

PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2012 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement



Minnesota Charter School District #4090

Simon Tyler, Director

27695 Denmark Avenue Northfield, MN 55057

Phone: (507) 645-9640

Fax: (507) 645-8234

Email: pccs@prairiecreek.org

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INTRODUCTION

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 tenth year of operation as a charter public school.

MISSION

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 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 co-operation, 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.*

SCHOOL PROGRAM, ENROLLMENT, AND STUDENT ATTRITION

Authorizer

Northfield Public Schools
Chris Richardson, Ph.D.
507-663-0600

Relationship with Authorizer

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)
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. On February 2, 2012, Dr. Richardson spent a day reviewing the program and meeting with students, staff and parents.

School Calendar & Hours of Operation

The first day of school was September 6, 2011 and school ended on June 1, 2012. 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 180 students in grades K-5. The student/classroom teacher ratio in 2011-2012 was 20:1.

Enrollment

PCCS has detailed admissions procedures and preferentially admits applicants who have a sibling enrolled at PCCS or applicants who are the children of staff members. 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. A limited amount of information is gathered on the application forms, including student's name, age of kindergarten, 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. Prairie Creek maintained full enrollment and had a wait list at every grade level in 2011-2012.

Attrition

Three students transferred during the school year: one family to a home school environment, one family (two children) to a neighboring traditional school. These spots were filled from the wait list with new students.

At the end of the school year four families moved out of town or out of state (seven children). Two children transferred to schools in the neighboring Northfield School district. Three children transferred to private schools.

Characteristics of PCCS Students

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

Table 2: Characteristics of PCCS Students¹

PCCS Students	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Enrollment (K-5) ²	119	120	119	177	178	180
Average Daily Membership ³	118.33	119.63	119.50	177.42	179.15	NA ⁴
Male	69 (58%)	65 (54%)	58(49%)	83 (47%)	98 (55%)	84 (47%)
Female	50 (42%)	55 (46%)	61(51%)	94 (53%)	80 (45%)	96 (53%)
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	11 (9%)	8 (7%)	6 (5%)	12 (7%)	8 (4%)	8 (4%)
Black/Non-Hispanic	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (0.8%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)
Caucasian	106(89%)	108(90%)	111(93%)	158 (89%)	162 (91%)	165 (92%)
Hispanic	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	1 (0.8%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	5 (3%)
Students of Color	13(11%)	12 (10%)	8 (7%)	19 (11%)	16 (9%)	15 (8%)
Free and Reduced Lunch	7 (6%)	16 (13%)	11 (9%)	30 (17%)	41 (23%)	32 (18%)
English Language Learners	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Special Education Status	15(13%)	14 (12%)	14 (12%)	19 (11%)	20 (11%)	18 (10%)
Mobility Index ⁵	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.01	NA ⁶

¹ Source: Minnesota Department of Education (<http://education.state.mn.us>)

² This number represented the count of students who were enrolled on October 1 of the school year.

³ 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.

⁴ Not yet available.

⁵ The *Mobility* represents how much activity annually occurs based on student transfers after the school year begins.

⁶ Not yet available

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 Governors. Other members may be accepted by majority vote at a membership meeting or Board of Governors meeting. The nine members of the 2011-2012 board all have completed all three required training modules in the areas of employment law, governance and finance.

Number, Tenure, and Qualifications:

Since the 2010-2011 school year, the permanent Board consists of nine members, six of whom will be chosen from the parent community, two of whom will be chosen from the faculty, and one from the community at large. The director and Chief Financial Officer serve as non-voting members. 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.

There were nine voting members of the PCCS Board for the 2011-2012 school year. Specific information for each Board member can be found in Table 14 below. Overall, Board members had an average attendance rate of 87%.

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

Table 14: PCCS Board Members

Name	Board Position	Represents	Contact Information	Attendance
Randy Clay	Member	Parent	rbclay@gmail.com	91%
Roz Eaton-Neeb	Secretary	Parent	eatonnee@stolaf.edu	91%
Trish Ferrett	Member	Parent	TFerrett@carleton.edu	91%
Bonnie Jean Flom	Board Vice Chair	Community	bjflom@charter.net	73%
Paul Hager	Treasurer	Parent	phager@carleton.edu	73%
Dan Kelley	Board Chair	Parent	tgx012@yahoo.com	100%
Laura Medwetz	Member	Faculty	lmedwetz@prairiecreek.org	82%
Cathy Oehmke	Member	Faculty	coehmke@prairiecreek.org	100%
Heidi Welsch	Member	Parent	heidi.welsch@gmail.com	82%
Keith Johnson	Ex-officio Member	CFO	keith_johnson@hotmail.com	
Simon Tyler	Ex-officio Member	Director	styler@prairiecreek.org	

Board Training Record

Board Member	Governance	Financial	Employment
Randy Clay	8/16/11	8/9/11	8/24/11
Roz Eaton-Neeb	8/16/11	8/9/11	8/24/11
Trish Ferrett	1/8/11	8/9/11	1/8/11
Bonnie Jean Flom	1/8/11	8/9/11	12/17/10
Paul Hager	8/16/11	5/21/10	12/17/10
Dan Kelley	11/19/11	3/10/12	8/24/11
Laura Medwetz	1/8/11	8/9/11	1/8/11
Cathy Oehmke	8/16/11	8/9/11	8/24/11
Heidi Welsch	11/19/11	8/9/11	8/24/11

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 2011-2012 were similar to the previous year. The turnover rate for 2011-2012 was 14.2% among teaching staff (n=14), 25% among non-teaching staff (n=12), and 19.2% 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

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Teaching Staff	2/6	4/14	3/19	3/20	2/14
Non-teaching staff	2/13	1/6	1/5	1/7	3/12
Total	4/19 (21.1%)	5/20 (25%)	4/24 (16.6%)	4/27 (14.8%)	5/26 (19.2%)

Table 13 below shows all staff employed at PCCS for the 2011-2012 year, their position, and whether or not they will be returning for the 2012-2013 year. Five staff will not be returning for the 2012-2013 school year.

Table 13: School Staff by File Folder and Position

Name	File Folder	Position	FTE	11-12 Staff	12-13 Staff	Reason for change
Simon Tyler		Director	1.0	Y	Y	
Ona Sheets		Business Manager	1.0	Y	Y	
Colleen Braucher		Administrative Asst.	1.0	Y	Y	
Susan Kesselring	249667	Kindergarten & 1st Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Elise Erickson	453388	Kindergarten & 1st Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Jeanne Avery	435291	Kindergarten & 1st Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Margaret Lindholm		Kindergarten & 1st Grade Assistant Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Amy Haslett-Marroquin	374525	2nd & 3rd Grade	1.0	Y	Y	

Nancy Dennis	394260	2nd & 3rd Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Molly McGovern Wills	427419	2nd & 3rd Grade Assistant Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	2012-2013 Returning as 2nd & 3rd Grade Classroom Teacher
Jennifer Nelson	445009	2nd & 3rd Grade	1.0	Y	N	Personal
Amy Brown	398391	4th and 5th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Michelle Martin	406690	4th & 5th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Cathy Oehmke	421554	4th & 5th Grade	1.0	Y	Y	
Greta Kesselring		4th & 5th Grade Assistant Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Christina Hughes	998050	Spanish	0.5	Y	N	Community License Expired
Rachel Geffers	432580	Music Teacher & Classroom Assistant	0.5 0.5	Y	Y	
Laura Medwetz	369425	Special Education Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Kelsey Fitschen	450336	Special Education Teacher	1.0	Y	Y	
Chris Ellison		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	N	Retired
Naomi Hilmas		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	N	Leaving to teach abroad
Natalie Ojala		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	Y	
Sarah Sickels		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	N	Leaving to teach abroad
Nikki Teske		Special Education PARA	1.0	Y	Y	
Angie Ekern	397283	Art Teacher	.375	Y	Y	
Dorinda Grandbois		Librarian	Part-time	Y	Y	

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Prairie Creek faculty works collaboratively to determine professional development foci. Professional development at Prairie Creek is very robust. Typically two hours a week is devoted to professional development activities lead by Prairie Creek faculty and outside experts. In addition, the teaching staff participates in two days of professional development at the end of the year for reflection on the year’s work and goal setting focused on the mission and purpose of the school. The staff also participates in four days of workshops prior to the start of the school year. The faculty functions as an authentic learning community with teacher leadership utilized to develop workshops related to academic and non-academic goals.

Work in 2011-2012 primarily focused on technology, math assessment and instruction, and eco-literacy.

As can be seen in the table below, one activity (weekly professional development meetings) included all teaching 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

Description	Hours	Participants
“Aligning Math Curriculum to State Standards”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Multi Age Opportunities: Assessing current practice and designing new programs”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Math Evaluation: Reviewing and Developing Models for Evaluation”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Ecological Literacy: Exploring Current Thought”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Technology: Assessing Where We Are and Where We Want to Be”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Staff Supervision and Evaluation: Reviewing and Creating a Process for Supervision”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Work Sampling and Standards Based IEPs”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Aligning Math Curriculum to State Standards II”	2	All Teaching Staff
“Eco Literacy: Review of Research and Application to our Practice”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Math Ability Grouping: Exploring Current Research Regarding Ability Grouping”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Technology: Learning how to use iPhoto, Google Calendar and Typepad”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Mandated Reporting: Learning the What, When, Where and How”	2 hours	All Staff

“Narrative Writing Coaching Session”	1 hours	Newer Teaching Staff
“Review of Practice regarding Art, Spanish and Music”	1 hour	All Teaching Staff
“Ecoliteracy: How to Integrate Environmental Awareness into Curriculum”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Staying Inspired: How to Avoid Teacher Burnout”	1 hour	All Teaching Staff
“Ecoliteracy: Field Trip to Carleton Arboretum, using sketching to inspire scientific inquiry”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Technology Book Club: <i>Curriculum 21</i> ”	1.5 hours	All Teaching Staff
“Technology Book Club: <i>A New Culture of Learning</i> ”	1 hour	All Teaching Staff
“Technology Workshop: Exploring new Programs and Resources”	2 hours	All Teaching Staff
Responsive Classroom 1	5 Days	Elise Erickson
Responsive Classroom 2	5 Days	Amy Haslett-Marroquin
“Teaching Strategies for Emergent Readers”	1 Credit	Amy Haslett-Marroquin
Hamline CGEE Rivers Institute	3 Days	Amy Brown and Jennifer Nelson
504 Workshop	1 Day	Nancy Dennis, Simon Tyler
Cognitive Coaching 1	6 Days	Simon Tyler and Michelle Martin
CTED 777: Effective Literacy Instruction for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities	3 Credits	Laura Medwetz
CTED 558: SMART Notebook Software	3 Credits	Laura Medwetz
Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training (CPI)	8 hours	Simon Tyler, Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah, Laura Medwetz, and Natalie Ojala
iPad Training	6 hours	Laura Medwetz
Innovative Special Education Services: Back to School Inservice	6 hours	Laura Medwetz, Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah
MDE Special Education, Special Topics	6 hours	Laura Medwetz
Standards Based IEP	2 Days	Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah
Special Education Financial Training	3 hours	Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah
Introduction to Educational Research	3 Credits	Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah
Using Educational Research	3 Credits	Kelsey Fitschen-Hemmah

DIRECTOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In addition to participating in many 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 33 credit graduate level program for a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. The director will complete the program in December of 2012.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Goals and Accountability Plan

PCCS developed two academic and two non-academic goals for the 2011-2012 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 2011-2012 Accountability Plan

Academic Goals	Indicators of Success	Measurements
<p><u>Math</u></p> <p>Tracking tools to identify students at risk of falling behind in math will be refined and interventions implemented to support math learners</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> At least 70% of PCCS students will, on average, be “proficient” by spring on the Mathematical Thinking domain.</p> <p><u>Growth:</u> PCCS students will, on average, show a significant increase in Mathematical Thinking domain scores from fall to spring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work Sampling System ● Domain: Mathematical Thinking ● Grades: all PCCS students K-5 ● Scores: Students will score “proficient” on at least 75% of domain statements.
<p><u>Science</u></p> <p>Integrate a focus on environmental science throughout the school program. Develop student knowledge and understanding of Life Science through projects, themes and journaling.</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> At least 66% of PCCS students will be on average “proficient” by the spring on the Scientific Thinking domain.</p> <p><u>Growth:</u> PCCS students will, on average, show a significant increase in average Life Science domain scores from fall to spring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work Sampling System ● Domain: Scientific Thinking ● Grades: All PCCS students K – 5 ● Scores: Students will score “proficient” on at least 75% of domain statements.

Non-Academic Goals	Indicators of Success	Measurements
<p><u>Technology</u></p> <p>Review how technology is currently used to support learning at PCCS.</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> A new technology plan.</p> <p>100% of classroom teachers will participate in technology focused professional development for a minimum of 6 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completion of a technology plan ● Attendance logs of professional development activities related to technology.
<p><u>Multi-Age Community</u></p> <p>Develop new structures for children to engage in learning and social development together across grades.</p>	<p><u>Standard:</u> At least three new initiatives will be designed, implemented and evaluated to support multi-age connections between students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys of staff and students administered in May

Summary of Academic Performance

- **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).

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

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

- PCCS students showed large percentage gains from fall-to-spring on WSS in the mathematical thinking domain (45.48%).
- PCCS had two goals relating to progress on the WSS, one for Mathematical Thinking and one for Life Science:
 - Students fell slightly short of the goal for the Mathematical Thinking domain with 65% scoring as “Proficient” in the spring of 2012. The standard used by the school to measure goal achievement was raised significantly in 2012 from students who scored “In Process” *and* “Proficient” to only those students who scored “Proficient.” The staff looks forward to continued work on this goal in the coming year.

- Students met the goal for proficiency in the life science functional component of the scientific thinking domain, with 89% of students scoring proficient by spring 2012.
- On the MCA-II Reading, 82% of PCCS students met or exceeded proficiency; the proficiency rate exceeded statewide levels. On the MCA – III Mathematics, 49.4% of PCCS students met or exceeded proficiency, which was below statewide proportions. On the MCA – III Science test, 5th graders at PCCS had a proficiency rating of 86.7%, which was higher than the statewide proficiency rate (57.7%).

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 curricular areas at different time periods (fall, winter, and spring) in order to inform teaching staff. Curricular 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 2011-2012: mathematical thinking and the life science component of the scientific thinking domain. 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). The staff uses the electronic version of the Work Sampling System.

PCCS students were observed by staff in fall 2011 and again in spring 2012. Table 3 below shows the proportions of students scoring as “In Process” or “Proficient” in the spring of 2012. On the mathematical thinking domain, 65% of students scored as Proficient. One of PCCS’s goals was that at least 70% of students will be “Proficient” in the spring. As can be seen in the table, PCCS came close to achieving this new, much more rigorous goal.

Table 3: Number of Students Scoring Proficient on the WSS Math Domain by Spring 2012

Math Domain - Spring 2012			
Grade	Not Yet	In Process	Proficient
K		1	29
1		0	30
2	1	24	5
3		17	11
4		13	18
5		7	23
Percent of all Students	1%	34%	65%

PCCS also measured average progress from fall 2011 to spring 2012 on the Mathematical Thinking domains.

Table 4: Percentage Growth from Fall to Spring in Math Domain

Percentage Gains Fall to Spring - Math Domain		
Grade	Mean Gain	Percent Gain
K	.92	46.94%
1	.87	41.43%
2	.91	68.94%
3	.84	57.53%
4	.68	37.5%
5	.46	20.54%
Average Gain	.78	45.48%

The second academic goal focused on life science and was measured by students who were proficient in the life science component of the scientific thinking domain. The goal was for 70% of students to score proficient in spring, 89% of students scored proficient.

Table 5: Number of Students Scoring Proficient on the WSS Life Science Functional Component by Spring 2012

Life Science Functional Component 2012			
Grade	Not Yet	In Process	Proficient
K	0	2	28
1	0	0	30
2	0	7	23
3	0	5	24
4	0	3	28
5	0	2	28
Percent of all Students	0%	11%	89%

PCCS also measured average progress from fall 2011 to spring 2012 on the life science domain.

Table 4: Percentage Growth from Fall to Spring in Life Science Domain

Percentage Gains Fall to Spring – Life Science Domain		
Grade	Mean Gain	Percent Gain
K	.93	46.50%
1	.67	28.76%
2	1.38	98.57%
3	1.23	82.00%
4	.93	50.40%
5	.70	31.39%
Average Gain	.97	56.27%

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 School district, and all schools in Minnesota. On the Reading test, PCCS students aligned with the average of Northfield schools, and exceeded the Minnesota average. On the Mathematics MCA-II/III, a smaller proportion of PCCS students met proficiency than Northfield schools and statewide proportions.

Recent years have seen multiple changes to the MCA II and III assessments. Several factors need to be considered during the comparison of standardized test score data.

- Prairie Creek Community School continues to be mindful of the fact that its small cell size will likely result in significant swings in proficiency ratings from year to year. Consequently, the school is developing growth model goals for students in fourth and fifth grades that measure proficiency ratings for continuously enrolled students.
- Given the option, Prairie Creek decided to measure the children with the MCA math assessment just once in spring 2012. The majority of districts in Minnesota assessed children three times, with the highest recorded score counting towards proficiency.
- Prairie Creek opted to conduct the math assessment using the paper method in 2012. Students taking the test online could have the questions read aloud.

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
2012 (Grade 3-5)	82.00%	82.10%	76.00%	49.45%	74.40%	65.40%
2011 (Grade 3-5)	86.60%	83.70%	77.90%	54.90%	66.10%	63.70%
2010 (Grade 3-5)	81.40%	79.90%	72.30%	68.80%	76.60%	65.90%
2009 (Grade 3-5)	83.60%	84.20%	75.00%	59.00%	80.60%	74.10%
2008 (Grade 3-5)	81.40%	81.30%	74.90%	67.80%	76.20%	73.00%

Please note: because the enrolled students differ for each school (e.g. 3rd grade students in 2012 were not tested as 2nd graders in 2011), it is inappropriate and inadvisable to make a direct comparison between performance in 2011 and 2012. Also, the MCA-III was used for mathematics for the first time in 2011 also making comparisons to previous years inadvisable.

The MCA also measures progress in science education starting in grade 5. Table 7 below shows the proficiency rates in science from 2008 through 2012 at PCCS, Northfield Schools, and Minnesota Schools. As can be seen in the table, in 2012, 5th graders at PCCS had a proficiency rating of 86.7% which exceeded the rates of Northfield and the state average.

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.

Science			
Year	PCCS	Northfield Schools	Minnesota Schools
2012 (Grade 5)	86.7%	62.5%	57.7%
2011 (Grade 5)	66.7%	47.1%	46.0%
2010 (Grade 5)	32.0%	50.6%	66.7%
2009 (Grade 5)	68.5%	47.4%	45.0%
2008 (Grade 5)	63.1%	43.9%	39.1%

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

PCCS was above target in five categories that counted for AYP (attendance and reading sub-groups), and below target for three categories (math sub-groups).

Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR)

PCCS Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR) for 2011 – 12 was 24.37%. This measurement designates PCCS as a Continuous Improvement School.

	MCA Medium or High Growth				
	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 -2010	2010 - 2011	2011 -2012
PCCS					
<i>Reading</i>	83.00%	80.00%	80.00%	93.00%	69.50%
<i>Math</i>	86.00%	81.00%	76.00%	62.00%	79.60%
Northfield					
<i>Reading</i>	82.00%	82.00%	84.00%	84.00%	83.20%
<i>Math</i>	85.00%	82.00%	87.00%	72.00%	86.90%
State of Minnesota					
<i>Reading</i>	73.70%	75.00%	76.10%	81.73%	77.52%
<i>Math</i>	72.90%	72.80%	75.40%	73.16%	77.62%

This growth chart indicates Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) measurement of student growth from spring to spring according to MCA math and reading scores. PCCS academic goals for 2011-2012 will incorporate growth measurement data.

Note: The MCA-III was used for mathematics for the first time in 2011 making comparisons to previous years inadvisable.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

PCCS measures progress towards two non-academic goals. In the 2011-2012 academic year, the first goal that PCCS reviewed was how technology is used to support learning at PCCS. This goal was measured by the creation of a new technology plan and logs of teacher attendance at technology focused professional development. The second goal was to develop new structures for children to engage in learning and social development together across grades. To achieve this, the staff developed four new initiatives that were implemented and evaluated to support multi-age connections among students.

PCCS met their non-academic goals. Specifically:

- 100% of classroom teachers attended at least 6 hours of professional development focused on technology.
- Staff developed four new multi-age experiences for children including a “bird buddy” program, a multi-age lunch opportunity, a formalized leadership role for older children in multi-age play and a student council. Staff administered a child survey and discovered that students were satisfied with bird buddies and very satisfied with student council. The majority of fourth and fifth graders (83%) felt that their leadership role had an impact on the play they engaged in throughout the year. In the parent survey, 97% of parents felt that their child had many opportunities for multi-age connections.
- An observational survey of students at recess indicated that 87% of students observed over three days were engaged in multi-age play. There is no baseline data to indicate if this is an increase over previous years, however.

Technology at Prairie Creek

In 2011-2012, PCCS had the non-academic goal of reviewing how technology was being used to support learning at Prairie Creek. This goal was measured through the creation of a technology plan and logs of teaching staff’s attendance at professional development activities related to technology. A technology plan was written and 100% of teaching staff attended at least six hours of professional development activities that related to technology, thus meeting both elements of the goal.

Table 8 - Technology Professional Development at Prairie Creek Community School 2011-2012

Technology Focused Professional Development	Number of hours
Technology: Assessing where we are and where we want to be (including a literature review)	2
Technology: Learning how to use iPhoto, Google Calendar, and Typepad	2

Technology Book Club: Discussion of the book <u>Curriculum 21</u>	1.5
Technology Workshop: Exploring new programs and tools for use in the classroom	2
Technology Book Club: Discussion of the book <u>A New Culture of Learning</u>	1

The Multi-Age Community at Prairie Creek

In 2011-2012, Prairie Creek wished to develop new structures for children to engage in learning and social development together across grades. Through a non-academic goal, staff committed to creating three such initiatives and conducting surveys to determine their effectiveness. More than three programs were developed including: the year-long “bird buddy” program creating K-5 community groups, a multi-age lunch opportunity, a formalized leadership role for older children in multi-age play and a student council.

K-5 students were surveyed to determine their feelings about the initiatives. Student council and Bird Buddies were seen in a positive or neutral way by 88% and 83% of the students respectively. The multi-age lunch response indicated a need to re-design and re-evaluate the experience since 44% of the students responded negatively to the experience. In addition, when the fourth and fifth graders were asked about their leadership roles in the first six weeks of school, 83% indicated that leadership roles had an impact on their multi-age interactions throughout the year.

Table 9: Responses of Students K-5 about multi-age initiatives

Activity Student Response	“Bird Buddies”			Multi-Age Lunch			Student Council	
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Negative
	41%	52%	7%	27%	30%	44%	88%	12%

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 (8 questions); (b) Curriculum and Learning (8 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 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 124 total families at PCCS, 98 completed the survey for a response rate of 79%.

The results of the survey were very positive.

- There was an overall positive response in all four domains: Faculty and Staff (99%), Community and Climate (98%), Curriculum and Learning (93%), and Governance and Administration (95%).
- 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 (3.69), Community and Climate (3.44), Curriculum and Learning (3.44), and Governance and Administration (3.51). Averages were very similar to previous survey administrations.
- Parents overwhelmingly agreed that PCCS effectively implements a progressive education approach with students.
- Parents were asked if they have more than one child enrolled at Prairie Creek. The majority of parents (59.8%) 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 (76.5%) 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 (84.7%).
- The largest proportions of parents indicated they volunteered at PCCS between 1-5 hours (45.4%), less than an hour (27.8%), or 6-10 hours (16.5%) per month and the most commonly reported ways they volunteered included: in the classroom, serving lunch, assisting with events, and assisting/chaperoning field trips. An opportunity for Prairie Creek is to reach out to parents with alternative volunteer activities.
- Nearly all parents (98.9%) indicated they attend parent events at PCCS and the most commonly reported events attended were concerts, classroom events, May Day, and curriculum night.

Table 10 displays the proportion of parents averaging positive responses across the four domains. Nearly all parents (99%) averaged positive responses when asked their opinions about faculty and staff, while the large majority averaged positive responses regarding community and climate (98%), curriculum and learning (93%) and governance and administration (95%).

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%
Community and Climate	98%
Curriculum and Learning	93%
Governance and Administration	95%

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

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

Domain	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Faculty and Staff	3.73	3.68	3.72	3.70	3.69
Community and Climate	3.70	3.63	3.55	3.62	3.67
Curriculum and Learning	3.63	3.55	3.45	3.51	3.44
Governance and Administration	3.48	3.38	3.38	3.38	3.52

Average Rating

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

- *“My child is growing in his/her ability to solve conflicts with others.” (100%)*
- *“I am provided with opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.” (100%)*
- *“I am satisfied with the arts experiences my child has at PCCS (music, art, drama...).” (100%)*
- *“The School encourages my child to pursue areas of personal interest in daily learning.” (100%)*
- *“My child’s teacher creates a culture of learning in the classroom.” (100%)*
- *“My child is known by her/his teacher.” (100%)*
- *“The office staff are welcoming and helpful.” (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.” (28.4% weren’t satisfied) (32.2% in 2010-2011)*
- *“I am satisfied with my child’s progress in becoming a competent and confident mathematician.” (12.6% weren’t satisfied) (14.5% in 2010-2011)*
- *“I feel informed about the work of the Board.” (18% didn’t feel informed)(23.6% in 2010-2011)*

Last year’s percentages of negative responses are also included above to show the growth in all three of these opportunity areas. Please 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.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION

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

- Administrative Transition
 - The board successfully oversaw a transition from a director of over 15 years, Caroline Jones, to a new director, Simon Tyler.
- Policy Review
 - A committee consisting of staff, board members and parents was established to review and revise essential school policies. The school contracted with Booth & Lavorato LLC to oversee this work.
- Literacy Plan
 - Following the requirement of a state statute, PCCS developed a Literacy Plan documenting instruction and assessment in literacy across the K – 3 grades. This was a staff collaborative exercise that prompted a thorough review of literacy practices and assessment implementation.
- Website and Electronic Communication
 - In the spring of 2012, a new school website was launched. This improved communication tool will provide access to information about all aspects of our program to parents and community members.
- Green School Initiatives
 - The school contracted with Done Right Foods to provide a healthy lunch program for students.
 - A butterfly garden was created and rain-barrels installed.
- Arts Initiatives
 - Successful community events were held to celebrate Prairie Creek’s arts program. In the spring, a “True Colors” All School Art Evening was held to give families an insight into the process of teaching visual arts at the school. In May, all the children performed in the school music concert.
 - Children in the K – 3 grades participated in a dance residency with the Flying Foot Forum dance company.
- History Project
 - Supported by a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society, a project was undertaken to organize and archive school historical documents from the past thirty years.
- Technology

- The technology committee revised and updated the school plan. New laptops were purchased for staff. Smartboards were installed in two special education resource rooms and in the school Spanish classroom / meeting area. Staff has also committed to trial the use of iPads in each team.
- The school library has been updated with the installation of the Alexandria system.
- Cognitive Coaching
 - Director Simon Tyler and teacher Michelle Martin participated in the Cognitive Coaching training program. It is anticipated that this will be incorporated into staff supervision and peer coaching practices in 2012-2013.
- Multi-age
 - The school continues to be mindful of its mission to create a multi-age environment. A system of “bird buddies” ensures that children connect with each other for work and play across the three developmental age bands in the school.

FUTURE PLANS

- Outdoor Classroom
 - The school continues to be innovative in taking the student learning opportunities beyond the classroom walls. Fifth grade students, for example, continue to spend a week each winter at the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center.
 - Staff and board designed an “outdoor classroom” pavilion space to support environmental education on our school grounds. Prairie Creek’s landlords are financially supporting this project. The outdoor classroom will be constructed in the fall of 2012.
- Math
 - Prairie Creek will implement the following initiatives to support math growth in the coming year:
 - The development of a school-wide math plan that revises, articulates and maps the school’s math curriculum from team to team
 - The introduction of new math resources (primarily Everyday Math) to support instruction at each grade level
 - The establishment of math goals that align to a growth measurement model
 - The revision of the school’s Title 1 plan to focus on student support in the early grades
- Diversity and Cultural Awareness
 - Prairie Creek will focus on a study of diversity and cultural awareness. We are committed to our mission goal to “make the world a better place.”
 - An Education Resource Committee will be formed to include parents and community members in this action research project.
 - Professional Development will focus on raising staff understanding of diversity issues and providing opportunity for an inventory of our building and professional biases.
- Curriculum Mapping
 - Prairie Creek stays true to its mission by providing students with opportunities to learn through interdisciplinary themes. For both accountability and planning purposes, the school has created a template by which to track themes and projects with alignment to standards. This new mapping system will be implemented and reviewed in 2012-2013.
- Health and Wellness
 - PCCS is committed to the health and wellness of the whole community. Non-academic goals this year will focus on a review of wellness policies and practices. Incorporated into this work will be professional development on nutrition, mental health, physical education and anti-bullying policies and practice.
- Foreign Language Program

- PCCS has hired a new Spanish teacher to lead the program. This year will be an opportunity to review our Spanish curriculum and provide education to parents on the goals of our program.
- The Arts
 - PCCS continues to embrace arts education. Under the leadership of the visual arts and music teachers, the school will explore new ways to share the process of arts education with families.
- 30th Year Anniversary
 - 2013-2014 will be Prairie Creek's 30th anniversary. This year, a steering committee of board members, staff, parents and community members will work on preparing community events and happenings to celebrate this landmark.

SCHOOL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

As a charter school, we are responsible for the education of children and for having a clear knowledge of business and fiscal responsibilities. Three years ago we hired Keith Johnson as our accountant/CFO. Ona Sheets manages HR, payroll and the business office. Keith Johnson attends all monthly Finance Committee and Board meetings, drafting detailed monthly financial statements including year-to-date budget versus actual statement, disbursement listing, cash flow projection, and a summary of fiscal highlights since the last Board meeting. The Prairie Creek Board and Finance Committee carefully review these documents each month.

Prairie Creek has slowly built a fund balance reserve, finishing the 2011-2012 school year with a fund balance of \$506,853.93. This figure is 33.6% of our operating budget, which has allowed us to avoid the issue of borrowing funds to survive the statewide 35.7% holdback for public schools.

The audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2012, show combined revenue totaling \$1,761,620.90 and combined expenses in the amount of \$1,671,638.80, resulting in a Net Income of \$89,982.10.

Larson Allen, an independent auditor, has conducted PCCS's financial analysis. PCCS will submit audited financial statements to Northfield Public Schools and the Minnesota Department of Education on or before December 31, 2012.

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 6/30/2011

Income

Direct Public Support	\$32,950
Government Grants	\$1,514,546
Other Revenue	\$183,061
Total Revenue	\$1,730,557

Expenses

Amount Spent for Program or Charitable Purposes	\$1,382,448
Management/General Expense	\$229,686
Fundraising Expense	\$0
Total Expenses	\$1,612,134

Excess/Deficit	\$118,423
Total Assets	\$1,065,612
Total Liabilities	\$108,953
End of Year Fund Bal/Net Worth	\$956,659

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