

PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2011 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement



“I believe PCCS is staying true to all of the mission statement.”

“Teachers are consistently concerned about social issues and emotional well-being of the children.”

PCCS Parent’s Response to “In what ways do you consider that PCCS is staying true to its mission as a progressive school?”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the staff and families of Prairie Creek Community School (PCCS), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Northfield Public Schools, and the general public with information describing the progress of PCCS and its students during its ninth year of operation as a charter public school. The key findings in this report are as follows:

- ❖ **Academic Goals:** PCCS used a number of instruments to assess student progress towards academic goals including the Work Sampling System (WSS) and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, Series II/III (MCA-II/III).
 - On the WSS, a large proportion of students scored “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring across two domains: Mathematical Thinking (92.2%) and Language & Literacy (91.7%).
 - Students showed statistically significant fall-to-spring improvements across both domains.
 - PCCS had two goals relating to progress on the WSS, one for Mathematical Thinking and one for Language and Literacy:
 - Students fell slightly short of the goal for the Mathematical Thinking domain with 93.8% of students (who were flagged in spring 2010 and “not yet” attaining proficiency in the fall of 2011) scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2011.
 - Students met the goal for growth on the Language and Literacy Domain with students showing statistically significant progress from fall 2010 to spring 2011.
 - On the MCA-II Reading, 86.8% of PCCS students were proficient; this rate was slightly greater than the level observed within Northfield Schools and exceeded statewide levels. On the MCA-III Mathematics, 54.9% of PCCS students met or exceeded proficiency which was below the level observed in Northfield Schools and statewide proportions. On the MCA-II science test, 5th graders at PCCS had a proficiency rating of 66.7%, which was higher than Northfield schools and Minnesota schools.

- ❖ **Non-Academic Goals:** PCCS measures progress towards two non-academic goals. The first is that PCCS will encourage and support play as a part of the social curriculum. This goal is measured by attendance logs of professional development activities that relate to play. The second is to improve the communication structure used by faculty and staff at PCCS as measured via staff survey.
 - PCCS fell slightly short of the goal for 100% staff attendance at professional development activities related to play with an overall attendance rate of 95.0%.
 - Staff were positive about the communication among teachers, staff, and school board with most indicating they felt informed/connected with the professional work of the classrooms/programs (81%), felt connected to the learning community (79%), and felt informed about the activities at school (78%); slightly more than half felt informed about the decisions of the board (56%).
 - Parents also completed an annual Parent Survey. The results of the survey were very positive.
 - Parents responded positively in each of the four domains: Faculty and Staff (99.1%), Community and Climate (97.7%), Curriculum and Learning (93.2%), and Governance and Administration (90.1%).
 - Average ratings across the four survey domains of the Parent Satisfaction Survey were also very positive: parent ratings were between 3 (“Agree”) and 4 (“Strongly Agree”) for Faculty and Staff (3.70), Community and Climate (3.62), Curriculum and Learning (3.51), and Governance and Administration (3.38).
 - Parents overwhelmingly agreed that PCCS effectively implements a progressive education approach with students. The large majority of comments included an appreciation for the hands-on learning model, community and parental participation, and the child-centered approach at PCCS.
 - The largest proportions of parents indicated they volunteered at PCCS between 1-5 hours (48.8%) or 6-10 hours (21.4%) per month and nearly all parents (97.6%) indicated they attend parent events at PCCS.

MISSION, GOAL, AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Prairie Creek Community School (PCCS) is a charter public school, founded in 1983, that offers progressive education for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. PCCS focuses on progressive education for all students. PCCS is a non-profit trust registered with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office (see also Appendix A).

Mission Statement

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *PCCS is a progressive school. We emphasize cooperation, promote self-reflection, support innovation, and value change. We share our philosophy and practice with others and learn from them.*
- *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.*

Goals and Accountability Plan

PCCS developed three academic and two non-academic goals for the 2010-2011 school year as part of their commitment to accountability. All of the academic and non-academic goals were developed with specific measurement tools and indicators of success (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: PCCS’s 2010-2011 Accountability Plan

Academic Goals	Indicators of Success	Measurements
<p>Academic Goal: Math</p> <p>Develop tools to identify students at risk of falling behind in math, develop and implement interventions to support struggling math learners</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> At least 95% of PCCS students who were flagged in spring of the previous year and are “not yet” attaining proficiency in the Mathematical Thinking domain in fall will be “in process” or “proficient” by the spring.</p> <p><u>Growth:</u> PCCS students who were flagged in spring of the previous year and are “not yet” attaining proficiency in the Mathematical Thinking domain in fall will show a significant increase in average scores from fall to spring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Sampling System • Domain: Mathematical Thinking • Administration: Fall and spring • Grades: All PCCS students 1-5 flagged by teacher in spring of previous year and are “not yet” attaining proficiency in grade level Mathematical Thinking in fall. • Scores: Proportions “in process” or “proficient” and average scores at each level.
<p>Academic Goal: Writing</p> <p>Develop students’ ability to communicate non-fiction information effectively in written form with special attention to teaching the craft of writing in an emergent curriculum</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> At least 66% of PCCS students will be “in process” or “proficient by the spring on the Language and Literacy domain.</p> <p><u>Growth:</u> PCCS students will, on average, show a significant increase in average Language and Literacy domain scores from fall to spring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Sampling System • Domain: Language and Literacy • Administration: Fall and spring • Grades: All PCCS students 3-5 • Scores: Proportions “in process” or “proficient” and average scores at each level.

Non- academic Goals	Indicators of Success	Measurements
<p>Non-academic Goal: Play</p> <p>Encourage and support play as a key part of the social curriculum at PCCS.</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> 100% of all teaching staff will attend all professional development activities that relate to play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance logs of professional development activities related to play.
<p>Non-Academic Goal: Staff Communication</p> <p>Improve the communication structure used by faculty and staff at PCCS</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> 80% of all faculty and staff will report feeling well-informed about the work being done together at PCCS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of all faculty and staff administered in May.

SCHOOL PROGRAM, ENROLLMENT, AND STUDENT ATTRITION

Authorizer

Northfield Public Schools
Chris Richardson, Ph.D.
507-663-0629

PCCS opened in 2002
Contract was renewed in 2005 (05/06 to 07/08), 2008 (08/09 to
10/11), and in 2011 (11/12 through 15/16)

Relationship with Authorizer

Each fall, the director sends a formal report to the Northfield Board of Education regarding the previous school year. The authorizer has been pleased with PCCS and the Board has been supportive of its goals. Board members also visit the school on occasion.

School Calendar & Hours of Operation

The first day of school was September 7, 2010 and school ended on June 10, 2011. PCCS was open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm and Wednesday from 9:15 am to 2:30 pm.

Student / Classroom Teacher Ratio

PCCS employed nine classroom teachers to serve 178 students in grades K-5. The student/classroom teacher ratio in 2010-2011 was 19.7:1.

Enrollment

PCCS has detailed admissions procedures (see Appendix C) and preferentially admits applicants who have a sibling¹ enrolled at PCCS. If applications exceed the number of openings, admission of additional students is based on a lottery system. The Director publishes the date of the lottery and draws names of applicants until all spaces are filled. At that time the Director also constructs a wait list so that, should a student withdraw from PCCS, openings can be filled from the wait list.

Copies of PCCS's enrollment application can be found in Appendix D. A limited amount of information is gathered from the forms, including student's name, age (to determine appropriate grade and space available), whether or not the applicant has a sibling enrolled at PCCS (siblings of current PCCS students are enrolled prior to other applicants), and parent/guardian contact information.

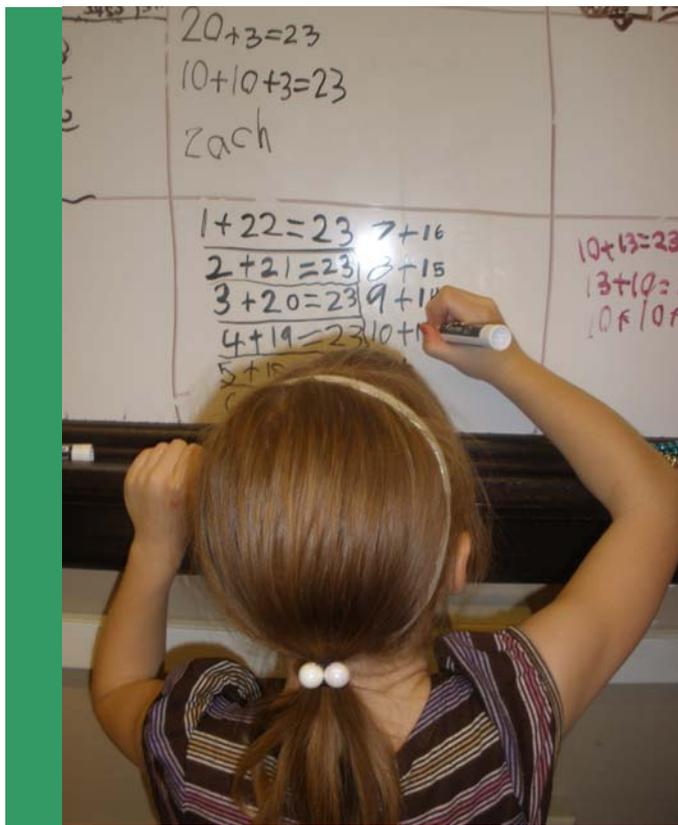
¹ This includes foster children living with the family.

Characteristics of PCCS Students

Table 2 below outlines gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics of PCCS students.

Table 2: Characteristics of PCCS Students²

PCCS Students	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
Enrollment (K-5) ³	112	119	120	119	177	178
Average Daily Membership ⁴	111.91	118.33	119.63	119.50	177.42	NA ⁵
Male	65 (58%)	69 (58%)	65 (54%)	58 (49%)	83 (47%)	98 (55%)
Female	47 (42%)	50 (42%)	55 (46%)	61 (51%)	94 (53%)	80 (45%)
Race / Ethnicity						
American Indian	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)
Asian / Pacific Islander	9 (8%)	11 (9%)	8 (7%)	6 (5%)	12 (7%)	8 (4%)
Black / Non-Hispanic	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (0.8%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)
Caucasian	101 (90%)	106 (89%)	108 (90%)	111 (93%)	158 (89%)	162 (91%)
Hispanic	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	1 (0.8%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)
Students of Color	11 (10%)	13 (11%)	12 (10%)	8 (7%)	19 (11%)	16 (9%)
Free or Reduced Lunch	9 (8%)	7 (6%)	16 (13%)	11 (9%)	30 (17%)	41 (23%)
English Language Learners	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Special Education Status	14 (13%)	15 (13%)	14 (12%)	14 (12%)	19 (11%)	20 (11%)
Mobility Index ⁶	0.00	0.06	0.03	.06	.03	NA ⁷



“Prairie Creek is the epitome of progressive education. Families are actively involved in the education of the children and valued as an important part of the community. I've never met teachers more committed to the education of the whole child.”

PCCS Parent's Response to "In what ways do you consider that PCCS is staying true to its mission as a progressive school?"

² Source: Minnesota Department of Education (<http://education.state.mn.us>).

³ This number represented the count of students who were enrolled over October 1 of the school year.

⁴ ADM is computed by taking the number of days the student was reported as enrolled divided by the number of instructional days reported for that school.

⁵ Not yet available.

⁶ The *Mobility Index* is calculated by adding mid-year enrollments, transfers, and withdrawals and then dividing this by the district's October 1 enrollment. The *Mobility* represents how much activity annually occurs based on student transfers after the school year begins.

⁷ Not yet available.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Summary

PCCS measures academic progress using a number of measures including the Work Sampling System (WSS) and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, Series II (MCA-II).

Changes in academic performance of PCCS students are noted as follows:

- ❖ On the WSS, a large proportion of students scored “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring across two domains: Mathematical Thinking (92.2%) and Language & Literacy (91.7%).
- ❖ In addition, PCCS students showed statistically significant fall-to-spring improvements on WSS across both domains.
- ❖ PCCS had two goals relating to progress on the WSS, one for Mathematical Thinking and one for Language and Literacy:
 - Students fell slightly short of the goal for the Mathematical Thinking domain with 93.8% scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2011 (of students for students flagged in spring of 2010 and “not yet” attaining proficiency in the fall of 2011).
 - Students met the goal for growth on the Language and Literacy Domain with students showing statistically significant progress from fall 2010 to spring 2011.
- ❖ On the MCA-II Reading, 86.8% of PCCS students met or exceeded proficiency; the proficiency rate was slightly greater than the level observed within Northfield Schools and also exceeded statewide levels. On the MCA-III Mathematics, 54.9% of PCCS students met or exceeded proficiency which was below the levels observed within Northfield Schools and statewide proportions. On the MCA-II science test, 5th graders at PCCS had a proficiency rating of 66.7%, which was higher than Northfield schools and Minnesota schools.

Work Sampling System

The Work Sampling System (WSS) was adopted by the Minnesota Department of Education from November 1999 to May 2003 in response to a Title I legislative requirement for evaluating student progress. The WSS is used to record a student’s knowledge and skills across an array of curriculum areas at different time periods (fall, winter, and spring) in order to inform teaching staff. Curriculum areas assessed by the WSS include personal and social development, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, arts, and physical development. PCCS staff used two sections of the WSS to measure student academic progress towards accountability goals in 2010-2011: Mathematical Thinking and Language and Literacy. Students were scored on a three-point scale: “Not Yet” (student cannot demonstrate indicator), “In Process” (student demonstrates indicator intermittently), and “Proficient” (student can reliably demonstrate indicator).

PCCS students were observed by staff in fall 2010 and again in spring 2011. Table 3 below shows the proportions of students scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2011. On the mathematical thinking domain, the large majority of students (92.2%) scored as In Process or Proficient. One of PCCS’s goals was that at least 66% of students will be “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring on the Language and Literacy domain. As can be seen in the table, PCCS exceeded this goal with the large majority (91.7%) scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2011.

Table 3: Number of Students Scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” on the WSS by Grade in Spring 2011

Domain	Grade						Total
	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Mathematical Thinking	25 (83.3%)	24 (80.0%)	30 (100%)	31 (100%)	27 (90.0%)	29 (100%)	166 (92.2%)
Language and Literacy	24 (80.0%)	29 (96.7%)	30 (100%)	31 (100%)	25 (83.3%)	26 (89.7%)	165 (91.7%)

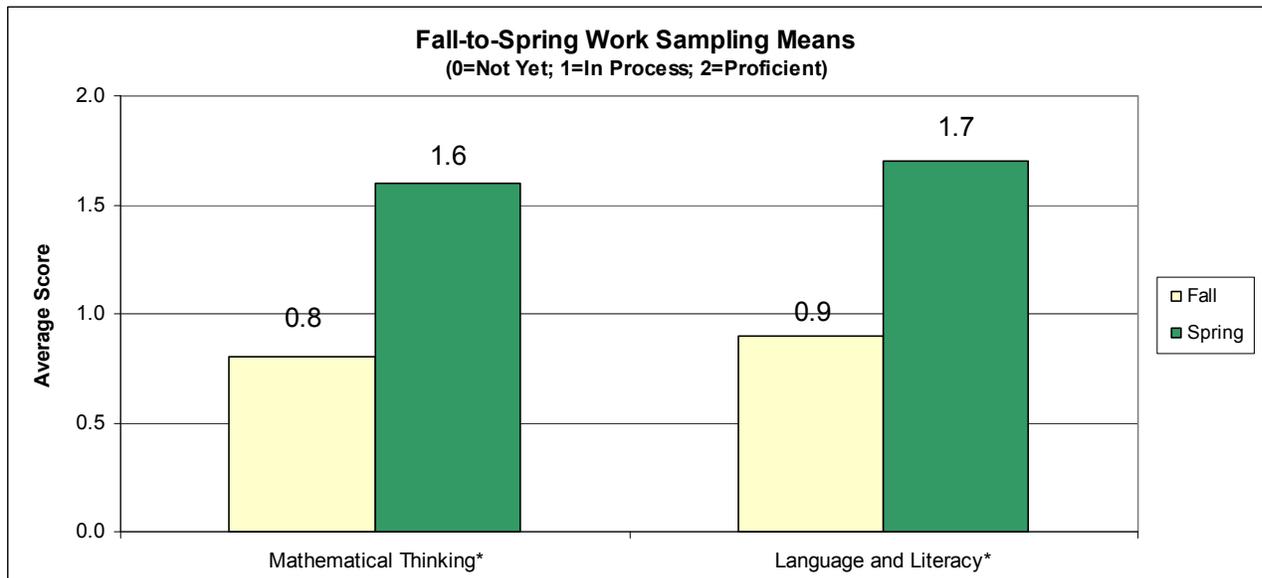
PCCS also measured average progress from fall 2010 to spring 2011 on the Mathematical Thinking and Language and Literacy domains. As can be seen in Table 4 and Figure 1 below, students made statistically significant progress from fall to spring on the Mathematical Thinking and Language and Literacy domains.

Table 4: Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 Means for WSS Academic Domains

Scale	N	Fall mean	Spring mean	Difference
Mathematical Thinking	180	0.8	1.6	+0.8*
Language and Literacy	180	0.9	1.7	+0.8*

*Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ as measured by a paired samples t -test.

Figure 1: Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 Means for the WSS Mathematical Thinking and Language and Literacy Domains



*Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ as measured by a paired samples t -test.

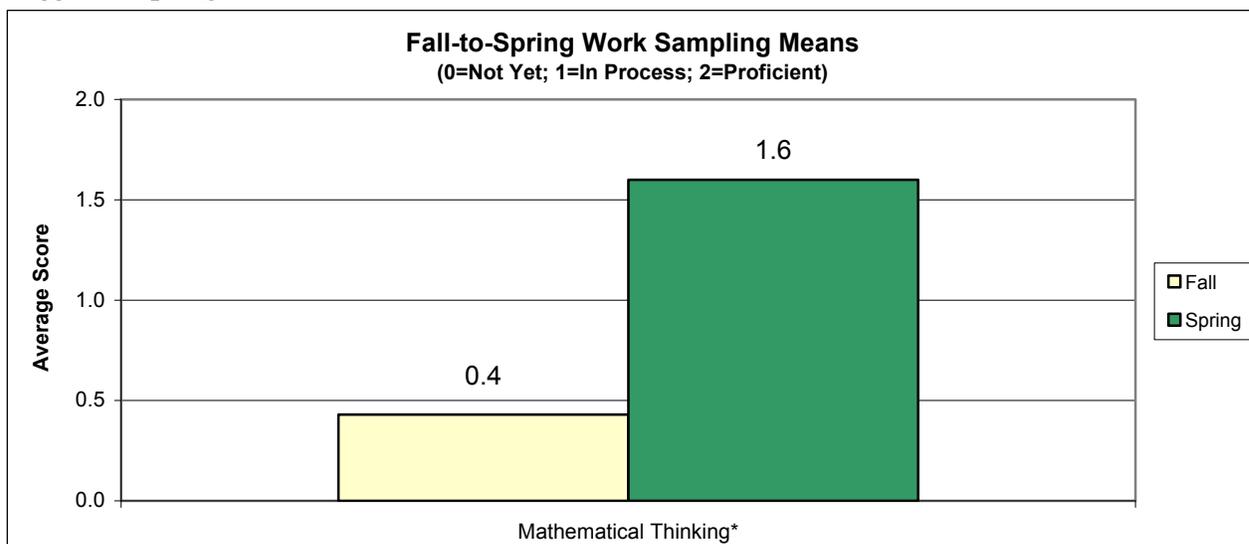
One accountability goal for the WSS was for a minimum of 95% of the students who were flagged in spring of the previous year (spring of the 2009-2010 school year) and are rated “not yet” in the fall of 2010 in all grades to score “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2011 in the Mathematical Thinking domain. As shown in Table 5, PCCS fell slightly short of the 95% accountability goal in for the Mathematical Thinking domain with 15 (93.8%) of the 16 flagged students scored “In Process” or “Proficient” by the end of the school year. It is important to note that since only 16 students were flagged in spring of the previous year, each student represents more than a 5% change and therefore the results in Table 5 should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 5: Number of Students Flagged in 2010 Scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” on the WSS in Spring 2011

Domain	In Process or Proficient in Spring 2011
Mathematical Thinking	15 (93.8%)

The second mathematics WSS accountability goal for PCCS was that students who were flagged in spring of 2010 and are rated as “not yet” in fall of 2010 would make statistically significant fall-to-spring progress on the Mathematical Thinking domain. As can be seen in Figure 2 below, students flagged in the spring of 2010 showed a statistically significant improvement on the Mathematical Thinking domain in the 2010-2011 school year.

Figure 2: Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 Means for the WSS Mathematical Thinking Domain for Students Flagged in Spring of 2010



*Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ as measured by a paired samples t -test.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, Series II and III

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) is a mandatory, statewide assessment of reading (Series II of the MCA) and mathematics (Series III of the MCA) performance in grades 3-8, writing in grade 9, reading in grade 10, and mathematics in grade 11. The MCA-II/III is used to measure students' progress toward mastery of Minnesota's academic standards and was first administered in spring 2006. Performance on the MCA-II/III is reported in scaled scores and achievement levels (does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations). Those students who achieve 'meets expectations' and 'exceeds expectations' are identified as having proficiency with Minnesota's academic standards by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Table 6 shows the proportion of students meeting or exceeding proficiency for the last five administrations of the MCA-II/III for PCCS, schools in the Northfield Public Schools district, and all schools in Minnesota. On the Reading test, PCCS students exceed both the average of Northfield schools and the Minnesota average. On the Mathematics MCA-II/III, a smaller proportion of PCCS students meet proficiency than Northfield schools and statewide proportions.

Table 6: Proportion of PCCS, Northfield Schools, and Greater Minnesota School Students Scoring At or Above Proficiency over the Last Five Administrations of the MCA

Year	Reading			Mathematics		
	PCCS	Northfield Schools	Minnesota Schools	PCCS	Northfield Schools	Minnesota Schools
2011 (Grades 3-5)	86.8%	83.7%	77.9%	54.9%	66.1%	63.7%
2010 (Grades 3-5)	81.4%	79.9%	72.3%	68.8%	76.6%	65.9%
2009 (Grades 3-5)	83.6%	84.2%	75.0%	59.0%	80.6%	74.1%
2008 (Grades 3-5)	81.4%	81.3%	74.9%	67.8%	76.2%	73.0%
2007 (Grades 3-5)	93.0%	80.7%	74.7%	59.6%	78.5%	71.1%
2006 (Grades 3-5)	85.5%	84.9%	78.4%	76.4%	73.4%	68.5%

Please note: because the enrolled students differ for each school year (e.g., 3rd grade students in 2011 were not tested as 2nd graders in 2010), it is inappropriate and inadvisable to make a direct comparison between performance in 2010 and performance in 2011. Also, the MCA-III was used for mathematics for the first time in 2011 also making comparisons to previous years inadvisable.

Although not utilized to measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the MCA-II also measures progress in science education starting in grade 5. Table 7 below shows the proficiency rates in science from 2008 through 2011 at PCCS, Northfield Schools, and Minnesota Schools. As can be seen in the table, in 2011, 5th

graders at PCCS had a proficiency rating of 66.7% which exceeded the rates of Northfield and Minnesota Schools.

Table 7: Proportion of PCCS, Northfield Schools, and Greater Minnesota School Students Scoring At or Above Proficiency over the Last Five Administrations of the MCA

Year	PCCS	Science	
		Northfield Schools	Minnesota Schools
2011 (Grades 3-5)	66.7%	47.1%	46.0%
2010 (Grades 3-5)	32.0%	50.6%	66.7%
2009 (Grades 3-5)	68.5%	47.4%	45.0%
2008 (Grades 3-5)	63.1%	43.9%	39.1%

The Minnesota Department of Education uses performance on the MCA-II/III, in part, to determine if a school or district is making AYP under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). AYP information is not yet available from MDE at this time.

SCHOOL OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Summary

PCCS measures progress towards two non-academic goals. The first is that PCCS will encourage and support play as a key part of the social curriculum. This goal is measured by attendance logs of staff attendance at professional development activities that relate to play. The second is to improve the communication structure used by faculty and staff at PCCS. The goal is that 80% of all faculty and staff will report feeling well-informed about the work being done at PCCS as measured via staff survey.

At the present time, PCCS has met some of their non-academic goals. Specifically:

- ❖ PCCS fell slightly short of the goal for 100% staff attendance at professional development activities related to play with an overall attendance rate of 95.0%.
- ❖ Staff were positive about the communication among teachers, staff, and school board with most indicating they felt informed/connected with the professional work of the classrooms/programs (81%), felt connected to the learning community (79%), and felt informed about the activities at school (78%); slightly more than half felt informed about the decisions of the board (56%).
- ❖ Parents also completed an annual Parent Satisfaction Survey. The results of the survey were very positive.
 - One of PCCS's goals was that 85% or more of parents would respond positively in each of the four domains of the parent satisfaction survey. This goal was met for all four domains: Faculty and Staff (99.1%), Community and Climate (97.7%), Curriculum and Learning (93.2%), and Governance and Administration (90.1%).
 - Average ratings across the four survey domains of the Parent Satisfaction Survey were also very positive. On average, parent ratings were between 3 ("Agree") and 4 ("Strongly Agree") for Faculty and Staff (3.70), Community and Climate (3.62), Curriculum and Learning (3.51), and Governance and Administration (3.38). Averages were very similar to previous administrations.
 - Parents were asked to provide feedback on an open-ended item regarding the implementation of progressive education at PCCS. Parents overwhelmingly agreed that PCCS effectively implements a progressive education approach with students. The large majority of comments included an appreciation for the hands-on learning model, community and parental participation, and the child-centered approach at PCCS.
 - Parents were asked if they have more than one child enrolled at Prairie Creek. The majority of parents (58.1%) stated they do not have more than one child enrolled. Parents were also asked to identify the city of their mailing address. A majority of parents listed Northfield (75.6%), while a smaller portion listed Farmington (9.3%) as their mailing address.
 - Parents were asked to identify a previously attended school for their child. The majority of parents responded with "no/NA" or no response was given (73.6%). The two schools with the largest response included Greenvale Park Elementary (9.2%) and Sibley Elementary (5.7%).
 - In addition, the largest proportions of parents indicated they volunteered at PCCS between 1-5 hours (48.8%) or 6-10 hours (21.4%) per month and the most commonly reported ways they volunteered included: in the classroom, serving lunch, assisting with events, and assisting/chaperoning field trips.
 - Nearly all parents (97.6%) indicated they attend parent events at PCCS and the most commonly reported events attended were concerts, classroom events, May Day, and curriculum night.

Play as Support of Curriculum

In 2010-2011, PCCS had the non-academic goal of encouraging and supporting play as a key part of the social curriculum at PCCS. This goal was measured through logs of teaching staff's attendance at professional development activities related to play. The goal was that 100% of teaching staff would attend all (100%) professional development activities that related to play. Table 8 below shows the attendance rates of teaching staff at play-related professional development activities. As can be seen in the table, of the six professional development activities, staff had an average attendance rate of 95.0%, falling slightly short of the goal.

Table 8: Attendance Rates of PCCS Staff at Professional Development Activities Related to Play

Staff	Overall Attendance Rate
11 staff members	93.9%

Staff Communication Survey

PCCS measures the perceptions of staff about the communication among teachers, staff, and the school board via staff survey. The survey asked four close-ended questions with four response options (Very Much, Most of the Time, Somewhat, Not at All) and one open-ended item. For 2011, 19 of 24 staff members responded to the survey. The goal was that 80% of staff would feel well informed of the work being done at PCCS. Table 9 below shows the number and proportion of positive responses to survey items. As can be seen in the table, most staff indicated they felt informed/connected with the professional work of the classrooms/programs (81%), felt connected to the learning community (79%), and felt informed about the activities at school (78%); slightly more than half felt informed about the decisions of the board (56%).

Table 9: Number and Proportion of Positive Responses to the Staff Survey

Item	Positive Responses
I feel informed/connected with the professional work of the classrooms/programs I work with.	81%
I feel connected to the learning community.	79%
I feel informed about the activities at school.	78%
I feel informed about the decisions of the board.	56%

Parent Satisfaction Survey

Each spring, PCCS distributes a parent engagement and satisfaction survey to parents/guardians of PCCS students. The survey was designed to measure four domains of parent satisfaction: (a) Community and Climate (7 questions); (b) Curriculum and Learning (9 questions); (c) Faculty and Staff (4 questions); and (d) Governance and Administration (5 questions). Questions in the four domains were close-ended with four response options (4 = Strongly Agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree). A fifth domain (Progressive Education) was an open-ended question and parents were asked to identify ways that "PCCS is staying true to its mission as a progressive school." The last section of the survey (7 questions) consisted of demographic questions (e.g., city of residence, volunteering) and was a mix of close-ended (yes/no, multiple choice) and open-ended questions. Of the 129 total families at PCCS, 88 completed the survey for a response rate of 68.2%.

Table 10 displays the proportion of parents averaging positive responses across the four domains. Nearly all parents (99.1%) averaged positive responses when asked their opinions about faculty and staff, while the large majority averaged positive responses regarding community and climate (97.7%) and curriculum and learning (93.2%). A large proportion of parents (90.1%) also averaged positive responses for the governance and administration domain.

Table 10: Proportion of Parents Averaging Positive Responses across Domains

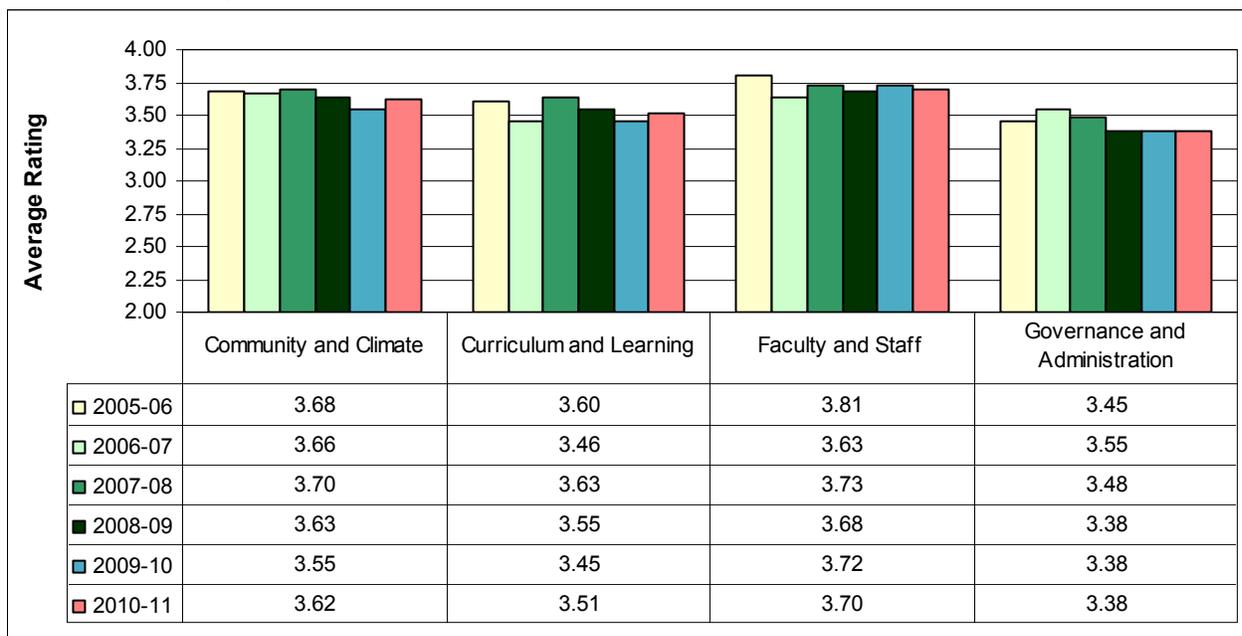
Domain	Proportion of Parents with an Average Positive Response (3.0 or higher)
Faculty and Staff	99.1%
Community and Climate	97.7%
Curriculum and Learning	93.2%
Governance and Administration	90.1%

Table 11 and Figure 3 show the average score for the four survey domains. As can be seen in the table and figure, the average rating for all four domains fell between the “Agree” (a rating of 3) and “Strongly Agree” (a rating of 4) response options.

Table 11: Average Response on Parental Engagement and Satisfaction Survey over Time

Domain	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Community and Climate	3.68	3.66	3.70	3.63	3.55	3.62
Curriculum and Learning	3.60	3.46	3.63	3.55	3.45	3.51
Faculty and Staff	3.81	3.78	3.73	3.68	3.72	3.70
Governance and Administration	3.45	3.48	3.48	3.38	3.38	3.38

Figure 3: Comparison of Average Ratings on the Four Domains of the Parent Engagement and Satisfaction Survey



Statements with the highest proportion of “**Strongly Agree**” and “**Agree**” responses on the Parent Satisfaction Survey were:

- “My child is happy at PCCS.” (100%)
- “The social curriculum at PCCS is supported in my child’s classroom.” (100%)
- “My child is growing in his/her ability to solve conflicts with others.” (100%)
- “My child is learning to research topics of interest, develop, and present his/her learning.” (100%)
- “My child’s teacher creates a culture for learning in the classroom.” (100%)
- “My child is known by her/his teacher.” (100%)

Statements with the largest proportion of “**Disagree**” and “**Strongly Disagree**” responses were:

- “I am satisfied with the foreign language experiences my child has at PCCS.” (32.2%)
- “I feel informed about the work of the Board.” (23.6%)
- “I am satisfied how my child applies his/her math knowledge in solving problem situations.” (14.5%)
- “The Director is responsive to parent concerns.” (9.6%)
- “I feel PCCS is open to parental input.” (9.2%)
- “PCCS leadership promotes the mission of the school effectively.” (8.1%)

It is important to note that for the statements that had the largest proportions of Disagree and Strongly Disagree, the majority of parents still responded positively to the items.

Parents could also provide open-ended feedback regarding progressive education⁸ (Domain 5) at PCCS. Of the 87 parents who completed the survey, 50 (57.5%) responded and their responses were grouped by themes. The three themes parents provided most frequently are summarized below. All of the themes and parent responses can be found in Appendix G.

- **Hands-on Learning (N = 13)** Many parents expressed appreciation for the “hands-on” learning model at PCCS. One parent noted that “PCCS does a fabulous job of integrating learning into all their subjects, thereby making the material exciting to the students.” Another parent also stated that “The thematic based learning incorporates all subjects (math, reading, science, etc) giving my child a hands on approach to learning that makes sense to him.”
- **Community and Parental Participation (N = 13)** Parents expressed satisfaction with community and parental participation at PCCS. One parent noted that “Families are actively involved in the education of the children and valued as an important part of the community.” Another parent also wrote, “The community of PCCS is great. Being known and accepted by students of all ages, teachers, other adults at the school, other parents & families has made school a place my son loves - which only enhances his learning.”
- **Child-Centered (N = 12)** Parents expressed appreciation for the “child-centered” approach at PCCS. One parent noted “I feel my child is absolutely treated with respect and valued for his unique characteristics.” Another parent also stated “I see how my child is growing, understanding and using all the wonderful skills taught at PCCS. And when I talk to other children there I see the same thing.”

Parents were asked if they have more than one child enrolled at Prairie Creek. Fifty of 86 (58.1%) parents reported they do not have more than one child at Prairie Creek. Parents were also asked to identify the city of their mailing address. A majority of parents listed the city of Northfield (75.6%), while a significantly smaller proportion listed Farmington (9.3%) as their mailing address with the remaining twelve parents choosing “other” (14.0%) from the response options. When asked to identify a previously attended school

⁸ PCCS defines “progressive education” in the item by the following: “In progressive schools children are valued as unique and worthy of respect. The progressive school teaches children to think for themselves instead of passively accepting stereotyped ideas. Progressive schools practice a developmental approach, recognizing that the child develops according to a timetable that is unique to each particular child. Learning is hands-on and child-centered rather than ‘adult-driven.’ Classes are of mixed ages and no ability grouping is used. Community is important and parents are considered a vital part of their child’s education.”

for their child, the majority of parents responded with “no/NA” or no response was given (73.6%), indicating their child did not attend a previous school. The two schools with the largest response included Greenvale Park Elementary (9.2%) and Sibley Elementary (5.7%) in Northfield, MN.

Parents were asked to estimate the number of hours that family members volunteered at PCCS. Family members indicated that they volunteered 1-5 hours per month (48.8%) or 6-10 hours per month (21.4%). A smaller proportion indicated volunteering less than one hour per month (15.5%), 11-15 hours per month (6.0%), or more than 15 hours per month (8.3%). When asked the ways in which they have volunteered at PCCS, parents’ most common responses included: volunteering in the classroom, serving lunch, assisting with events, and assisting/chaperoning field trips. Eighty-three out of 85 (97.6%) parents reported that they do attend parent events at PCCS. When asked about which events they have attended, the most common responses included concerts, classroom events, May Day, curriculum night, and auction.



“I see how my child is growing, understanding and using all the wonderful skills taught at PCCS.”

“I feel my child is absolutely treated with respect and valued for his unique characteristics..”

PCCS Parent’s Response to “In what ways do you consider that PCCS is staying true to its mission as a progressive school?”

SUCCESSSES, INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PLANS

In addition to the feedback from parents, PCCS staff reflected on the successes and challenges encountered by their program this year. The following list represents staff perceptions of successes, innovative and best practices used at PCCS, challenges and future plans for the upcoming school year.

Successes, Innovative Practices and Implementation

- ❖ Mathematics interventions
 - Through extensive research and professional development, teachers generated assessment tools capable of identifying students who were not meeting numeracy development benchmarks. Teachers worked in teams to create interventions and lessons to support identified learners. By September, 2011 80% of students who received extra support no longer need intervention to work with their grade level peers.
- ❖ The Catalyst Fund
 - The Catalyst Fund is an in-house grant program designed to promote creative professional development and increase faculty retention. This year, each teacher received a mini-grant to develop a personal professional development project. These projects add richness to the collegial life at PCCS and have brought many new and innovative insights to the school.
- ❖ A greener school
 - Parents and teachers collaborated to develop a composting system at the school and create an innovative farm-to-table curriculum and reduce the school's waste stream. Children in 2nd and 3rd grade went on numerous field trips, learned about industrial composting, taught the rest of the school how to compost, and collected data to measure the impact of their program. In addition, students planned and lead a service learning project, designed and planted a garden, and harvested their first crop.
- ❖ Nature Journals
 - All students participated in journaling in which they sketched and recorded the natural world. Work in these journals honed observations skills and connected students more intimately with their changing environmental patterns. Each child selected a sketch for the school wide publication, "*The Seasons of Prairie Creek*" which was distributed to each family at the end of the year.
- ❖ Vertical integration of project process
 - Teachers worked to align the research process at each grade level. Teachers now use similar tools and identical language that helps students gain independence in their research. The alignment has helped streamline the process of increasing complexity of the projects grade by grade through the fifth grade.
- ❖ Special education teaming
 - The special education team added a teacher at the intermediate level mid-year. With a designated special education teacher at both the primary and intermediate level, coordination with classroom teachers was improved and the inclusion model was even more successful at delivering effective instruction in the least restrictive environment.
- ❖ Finances
 - PCCS was able to maintain adequate staffing levels and resources while meeting the fund balance recommendation of the auditors even despite the holdback from the State. PCCS also added a Chief Financial Officer as an ex-officio member of the school board to aid in making financially sound decisions.

Challenges & Future Plans

- ❖ Communication challenges
 - Several meetings between board members and teachers at the end of the 2010-2011 school year began the process of improving communication. Starting in the summer of 2011, board members met with staff on the first day of summer workshops, and in the 2011-2012 school year the faculty board retreat will be re-instituted and the board chair will be visiting the school and teachers more regularly. In addition, the board committee system will be re-invigorated and teachers will be encouraged to join in the committee work.
 - PCCS faced the challenge of using technology in a more effective manner to communicate with parents. Plans to more effectively use technology include development of a new website and replacing most paper correspondence with e-mail correspondence. Staff also will experiment with tools such as E-vite, blogs, and Vertical Response to strengthen communication.
- ❖ Community development
 - A change in transportation patterns and the increased size of the community have resulted in a feeling among some families that some of the school's former closeness has been lost. Staff will work to develop events and systems to help re-invigorate the sense of casual community at the school.
 - PCCS would like to increase the depth of the multi-age experiences of students. Teachers will focus on opportunities to team across grade levels and the school will also re-examine and re-invigorate the social curriculum work (especially during the first six weeks of school).

SCHOOL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Larson Allen, 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, 2011.

SCHOOL STAFF

Table 12 below shows the rates of turnover among teaching and non-teaching staff. As can be seen in the table, turnover rates in 2010-2011 were similar to the previous year. The turnover rate for 2010-2011 was 15.0% among teaching staff (n=20), 14.3% among non-teaching staff (n=7), and 14.8% overall. Note that, because PCCS maintains a small number of staff, a change of one staff member represents nearly a 5% overall turnover rate. As a result, proportions should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 12: Turnover Rates Among Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff at PCCS

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Teaching staff	0/6	0/6	2/6	4/14	3/19	3/20
Non-teaching staff	8/14	4/13	2/13	1/6	1/5	1/7
Total	8/20 (40.0%)	4/19 (21.1%)	4/19 (21.1%)	5/20 (25.0%)	4/24 (16.6%)	4/27 (14.8%)

Table 13 below shows all staff employed at PCCS for the 2010-2011 year, their position, and whether or not they will be returning for the 2011-2012 year. Four staff will not be returning for the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 13: School Staff by File Folder and Position

Name	File Folder	Position	FT E	10-11 Staff?	11-12 Staff?	Notes
Caroline Jones		Director	1.0	Y	N	Retired
Ona Sheets		Business Manager	1.0	Y	Y	
Colleen Braucher		Administrative Assistant	1.0	Y	Y	
Pam McGinnis	346144	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	1.0	Y	N	Resigned Jan 2011
Elise Erickson	453388	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade Assisstant Teacher/ Classroom Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	Changed to Classroom teacher in Jan 2011
Jeanne Avery	435291	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Susan Kesselring	249667	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Nancy Dennis	394260	2 nd & 3 rd Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Molly McGovern Wills	427419	2 nd & 3 rd Grade	1.0	Y	Y	Classroom Assistant in 11-12
Amy Haslett-Marroquin	347525	2 nd & 3 rd Grade		Y	Y	
Michelle Martin	406690	4 th & 5 th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Cathy Oehmke	421554	4 th & 5 th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Amy Brown	398391	4 th & 5 th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Elizabeth Treat	445009	4th & 5 th Grade Assistant Teacher	1.0	Y	N	Student teaching for 11-12
Jennifer Nelson	441787	Classroom Assistant	1.0	Y	Y	Moved to 2 nd and 3 rd Classroom Teacher for 11-12
Karen Dennison		Classroom Assistant	.4	Y	N	Contract non-renewal
Laura Medwetz	369425	Special Education Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Kelsey Fitschen	450336	Special Education Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Naomi Hilmas		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	Y	Started Jan 2011
Chris Ellison		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	Y	
Natalie Ojala		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	Y	
Margret Lindholm		Special Education PARA/ Classroom Assistant	1.0	Y	Y	Changed to Classroom Assistant Feb 2011
Christina Hughes	998050	Spanish	0.5	Y	Y	
Rachel Geffers	432580	Music & Classroom Assistant	0.5 0.5	Y	Y	
Angie Ekern	397283	Art Teacher	.4	Y	Y	
Dorinda Grandbois		Librarian	.4	Y	Y	
Sara Sickels		Classroom Assistant	1.0	Y	Y	Started March 2011

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Membership: The membership of the Board is composed of parents and/or guardians of currently enrolled PCCS students, and the current staff and Board of Trustees. Other members may be accepted by majority vote at a membership meeting or Board of Trustees meeting.

- **Number, Tenure, and Qualifications:** Since the 2005-2006 school year, the permanent Board consists of nine members,⁹ six of whom will be chosen from the parent community and three of which will be chosen from the faculty. Terms of the members run from July 1 to June 30. Members serve no more than two consecutive terms and at least one year must separate the second term from the next period of service.
- **Election:** The Nominations Committee prepares a slate of candidates sufficient in number to fill the expiring terms of members leaving the Board and consistent with the parent/teacher ratio requirements no later than April 15 of any given year. The new Board takes office effective July 1 of the same year.

There were 11 voting members of the PCCS Board for the 2010-2011 school year. Specific information for each Board member can be found in Table 14 below. Overall, Board members had an average attendance rate of 91.8%.

Table 14: PCCS Board Members

Name	Board Position	Represents	Contact Information	Attendance
Trish Ferrett	Trustee	Parents	tferrett@carleton.edu	80%
Cynthia Gilbertson	Trustee	Parents	cfgilbertson@mac.com	100%
David Lefkowitz	Trustee	Parents	dlefkowi@carleton.com	90%
Dean Paxton	Trustee	Parents	Dean.paxton@allina.com	90%
Michael Viola	Trustee	Parents	michaelviola@sbgdf.com	100%
Bonnie Jean Flom	Trustee	Community	bjflom@charter.net	90%
Jeanne' Avery	Faculty Member	Faculty	jeanne.burgoyne@gmail.co	100%
Laura Medwets	Faculty Member	Faculty	lmedwetz@gmail.com	80%
Paul Hager	Treasurer	Parent	phager@carleton.edu	80%
Caroline Jones	Ex-Officio Member	PCCS Director	cjones@prairiecreek.org	100%
Keith Johnson	Ex-Officio Member	CFO	Keithjohnson@gmail.com	100%

Membership Meetings: Members have the right to attend the open portion of all Board meetings. The Board schedules two regular meetings of the full membership, one in the fall and one in the spring of each academic year. The Director of the school facilitates the fall meeting and the Chair of the Community Council facilitates the spring meeting.

- **Duties:** The membership is advisory to the Board and will carry out any functions the Board may direct.
- **Special meetings:** Special meetings of the membership may be called at any time by the chair of the Board or upon written request of at least ten percent of the membership presented to the chair or presented at a meeting of the Board.
- **Quorum:** The presence in person of at least 25 percent of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- **Voting:** A majority of the members present at any meeting shall rule on all matters voted upon unless specified otherwise by these bylaws.

⁹ Note: PCCS received a variance from the district to increase the number of parents serving on the PCCS Board because of the small number of faculty teaching at PCCS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PCCS implemented a professional development plan throughout the 2010-2011 school year. The plan was developed by the school’s Board of Directors and the school’s director at the time, Caroline Jones. Table 15 below displays the time frame, a brief description of the professional development activities, and participants. As can be seen in the table, PCCS teachers and staff participated in 11 different professional development activities throughout the school year. PCCS utilizes a catalyst fund that staff can apply for in order to participate in unique professional development activities. As can be seen in the table below, one activity (weekly professional development meetings) included all staff while the others provided specialized development for individual staff. Activities ranged in time from a few hours to full one or two credit classes of professional development.

Table: 15 PCCS Professional Development Implementation

Time Frame	Description	Participants
88 hours	Weekly meeting on various topics including, MCAs, incorporating play into the social curriculum, writing strategies, visual literacy, and staff communication	All staff
1 day class	Northhouse Folk School workshops (e.g art education and book studies)	Cathy Oehmke, Michelle Martin, Jennifer Nelson, Nancy Dennis, Elise Erickson, Molly McGovern, Susan Kessering
6 hours	Current research in reading and reading workshop	Amy Brown
1 week class	The Responsive Classroom I	Elise Erickson
2 week workshop	The Responsive Classroom II	Amy Haslett-Marroquin
2 credit class	Fluency for Struggling Reading	Amy Haslett-Marroquin
3 hours	Art instruction for young students	Jeanne Burgoyne
2.5 hours	Standards-based IEP training	Kelsey Fitschen
1.5 hours	Pre-test workshop for new DACs	Colleen Braucher
1 credit class	“Making Books with Children” through Hamline University	Amy Brown

In addition to some of the above activities, PCCS’s director, Simon Tyler, is currently enrolled in a principal licensure program through the University of Saint Thomas. The program is a board approved 33 credit graduate level program. The director will complete the program in December of 2012.

ABOUT ACET, INC.

Established in 1998, ACET is an independent research group specializing in the evaluation of educational and community-based programs. Our group has extensive experience evaluating multi-year, multi-site statewide and national initiatives aimed at improving the lives of youth and families, and in providing positive outreach to various communities. ACET's mission is to "provide services to improve organizational effectiveness and build evaluation capacity."

ACET has served as the principal evaluator for several local, statewide, and federal programs and initiatives funded by organizations such as the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We have provided evaluation technical assistance and offered training sessions to over 50 organizations that have a widespread impact on varied groups, including youth and adults recovering from chemical dependency, children at risk for academic failure, and adults receiving health and prevention services. Our company has also provided evaluation assistance to organizations that empower individuals to develop peaceful relationships, eliminate violence, and establish outreach efforts to parents and community members.

Contributors to this report include:

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APPENDIX A

Registration with Minnesota Attorney General's Office



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Search Results

Organization Name **PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL**
 Federal ID# **421530416**
 For Fiscal Year Ending **6/30/2010**

Income

Direct Public Support	\$40,966
Government Grants	\$1,647,703
Other Revenue	\$162,252
Total Revenue	\$1,850,921

Expenses

Amount Spent for Program or Charitable Purposes	\$1,369,082
Management/General Expense	\$202,276
Fundraising Expense	\$0
Total Expenses	\$1,571,358

Excess/Deficit	\$279,563
Total Assets	\$1,021,969
Total Liabilities	\$183,733
End of Year Fund Bal/Net Worth	\$838,236

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APPENDIX B

Admissions Procedures

Prairie Creek Community School Process of Admissions

Revised February 6th, 2006

In accordance with MN State law MS124d.10 Subd. 9 (Admission Requirements) all students who submit timely applications to Prairie Creek will be awarded places unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class or grade level. In this case, all available places will be filled by lottery. Siblings of a currently enrolled student, or foster children of that student's family, or students who live within a two mile radius of Prairie Creek have preference in admissions before accepting other students by lottery.

The following procedure shall be followed by the Director when admitting students to the school:

At an appointed date the Director shall conduct a lottery for Kindergarten placement. This date shall be published in the Northfield News, and in surrounding newspapers at the Director's discretion. All families applying to the school will be made aware of this date.

After the Kindergarten places have been filled names shall continue to be pulled by lottery to make up the waiting list. Any applications received after the date of the lottery will be added to the bottom of the waiting list in the order in which they are received. Students who are not awarded places will automatically have their names placed on the list for the following year.

For grades 1-5, the waiting list will be formed by lottery each year at the same time as the Kindergarten lottery. Students who are not awarded places will automatically have their names placed on the list for the following year.

Students who are offered places at the school and choose not to attend will be removed from the waiting list.

Approved by Board of Trustees:

6 February 2006

APPENDIX C

Enrollment Application

Application for Admission

Prairie Creek Community School

K-5 Public Charter School

Date of Application: _____

Name of Student: _____

Date of Birth : _____

Home Address: _____

City/Zip Code _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell phone Number _____

Grade Level for fall of 20____ (circle one) Kindergarten 1 2 3 4 5

Name of Parent: _____

Name of Parent: _____

School District of Residence: _____

Do you have a sibling attending Prairie Creek School? Yes No

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Return To:
Prairie Creek Community School
27695 Denmark Ave.
Northfield, MN 55057

APPENDIX E

Summary of Parental Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

Note: Shaded cells indicate no responses.

Domain 1: Community and Climate	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) My child is happy at PCCS.	72 (82.8%)	15 (17.2%)		
b) PCCS provides a safe and secure environment for my child.	70 (80.5%)	16 (18.4%)	1 (1.1%)	
c) The social curriculum at PCCS is supported in my child's classroom.	68 (78.2%)	19 (21.8%)		
d) My child is growing in his/her ability to solve conflicts with others.	47 (54.0%)	40 (46.0%)		
e) I feel well informed about what is going on at PCCS.	35 (40.7%)	47 (54.7%)	4 (4.7%)	
f) I am provided with opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.	63 (72.4%)	23 (26.4%)	1 (1.1%)	
g) I feel PCCS is open to parental input.	37 (42.5%)	42 (48.3%)	6 (6.9%)	2 (2.3%)
Domain 2: Curriculum and Learning	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
h) I value the attention the school gives to children's play both in the classroom and outside.	69 (80.2%)	15 (17.4%)	2 (2.3%)	
i) The school promotes a climate for passionate writing in its students.	54 (62.8%)	30 (34.9%)	2 (2.3%)	
j) My child is learning to research topics of interest, develop, and present his/her learning.	57 (67.9%)	27 (32.1%)		
k) PCCS engages my child in questioning, discovering, and using his/her knowledge of environmental science in making a difference in their world.	53 (61.6%)	32 (37.2%)	1 (1.2%)	
l) I am satisfied how my child applies his/her math knowledge in solving problem situations.	25 (30.1%)	46 (55.4%)	12 (14.5%)	
m) I am satisfied with the arts experiences my child has at PCCS (music, art, drama...).	66 (76.7%)	19 (22.1%)	1 (1.2%)	
n) I am satisfied with the foreign language experiences my child has at PCCS.	26 (29.9%)	33 (37.9%)	24 (27.6%)	4 (4.6%)
o) The school encourages my child to pursue areas of personal interest in daily learning.	53 (61.6%)	31 (36.0%)	2 (2.3%)	
p) I feel informed about my child's progress at PCCS.	47 (56.0%)	33 (39.3%)	4 (4.8%)	
Domain 3: Faculty and Staff	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
q) My child's teacher creates a culture for learning in the classroom.	65 (74.7%)	22 (25.3%)		
r) My child is known by her/his teacher.	74 (85.1%)	13 (14.9%)		
s) PCCS teachers use their knowledge of individual learning styles to optimize learning.	56 (65.1%)	29 (33.7%)	1 (1.2%)	
t) My child's teacher communicates with me about what is happening in the classroom.	50 (57.5%)	35 (40.2%)	2 (2.3%)	
Domain 4: Governance and Administration	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

u) PCCS leadership promotes the mission of the school effectively.	50 (58.1%)	29 (33.7%)	5 (5.8%)	2 (2.3%)
v) The Director is responsive to parent concerns.	38 (45.8%)	37 (44.6%)	5 (6.0%)	3 (3.6%)
w) Communication with parents is informative.	39 (45.9%)	42 (49.4%)	4 (4.7%)	
x) I feel informed about the work of the Board.	18 (21.2%)	47 (55.3%)	19 (22.4%)	1 (1.2%)
y) The office staff are welcoming and helpful.	66 (75.9%)	18 (14.9%)	3 (3.4%)	

Do you have more than one child enrolled at Prairie Creek? *86 parents answered this question*

- Yes: 36 (41.9%)
- No: 50 (58.1%)

What is the city of your mailing address? *86 parents answered this question*

City	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Northfield	65	75.6%
Farminton	8	9.3%
Lakeville	1	1.2%
Faribault	0	0.0%
Elko/New Market	0	0.0%
Other	12	14.0%

If your child attended another school before coming to Prairie Creek please list below.

School	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Greenvale Park Elementary	8	9.2%
Sibley Elementary	5	5.7%
Cannon Falls Elementary	2	2.3%
Montessori Children's House	3	3.4%
Bridgewater Elementary	2	2.3%
Homeschooled	2	2.3%
Randolph, MN	1	1.1%
No/NA/No response given	64	73.6%

How many hours each month would you say you or your family members volunteer for PCCS? *There were 84 responses to this item*

1. less than 1 hour: 13 (15.5%)
2. 1-5 hours: 41 (48.8%)
3. 6-10 hours: 18 (21.4%)
4. 11-15 hours: 5 (6.0%)
5. more than 15 hours: 7 (8.3%)

In what ways have you volunteered for PCCS? *72 parents responded to this item*

Volunteer Activity	Number of Parents	Percent of Total Responses
Classroom	44	21.9%

Served Lunch	33	16.4%
Assisted with Events	31	15.4%
Assisted with/Chaperoned Field Trips	26	12.9%
Classroom Representative	11	5.5%
Mentored/Taught Children	9	4.5%
Serve on Committee/Board	9	4.5%
Auction	8	4.0%
Made Donations/Purchased Supplies	4	2.0%
Work Days	3	1.5%
Provided Food/Baked	3	1.5%
Other Ways, Specific ¹⁰	7	3.5%
Other Ways, General	13	6.5%

Do you attend parent events at PCCS? 85 parents answered this question

- Yes: 83 (97.6%)
- No: 2 (2.4%)

Parent Events Attended	Number of Parents who Attended	Percent of Total Responses
Concerts	61	14.5%
Classroom Events	58	13.8%
May Day Celebrations	57	13.6%
Curriculum Night	46	11.0%
Auction	42	10.0%
Potlucks	36	8.6%
Parents Education Nights	29	6.9%
Work Days	15	3.6%
Community Meetings	14	3.3%
Board Informational Meetings	13	3.1%
Community Council	8	1.9%
Art Fair/Show	8	1.9%
Fieldtrips	5	1.2%
Music Informance	3	0.7%
Other -5 categories--two responses/category ¹¹	10	2.4%
Other -6 categories--one response/category ¹²	6	1.4%
Half to All of Them	9	2.1%

Domain 5: Progressive Education.

In progressive schools children are valued as unique and worthy of respect. The progressive school teaches children to think for themselves instead of passively accepting stereotyped ideas. Progressive schools practice a developmental approach, recognizing that the child develops according to a timetable that is unique to each particular child. Learning is hands-on and child-centered rather than “adult-driven.” Classes are of mixed ages and no ability grouping is used. Community is important and parents are considered a vital part of their child’s education.

In what ways do you consider that PCCS is staying true to its mission as a progressive school? 50 parents

¹⁰ Other specific ways included assisting with May Day and Girl Scout events.

¹¹ Other categories included: Class plays, project presentations, director’s roundtable, village, and honoring night.

¹² Other categories included: End-of-year carnival, talent Friday, graduation, bridging ceremony, a teacher’s birthday, and Caroline’s open house committee.

answered this question

The following statements are direct quotes from responses to the question under domain 5. No editing has taken place.

Hands-on Learning (N = 13)

- In some classrooms, progressive education is leading our students to be active learners. (1)
- Hands on learning...
- ...and very hands on!
- ...active learning...
- ...hands-on.
- PCCS does a fabulous job of integrating learning into all their subjects, thereby making the material exciting to the students.
- ...hands on learning environment
- ...that there is daily hands-on learning...
- The thematic based learning incorporates all subjects (math, reading, science, etc) giving my child a hands on approach to learning that makes sense to him. Example: Peep Village has him excitedly using and talking about math concepts.
- Hands-on learning with playing as in integral part of learning.
- ...learning is very hands-on and reflective...
- ...hands on real life learning
- Independent projects and reading

Community and Parental Participation (N = 13)

- Families are actively involved in the education of the children and valued as an important part of the community.
- Parents are involved in the classroom and at home.
- ...reasonably strong sense of community, etc
- The community of PCCS is great. Being known and accepted by students of all ages, teachers, other adults at the school, other parents & families has made school a place my son loves - which only enhances his learning.
- ...and that community and parental involvement are considered to be elemental to the life of the school.
- The school tries to involve the immediate community of Castle Rock, and even though the school is larger now than in the past, you can still feel a strong sense of community within the school itself and within the parent community. I feel very much welcome in the school and have been allowed to volunteer there regularly in ways that are not always allowed in other schools. My favorite aspect of the school is the marvelous sense of energy and engagement you feel there.
- ...community-focused...
- Having parental involvement.
- Because respect and community is so emphasized at Prairie Creek, he [our child] was not excluded by the other kids but rather the kids were encouraged to see our son's unique qualities and to value him for them. He has blossomed and has many "BFF's" (Best Friends Forever).
- Importance of community...
- Parents are told when they can come in and bring their skills to help out.
- By encouraging parental involvement in the classroom...
- ...opportunities to learn from adult mentors and many teachers and assistant teachers

Child-Centered (N = 12)

- ...going outside to write in journals, outside creative play are encouraged.
- The teachers r very encouraging with the children to problem solve on their own!
- ...child-centered classrooms.

- I see how my child is growing, understanding and using all the wonderful skills taught at PCCS. And when I talk to other children there I see the same thing. I was a preschool teacher for eight years, also working with after school programs for elementary school aged children. So what I'm saying here is based on the experience of working with/known hundreds of children.
- This is truly a child-centered...
- Very focused on validating children's interests and learning styles...
- I believe the children's ideas are highly valued...that each child is thought of as a unique person rather than a dot on a bell curve...
- ...and child-centered.
- I feel my child is absolutely treated with respect and valued for his unique characteristics. Our child is very shy and as this is his first at the school, he struggled to speak in front of others and to make friends.
- I also think that while ability grouping does occur at PCCS, it is done in a developmentally and child centered way that is not counter to the progressive philosophy.
- Child centered...
- Lots of outdoor exploration, using miniature villages to simulate community and economics in real life, a strong respect for children, children greatly influence the themes of project learning...

Progressive School Statement/PCCS Mission Statement (N = 9)

- I believe PCCS is staying true to all of the mission statement stated above.
- In a holistic way to all children. I believe PCCS is accountable to it's mission statement.
- All of the above!
- all listed in the description
- In just about every way. I'm impressed!
- I 3 that all of the statements in the above paragraph are followed.
- In all of the above ways.
- PCCS is staying true to it's progressive mission in all ways.
- I have read several books about progressive education, especially when we were choosing if progressive education was a good fit for our family, PCCS successfully implements progressive education practices, values and community. When the school expanded I was worried about how and if that would continue. It has with exceeded all my expectations.

Student Individual Interests (N = 9)

- Children are encouraged to pursue their interests as it relates to the classroom activities.
- ...individualized experiences...
- PCCS has allowed my son to learn at his own pace based on his interests.
- Allowing children to pursue their interests.
- My definition of progressive education differs slightly from the one above -- namely in that I think that authentic experiences in which children value and seek out learning is central to a progressive classroom. That definitely happens in my son's classroom and in the other classrooms I've observed.
- Our children have been encouraged to pursue their areas of interest and talent - and they've also been supported and encouraged in their areas of particular challenge.
- ...my child is able to explore and learn things that she is interested in...
- Children are encouraged to explore topics they are interested in.
- ...and my children are not just a number or name, they are a person with feelings, knowledge and experience and they are valued for that.

Individual Student Attention (N = 8)

- Treating children as individuals and encouraging them to think for themselves. To know that many times there is more than one way to find and answer, keeping classes small so the teachers can truly know their students as the individuals they are.
- My children are treated individually...

- Focus on individual development...
- It is very obvious that each child is recognized as an individual
- I think that the teachers I have observed at PCCS do truly try to see each child as an individual....
- ...my child is seen as an individual, not a number or a test score...
- Each of my children have struggled with their individual problems (social, learning, ect) and pccs has done amazing with each of them-bringing them to thier full potential.
- All ways, particularly recognizing the different developmental time tables of each child.

Mixed Ages (N = 8)

- Mixed ages are great.
- Mixed age groups can be seen in and out of the classroom.
- Mixed age...
- ...mixed-age classes...
- Working with children of other ages and abilities allows him to many learning opportunities he wouldn't have otherwise. He learns from kids more skilled than him in a particular area, and he learns even more by helping those who may be a little behind him in another area.
- Our child has also greatly benefited from being in a mixed age class-room, he has learned so much from the "older" kids in his class. He definitely is curious about what they are doing, and having a "buddy" to help him through those things in the classroom that were so new to him greatly lessened his anxiety. Our family considers our son's spot at PCCS one of the greatest blessings we could have received.
- I love the mixed age classrooms.
- Older students helping younger students.

Effective teachers (N = 7)

- The teachers are wonderful. They communicate with the parents and are allowed to use their own creativity.
- I've never met teachers more committed to the education of the whole child, to each child in the school.
- ...teachers are consistently concerned about social issues and emotional well-being of the children
- Despite a "rough" beginning, another teacher was able to step into the classroom..asses the social culture of the classroom, transform the social hurdles that were hindering learning and finish the school year with a wonderful, healthy classroom that was conducive for learning.
- ...(teachers) tailor the learning accordingly.
- ...teachers really know the students in their room
- ...and teachers valuing each child.

Developmentally appropriate instruction/curriculum (N = 5)

- Lots of effort is put into keeping the learning appropriate...Problem-solving and critical thinking are taught and encouraged, and the results of that sort of learning and thinking can be seen in the projects created and in the conversations that are held daily.
- Emergent curriculum.....strong social curriculum; fostering creativity...
- Regarding the developmental approach of PCCS; we actually didn't realize what an affinity for math our child has, but because he has been encouraged to develop at his own pace we have come to realize that his pace is ahead of where a typical school would have taken him for his age.
- Their learning is quite practical - they're easily able to express the value of knowing about how to measure or calculate..and they know about artists I remember learning about in college....
- I see my children benefiting from the social curriculum...

Suggestions for Improvement (N = 1)

- Minimization of rote activities and excessive use of worksheets is sensible, but in the area of foundational math skills I feel the pendulum is swung too far. Despite weekly tutoring our child's basis math skills are not to where they should be. There should be more emphasis on learning math facts

during the school day. In homes with two parents working full-time, or a single parent working full-time, it is difficult to devote time to teaching what really should be taught in the classroom. This is especially trying when there are other siblings who need attention.