills. The choice to pursue such options will be opportunity- or need-driven and so connected to specific situations as they may arise. At the time of UME Prep's application submission, no official agreements have been made with other organizations. However, as indicated by the partnerships mentioned on pp. 24-27, UME Prep has aligned itself with members and leaders of various community organizations who have expressed a belief in this model. This has positioned UME Prep to **begin forming professional relationships and partnerships with these individuals' organizations so as to better serve and support our students on an ongoing basis."** Specifically, UME Prep will strive to develop

1. Networking opportunities among community organizations which can be used to provide additional human and material resources to enhance student achievement and
2. Greater coordination with service organizations to provide students with opportunities to apply what they are learning in a way that benefits their community.