

**Twin Cities Academy
4042-07
2012-2013**



**2012-2013
Twin Cities Academy
Annual Charter School Report
(4042-07)**

Submitted by Betsy Lueth, Principal

**Twin Cities Academy
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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to communicate to the constituents of TCA who we are and to monitor and report our annual school data, accomplishments and goals.

Vision

Citizens educated and inspired to make their mark on the world.

Mission

Twin Cities Academy is a St. Paul public school committed to developing productive citizens through academic rigor and building character in partnership with families and the community.

Twin Cities Academy is a public charter middle school located in St. Paul, Minnesota serving grades six, seven and eight. Twin Cities Academy is a college preparatory school committed to academic rigor, active citizenship, and character development. The foundation of our programs supports the student's ability to be ready for college at the end of their secondary education.

This past year we enrolled 197 students. Although TCA offers a small school environment, our students benefit from a wide variety of courses at the middle school level. All students are able to take a foreign language, participate in band, and have one semester of civics, art, music, and physical education. During after school hours, students are able to participate in sports or theater along with many other enrichment activities.

Our educational model emphasizes community involvement and relationship building. Families sign a covenant agreeing to share in the partnership of providing support and ensuring success for their children academically, socially, and behaviorally. Our school has a high degree of student and family engagement, reflected in data from 2012-13. During the school year, TCA's average daily attendance was 96%. Our student retention rate throughout the year was 97%. Parent/Teacher Conferences held on Saturdays (November, February and April) averaged 93% in attendance. TCA parents are actively engaged in the school, as evidenced by the over 2,500 hours volunteered last year by parents and community members.

MCA-II, MCA-III and NWEA MAP assessments indicate that we are providing a quality educational experience for our students and they are consistently out-performing many schools in the state including the resident school district, Saint Paul Public Schools. As a public charter school, we offer an academically rigorous educational choice to Minnesota families, and provide our students a high-quality, individualized education.

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School Enrollment

For several years, enrollment at Twin Cities Academy has been sustained right below 200.

Year	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total School Population
2009-2010	53	68	78	199
2010-2011	56	64	70	190
2011-2012	52	72	69	193
2012-2013	50	72	75	197
Estimated 2013-2014	58	73	71	202

Admissions

Twin Cities Academy is dedicated to a free-access quality education, without discrimination, and follows all Minnesota statutes as they relate to application and admission procedures for charter schools. Enrollment is open to all middle school students residing in any school district in Minnesota.

TCA holds open houses and accepts applications throughout the year. Per the school board adopted enrollment policy, the school board establishes the open enrollment period applicable to the following school's year admission by October 1st or the current year. Available enrollment seats by grade is published by February 1st of the current year for the following year, which will always be prior the last day of the open enrollment period, and the lottery, if a lottery is required. Lottery numbers are generated electronically and drawn randomly through a computer program. Lottery results are mailed to families.

Students submitting applications after the last day of the open enrollment period, are placed on our waiting list and acceptance is based on space availability.

Once students are accepted, they are then asked to complete a registration packet, attend a covenant meeting, and participate in new student orientation. Please refer to the TCA enrollment application on the next page of this document.

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Twin Cities Academy
Enrollment Application
A St. Paul Charter School for Grades 6, 7, and 8

STUDENT INFORMATION

Last Name _____ First Name _____

School Year _____ Current Grade _____ Next Year's Grade _____

Home Address _____ Apartment _____

City & State _____ Zip Code _____ Home Phone _____

Sibling Currently Enrolled at TCA* _____ Yes _____ No

PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent / Guardian _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

Parent / Guardian _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

**Twin Cities Academy's enrollment is independent of Twin Cities Academy High School. Alumni and sibling preference does not transfer between TCA and TCAHS.*

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

"A charter school shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. A charter school shall give preference for enrollment to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents before accepting other pupils by lot. If a charter school is the only school located in a town serving pupils within a particular grade level, then pupils that are residents of the town must be given preference for enrollment before accepting pupils by lot. A charter school may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability."MS124d.10 Subd.9.

If applying for the current school year, please contact the school office.

OFFICE USE ONLY: Date Received _____ Lottery Number _____

Lottery Drawing Held February 28th

835 E. 5th Street . Saint Paul, MN . 651-205-4797

Twin Cities Academy

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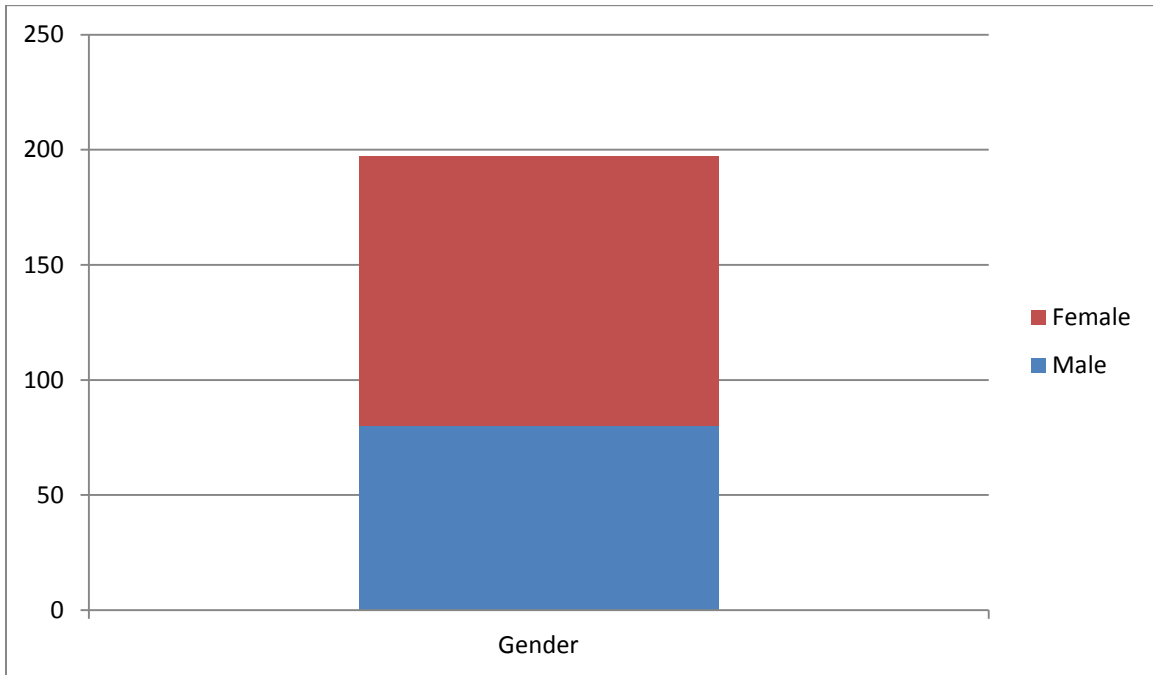
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Student Demographic Data for 2012-13

Gender

Over the past few years, we have begun to experience an inequity regarding gender in our school, with females trending to over 60% of the population.

Proportion of Males and Females, 2012-13



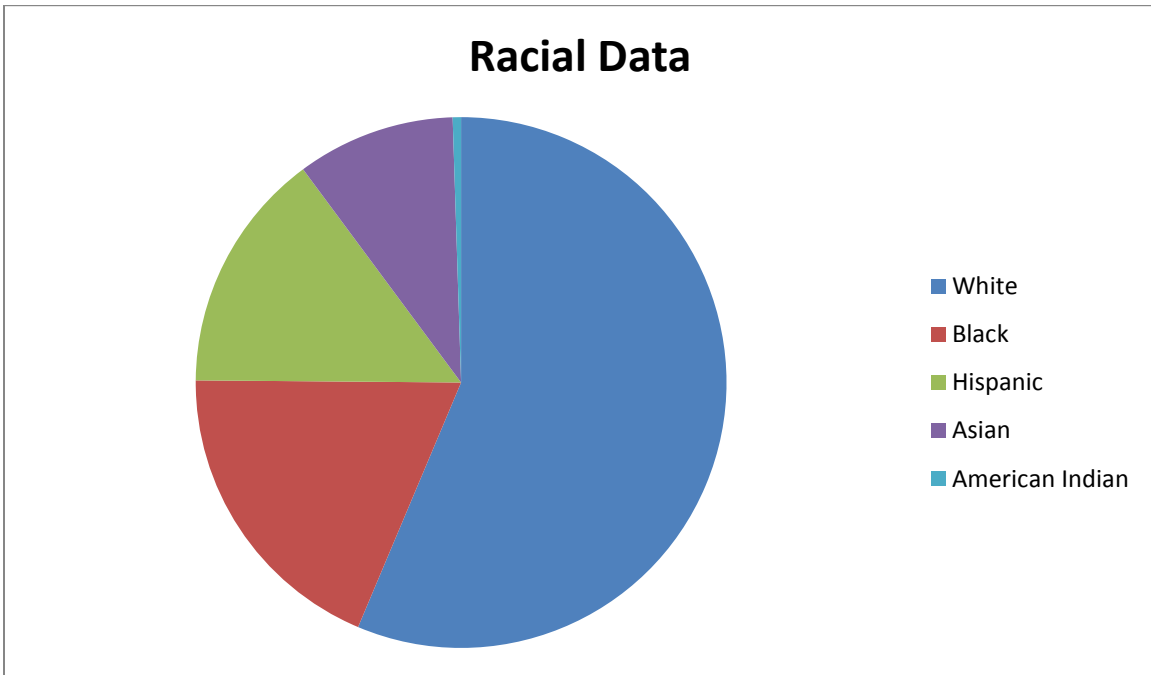
	Male	Female	Total	Male/Female Ratio
2011-12	74	119	193	38%/62%
2012-13	80	117	197	40%/60%

Race/Ethnicity

In 2012-13, approximately 44% of the student population were students of color.

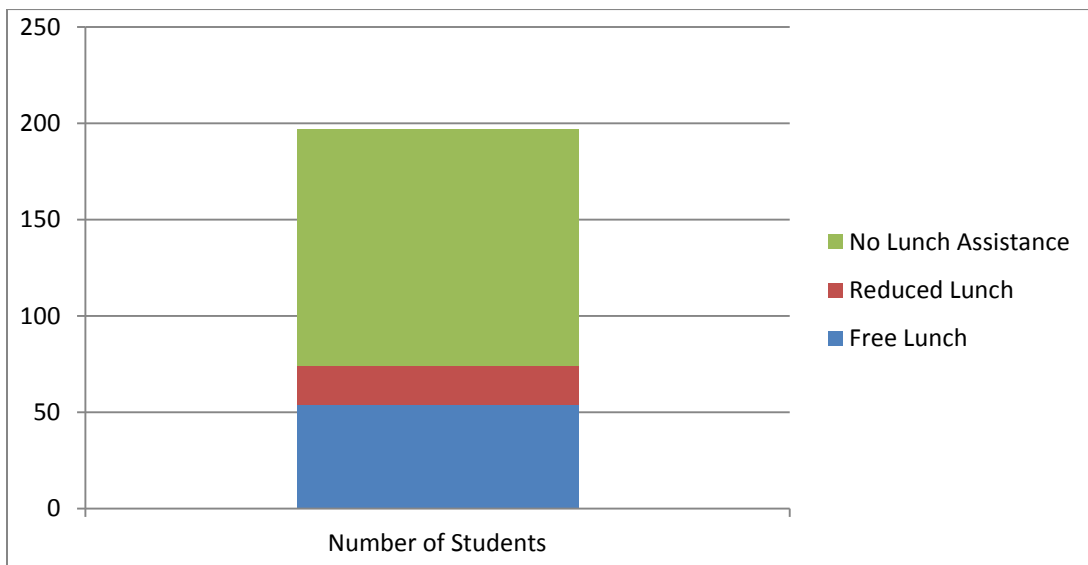
	Asian American	Black American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Total
No. of Students	19	37	29	111	1	197
%	9.6%	18.8%	14.7%	56.3%	.5%	

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Free & Reduced Lunch

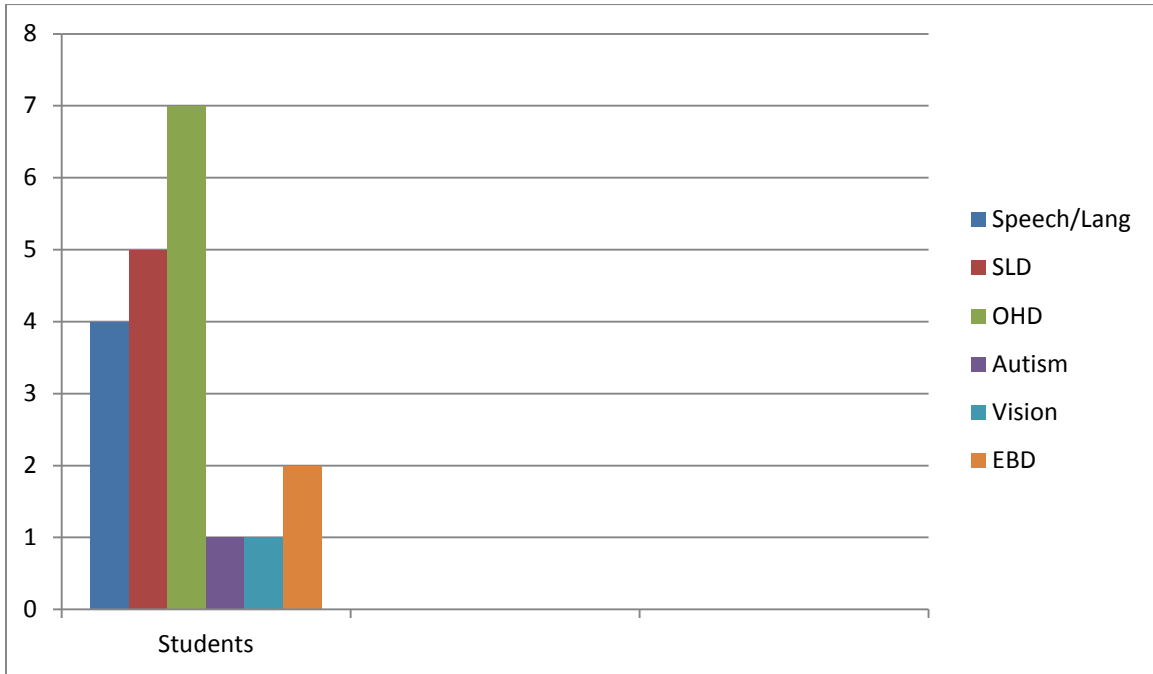
	No. of Students	% to Total School Enrollment
Free Lunch	54	27%
Reduced Lunch	20	10%
Combined Free & Reduced	74	37%
No Lunch Assistance	123	63%



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Special Education

No. of Students	% to Total School Total	Primary Disability	Students Per Category
20	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speech & Language ▪ SLD ▪ OHD ▪ Autism ▪ Vision ▪ EBD 	4 5 7 1 1 2



Limited English Proficiency

No. of Students	% to Total Enrollment	Home Language	Student Per Grade
4	2%	Spanish	2-7 th Grade
			2-8 th Grade

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Student Attrition**

Overall, student attrition at Twin Cities Academy has been low, and fairly stable.

Mobility

	Students Enrolled September 2012	Students Enrolled June 2013	Students Enrolled September 2013
Grade 6	49	52	59
Grade 7	73	74	71
Grade 8	74	72	70
All School	196	198	200
Retention Rate (# of students in 7th - 8th grades in Sept. of 2013 who attended in previous year.)	97%		

Governance and Management

Authorizer Information

Authorizer	Contact Information	Liaison	Contract Expiration
University of St. Thomas	University of St. Thomas 1000 LaSalle Street Minneapolis, MN 651-962-4844	Molly McGraw-Healy mccgraw@stthomas.edu	June 30, 2018

Because charter schools are not part of traditional community school districts, they are accountable to the State of Minnesota for student learning and financial performance through a state approved charter school overseer, or authorizer. Our authorizer is The University of St. Thomas, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Their role is to ensure that we are true to our school’s mission, the continued quality of our academic programs, quantifiable student learning, that we meet parents’ expectations and satisfaction, and that we comply with state and federal mandates. We submit our School Board minutes and financial statements monthly to the University of St Thomas. They have agreed to be our authorizer for two years.

Board of Directors

TCA’s governing board includes teachers, parents, and community members. The following chart shows membership for 2012-13.

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Name	Board Position	Group	Term Exp.	Phone Number	Email Address	Attendance Rate
Anna Schneck		Teacher #384133	Oct. 2014	612-986-7105	aschneck@twincitiesacademy.org	83%
Chris Rider		Parent	Oct. 2014	651-774-0251	Christinerider1@gmail.com	100%
Justin Larson		Com Member	Oct. 2015	763-234-8311	justinllarson@gmail.com	83%
Sarah Ancel	Vice Chair	Teacher #439395	Oct. 2013	763-443-9533	Sancel@twincitiesacademy.org	83%
Christian Gould		Parent	Oct. 2013	651-336-8180	cng@outdooradventures.com	66%
Joel Michael	Chair	Com Member	Oct. 2014	651-224-3113	jtmichael@hotmail.com	83%
Sara Jennerjohn	Treas.	Teacher #432384	Oct. 2013	612-840-4264	jennerjs@gmail.com	83%
Janelle Voxland-Flomo	Sec.	Teacher #446061	Oct. 2013	651-748-8301	jvflomo@comcast.net	92%
Jim D'Aquila		Parent	Oct. 2013	651-225-1313	jdaquila@mac.com	33%
Alex Bajwa		Com Member	Oct. 2014	651-251-3435	abajwa@alexbajwa.com	33%

Professional development is scheduled for the governing board, both as a group (total board trainings) and individually. Minnesota Charter Law mandates ongoing education for the governing board, in which TCA is compliant. From July 2012 to June 2013, Board Members attended the following training sessions:

All current board members participate in regular board training during regularly scheduled board meetings. Specifically this year, all current board members participated in governance structure conversations and trainings during the strategic planning process. The strategic plan was presented at the June 2013 meeting, and the strategic plan contractor provided board members with instruction on their role as board members in the areas of governance and financial oversight as it pertained to the three year strategic vision of the school. Additionally, newly elected board members participated in Minnesota statutory required trainings in governance, finance and policy as follows:

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Member Name	Governance Training	Personnel/Employment Training	Finance Training
Anna Schneck	12-8-12 at UST	12-8-12 at UST	12-8-12 at UST
Chris Rider	4-20-13 at UST	4-20-13 at UST	4-20-13 at UST
Justin Larson	Resigned	Resigned	Resigned

All current board members satisfied the state required board training in board governance, personnel/employment and finances. Services were provided by the MN School Board Association, Non-Profit Assistance Fund or the University of St. Thomas.

School Management

During the 2012-2013 school year, Twin Cities Academy functioned using a co-director model. Both the principal and the director of operations reported to the school board. The principal's primary focus was on the academic leadership of the school, with the director of operations focused on the financial and operational management of the school, including facilities and transportation. Based on staff feedback and a full review of the co-director model by both the governance and executive board sub-committees, a proposal to move back to the single leader model was adopted by the board in June 2013.

For the 2013-2014 school year, Betsy Lueth, principal, will function as the single leader of the school, and be the only direct report to the school board. Ms. Lueth is a MN licensed K-12 principal with seven years of administrative experience in charter schools. The 2013-2014 school year will be her second year at Twin Cities Academy.

Staffing

Name	File Number	Assignment	Yrs. w/ School	Status
Lueth, Betsy	397306	Principal	1	Returning Fall 2013
Minck, Andrew		Director of Operations	2.5	Not Returning Fall 2013
Ausen, Terri		Office Manager	4	Returning Fall 2013
Mikolai, Judi		Library Aide	1	Returning Fall 2013
Cook, Lyssa		Office Assistant	2	Returning Fall 2013
Fleischhacker, Laverne		Cafeteria	14	Returning Fall 2013
Diallo, Sam		Cafeteria/Custodian	4	Returning Fall 2013
Zakrzewski, JoAnn		Cafeteria	1	Returning Fall 2013
Diegnau, Cindy		Afterschool Program	14	Not Returning Fall 2013
Hobyan, Bob		Accountant	14	Not Returning Fall 13

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Teaching Faculty Information

Staff Member	File Number	Assignment	Yrs. w/ School	Status
Amundson, Erin	410808	Science	10	Returning Fall 2013
Cullen-Benson, Brendan	435573	Art	3	Returning Fall 2013
Farlow, Emily	449487	Spanish	1	Returning Fall 2013
Schneck, Anna	384133	Math	14	Returning Fall 2013
Buege, Melissa	428149	French	4.75	Not Returning Fall 2013
Ancel, Sarah	439395	English	5	Returning Fall 2013
Voxland-Flomo, Janelle	446061	Math	4.5	Returning Fall 2013
Shelhamer, Mike	421650	History	7	Resigned Winter 2013
Lindholm, Scott	441065	Physical Education	5	Returning Fall 2013
Jennerjohn, Sara	432384	English	6.5	Not Returning Fall 2013
VanderPlas, Mike	440595	History	5	Returning Fall 2013
Hollinger, Rhiannon	440139	Science	5	Returning Fall 2013
Dostal, Jon	427733	Music, Band	2	Returning Fall 2013
Riebe, Melody	443433	Special Education	3	Not Returning Fall 2013
Hickey, Elizabeth	462843	Special Education	2	Returning Fall 2013
Kaari, Katie	404724	Contracted Speech Therapist	2	Not Returning Fall 2013
Dusek, Samantha	468240	Counselor	1	Returning Fall 2013
Gould Gourley, Shannon	375103	Academic Dean	14	Returning Fall 2013
Carlin, Susan	438512	Contracted Speech Therapist	2	Not Returning Fall 2013
McCall, Maureen	264099	School Social Worker	2	Returning Fall 2012
Walters, Emily	447835	Special Education	3	Returning Fall 2013
Sieg, Kristin	439256	6 th Grade	1	Returning Fall 2013

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Finances

Twin Cities Academy is on solid financial footing. The school entered the 2012-13 school year with a positive fund balance of \$786,199, a figure which represented a net gain of over \$51,326 over the prior year.

The Board, primarily through the Finance Committee, actively partners with both the principal/director of operations to oversee financial matters. The Director of Operations compiles and presents a financial report to the Board monthly. This report is a review of checking and savings account balances, fund balance, income and expenses statements and a 6 month cash flow projection. These financial statements are provided to the treasurer and finance committee members a week before the board meeting. The Board reviews and analyzes all budgets, expenditures, and bank statements, and provides monthly/quarterly financial statements to the authorizer.

Following is a summary of TCA's budget and actual (audited) financial results for Fiscal Year 2013 as well as our financial position at June 30, 2013. TCA is expected to contribute \$63,677.00 to the fund balance based on the unaudited financials at the end of June 30, 2013. This represents a 42.2% fund balance with an expected total amount in the fund balance of \$849,866 (unaudited). The final audited financials will be available in January 2014.

The audit for the fiscal year 2012 contained no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies as prepared by MMKR audit firm and presented to the school board during the fall of 2013.

Twin Cities Academy did not employ an outside agency or business manager. School administration and the Board managed the finances during the 2012-2013 school year. At the end of the fiscal year, the school board and administration chose to pursue working with Belz, Kes, Darling and Associates and have also employed an internal business manager Dr. Terry Tofte to prepare the financials. The board and the principal will continue to oversee the overall financial health of the school, on a monthly basis through review of detailed finances in the board finance sub-committee, and by presenting the financials monthly to the full school board during the regular school board meeting.. By using an outside firm such as BKDA, Twin Cities Academy is assured to have strong internal controls and procedures in place to continue it's financial health and clean audits.

Fund Balance:

Un-audited fund balance as of June 30, 2013 - \$849,866

2011-2012 Annual Audit Report –
MMKR Certified Public Accountants & Co.
55353 Wayzata Blvd. Suite 410
Minneapolis, MN 55416

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Twin Cities Academy
St. Paul, MN

Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2013

	Audited Balance June 30, 2012	Balance June 30, 2013
<u>Assets</u>		
Current Assets		
Cash and Investments	316,482	732,427
Accounts Receivable	30,267	7,346
Due from Other MN Dist	21,278	3,258
State Aids Receivable	637,292	225,781
Federal Aids Receivable	0	17,374
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	4,340	36,731
Total Current Assets	1,009,658	1,022,917
Total All Assets	1,009,658	1,022,917
<u>Liabilities and Fund Balance</u>		
Current Liabilities		
Salaries and Wages Payable	96,388	87,447
Line of Credit Payable	70,000	0
Due to Other MN Dist	11,506	10,677
Accounts Payable	41,770	49,369
Payroll Deductions and Contributions	3,795	25,558
Deferred Revenue	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	223,459	173,051
Fund Balance		
Fund Balance 7-1-2012	786,199	786,199
Net Income To Date	0	63,667
Total Fund Balance	786,199	849,866
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	1,009,658	1,022,917

Academic Performance

Curriculum

TCA believes no one program satisfies students' academic needs. The staff and administration extract the best curricula and tailor it to the needs of the students. Among our core curriculum, Core Knowledge and MN Content Standards act as the foundation for the middle school program. Core Knowledge is a rigorous curriculum sequence designed by E.D. Hirsch. TCA also implements special programming, such as participation in MN History Day, and encourages passionate teacher interests and unique educational opportunities as they surface. Other designed curricular choices in place for middle school include: extended core courses by doubling the number of minutes (45 to 90 minutes). These extended classes, called Extensions, are geared for students who are not performing at grade level. The following courses are designed to improve fundamental skills: Reading Extensions and Algebra Extensions.

In response to declining math MCA scores for the past couple years, along with a changing school demographic, and noticeable achievement gaps resulting from our move to the East Side of St. Paul from the Highland area, staff and administration employed several strategies to address students' math skill development. Even though our sixth graders receive 90 minutes of daily math, we continued to see some students lagging behind their peers. NWEA testing in the fall of 2012 revealed that less than 50% of students were on track to pass MCA proficiency levels in mathematics and reading. We introduced a different math instructional model addressing the same content, but with a different instructional approach. We invited our math staff to return to school an additional week prior to the beginning of the school year. At that time, they were trained in Data Driven Instruction, and curriculum changes were made. We provided the math department with collaborative prep time to analyze and use the data for more effective classroom instruction. We monitored math instruction and progress closely by implementing 4-6 week formative assessments. All of these strategies helped us to reverse the trend of declining math MCA achievement scores.

All teachers have been directed to review current curriculum for alignment to state standards. Administration and content area teachers conduct full review of the scope and sequence for both the mathematics and literacy programs. As noted above, the mathematics department spent a considerable amount of time this past August reviewing, aligning current curriculum, determining future curriculum needs, and developing interim assessments. The English and Social Studies departments have begun reviewing the new Common Core standards for literacy instruction through on-site professional development activities. Interim assessments developed by administration in spring 2013 directly correlate with the new MCA-III specifications.

The current schedule at TCA is well-designed and based on strong practices focused on beating the achievement gap, with double doses of math and reading during the school day. The administration, along with a leadership team of five lead instructors, are reviewing other research-based scheduling models to ensure all students are fully benefitting from their time in school. The leadership team is interested in expanding the academic minutes students receive in the core content areas of math, English, and science.

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Academic Program Highlights for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Student Focus:

- Continuously assessing and evaluating student learning; modifying and adjusting instruction and curriculum to meet needs of students to the best of our ability. The launching of the NWEA this past year is providing us with the data we need to better assess and support instruction and learning, and make beneficial instructional changes.
- Setting high academic expectations and holding students accountable.
- An in-house tutorial class was granted to pre-identified students in need of additional academic support. As a result of this tutorial, we noticed a significant decrease in failing grades.
- Grade Level Readiness- Review records of incoming students closely to accurately assess their needs and enroll them in the appropriate support classes (i.e. Reading Extensions). Develop and begin to implement a school wide targeted reading intervention plan to better meet students' grade level deficiencies.
- Conducting frequent conferences (team meetings) with families to discuss struggling students and problem solve for higher future success.
- Scheduling Homework Jump Start (Enrichment Afterschool Program) for all newly enrolled students to assist with the transition to TCA.
- Conduct General Education Child Study meetings bi-monthly to monitor the needs of students in a timely manner.
- Close working relationship between special education and regular education teachers in an effort to ensure differentiated content and adjustments to meet the needs of students with special needs.
- Monitoring Agenda (student planner)
- Provide homework assignments on-line for easy access; keeping students better informed.

Parent Focus:

- Parent education sessions such as Back to School Night, College Readiness and Helping Children with Academics are scheduled throughout the school year.
- Parents can monitor homework completion, assessments and grades on-line.
- Required weekly signing of student Monitoring Agendas (student planners) by parents, so parents are informed of what is expected and needs to be done.
- Parents are extended an invitation to teach or assist with after school Enrichment classes.

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- Parent Teacher Conferences are held on Saturdays (3) to accommodate busy families.
- Parent representatives comprise approximately one-third of our school board.
- Parent concerns and questions are addressed in a timely manner.

Teacher Focus:

- Participation in annual performance goals program.
- Scope and sequence are submitted to administration and implemented accordingly each semester.
- Reading and writing across the curriculum are implemented. All teachers share in the teaching of reading and writing.
- Setting high expectations for quality instructional practices and holding staff accountable.
- Annual school goals for both the school and board of governance are identified, monitored and reviewed.
- Professional development opportunities are provided for teachers to improve their skills in the areas of technology and differentiation of curriculum.
- Weekly staff meetings are conducted to ensure efficient communication.

School Academic Accountability Measurement & Results

In 2012-2013, Twin Cities Academy conducted MCA-II & MCA III Testing:

- Reading Grade 6-8
- Math Grades 6-8
- Science Grade 8

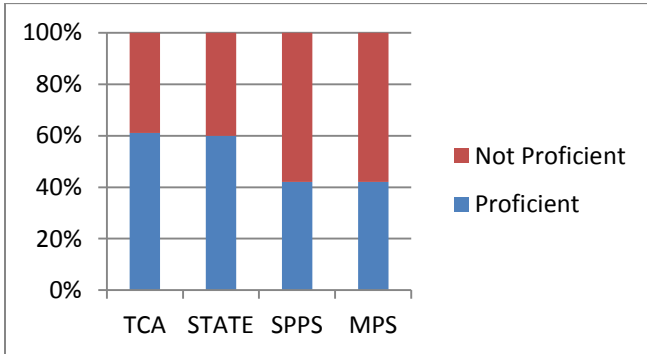
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All School - Grades 6-8

2013 MCA III - Math & Reading Results

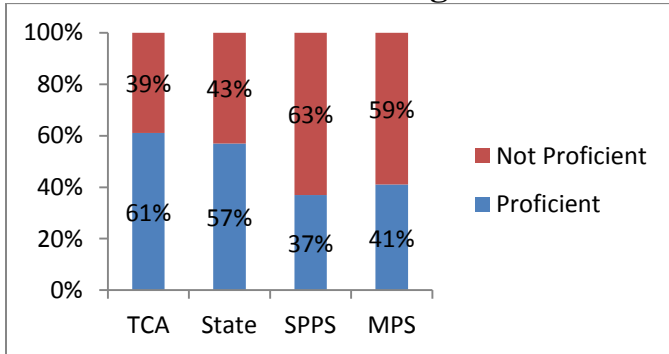
TCA surpassed State and Minneapolis and Saint Paul District averages in both the Math and the Reading portion of the MCA-II.

MCA-III	MATH		READING	
	Proficient	Not Proficient	Proficient	Not Proficient
TCA	61%	39%	61%	39%
Statewide	60%	40%	57%	43%
St. Paul Public Schools	42%	58%	37%	63%
Minneapolis Public Schools	42%	58%	41%	59%

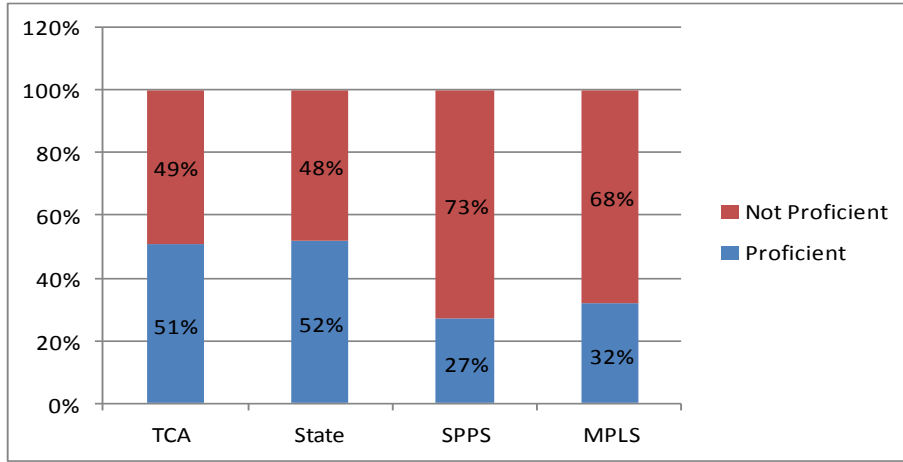
Math



Reading

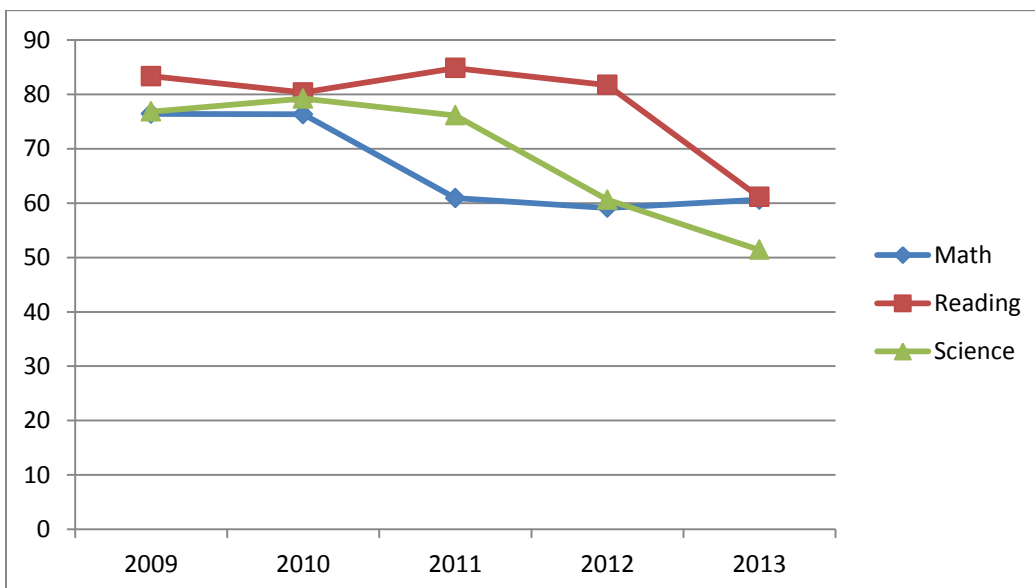


**Twin Cities Academy
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Grade 8
MCA II -Science Results**



MCA-II Science Grade 8	Proficient	Not Proficient
TCA	51%	49%
State	52%	48%
SPPS	27%	73%
MPLS	32%	68%

TCA Performance on MCA Math, Reading and Science, 2009-2013



Innovation and Implementation Practices

In fall, 2012, students took the NWEA MAP standardized assessment, to identify student learning needs. While TCA average scores in both reading and math for all students grades 6-8 slightly outpaced the national average, within a given classroom, it was not unusual to find students performing at the 20th percentile as well as the 98th percentile. Administration and staff must address the levels at which the students are performing. With an emphasis on rigorous curriculum and high expectations for learning and growth, the school's immediate challenge was how best to service students so that all students receive ample support in reaching their potential. Students with a lack of academic success need their insufficiencies addressed with remedial support while maintaining an environment that prepares students for college. NWEA results indicated only 50% of students were on track to be proficient in Math and Reading in the MCA-III spring assessments. Administration and staff focused on preparing and monitoring student growth through regular formative assessments and targeted instruction based on the analysis of assessment data. This system was only piloted in 2012-13, focusing on the area of math specifically: we are hopeful that when it is fully implemented, we will see rapid student growth that will lead to higher proficiency on the statewide examinations.

During the 2012-2013 school year Twin Cities Academy launched several new initiatives to support student achievement and growth. The first was to begin reviewing all courses and curriculum for alignment to the Minnesota and Common Core standards through the establishing of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) groups by department. TCA teachers and administration also began the conversation about designing a data-driven instructional environment focused on regular assessment of students every 4-6 weeks. Mathematics teachers spent one week in August aligning curriculum to the state standards and designing interim assessments. The interim assessments are focused on showing student growth rather than proficiency. Growth models are proven tools to reduce the achievement gap.

During the summer of 2012 the entire team of math teachers met to review the current curriculum and course scope and sequence. In so doing the math faculty discovered several areas for improvement as they matched the current curriculum to the state standards. After reviewing the curriculum the math department designed curriculum-based measures to be administered to all students every four to five weeks. Testing data was closely analyzed to determine the degree of our potential achievement gap for students of color in reading and math. Teachers also implemented an Algebra vertical course alignment so that both MS and HS students enrolled in Algebra would have the same high quality instruction. We utilized our data from our NWEA testing to guide our instruction and target areas of need. The administration will meet regularly with the math faculty to review the results of the assessments and modify instruction as needed to ensure that all students are growing towards and hopefully surpassing the Minnesota state mathematics standards.

The language arts and social studies faculty also began developing a data-driven instructional model. Faculty in these disciplines are reviewing the Common Core standards 6-12 and ensuring that the current curriculum and course scope and sequence meets these standards. After completing the review of current curriculum and instruction, faculty along with administration will ensure that all standards are met throughout the course sequences. The language arts and social studies faculty will then also be developing curriculum-based measurements to be conducted every four to five weeks for all students. These assessments will be reviewed with administration to ensure student achievement is growing and meeting the Common Core standards.

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As a part of focusing on “beating the achievement gap,” diagnostic reading testing was done for all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. For those students showing one to two grade levels below were placed in extensions classes, three or more grade levels additional testing was done to identify specific areas of need and a team meeting would be held with a Reading Specialist, Special Education teachers (if applicable), English teachers, and administration to develop a reading intervention plan. This is the beginning of our RTI (Response to Intervention) model which we began implementing related to reading in the 2012-2013 school year.

Individual and large group staff development opportunities were made available to teachers to improve their skill in curriculum differentiation. Administration supports close communication between special education and general education staff. We also hired additional special education staff and an English Language Learners (ELL) teacher for the 2012-2013 school year. The necessity and expectation of differentiation is communicated on a regular basis. Administration monitors the classroom instruction to see that differentiation is occurring.

The special education teachers deliver services in the regular classroom in collaboration with the regular classroom teacher. This inclusionary special education delivery model is an asset to our program. To further enhance this model, especially in the English and literacy courses, the English department along with all three Special Education Case Managers, attended a training on co-teaching. Co-teaching is a model that is particularly effective in the type of inclusion environment TCA offers its special education students. The co-teaching model will further benefit all learners, offering more teachers in the core content classrooms delivering instruction in a variety of modalities.

The School Board adopted a new student discipline policy, and the administration developed a five-tier infraction plan addressing student behaviors. TCA began development of a school-wide bully prevention program. Students in sixth through eighth grades participated in weekly lessons related to self-esteem, peer conflict resolution, and team-building. The school also holds bimonthly all-school forums, often with guest speakers and performances, as an avenue for building a strong climate and culture focused on respect and scholarship. Every staff member is expected to contribute to the school climate in a way that is healthy, safe, respectful, and conducive to learning, by developing that culture in the classrooms, in the hallways, and during unstructured times such as cafeteria lunch.

Future Plans

As our population of students grows, and the needs of the students becomes more diversified we will be adding staff, facilities and technology to accommodate those needs. Additionally as our programs develop, the Twin Cities Academy school board and administration will be working collaboratively to review school policies and resources to ensure systematic and sustainable models to support our growth.

To do this we completed the process of designing a 3-5 year strategic plan to better address the needs of the school to ensure progress. The strategic plan focuses on three strategic directions: 1) Launching the staff to new levels with a focus on engaging staff in effective instructional practices; 2) committing to the college-preparatory mission through marketing and investing our stakeholders; and 3) expanding and aligning finances and funding with the mission of the school. The plan is to address the stabilization of Twin Cities Academy as it transitions from a startup charter school to a respected educational institution in the Twin Cities area.

Twin Cities Academy

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At the instructional level, Twin Cities Academy needs to provide sufficient differentiation in instruction and deliver rigorous academics. When students are several grades behind it is extremely difficult to effectively address the levels of every student. TCA teachers and administration are committed to delivering a rigorous education to every child. The re-design of course sequence, daily schedule, professional development/teacher support system, along with regular review of student data will help support a sustainable differentiated instructional model.

Currently we support struggling students through afterschool tutorial and study hall programs. For some students tutorial periods are built into the daily schedule. Often these same students receive double-doses of math and literacy as well. Recently TCA is experiencing the enrollment of more students needing additional support to bring them up to grade level in math and reading. Capacity to address achievement gaps and the enrollment of students more than a grade level behind in math and reading must be planned for in the coming school years. For the 2013-2014 school year, we are planning an expansion of our tutoring program by partnering with college students. In addition we have realigned our course sequence to ensure all students have access to both the support or enrichment classes they need, by expanding our extensions programming and adding STEM classes at all grade levels.

Another area we are looking forward to strengthening is our technology. Currently most classrooms have Smartboards and with additional funding through enrollment and grants we are hopeful to have all classrooms equipped with Smartboards by the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally we are hopeful through granting and fiscal frugality to add at least one laptop computer lab to our existing technology for students.

In order to ensure the quality of instruction in all classrooms, in collaboration with teachers, the current administration is designing a teacher leadership and evaluation model focused on student achievement. All teachers in the 2012-2013 school year were evaluated at least two times (three times for teachers new to profession per the statute) using an evaluation rubric based in Charlotte Danielson's model and a rubric provided by a 90-90-90 school. This evaluation process will provide the data to support future teacher performance pay and provided the beginnings of a framework for a Q-Comp plan for the 2014-2015 school year. In addition a teacher leadership team was established in the 2012-2013 school year, and in 2013-2014 they will provide the framework for the career-ladder requirements of a Q-Comp plan. TCA has recently submitted their letter of intent to submit a Q-Comp plan in the 2013-2014 school year to MDE in hopes of implementation in the 2014-2015 school year.

Lastly, in an effort to recognize the needs of students more holistically, Twin Cities Academy has added a breakfast program in the 2013-2014 school year. Based on research, we recognize that students who eat breakfast will perform better academically. Additionally, we understand that students in the 6th through 8th grade need regular access to exercise throughout the day, and through the new course design we also offer all students physical education classes during the full school year.