

Prairie Creek Community School



PRAIRIE CREEK
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Charter School Renewal Application 2016

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School Overview

School Name: Prairie Creek Community School
School Address: 27695 Denmark Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057
Mission Statement: <i>PCCS is a community school. Parents, teachers, staff, and students cooperate with one another and with others outside the school to create a joyful and challenging climate for learning.</i> <i>PCCS is a child-centered school. We help children discover the power and excitement of their minds, their feelings and bodies, their relationships, their art. We assure children of their value, encourage their accomplishments, and respect their individual learning styles. We value diversity.</i> <i>PCCS is a progressive school. We emphasize co-operation, promote self-reflection, support innovation, and value change. We share our philosophy and practice with others and learn from them.</i> <i>PCCS aims to make the world a better place. We value justice, gender-fairness, and conflict resolution. We educate children to live as responsive, responsible members of their own communities, now and in the future.</i>
School Director/Principal: Simon Tyler
Chair, Board of Directors: Rosalyn Eaton-Neeb
Current Grades Served: K - 5
Current Enrollment: 180
Grade Span for Next Charter Term: K - 5
Maximum Enrollment for Next Charter Term: 180
Address of Campus(es) for Next Charter Term: Same

Executive Summary

Since 2002 when Prairie Creek Community School (PCCS) first acquired status as a public charter school, our school has enjoyed an open, collaborative relationship with its authorizer, the Northfield School District. This partnership has grown and strengthened throughout the current contractual period. We welcome this opportunity to apply for a new contractual agreement.

During the current contract, that dates back to 2011, PCCS leadership, board and staff have made annual reports to the Northfield School Board. PCCS has appreciated the opportunity to present details of performance, share progressive education philosophy and discuss challenges and future plans. Superintendent Dr. Richardson and his staff consistently provided invaluable support and oversight to PCCS in all aspects of program management.

PCCS board and faculty have responded to the many changes and initiatives in public education, and this application directly responds to accountability performance criteria. This document is structured intentionally around four key contract renewal application questions:

1. Is the educational program a success?
2. Is the organization effective and well-run?
3. Is the school meeting its legal obligations?
4. Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

This application provides data and evidence that demonstrates PCCS' success and strongly answers each of the above questions in the affirmative. It also outlines the school's vision and action plans for continued school success to support the school's viability for a further contractual agreement.

The school self-study, for the purposes of this application, centers primarily on information and data that shows success and growth by accountability data. The organization of this report mirrors the annual site report that is provided each year to the authorizer. As the self-study details, PCCS continues to be a successful and well-run program by all criteria associated with these four questions. Over the course of the last five years, PCCS has adjusted to changes in the accountability landscape by thoughtfully and intentionally reviewing instructional practices, while also maintaining a commitment to educating each unique child in a joyful, inquiry-centered learning environment.

An evaluation team of external education experts was invited to review the school's performance. Prior to the site visit, this team was provided with the self study, site and annual reports, as well as any requested documentation related to areas of education program, governance, special education and finance. The team spent two full days immersed in the school program and spent time with stakeholders from all areas of the school community. Two members of the evaluation team, Eric McDonald and Ryan

Krominga presented findings from the report to PCCS board members at the November meeting.

The scope of the application guidelines gives less room for an evaluation of the school's progressive education mission and purpose. As the authorizer considers contract renewal, PCCS also wishes to express an appreciation of the support and interest Northfield Public Schools has given to the innovative practices of our school mission.

PCCS' enduring commitment to progressive education is more thoroughly documented elsewhere. It may be found in the narrative of annual reports, in the evidence of projects, thematic studies, parent satisfaction surveys, faculty retention, in art residencies, multi-age structures and play-based learning activities. It is evident in countless community events and activities that proactively engage parents with their children's learning. The success of the school's mission is found in the stories of alumni in middle and high school as well as in college and career. PCCS is excited to publish a history of the school's innovative progressive education this winter as an insight into a small school's exciting contribution to a community that values excellent and diverse educational choice opportunities for young people.

It is with great appreciation for the support, and wise oversight, of Dr. Richardson and the Northfield School Board that Prairie Creek Community School respectfully submits this Charter School Renewal Application.

Sincerely,

Simon Tyler
Director

Rosalyn Eaton-Neeb
PCCS School Board Chair

December, 2015

Narrative Responses for Performance Review

1. Is the education program a success?

PCCS has been a public, progressive elementary school since 2002. The success of Prairie Creek Community School's education program is evident in both its enduring commitment to a progressive education philosophy and practice and a data-informed analysis of student performance by state accountability and local assessments.

Student success by growth and proficiency measures on standardized assessments and Minnesota Department of Education benchmarks are clearly detailed in the school self-study and accompanying attachments. Most recent proficiency and growth scores on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) highlight measurable success students have attained in reading and math and continuing high performance in Science.

PCCS is a child-centered school and recognizes that the most useful assessment of student academic growth must be tied to formative, teacher-led evaluations that can inform instruction practices. During the contractual period, formative assessments have shifted to literary plan tools and math NWEA MAP measures that allow faculty and leadership to better monitor student needs.

Accountability measure successes aside, the enduring attraction of PCCS for staff, parents and students is a continued commitment to a progressive education program. Exceptionally high levels of staff and family retention and a consistent waitlist at all grade levels are testimony to the appeal of a program dedicated to the lifelong learner. Formal visits to PCCS by the authorizer (annually by Dr. Richardson, superintendent of Northfield Public Schools) and by the evaluation team provide reports from the classroom that students are highly engaged and passionate about inquiry-based learning.

The faculty, board and school leadership commits to deepening understanding of how students learn. Non-academic goals, established each year and a teacher-led culture of professional development constantly challenge the school to be responsive to the social/emotional, community and academic needs of each unique child.

2. Is the organization effective and well-run?

As detailed in the self-study and evaluation team report, Prairie Creek Community School is an effectively managed school by all reports and measures.

Financially, Prairie Creek has maintained a commitment to being responsible and careful stewards of public school funds. The success of the school's financial management is thoroughly detailed in the finance section of the Evaluation Team report. During his annual site visit, Dr. Richardson meets with finance committee and board members and provides insight and guidance after reviewing long-term planning models. The school engages in a process of five year forecasting with a practice of maintaining a strong fund balance that allows for a secure and flexible response to the unpredictable

nature of school revenue sources. The school board and finance committee engage transparently with faculty for input and discussion on annual budget decisions. Despite limited increases in state revenues during the contractual period, PCCS has maintained the small class size essential to the education program mission while also implementing improvements to the employee compensation and benefits model.

In her evaluation of the school's governance structure and performance, Andrea Harder commented: *The Board takes their role of governance seriously and has gone through a strategic planning process that has resulted in a strategic plan that will guide the school for the next contract term.* All board members complete three sessions of training in the areas of Governance, Finance and Employment. Additionally, the board engages in an annual retreat with faculty that builds understanding and collaboration around the school mission. Two teacher board members serve to provide an invaluable connection between the education program and governance. During the contractual period, the board undertook a comprehensive review of the school's policy manual.

The current school director, Simon Tyler, has been the school's leader since 2011. Director Tyler possesses a Principal's Licensure and closely collaborates with his own board and connects regularly with Dr. Richardson and other leaders in the authorizing district on school leadership questions. PCCS is also a member of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS).

Prairie Creek has been in existence since 1983 (founded initially as a private, independent school) and continually revisits its mission to innovative education practices. The effective management of professional development, facility and finances continues to support the teacher autonomy required to maintain a culture and practice of child-centered education.

3. Is the school meeting its legal obligations?

A public charter school, PCCS is held accountable to a high level of performance by outside reviews of aspects of the program. The school is consistently successful by all these assessments.

For the last three years, PCCS has attained the MDE School Finance Award. Clean audits are returned by CliftonLarsonAllen. Ryan Krominga reviewed audit reports and summaries for compliance and interviewed board, finance committee members and administration for his evaluation report.

As part of the evaluation team report, the school requested a thorough assessment of the special education program by Special Education Director Billie Ward. The report is detailed in this application. Billie Ward's evaluation is supported by the full compliance review of PCCS' special education program that was completed in the spring of 2015 and reported that the school was in full compliance with federal laws and state statutes.

After being hired at PCCS as director, Simon Tyler reviewed all compliance requirements and systems for completion at the school. The office maintains an electronic calendar with deadlines for completion of school assurances and reports so

that they are accurately completed in a timely manner. The legal obligations and compliance requirements for public schools are complicated but the school leader and chief financial officer have considerable experience in managing school environments. The director regularly checks with the authorizer, MDE, MACS and a network of local charter school directors with compliance questions and school legal issues. Where necessary, additional staff have been hired to support children and service requirements. For example, two years ago the school added a part-time nurse to the staff.

The PCCS' Board of Directors engages in comprehensive training that provides knowledge and understanding of school law and compliance. The school has a policy committee that continually reviews policy and procedure and oversees the development of new policies as required. The school director and board members attend the MACS Law Conference each summer and the director stays apprised of legislative updates via MDE and MACS communications.

4. Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

PCCS has focused academic student accountability goals in the areas of math and literacy. To support student success, evaluation measures for SMART goal setting have shifted to more formative measures such as Fountas and Pinnell for reading and MAP assessments for math. Teachers routinely set goals and review student progress in developmental teams. In math, flexible groupings are now utilized throughout the general education program and teachers are incorporating best instructional practices through training in Lesson Study and Number Talks.

PCCS is attentive to the success of subgroup performance in the areas of special education and free/reduced lunch and carefully considers strategies to provide additional support where needed. During the course of the last contract, the school and board committed to the hiring of a reading/math instructional support teacher. The school has developed and implemented a Title 1 program to support students at risk of not being successful in math. The special education team provides a model of inclusive education for students with disabilities. A best practices co-teaching design is currently being utilized in the 2nd and 3rd grade team with general education and special education teacher partnership. Looking forward, the special education team is planning a design for social and emotional learning in collaboration with classroom teachers.

Organizationally, PCCS has been attentive to the demands of increasing school size and managing a larger facility. During the period of the current contract, the school has responded to these challenges by hiring a facility management company, increasing staffing in key areas (intervention teacher, office assistant and part-time school nurse and technology consultant). A review of staffing for management of operations and systems is currently underway. Looking forward, the school and board recognize the need to develop a succession plan for all administrative roles.

A comprehensive review of the school program was conducted in 2014 - 2015 by board, faculty and community. This plan will provide a framework for success in the years

ahead. Progress toward strategic plan goals will be monitored through scheduled updates and reports to the school board.

Self Study

This self-study follows a format similar to the annual data reports that have been provided to the authorizer during the contractual period. Data is drawn primarily from the most recent school year, 2014 - 2015. Comprehensive data from all school years during the contractual period is available in Annual Reports on the school website as well as Site Data packets provided to the authorizer during the contractual period: http://prairiecreek.org/audits_and_reports.html

I. Is the Educational Program a Success?

Education Program changes during contractual period

The following curricular improvements and developments have taken place during this contractual period:

Literacy Plan

In alignment with the state requirement, Prairie Creek Community School developed a comprehensive Literacy Plan that outlines curriculum and assessments. A reading intervention teacher was hired in 2012-2013 to support students who are below grade level in reading.

Math

PCCS maintains a progressive approach to teaching math with a structured curriculum that meets state standards and research-based best instructional practices. Changes during the contractual period have included:

- Flexible groupings at the 2nd grade / 3rd grade and 4th grade / 5th grade team levels
- Lesson Study - a process of research-based professional development that equips teachers with knowledge and skills to examine and respond to children's mathematical understanding
- The introduction of NWEA MAP math assessments across the K - 5 program to provide an additional measurement tool to support teacher observations
- Growth accountability goals utilizing MCA data
- The addition of a reading/math intervention specialist to provide data-informed targeted support for students performing below grade level
- Parent education sessions to inform the community of the school's math program philosophy and ways they can connect with their child's mathematical journey

Arts Initiatives

Progressive education requires a strong commitment to the arts. Prairie Creek provides music and visual arts specialist instruction for all students. The school now has a school orchestra serving children in fourth and fifth grade that has become an established part of our program.

Prairie Creek continued its rich tradition of arts' residency programming with a month long collaboration with the Heart of the Beast Theater company in 2015 and an Opera Residency in collaboration with St. Olaf college in 2014. In 2014-2015, an arts'

committee comprised of teachers and community members was established to provide guidance and planning for a three year cycle of residency experiences for the children.

Thematic Study

Prairie Creek Community School's progressive education mission focuses on interdisciplinary learning through thematic study. The faculty developed a system of curricular mapping to track thematic study with connections to standards and benchmarks in social studies and science.

Social / Emotional Learning

Prairie Creek Community School has always been committed to educating the whole child. The social and emotional development of the child has been addressed in the following ways:

- A commitment to the values of play and child-centered inquiry
- Three parent-student-teacher conferences per year that utilize a goal-setting and narrative reporting process
- A teacher-led process of Guided Recess that instructs children in the collaborative and social skills required for a successful community culture
- A social curriculum that is informed by Responsive Classroom training for all new faculty
- The addition of a part-time school nurse to address the health and well-being of all students

Service Learning

The school has explored practical ways to meet its mission to Make the World a Better Place. Prairie Creek hosted a Family Service event in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. This was an event coordinated by both staff, students and parents. Students applied for a grant from the Healthy Community Initiative and solicited donations from families. "Stations" were hosted in classrooms throughout the evening. Each classroom learned about the organization they would be helping. Over 300 people attended each event and over 1000 items were created to support local charities. The projects were shared and items presented to the representatives of each charity at an All School Gathering.

Student Academic Growth – Progress Over Time

For comparison purposes, Prairie Creek Community School is being compared with the State of Minnesota, Sibley Elementary School, New Discoveries Montessori Academy (NDMA) and North Shore Community School.

North Shore Community School is a charter school in Duluth that focuses on developing life-long learners with an emphasis on environmental education. NDMA has a comparable progressive education mission fostering inquiry, exploration and the nurturing of a life-long learner. Sibley Elementary School is a traditional school in our authorizing district, Northfield.

Accountability Goals: 2014-2015

<u>Reading Growth</u>	
Kindergarten 66% of children who come in knowing 12 or fewer letter names and sounds will learn letter names and sounds, and will be reading Fountas and Pinnell "A" books by the end of the year. 66% of children who come in knowing 13 or more letter names and sounds will learn letter names and sounds, and will be reading Fountas and Pinnell "C" books by the end of the year. 66% of children who come in reading Fountas and Pinnell "A" books or above will move forward at least 3 levels in the F & P system.	Kindergarten 82% of this group of students met the goal of reading "A" books by the end of the year. 100% of students met the goal of reading "C" level books by the end of the year. 100% of children progressed at least three levels.
First Grade 66% of children will move forward at least four reading levels in the Fountas and Pinnell system.	First Grade 70% of children progressed at least four reading levels..
Second Grade 75% of children who come in reading below Level I will progress at least 4 reading levels by the end of the school year. Those students entering 2 nd grade at or above Level I will progress 3 levels.	Second Grade 73% of children progressed at least four reading levels. 74% of children progressed at least three reading levels.
Third Grade 75% of children who come in reading below Level M will progress at least 4 reading levels by the end of the school year. Those students entering 3 rd grade reading at Level M or above will progress 2 levels.	Third Grade 43% of students progressed at least four levels. 74% of students progressed at least two levels.
Fourth and Fifth Grade The number of PCCS students in grades 4 and 5 attaining "medium" or "high" levels of growth will meet or exceed 73% (State average in 13 – 14 was 72.1%)	83.1% of students in grades 4 and 5 attained "medium" or "high" levels of growth in reading

Non-Academic Goals 2014-2015

<p>Parent Education</p> <p>Prairie Creek will create opportunities for parents to learn from teachers and experts about progressive education, parenting skills and emotional intelligence.</p> <p>Five parent education evenings will be hosted by teachers and guest speakers.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Review assessment practices and goals in PCCS' progressive learning environment.</p> <p>Broaden the understanding within parent community of what authentic "assessment" means.</p>	<p>Prairie Creek hosted five parent education evenings.</p> <p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Progressive Education in the classroom (Curriculum night) ● Thematic Learning ● Math ● Supporting Sibling Success ● Children and Friendships <p>Director overview presentation to school board on accountability assessments and progressive education assessments</p> <p>Piloting of MAP Math Assessments</p> <p>Review of literacy growth goals and implementation of new practice utilizing Fountas / Pinnell assessments in grades K - 3</p> <p>Development of strategic action plan to educate parent community regarding authentic assessment in 2015-2016.</p>
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Non-Academic Goal focus areas - 2011 - 2016

- 2015 - 16 Race / Student Discourse
- 2014 - 15 Parent Education / Authentic Assessment
- 2013 - 14 Social / Emotional Development / Service Learning
- 2012 - 13 Health and Wellness / Diversity and Cultural Awareness
- 2011 - 12 Technology / Multi-Age Community

Growth Data

MDE Report Card: PCCS "On Track" Data:

MATH	2013	2014	2015
Percent of students "On Track for Success"	52.8%	53.6%	67.8%
The percentage of on track students are those who made medium or high growth and non-proficient students who made high growth.			

READING	2013	2014	2015
Percent of students "On Track for Success"	69.8%	73.7%	71.1%
The percentage of on track students are those who made medium or high growth and non-proficient students who made high growth.			

Student Progress by Category

Trend Data for sub-group performance in Reading and Math focuses on Special Education students and students who qualify for Free/Reduced lunch.
Trend data taken from the Minnesota Report Card shows student success over the contractual period.

Attachment A: *Math Trend and Comparison Data for Free/Reduced Lunch student performance*

Attachment B: *Reading Trend and Comparison Data for Free/Reduced Lunch student performance*

Attachment C: *Math Trend and Comparison Data for Special Education student performance*

Attachment D: *Reading Trend and Comparison Data for Special Education student performance*

Comparison Growth Data with State and local traditional school (Sibley Elementary)

MCA Assessments - Medium or High Growth	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
PCCS			
<i>Reading</i>	83.00%	87.70%	83.10%
<i>Math</i>	71.70%	71.40%	88.10%
Sibley Elementary (Northfield School District)			
<i>Reading</i>	79.9%	72.10%	83.20%
<i>Math</i>	76.3%	79.40%	80.40%
State of Minnesota			
<i>Reading</i>	72.10%	72.10%	73.70%
<i>Math</i>	72.60%	73.90%	74.00%

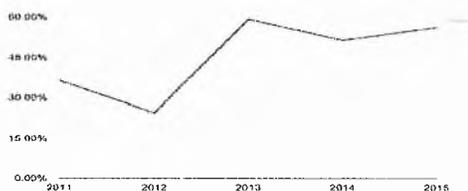
Student Achievement Level – Proficiency Status in Math, Reading and Science
MCA data with state, local and comparison charter schools

Proficiency Index Math	Prairie Creek	State	New Discoveries Montessori	North Shore Community	Sibley Elementary
2015	66.7%	61.6%	50.0%	66.3%	76.8%
2014	53.8%	61.9%	47.6%	63.4%	74.7%
2013	62.5%	61.6%	33.3%	62.9%	78.1%

Proficiency Index Reading	Prairie Creek	State	New Discoveries Montessori	North Shore Community	Sibley Elementary
2015	70.0%	60.6%	65.9%	69.7%	76.8%
2014	63.7%	59.8%	62.2%	61.1%	71.2%
2013	65.5%	58.75	43.3%	61.4%	70.2%

Proficiency Rates Science	Prairie Creek	State	New Discoveries Montessori	North Shore Community	Sibley Elementary
2015	80.6%	60.2%	43.5%	70.5%	73.9%
2014	63.3%	54.5%	47.8%	68.3%	73.9%
2013	71.4%	53.4%	42.9%	69.6%	78.1%

**Multiple Measurement Ratings during Contractual Period
(data from Minnesota Report Card)**



**Focus Ratings Performance during Contractual Period
(data from Minnesota Report Card)**



Student Engagement

Attendance percentage for 2015 was 96.3% and met AYP.
(percentage from Minnesota Report Card on MDE website)

Enrollment is expected to be at the targeted 180 students for the 15/16 school year.

	10-11	11-12	12-13	13 -14
Enrollment (K-5)	178	180	180	182
Average Daily Membership	179.15	178.39	178.71	181.05

* In the 2015-2016 the Prairie Creek faculty will develop measures for assessing student engagement at each developmental level. This data will inform summative evaluations of faculty in the Teacher Evaluation process.

Unique Education Objectives

Prairie Creek's progressive philosophy aligns closely with current research and best practices for developing 21st century skills. The school is a multi-age, active learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a passion for learning. The school places a strong emphasis on the value of play, the dramatic arts and the development of social and emotional intelligence.

The academic program is centered on a philosophy, rooted in the teaching of John Dewey and other progressive educators, that holds that children will construct an understanding of the world from genuine experiences. Consequently, children engage in thematic study and individual projects throughout the school year. Teachers tailor this study to the children's developmental stages as they progress through the K - 5 program. Inter-disciplinary study is aligned to standards through an annual review by teacher professional development committees. Comprehensive literacy and math plans support this work and ensure continuity and opportunity for reading, writing and numeracy to also connect in authentic ways with other subject areas.

Prairie Creek has a strong commitment to the arts, and specialists teach all children in the fields of visual art, music and Spanish. A team of general education teaching assistants provides an additional level of child-centered support. The general education program is supported by a team of three licensed special education teachers and paraprofessionals that serve Individual Education Program Plan needs. A licensed math/literacy intervention teacher works with children in the K - 2 grades who require additional literacy and math support in the general education setting.

Prairie Creek is committed to a robust model of teacher evaluation. All teachers are supervised and evaluated by the school director.

Professional Development

Student learning is designed by teachers in an innovative community of professional collaboration. Teachers team in professional development committees that review standards and best practices across the curricular areas on a two year cycle. These committees meet and plan the weekly two hour professional development sessions for faculty. In addition, the teaching staff participates in two days of professional development at the end of the year for reflection on the year's work and goal setting focused on the mission and purpose of the school. The staff also participates in four days of workshops prior to the start of the school year. The faculty functions as an authentic learning community with teacher leadership employed to develop workshops related to academic and non-academic goals.

Each professional development committee has three classroom teachers. The director, special education teachers and specialists participate on committee work. Each September, faculty reviews a list of professional development goal areas and topics that are determined during faculty retreat in June and work week in August. Under the guidance of a professional development teacher leader, study areas are divided out

among the three committees. Teachers also participate in specialized professional development outside of the regular weekly session.

Attachment E: *Committee-led Professional Development Focus Areas 2014-2015*

II. Is the Organization Effective and Well-Run?

Financial Performance

As a charter school, we are responsible for the education of children and for having a clear knowledge of business and fiscal responsibilities. Ona Sheets is the Business Manager/Human Resources Coordinator and Keith Johnson is the Chief Financial Officer. The Prairie Creek School Board and Finance Committee meet on the 4th Thursday of each month and the school's financial information is carefully reviewed and discussed at each meeting. Prairie Creek has slowly built a fund balance reserve, finishing FY15 with a fund balance of \$609,035 (33.7% of annual expenditures) which has kept the school fiscally sound and prepared to weather any unforeseen events. The audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2015 show General Fund total revenue at \$1,828,673 and General Fund total expenses in the amount of \$1,812,869 resulting in a Net Income of \$15,804.

CliftonLarsonAllen, an independent auditor, has conducted PCCS' financial analysis. PCCS will submit audited financial statements to Northfield Public Schools and the Minnesota Department of Education on or before December 31, 2015.

School Demand

PCCS Students	11 - 12	12 - 13	13 - 14
Enrollment (K 5)	180	180	182
Average Daily Membership	178.39	178.71	181.90
Mobility Index	0.03	0.02	0.01

Prairie Creek Community School is fully enrolled at 180 students and maintains a waitlist for open spots.

Parent Satisfaction

Each spring, PCCS distributes a parent engagement and satisfaction survey to parents/guardians of PCCS students. A more comprehensive report of the survey is included in the school annual report each year.

Proportion of Parents Averaging Positive Responses across Domains in 2014-2015

Domain	Proportion of Parents with an Average Positive Response (3.0 or higher)
Community and Climate	98%
Curriculum and Learning	96%
Faculty and Staff	97%
Governance and Administration	95%

The table below shows trend data the average score for the four survey domains. As can be seen in the table, the average rating for all four domains fell between the "Agree" (a rating of 3) and "Strongly Agree" (a rating of 4) response options.

Average Response on Parental Engagement and Satisfaction Survey over Time

Domain	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Community and Climate	3.62	3.67	3.66	3.75	3.72
Curriculum and Learning	3.51	3.44	3.47	3.46	3.57
Faculty and Staff	3.70	3.69	3.69	3.65	3.74
Governance and Administration	3.38	3.52	3.52	3.56	3.61

**Governance & Stewardship
Board of Directors**

The membership of the Board is composed of parents and/or guardians of currently enrolled PCCS students, staff members and community members. The nine members of the 2014-2015 board all completed the three required training modules in the areas of employment law, governance and finance.

The director and Chief Financial Officer serve as nonvoting members. Terms of the members run from July 1 to June 30. Specific information for each board member can be found in Table 14 below. Overall, board members had an average attendance rate of 80.5%.

Agendas, meeting minutes, policies, budgets and audited statements are posted on the website: www.prairiecreek.org

Board Members 2014 - 2015

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Term End Date	Email Address
Roz Eaton-Neeb	Chair	Parent	6/30/2017	reatonneeb-board@prairiecreek.org
Kelsey Fitschen	Secretary	Teacher	6/30/2016	kfitschen@prairiecreek.org
Ben Miller	Treasurer	Parent	6/30/2015	bmiller-board@prairiecreek.org
Bonnie Jean Flom	Vice-Chair	Community Member	6/30/2015	bjflom-board@prairiecreek.org
Randy Clay	Member	Parent	6/30/2015	rclay-board@prairiecreek.org
Amy Gernon	Member	Parent	6/30/2017	aedwardgernon-board@prairiecreek.org
Julie Cohrs	Member	Parent	6/30/2016	jcohrs-board@prairiecreek.org
Amy Haslett-Marroquin	Member	Teacher	6/30/2015	ahaslett@prairiecreek.org
Dan Rustad	Member	Parent	6/30/2017	drustad-board@prairiecreek.org

**Leadership
Administrative Team**

Executive Director	Simon Tyler *
Business Manager	Ona Sheets
Chief Financial Officer	Keith Johnson
Administrative Assistant	Colleen Braucher
Office Assistant	Theresa Nemec

*The school director has a Principal's License

III. Is the School Meeting Its Legal Obligations?

Financial Reporting & Accountability

State finance reports are filed appropriately and on time, including STAR, MARSS, preliminary fall UFARS, audit to MDE.

Services for Special Education Students

Prairie Creek Community School contracts with Indigo Education (formerly Innovative Special Education Services) for Special Education director services.

During the 2014-15 school year, a team from MDE conducted a review of the special education program at PCCS. The purpose of the MDE Compliance Review was to determine whether the district's current special education program is conducted consistent with state and federal laws and rules. Given the *Final Report* issued to PCCS, June 24, 2015, the following information was provided. The district was formally notified of zero individual findings of noncompliance for individual student records and no formal complaints were identified for the district.

Summary statement from MDE review:

Congratulations! The Minnesota Department of Education commends Prairie Creek Community School (4080-07) for demonstration of compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and with corresponding State Statute and Rule. The District's demonstration of its ability and commitment to implementing special education programs that meet or exceed minimum requirements is reflective of its administration, teachers, staff and community. The MDE appreciates all of the district's efforts on behalf of children with disabilities and their families.

Attachment F: Commissioner's letter notifying PCCS of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Compliance Achievement Award for 2014-2015

Services for English Language Learners

Prairie Creek Community School does not have any ELL students currently registered.

Is the school faithful to the terms of its contract?

Board members each complete a comprehensive program of board training in the areas of finance, governance and employment with twelve months of accepting a position on the board.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all elements of public school and charter school law.

The school has the following documents as evidence that there is compliance with all contractual requirements:

- By-laws of Prairie Creek Community School
- Teaching licenses or variances of all faculty and staff
- Board roster, nominations process and election process
- Prairie Creek annual Evaluation Plan
- All audits of the school
- Admissions policy
- Assurances of Compliance for Special Education
- Special Education district manual
- Insurance policy documents for the school
- Immunization forms for all students
- Employee Manual
- Policy Manual

A complete list of all school policies and reports are available on the school website at http://prairiecreek.org/school_board.html

School Law

Prairie Creek consults with Cindy Lavorato of Lavorato Law Offices LLC. She advises the director and board regarding matters of employment, policy and compliance. The services of our member association Minnesota of Charter Schools (MACs) are also available to the school

School Safety

Prairie Creek has the following procedures in place to ensure that all staff and children have proper training in safety and that the building meets all necessary health and safety requirements:

- Yearly training in Bloodborne pathogen safety
- Requirement that all children be current with immunizations or have a conscientious objector form on file
- Regular inspections to ensure drinking water is contaminant free
- CPR and First Aid training for staff on a two year schedule of training
- Required Fire Marshal inspections
- Crisis Management Plan - reviewed annually by Crisis Management Team
- Annual completion of required safety drills

IV. Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

Strategic Planning Process

This process was designed to both reflect back on the school's thirty year history as a progressive school and also look forward to assess opportunities for growth and development as a program. Community input was key to this process. A parent survey was administered in the fall followed by a community "World Cafe" conversation evening to receive parent ideas and input.

Attachment G: Strategic Plan Overview

Attachment H: Strategic Action Plan 2015 - 2016

World's Best Workforce Plan

Prairie Creek developed a World's Best Workforce Plan for 2015-2016 that meets the requirements of the state law:

- Kindergarten Readiness
- All Children Reading by Third Grade
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- All Students Career and College Ready by Graduation
- All Students Graduate

Professional Development plans will be targeted to support faculty awareness of diversity and the achievement of students in subgroup populations at our school. SMART goals will address the achievement gap challenges for students in the categories of special education and free/reduced lunch.

External Visitation Report by Outside Team of Experts

External Evaluation Report - November 2015

The Team:

Andrea Harder Director, EdVisions Cooperative	Governance/Leadership Team Leader
Ryan Krominga Teaching & Learning Coordinator Shakopee Public Schools	Finances
Eric Swan McDonald Assistant Professor of Science Education, Carleton College Science Teacher, Northfield ALC	Educational Programming
Billie Ward Special Education Director, Indigo Education	Special Education

Each team member answered the four critical questions pertaining to their area of expertise. Those questions being:

1. Is the educational program a success?
2. Is the organization effective and well-run?
3. Is the school meeting its legal obligations?
4. Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

Governance/Leadership: Andrea Harder

Is Prairie Creek Community School's educational program a success?

From the view of governance and leadership the answer is a definite yes. The School Board and Director of PCCS remain committed to the mission of the school: being a community school, child-centered, progressive educators and aiming to make the world a better place. While remaining consistent to their mission of progressive education, the Board and Director have seen an increase in PCCS' MCA data as can be viewed on the MDE Report Card for PCCS, which responds to the question of the educational component being a success.

Having the opportunity to meet with parents from PCCS, I was also able to hear from them how successful they see PCCS to be. They all love the education their children are receiving at PCCS, they feel their kids are academically ready when they leave the school and see the school culture piece reaching out into their children's lives at home and in the community. In my professional opinion, this is truly the greatest measure of success the school has is parent/family satisfaction. In addition, the school has a waiting list of 60+ students and an enrollment of 180 students. This speaks volumes to parental satisfaction with the school's programming, governance and leadership as a whole.

Teacher retention is high at PCCS which is another great example of the success of this program. Teachers comment on feeling satisfied with their work, loving their job and being supported by each other, the director, and the school board. Reflecting back teachers felt that this was a change over the past 5 years and the Board themselves reflected upon their intentional decision to have more interaction with staff and parents sharing the mission and vision of PCCS.

Is the organization effective and well-run?

It is with a high degree of certainty that I can say, yes, PCCS is effective and well-run. The Board takes their role of governance seriously and has gone through a strategic planning process that has resulted in a strategic plan that will guide the school for the next contract term. The Board places great intent in making sure the plan and committees of the school align to help them achieve the mission of the school. The Board also revised their Fund-balance policy, to ensure that they have a healthy fund balance of 25%, this is another measure that shows the schools is running effectively. The Board has also created a Development Committee that oversees all fundraising for the school, which is a big effort as they normally raise \$55,000-\$60,000/school year. This is another example that shows the support of the school from both the community and the schools' families. A Community Connections group has also been set up and reports to the Board with the main goal of organizing events and volunteer needs of the school.

The Leadership Team added a Part-time Office Assistant position to help with workload of Team Members. They have also made sure that transition or succession plans are in place for team members in case of an emergency. The day to day operations of PCCS are well organized and the day goes over well. The Director himself focuses on communication with staff each morning as a system to make sure everyone is aware of the day's happenings. Staff meetings are held on a weekly basis for one hour and this is another way that the Director can assure all things are running smoothly. The Leadership Team has put a support network in place for when advice is needed either legally or with educational programming.

One recommendation from my observations would be to schedule in time for the Leadership Team to meet on a weekly basis for a check-in time with one another.

Is the school meeting its legal obligations?

The Board and Leadership team, comprised of Business Manager, CFO, Administrative Assistant and Office Assistant are meeting all legal obligations that were reviewed and documentation of such is evident. The PCCS School Board is comprised of nine members, including 2 teachers, 2 Community Members & 5 parents. The Board meets monthly, agendas are distributed electronically to all Board Members. The Director provides the Board with a monthly Director's Report to update the Board on happenings within the program. The Board is well aware of the charter contract, bylaws of the school and policies that help guide the school. The Board follows open meeting law, Board training requirements and builds in on-going development for the Board.

The Director and Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that all compliance reporting is completed. In the course of the past 5 years, this area has been one of growth. The team has created shared calendars that have helped each other with accountability deadlines and to know who is completing each task. From my meetings with both the Board, Teachers and the Leadership Team the groups as a whole all identified that procedures have tightened up over the last five years, and compliance is handled and legal obligations are met in a timely and effective manner.

Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

Through the board creating their Strategic Plan, they have shown their desire to sustain success and continue to improve their school in the areas of: Progressive Education, Outreach and Community Engagement & Sustainability. Over the course of this school year the Board, Director and the faculty will work on creating a strategic action plan to execute the strategic plan. The Board has committed themselves to a quarterly check-in on the strategic plan to remain accountable to the process and themselves.

The Leadership Team is currently in the process of reviewing their roles and delineating duties and tasks that best suit the roles they each occupy. This process will allow them to shape the Leadership Team to meet the needs of compliance reporting, daily operations, and educational programming of PCCS.

Finance: Ryan Krominga

Is the educational program a success?

From the financial perspective Prairie Creek Community School (PCCS) is very successful. In the previous renewal Prairie Creek was expanding from a school enrollment of 120 students to 180 students. They have been a school of 180 students for the life of the current contract and have been very successful financially. They ended the most recent school year with a 33% fund balance based on school revenue.

PCCS has a stable enrollment with a healthy waiting list each year. They have a 1 to 20 student to teacher ratio in the classroom and have additional general education paraprofessional support. They are maximizing their budget, while having an optimal teacher to student ratio, and continuing to add to the fund balance.

Is the organization effective and well-run?

The school director and chief financial officer (CFO) meet weekly to go through school financial deadlines, documents, and decisions that need to be made. The director and business manager have a very positive relationship and work as a team to help the school make appropriate financial decisions.

School Board Business Management: The school has a finance committee that meets prior to each School Board meeting. The finance committee goes through monthly financial statements in detail and reports to the school board the financial status of the school. Each School Board member receives all financial reports. The School Board are active participants in the financial discussions for the school and have all gone to board training on school finance.

Most recently they had their business manager went out on sick leave. The Director, Chief Financial Officer and the Office Staff worked to fill that role in the short-term. This process has helped them re-evaluate the roles and responsibilities of each office staff member. It is my recommendation that a review cycle for roles and responsibilities of each administrative team member is put in place. As a small school, there are fewer redundancies in place for processes and procedures and when one person leaves, it can be very time consuming to figure out all of the responsibilities a staff member was completing, especially in an area as important as school finance.

Is the school meeting its legal obligations?

Prairie Creek Community School meets its financial deadlines and legal obligations. Prairie Creek Community School received the 2015 finance award and is set to receive the award again this year. The school operates with a healthy fund balance and is operating with fidelity.

Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

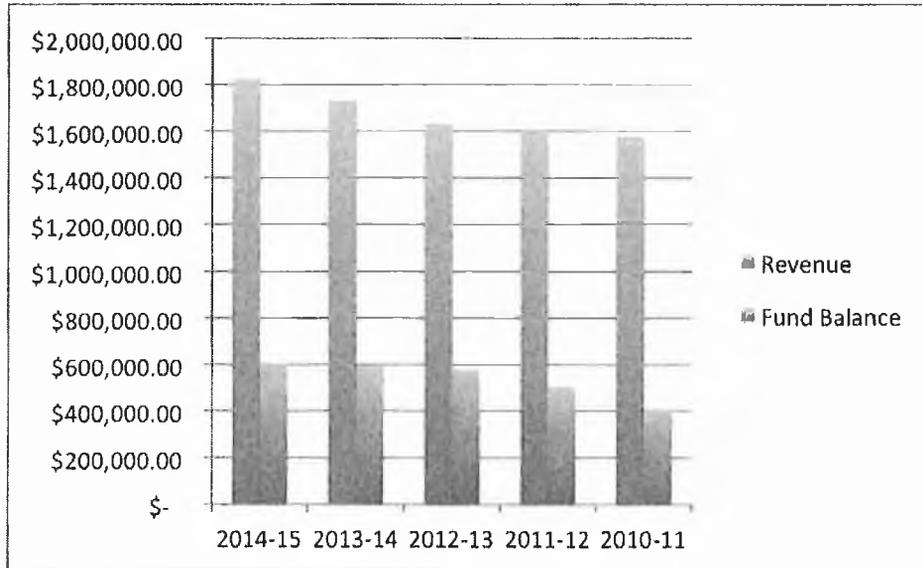
Prairie Creek has a strong financial outlook going into the next charter cycle with Northfield Public Schools. Prairie Creek continues to increase the fund balance each year, with the fund balance percentage decreasing as it is related to school revenue. This is because the increase in school aid is growing faster than the yearly increase to the fund balance.

PCCS uses the 5-year projection when making budget decisions. The projection is very conservative in nature and shows the fund balance decreasing over the next five years. Although this projection indicates dipping into the fund balance over the next five years, in reality the school continues to add to the fund balance year after year with a positive net gain at the end of each school year. If this trend continues, it is my recommendation that PCCS get more aggressive in lowering their fund balance to approximately 25% as stated in their fund balance policy. The excess funds could be spent on equipment or materials to help support the school's programming. I would caution using those funds on personnel, which would translate to ongoing expenses each subsequent year.

As shown below, revenue continues to increase due to increases in the per pupil funding formula and access to additional programming, like Title I. There was also a larger increase to the overall revenue in 2014-15, due to the introduction of all-day kindergarten and I suspect this will level out again, similar to 2010 through 2014. As stated above, the increases to revenue are increasing at a faster rate than increases to the fund balance, but the fund balance continues to grow and more than meets their cash flow need.

	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2012-11	2010-11
Total Revenue	\$1,828,673.00	\$1,733,067.00	\$1,632,522.00	\$1,601,941.00	\$1,578,707.00
Total Expenditure	\$1,812,869.00	\$1,719,680.00	\$1,661,394.00	\$1,505,954.00	\$1,491,607.00

Fund Balance	\$609,035.00	\$593,231.00	\$579,844.00	\$506,854.00	\$410,867.00
% of Revenues	33.30%	34.23%	35.52%	31.64%	26.03%



Educational Programming: Eric Swan McDonald

Is the educational program a success?

After observing several active classrooms, speaking with parents, students and administration, and after reviewing several documents I believe that there is little doubt that the educational program and Prairie Creek Community School (PCCS) is a success. Please refer to the data provided in the self-study regarding the math and reading MAP test scores as well as the science assessments for more data. These scores show, quantitatively, that what is happening at PCCS is certainly working. But they only show one part of the story. Another large part is what you see taking place in the classroom, things that are much more difficult to quantify, and things that speak loudly to the success of the educational program.

Having served as a faculty member in three different education departments I have observed students and teachers in well over 100 different classroom. I have observed students in almost all content areas and I never cease to marvel at how students respond to high quality instruction. At PCCS I was never left unimpressed. In all the classrooms I observed, at each of the grade levels, I could clearly see that student engagement was consistently at the 95-100% level and that any time a student appeared to be disconnecting the observant teacher was immediately redirecting their behavior in a positive, encouraging manner; something that almost always met with success. I observed students engaging in themed units that incorporated math, science and social studies. I observed them engaging in the creation of nature inspired art, excited at their own ability to create. I observed them using manipulatives to drive home the reality of math concepts, making music and rhythm as a group, and received

instructions in Spanish as they participated in physical education. I observed them play, problem solve, work in groups or alone, choose their own path to success and engage at levels that truly fit them. The students themselves were creating moments of success creatively and carefully facilitated by masterful teachers with high expectations.

Is the organization effective and well-run?

PCCS is an extremely well run intentional educational organization. Based in intentional community the decisions from the board, the director, the teachers and other staff, and the parents, are transparent. All involved have the best interest of the students in mind, which is extremely important when facing difficult decisions like class size. A clear dedication to the mission of the school keeps all decisions makers and stakeholders informed as they move forward and all said that they felt well informed of and could articulate the mission. Decisions have been made over the last five years that have had an impact on the daily classrooms, decisions that were taken seriously and involved input from all involved. The teachers at PCCS report that they feel extremely well supported by the school board, the parents, and the administrators and the school board and administration report that they seek and respect the input of the teachers and all others who work with the students. The students clearly come first and decisions are made with progressive education and student centered learning in mind.

Is the school meeting its legal obligations?

PCCS is meeting its legal obligations. With feet planted firmly in the present yet a clear eye out for the future this school works hard to meet the needs of all students. Hiring an intervention teacher to work directly with any students who are identified in need of extra support in reading and math they are very intentional in their attempt to address the achievement gap. All students are taught in an environment where creativity and engagement with the content is encouraged. Teachers work to keep their skills as educators extremely sharp with weekly professional development sessions. This model of professional development is teacher motivated and is aimed at keeping the teachers mindful of state and national content standards as well as any licensure mandates and other student needs. In this way they make sure that their content is always up to date and that their classes are well balanced in terms of what that they teach.

Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

PCCS, as I wrote previously, keeps their feet planted firmly in the present and in their mission but also keeps a clear eye on the future. Through their constant and transparent communication between all stakeholders they do not shy away from pressing needs. One area of concern, which they voiced, is the lack of diversity at the school (defined in many different ways). This is something that they are mindful of and is something that they are addressing as they recruit new students and get the word, about this school, out to the public. They are also aware of the fact that there is not a lot a turnover amongst the staff, which is good for stability, but makes it more difficult when new staff are added. Teacher evaluations by the director and director evaluations by the school board are also in place and a schedule is adhered to. Teachers set yearly growth goals and strive to achieve these goals with the full support of the administration, board, and parents. I am extremely confident that PCCS is poised wisely to sustain their success and will continue to improve over the next charter term.

Special Education: Billie Ward

Is the educational program a success?

Through interviews with parents, teachers and paraprofessional staff, it is evident the special education program at Prairie Creek is successful. The teachers and students with special needs are an integral part of Prairie Creek School. Students in need of unique specialized instruction receive services in the least restrictive environment, with a continuum of special education services provided based on student need. This continuum includes inclusion in the general education classroom, small group instruction and one on one instruction by the special education teacher.

Parents interviewed reported high satisfaction with the special education program. They reported communication with the special education teachers from the initial identification of their children meeting criteria for special education services to current programming has been excellent. Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings are truly team meetings where parent input is valued, confidentiality is honored, and each child is treated as a special individual. They report the entire special education process is respectful of the students and their families.

One of the indicators of a seamless program is the inability to identify when special education programming is occurring. Parents and staff reported students do not know who does and does not receive special. The multi-age groupings and inclusive special education instructional model allows students to seamlessly move between general education and special education.

Is the organization effective and well-run?

Prairie Creek is an effective and well run organization as evidenced by the longevity of staff, a student waiting list, the positive reputation of the school within the community, and the overall confidence from parents, teachers and paraprofessionals in the leadership of Simon Tyler and the board support.

Compliance with federal and state special education mandates, parental satisfaction with provided services, organizational collaboration between general and special education, ongoing professional development, community communication and confidence in the leadership of Brittany Thomforde, Special Education Director, are evidence of an effective and well-run special education department.

There is a strong commitment to staying true to the mission of a progressive school while incorporating federal and state requirements of special education.

Is the school meeting its legal obligations?

Minnesota Department of Education conducted a full compliance review of the special education program of Prairie Creek Community School during the 2014/2015 school year. The final report dated June 24, 2015 issued to Prairie Creek found the school to be in compliance with the Federal law (Individual with Disabilities Education Act-IDEA)

and State Statutes and Rules that govern special education processes, programs and services.

Review of special education documents including the above mentioned compliance review, Prairie Creek's Total Special Education Manual, Restrictive Procedures plan, and students Individual Education Program files support that Prairie Creek continues to be in compliance.

The special education staffing of 2.5 licensed teachers and 5 para-professionals meets the needs of the 28 students requiring specialized instruction. Prairie Creek contracts with outside agencies to provide the additional special education services needed to provide FAPE (free appropriate public education) to special education students. Currently these services include school psychologist, speech clinician, occupational therapist and developmental adaptive physical education. Prairie Creek is committed to contracting for additional related special education services (nursing, physical therapy, etc.) if the need is identified through the evaluation process for students. Every public school is required to have a Special Education Director to oversee the special education program. Prairie Creek contracts with Indigo Education, which provides this service for over 80 charter schools throughout Minnesota.

Are strategies in place for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term?

The special education team is committed to continued collaboration with general educators. Each special education teacher is an integral part of one of the three grade level teams with allows for planning and problem solving to best meet the needs of all students. At the 2/3 level the special education and general education teacher are co-teaching math. The special education teachers provide professional development to the paraprofessionals on a monthly basis. Looking forward, the special education team is preparing an action research that will target social communication.

Teachers, both general education and special education, reported the ongoing professional development provides the opportunity for intellectual growth, collaborative planning and resource discovery as they create educational curriculum.

ANNUAL CHARTER SCHOOL ASSURANCES

The following assurances must be signed annually by all operational charter schools.

[1] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school has looked for facilities that comply with Minn. Stat. § 124E.13, subd.1 and Minn. Stat. § 124E.03, subd. 2(a).

If the lease is with a sectarian organization:

I assure that students at Prairie Creek Community charter school are screened from any involvement with or exposure to any of the sectarian organization's religious activities occurring on school property during the school day or during school-sponsored events.

- a. Identify any involvement of any of the charter school's directors, administrators, or teachers in the sectarian organization; and
- b. Identify any telephone or fax numbers, email addresses, employer identification numbers, and employees that the charter school shares with the sectarian organization.
- c. Identify and describe any activities by the sectarian organization in support of your school, including but not limited to fundraising, student recruitment, promotion, any claimed affiliation with your school and sponsorship of school programs or events.

[2] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school has taken steps to maintain nonsectarian school facilities in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd. 3(b).

- a. Apart from items displayed only during the meetings of after-school student-only clubs, identify and describe all religious texts, symbols, quotations, or objects displayed at your school facilities on school days.
- b. If religious texts or multiple substantive quotations from religious texts are used in any classes or teaching materials other than in survey classes that teach about multiple religions, describe the texts or materials and quotations.
- c. Describe all prayers, calls to prayers, invocations, readings of religious texts, and religious greetings that have been delivered in connection with school activities.

[3] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school has a board-adopted religious accommodation policy that accords equal treatment of and access to all religions.

Select your school's response:

- The most recent version of the policy is attached. (Attach a copy of the policy.)
- The policy submitted with previous assurances has not changed.

[4] I assure that if Prairie Creek Community charter school allows religious or other activities on school property during non-instructional time there is a board-adopted policy allowing equal access to all groups and that such access otherwise complies with Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd. 3(b).

Select your school's response:

- The most recent version of the policy is attached. (Attach a copy of the policy.)
 The policy submitted with previous assurances has not changed.

[5] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school does not involve itself in religious activities, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd. 3(b), including by recruiting employees, parents or other volunteers for such activities.

- a. If you have not already done so in Assurance 1(b), identify any telephone or fax numbers, email addresses, employer identification numbers, and employees that the charter school shares with any sectarian organization.
- b. If you have not already done so in Assurance 1(c), identify and describe any activities by sectarian organizations in support of your school, including but not limited to fundraising, student recruitment, promotion, any claimed affiliation with your school and sponsorship of school programs or events.
- c. Identify and describe any instance in which your school took the religion of an individual into account in (a) the hiring, firing, discipline or assignment of your faculty, staff, vendors, or contractors; (b) the recruitment, admission or discipline of students; or (c) decisions regarding the resources made available to student groups.

[6] I assure that food served at Prairie Creek Community charter school satisfies applicable health and safety requirements, provides equal accommodations to all religions, and otherwise complies with Minn. Stat. § 124E.03, subd. 2(a).

- a. Describe any religious-based restrictions that your charter school places on the types of food that may be consumed on its premises.

[7] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school follows the state data practices law, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 124E.03, subd. 5(a), including regarding staff ability to report unethical or fraudulent actions of a charter where they work, and that the charter school's board has attended trainings that include state data practices law on the following dates: September 2015.

Select your school's response:

- The most recent version of the policy is attached. (Attach a copy of the policy.)
 The policy submitted with previous assurances has not changed.

[8] I assure that, if Prairie Creek Community charter school has a waiting list for acceptance into the school, a lottery is conducted that does not select students based on religious preference and that the lottery otherwise complies with Minn. Stat. § 124E.11.

Select your school's response:

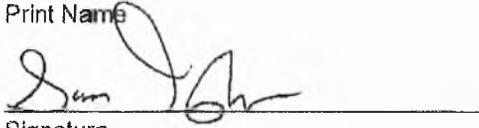
- The most recent version of the policy is attached. (Attach a copy of the policy.)
 The policy submitted with previous assurances has not changed.

[9] I assure that Prairie Creek Community charter school has a neutral dress code and/or uniform policy that does not promote a particular religion or particular religious customs and that the school does not, through its enforcement of dress code and/or uniform policy, restrict opportunity to participate in school activities.

Select your school's response:

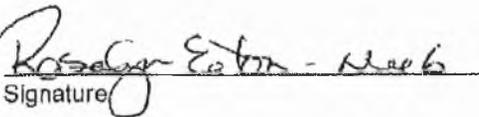
- The most recent version of the policy is attached. (Attach a copy of the policy.)
 The policy submitted with previous assurances has not changed.
 Describe the policy, if it is unwritten.

Charter School Director:

Simon Tyler
Print Name

Signature

9.17.15
Date

Charter School Board Chair:

Rosyln Eaton-Neeb
Print Name

Signature

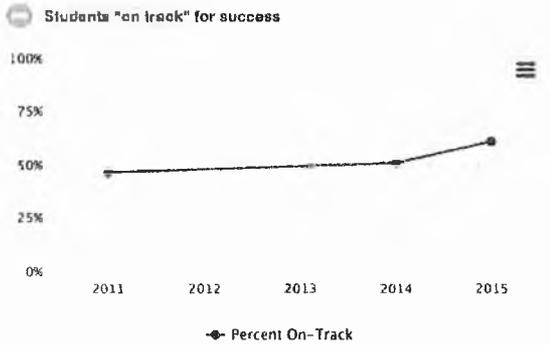
9.17.15
Date

Attachments

Attachment A: Math Trend and Comparison Data for Free/Reduced Lunch Program Students

Student Progress: Are students making expected growth? ⓘ

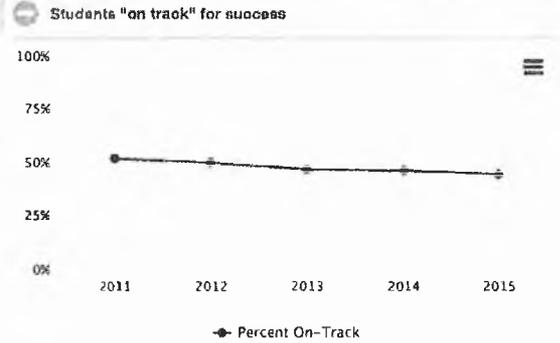
Prairie Creek Community School
 Prairie Creek Community School
 Subject: Math, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	45.6%
2012	49.9%
2013	49.9%
2014	49.9%
2015	60.0%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

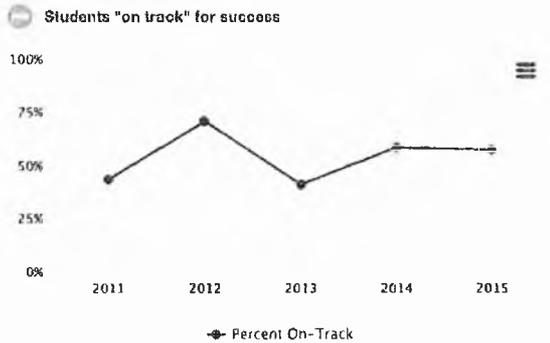
Statewide
 Subject: Math, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	50.8%
2012	48.8%
2013	45.6%
2014	44.9%
2015	43.3%

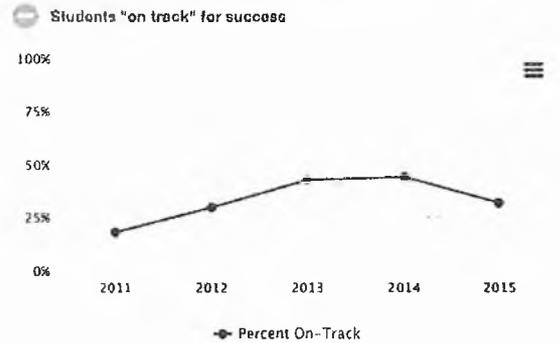
- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Sibley Elementary Northfield Public School District
 Subject: Math, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	42.3%
2012	69.7%
2013	40.0%
2014	57.5%
2015	56.3%

New Discoveries Montessori Academy
 Subject: Math, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



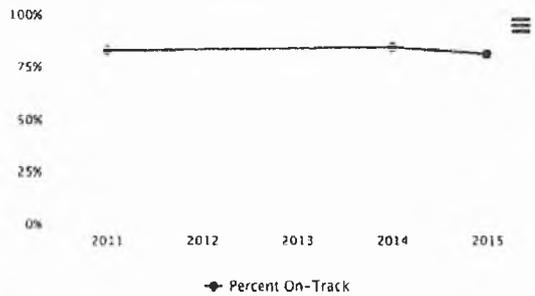
Year	Percent On-Track
2011	17.2%
2012	29.0%
2013	42.0%
2014	43.3%
2015	31.0%

Attachment B: Reading Trend and Comparison Data for Free / Reduced Program Students

Student Progress: Are students making expected growth?

Prairie Creek Community School
 Prairie Creek Community School
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success

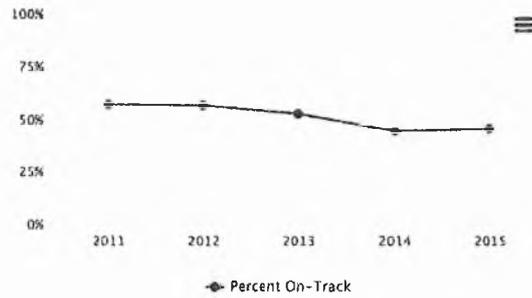


Year	Percent On-Track
2011	81.9%
2012	CTSTR
2013	CTSTR
2014	83.3%
2015	80.0%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Statewide
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success

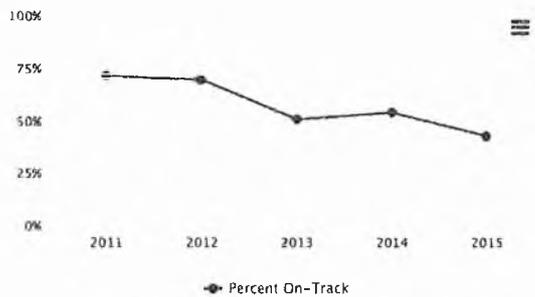


Year	Percent On-Track
2011	56.1%
2012	55.7%
2013	51.6%
2014	43.4%
2015	44.5%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Sibley Elementary Northfield Public School District
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

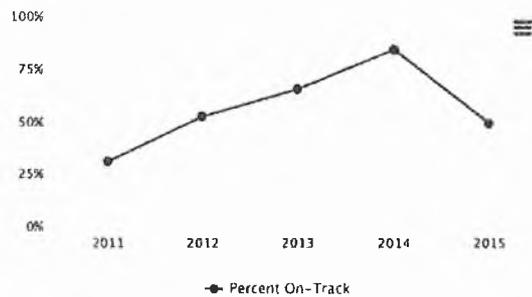
Students "on track" for success



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	70.8%
2012	68.8%
2013	80.0%
2014	53.2%
2015	42.0%

New Discoveries Montessori Academy
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success



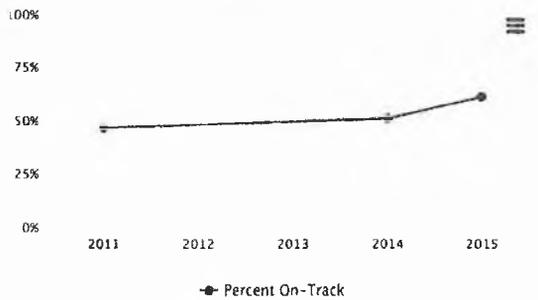
Year	Percent On-Track
2011	30.0%
2012	51.6%
2013	64.6%
2014	83.4%
2015	48.2%

Attachment C: Math Trend and Comparison Data for Special Education Student Performance

Student Progress: Are students making expected growth?

Prairie Creek Community School
 Prairie Creek Community School
 Subject: Math, Demographic: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success

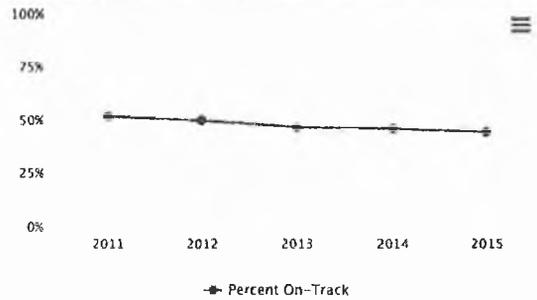


Year	Percent On-Track
2011	45.5%
2012	CTSTR
2013	CTSTR
2014	49.9%
2015	60.0%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Statewide
 Subject: Math, Demographic: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success

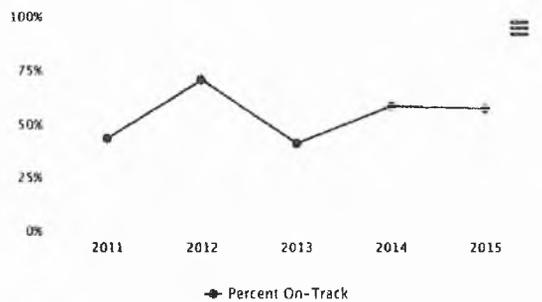


Year	Percent On-Track
2011	50.8%
2012	48.8%
2013	45.6%
2014	44.8%
2015	43.3%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Sibley Elementary Northfield Public School District
 Subject: Math, Demographic: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success

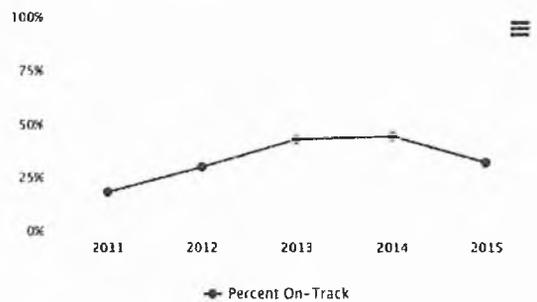


Year	Percent On-Track
2011	42.3%
2012	69.7%
2013	40.0%
2014	57.5%
2015	56.3%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

New Discoveries Montessori Academy
 Subject: Math, Demographic: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch

Students "on track" for success



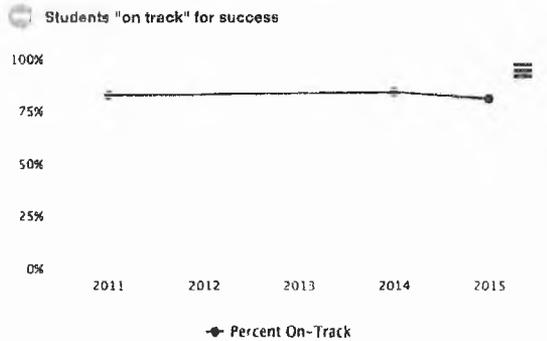
Year	Percent On-Track
2011	17.2%
2012	29.0%
2013	42.0%
2014	43.3%
2015	31.0%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Attachment D: Reading Trend and Comparison Data for Special Education Student Performance

Student Progress: Are students making expected growth?

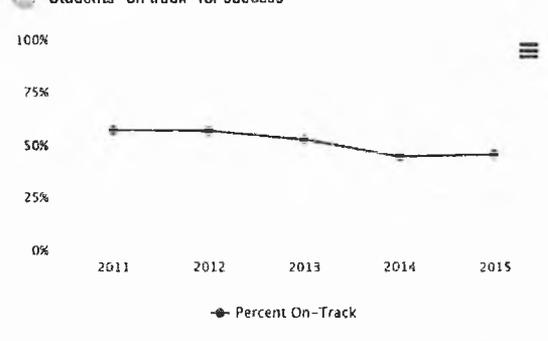
Prairie Creek Community School
 Prairie Creek Community School
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	81.9%
2012	CTSTR
2013	CTSTR
2014	83.3%
2015	80.0%

- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

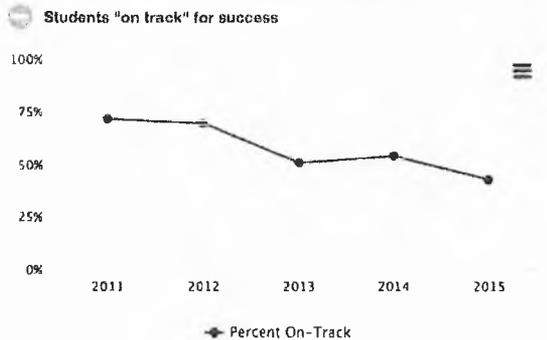
Statewide
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	50.1%
2012	55.7%
2013	51.6%
2014	43.4%
2015	44.5%

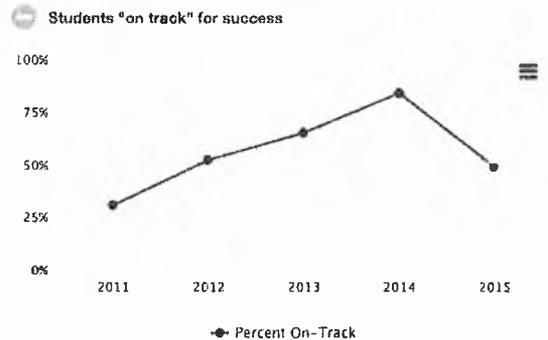
- 2014 - 2015 Student Growth, all students
- 2014 - 2015 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students
- School Contact Information

Sibley Elementary Northfield Public School District
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	70.8%
2012	68.8%
2013	50.0%
2014	53.2%
2015	42.0%

New Discoveries Montessori Academy
 Subject: Reading, Demographics: Free/Reduced Priced Lunch



Year	Percent On-Track
2011	30.0%
2012	51.6%
2013	64.8%
2014	63.4%
2015	48.2%

Attachment E: *Committee-led Professional Development Focus Areas 2014-2015*

Committee-led Professional Development in 2014 - 2015

Committee 1 Curricular area of focus: Literacy and the Arts

- Review of standards: Literacy
- Children's books that address social curriculum themes
- Taking care of the whole teacher
- Arts: weaving poetry and literacy into art
- Literacy assessment

Committee 2 Curricular area of focus: Math

- Review of standards: math
- Math Assessment
- Number talks
- Lesson Study
- Computer science/coding

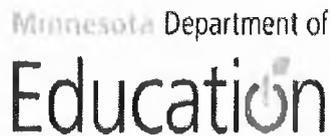
Committee 3 Curricular area of focus: Social Studies

- Review of standards: social studies
- Theme database
- STEM stations

Additional Faculty Professional Development and Training Activities

- Strategic Planning Session with Board
- Progressive Education Institute Review
- Student portfolio review
- Neuroeducation Presentation by St. Olaf staff and students
- Bullying Prevention training

Attachment F: *Commissioner's letter notifying PCCS of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Compliance Achievement Award for 2014-2015*



September 11, 2015

Brittany Thomforde
Director of Special Education
PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Innovative Special Education Services
1170 Red Fox Road
Arden Hills, MN 55112-

Dear Director Thomforde:

On behalf of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Division of Compliance and Assistance, I wish to extend congratulations to you, your special education staff, and board of education for earning the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Compliance Achievement Award for the 2014-2015 school year.

The award recognizes districts demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Act and the related Minnesota Statutes and Rules as noted during MDE's Compliance Review of PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL. This achievement demonstrates commitment to implementing special education programs that meet or exceed requirements and are reflective of the dedication of the administration, school staff, and community.

Enclosed is the Compliance Achievement Award certificate. Marikay Litzau, Division Director, and Erin Levin, Program Monitoring Supervisor, extend congratulations to you as well.

Again, I congratulate you and your team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Cassellius". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education

Enclosure

ER/jmb

Attachment G: *Strategic Plan Overview*

Enhance our Progressive Education Program

Our school continues to breathe the philosophy and practice of progressive education as determined by our founding families. By sustaining our initial values, Prairie Creek Community School will continue to provide leadership in the area of progressive education and examples of best practices for child centered learning. We will showcase student growth with relentless attention to the developmental needs of each learner. We will continue to attend to the individual and social growth of each child as we enhance our educational program. Thoughtfulness and care will be taken as we integrate technology and innovation within our educational program. Through shared experience and intentional program development, our school will fulfill its mission to make the world a better place.

Outreach

Prairie Creek Community School has been a local leader in progressive education for over 30 years. We have a rich tradition and a vibrant present that we will share with our school community, our region, and the broader progressive education movement. Prairie Creek will continue to examine, celebrate and reflect upon the school's core values and develop a coherent voice when articulating our philosophy. We will systematically communicate our mission and purpose to a diverse audience. We will establish partnerships with educators to deepen our own understanding of progressive education and best practices in the teaching of children.

Community Engagement and Program Sustainability

As a public progressive community school we are committed to providing a well-resourced child-centered environment that recognizes the importance of small class size. Prairie Creek Community School supports and develops progressive educators, invests in their continuing professional development, and creates an inspiring work environment. Prairie Creek Community School seeks the community's engagement in volunteer service and fundraising initiatives. The School Board will guide fundraising strategies that will be implemented within the context of responsible, multi-year budget projections.

Attachment H: Strategic Action Plan 2015 - 2016

Prairie Creek Community School		2015 - 2016 STRATEGIC PLAN
<p style="text-align: center;">Enhance our Progressive Education Program</p> <p><i>Our school continues to breathe the philosophy and practice of progressive education as determined by our founding families. By sustaining our initial values, Prairie Creek Community School will continue to provide leadership and example of child centered practices. We will showcase student growth with relentless attention to the developmental needs of each learner. We will continue to attend to the individual and social growth of each child as we enhance our educational program. Enduring thoughtfulness and care will be taken as we integrate technology and innovation within our educational program. Through shared experience and intentional program development, our school will fulfill its mission to make the world a better place.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Outreach</p> <p><i>Prairie Creek Community School has been a local leader in progressive education for over 30 years. We have a rich tradition, and a vibrant present, that we will share with our school community, our region, and the broader progressive education movement. Prairie Creek will continue to examine, celebrate and reflect upon the school's core values and develop a coherent voice when articulating our philosophy. We will systematically communicate our mission and purpose to a diverse audience. We will establish partnerships with educators to deepen our own understanding of progressive education and best practices in the teaching of children.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement and Program Sustainability</p> <p><i>As a public progressive community school we are committed to providing a well- resourced child-centered environment, that recognizes the importance of small class size. Prairie Creek Community School supports and develops progressive educators, invests in their continuing professional development, and creates an inspiring work environment. Prairie Creek Community School seeks the community's engagement in volunteer service and development initiatives. The School Board will guide fundraising strategies that will be implemented within the context of responsible, multi-year budget projections.</i></p>
<p>2015 - 2016 Strategic Goals</p> <p>Goal 1: Teacher Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a <i>Progressive Educator's Characteristics List</i> to guide annual teacher professional goal development 2. Design a new three-year evaluation schedule to include a peer coaching model, engagement survey and the summative evaluation process <p>Goal 2: Classroom Discourse</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify an aspect of conversation skills at the team-level and develop an action research or targeted team study project with attention to instruction and authentic assessment <p>Goal 3: Race and Diversity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Via a professional development committee, the faculty will engage in a study on race and diversity 	<p>2015 - 2016 Strategic Goals</p> <p>Goal 1: Publish History of PCCS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete layout planning 2. Publish and host book release 3. Share broadly via media and website link <p>Goal 2: Legislative Outreach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite/host local legislator for PCCS tour 2. Host community presentation by Ember Reichgott, author of <i>Zero Chance of Passage</i> <p>Goal 3: Plan Progressive Educators Conference for 2016-2017</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a planning committee and complete "visioning", conference options, and engage additional professional collaborators 2. Identify conference date and conference planning timeline 	<p>2015 - 2016 Strategic Goals</p> <p>Goal 1: Raise \$74,000+ via Fundraising</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disseminate development and volunteer talking points to PCCS community 2. Attain 100% of Board participation in fundraising efforts 3. Identify and support six school community fundraising projects 4. At school end, review and revise fundraising plan <p>Goal 2: Create a Baseline of Community Engagement/Participation to Measure Future Growth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host quarterly <i>Community Connections</i> meetings 2. Communicate and encourage volunteer opportunities 3. Host <i>PCCS Traditions & Events</i>