

PRAIRIE CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

*2023 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Student Achievement &
World's Best Workforce Report*



Minnesota Charter School District #4090

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1. School Information

This report provides the staff and families of PCCS 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 the 2022 - 2023 school year.

PCCS 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.

Mission Statement

Prairie Creek is a community school

Families, teachers, staff, and students collaborate to create a joyful and challenging climate for learning. We work to build an inclusive environment to which all belong. We embrace the experiences, identities, and perspectives that we all bring.

Prairie Creek is a child-centered school

Children discover their power in an experiential learning environment. We honor the whole child and attend to the well-being of each individual - socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. We strive to know children deeply and assure them of their value.

Prairie Creek is a progressive education school

We are committed to inquiry, innovation, and reflective practice. We support children in developing the skills and habits of mind that cultivate a lifelong love of learning. We share our philosophy and practice with others and learn from them.

Prairie Creek works to make the world a better place

We engage in democratic decision-making and problem-solving where children are empowered to speak their voice and effect change in pursuit of a just and compassionate world. We challenge and prepare one another to understand and actively resist racism and other societal injustices. We nurture a close connection with nature and promote environmental stewardship.

Authorizer

Northfield Public Schools
Matt Hillmann, EdD.
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), 2011 (11/12 to 15/16), 2016 (16/17 to 20/21) and 2021 (21/22 to 25/26).

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 March 6, 2023, Superintendent Dr. Hillmann 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, 2022 and school ended on June 8, 2023. PCCS was open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:15 am to 2:30 pm and Wednesdays 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. There are twenty children in each classroom.

Ratio of Licensed Teachers to Students for FY22 was 14.45 (data from Minnesota Report Card)

2. Student Enrollment

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Enrollment (K-5)	179	179	180	178	177
Average Daily Membership	178.52	179	180	178.80	179.06

Key Demographic Trends (Data from Minnesota Report Card)

PCCS Students	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Enrollment (K-5)	179	179	180	178	177

American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.0%	0%	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0)%
Asian	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)	4 (2.2%)	5 (2.8%)	5 (2.8%)
Black/African American	5 (2.8%)	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)	4 (2.2%)	1 (0.6%)
White	154 (86.0%)	155 (86.6%)	150 (83.3%)	145 (81.5%)	147 (83.15)
Hispanic	4 (2.2%)	7 (3.9%)	8 (4.4%)	10 (5.6%)	13 (7.3%)
Native American / Pac. Islander	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)
Two or More Races	13 (7.3%)	11 (6.1%)	15 (8.3%)	14 (7.9%)	11 (6.2%)
Students of Color	25 (14.0%)	24 (13.4%)	30 (16.7%)	33 (18.5%)	30 (16.9%)
Free and Reduced Lunch	25 (14.0%)	22 (12.3%)	23 (12.8%)	7 (3.9%)	27 (15.3%)
English Language Learners	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0.0%)
Special Education Status	46 (25.7%)	42 (23.5%)	36 (20%)	34 (19.1%)	34 (19.2%)

3. Student Attrition

PCCS has consistently low numbers of student attrition each year.

Percentage of students who are continuously enrolled between October 1 of 2022 and October 1 of 2023	97.8%
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4. 2022-2023 World's Best Workforce Report / Authorizer Contractual Goals

World's Best Workforce Plan / Authorizer Contract Goals

I. All Children are Ready for School	
At least 70% of kindergarten students will be ready for first grade by reaching Fountas & Pinnell level D	Fall: n/a Winter: n/a Spring (D): 44.8% Goal not met
At least 75% of grade 1 students will be ready for second	Fall (D): 40.0%

grade by reaching Fountas & Pinnell level J	Winter (F): 46.7% Spring (J): 33.3% Goal not met
At least 75% of second grade students will be ready for third grade by reaching Fountas & Pinnell level M	Fall (I): 44.8% Winter (K): 55.2% Spring (M): 62.1% Goal not met
II. All Students are Ready for Career and College, Including third grade literacy	
At least 75% of third grade students will attain Fountas & Pinnell level P	Fall (N): 76.7% Winter (O): 86.7% Spring (P): 93.3% Goal met
<p>MCA - Math (Grades 3 - 5) PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the state combined FY22-26 proficiency rate.</p> <p>PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the resident district combined FY22-FY26 proficiency rate.</p>	<p>PCCS: 60.7% State: 46.0% Goal met</p> <p>PCCS: 60.7% NPS: 59.0% Goal met</p>
<p>MCA - Reading (Grades 3 - 5) PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the state combined FY22-26 proficiency rate.</p> <p>PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the resident district combined FY22-FY26 proficiency rate.</p>	<p>PCCS: 73.0% State: 50.5% Goal met</p> <p>PCCS: 73.0% NPS: 61.6% Goal met</p>
III. All Racial and Economic Achievement Gaps between Students are Closed	
<p>MCA Math - FRP (Grades 3 - 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the state combined FY22-26 proficiency rate PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the resident district combined FY22-26 proficiency rate 	<p>PCCS: 38.5% State: 27.3% Goal met</p> <p>PCCS: 38.5% NPS: 37.4% Goal met</p>
<p>MCA Reading - FRP (Grades 3 - 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the state combined FY22-26 proficiency rate PCCS combined FY22 - FY26 proficiency rate exceeds the resident district combined FY22-26 proficiency rate 	<p>PCCS: 61.5% State: 33.9% Goal met</p> <p>PCCS: 61.5% NPS: 40.9% Goal met</p>
IV. All Students are Ready for Career and College (as Measured by Growth)	

<p>Math (Grades 2 - 5). FASTBRIDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall percentage of students identified by Fastbridge in the "some risk" or "high risk" categories will decrease by more than 5% points from fall to spring. • The overall percent of students identified by FastBridge as at the "grade level benchmark" (low risk - college pathway) will improve by at least five percentage points between fall and spring. 	<p>Fall: 25% Spring: 30% Goal not met</p> <p>Fall: 75% Spring: 70% Goal not met</p>
<p>Reading (Grades 2 - 5). FASTBRIDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall percentage of students identified by Fastbridge in the "some risk" or "high risk" categories will decrease by more than 5% points from fall to spring. • The overall percent of students identified by FastBridge as at the "grade level benchmark" (low risk - college pathway) will improve by at least five percentage points between fall and spring. 	<p>Fall: 32% Spring: 26% Goal met</p> <p>Fall: 68% Spring: 74% Goal met</p>

WBWF Narrative:

Provide student access to effective teachers who reflect the diversity of enrolled students. PCCS is committed to equitable access to high quality teachers for all children. This begins with placement consideration for incoming kindergarteners. We are a small public charter school that typically enrolls 30 kindergarteners each year with students admitted by lottery. Admitted students and families attend an orientation session in the spring. This is an opportunity for the experienced team of K/1 teachers to assess student needs. Placement is also informed by a review of surveys completed by parents and pre-schools.

Students of color, low income families and students with disabilities all have access to experienced and effective/exemplary rated teachers. An experienced Special Education teacher team closely collaborates in the intake process, ensuring equitable access for students with disabilities. The administrator and the rest of the faculty participate in the placement process later in the spring and review guidance and data input of this K/1 team. All teachers beyond the three-year induction phase are either in the "effective" or "exemplary" rating. All teachers are appropriately licensed for their field.

New faculty members are mentored and coached in alignment with the school's commitment to educating for equity and progressive education practices. In FY23 PCCS piloted a coaching model informed by training in the Art of Coaching and Coaching for Equity through the Bright Morning organization. Six teacher leaders all completed training in the summer of 2022. This training informs the annual peer coaching model implemented with the support of Q Comp funds.

16.9% of PCCS students in 2022-2023 were students of color. Groups that are not represented by licensed staff are: American Indian/ Alaska Native, Black/African American and Hispanic. Openings for teacher positions are infrequent, PCCS is committed to developing outreach to more diverse teacher applicants in all staffing positions. To support this commitment, PCCS supports two resident teachers in collaboration with the St. Thomas charter school resident teacher initiative. The school also forges connections with a broader network of potential hires beyond Minnesota. For example, PCCS builds strong connections at workshops and conferences with local and national organizations. These partners, such as the Progressive Education Network have strong equity missions. In the fall of 2022, a team of teachers attended the Progressive Education Network national conference and gave a presentation on the school's innovative All School Book Club program. This positions our school to be more prepared to systematically reach out to a more diverse population of potential educators.

5. Innovative Practices & Implementation

PCCS's progressive philosophy aligns closely with current research and best practices for developing 21st century skills. The school is a multi-age, active learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a passion for learning. The school places a strong emphasis on the value of outdoor learning, play, the arts and the development of social and emotional intelligence. PCCS is committed to strategic action work centered on educating for equity. This work is reflected in the strategic action goals.

The academic program is centered on a philosophy, rooted in the teachings of John Dewey and other progressive educators, that holds that children will construct an understanding of the world from genuine experiences. Consequently, children engage in thematic study and individual projects throughout the school year. Teachers tailor this study to the children's developmental stages as they progress through the K - 5 program. Interdisciplinary study is aligned to standards through an annual review by teacher professional development committees. Comprehensive literacy and math plans support this work and ensure continuity and opportunity for reading, writing and numeracy to also connect in authentic ways with other subject areas. PCCS has a strong commitment to the arts. Specialists teach all children in the fields of Visual Art, Music and Spanish. A team of teaching assistants provides an additional level of child-centered support.

The general education program is supported by a team of three licensed special education teachers and paraprofessionals that serve Individual Education Program (IEP) needs. A licensed Literacy Intervention teacher works with children, funded by an ADSIS grant matched by general education funds.

PCCS is committed to a robust and authentic model of teacher evaluation. All teachers participate in a peer coaching program funded by Q Comp. Teachers are evaluated by the school Director in accordance with the school's teacher evaluation plan.

Student Evaluation

PCCS is structured around a small, multi-age classroom model to provide a child-centered learning environment. Academic and non-academic goals are established for each child at a fall parent/student/teacher conference. Beyond state accountability measures that are detailed in this report, progress is monitored through formative assessments in math and literacy and a variety of measures including projects and performance in thematic study areas. Narrative reports that detail student progress are provided to families at the winter and spring conferences.

Innovative Professional Development Model

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

PCCS attended to several key elements of the Strategic Plan in the 2022-2023 school year. Including:

Community Connections, Collaborations and Traditions

Post pandemic, there has been a strategic focus on rebuilding community connections and traditions. In the 2022-2023 school year five social events were coordinated to support opportunities for families to make connections with each other. For the first time since 2019 all students and staff participated in an all school field trip for a music performance at Orchestra Hall and a tour of the Sculpture Garden.

Connecting with education partners

In the fall of 2022 three teachers and the director attended the national Progressive Educators Network Conference. The teachers presented a workshop on PCCS' innovative All School Book Club model. Teacher Michelle Martin was honored with the MN Environmental Educator of the Year award. PCCS also collaborated with local colleges St. Olaf and Carleton. St. Olaf students

partnered in a prairie restoration research project and Carleton students volunteered and made a video of the 4/5 Village project.

The Arts

The arts’ committee focused on re-establishing the arts residency cycle with an equity emphasis. The dance residency with artist Karla Nweje integrated stories of slavery and the Great Migration. This equity lens also informed the All School Book Club selections which included *The Most Beautiful Thing* by Kao Kalia Yang and *Firebird* by Misty Copeland and Christopher Myers.

Habits of Mind

The sixteen Habits of Mind have provided a framework for supporting and evaluating children’s journey for twenty years at Prairie Creek Community School. In the weekly teacher-powered professional development, there was a focus on reviewing the Habits through a reflection on their past, present and future role in our social and academic curriculum. Teachers taught targeted lessons and Habits language was intentionally woven into the narrative evaluation reports.

6. Staffing

PCCS employs highly qualified staff throughout its program. In support of the school’s child-centered mission, teachers oversee class sizes capped at 20 students. Additionally, the school commits to providing additional classroom staffing support with four general education teaching assistants. These teaching assistants provide morning support in the three K/1 classes with scheduled support in the 2/3 grade teams. Targeted academic support is provided by a team of Special Education teachers and paraprofessionals. With the support of an ADSIS grant, PCCS implemented a reading intervention program in FY22. Specialist classes are provided by part-time Visual Arts, Music and Spanish teachers.

2022-23 Licensed Teaching Staff

Name	File #	License / Agreement	2023-24 Status	Comments
Amy Narveson	385212	K/1	R	
Amanda Solinger	477588	K/1	R	
Amy Brown	398391	K/1	R	
Molly McGovern Wills	427419	2/3	R	

Nancy Dennis	394260	2/3	R	
Amy Haslett - Marroquin	374525	2/3	R	
Michelle Martin	406690	4/5	R	
Amber Reher	513462	4/5	NR	
Ryan Kiesel	1008790	4/5	R	
Liz Nelson	339146	Visual Arts	R	
Megan Fishman	441603	Music and Orchestra	NR	Role was Leave of Absence Cover
Tricia Christopherson	338643	Spanish	R	
Cale Steinhoff	486408	Special Education	R	
Kelsey Fitschen Hemmah	450336	Special Education	R	
Michelle Bigalke	419188	Special Education	R	
Anna Lisa Rustad	386075	Reading Intervention	R	

* R = Return, NR = Not Returning

Licensed teacher percentage turnover rate:

2022-23 to 2023-24: (non-returning teachers / total teachers x 100) = 12.5%

Licensed teacher percentage turnover trend data:

	19-20 to 20-21	20-21 to 21-22	21-22 to 22-23	22-23 to 23-24
Percentage	13%	13%	13.3%	12.5%

2022 - 2023 Non-Licensed Staff

Name	Assignment	2022-23 Status	Comments
Colleen Braucher	Office Manager	R	
Keith Johnson	Financial Officer	R	

Megan O'Meara	Office Assistant	R	
Diana Drager	Office Assistant / Special Education Admin Assistant	R	
Olivia Rezac	Teaching Assistant / Media Paraprofessional/After School Care Assistant	R	
Samantha Bolton	Teaching Assistant / Special Education Paraprofessional	NR	
Mary Poole	Teaching Assistant	R	
Kelley Ekstrom	Special Education Paraprofessional / After School Care Assistant	R	
Audrey Lane-Getaz	Teaching Assistant / Special Education Paraprofessional / After School Care Assistant	R	
Susie Liedner	Special Education Paraprofessional	NR	
Hannah Bauer	Special Education Paraprofessional / After School Care Assistant	R	
Jakob Anderson	Special Education Paraprofessional / Health Paraprofessional /After School Care Supervisor	R	Returning as Resident Teacher
Jesse Wiener	Special Education Paraprofessional	R	
Connie Menssen	School Nurse	R	

7. Governance and Management

Board of Directors

The membership of the Board is composed of parents and/or guardians of currently enrolled PCCS students, staff members and community members. The School Board consists of nine members. The Director and Chief Financial Officer serve as non-voting members. Terms of the members run from July 1 to June 30.

There were nine voting members of the PCCS Board for the 2022-2023 school year. Overall, board members had an average attendance rate of 81%.

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

Board Members 2022-2023

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Term End Date	Email Address
Margit Zsolnay	Member	Parent	6/30/2024	mzsolnay-board@prairiecreek.org
Kelsey Fitschen Hemmah	Treasurer	Teacher	6/30/2023	kfitschen@prairiecreek.org
Christine Williams	Chair	Parent	6/30/2023	cwilliams-board@prairiecreek.org
Tim Goodwin	Vice-Chair	Community Member	6/30/2024	tgoodwin-board@prairiecreek.org
Lyndsey Reece	Member	Parent	6/30/2024	lreece-board@prairiecreek.org
Shelly Dickinson	Member	Community Member	6/30/2025	sdickinson-board@prairiecreek.org
Zaki Haidar	Member	Parent	6/30/2025	zhaidar-board@prairiecreek.org
Nancy Dennis	Member	Teacher	6/30/2025	ndennis@prairiecreek.org
Beth Molitor	Secretary	Parent	6/30/2023	bmolitor-board@prairiecreek.org

Board Training Record

Board Member	Governance	Financial	Employment
Margit Zsolnay	10/12/2021	6/22/2021	6/23/2021
Christine Williams	9/16/2020	11/24/2020	8/26/2020
Beth Molitor	1/13/2021	11/24/2020	1/27/2021
Lyndsey Reece	6/6/2022	9/20/2021	6/6/2022
Kelsey Fitschen Hemmah	9/15/2012	9/15/2012	9/15/2012
Zaki Haidar	12/31/2022	12/31/2022	12/31/2022

Shelly Dickinson	11/11/2020	11/24/2020	3/24/2021
Nancy Dennis	12/28/2022	6/20/2023	12/29/2022
Tim Goodwin	10/12/2021	9/20/2021	10/26/2021

Director Professional Development Plan

PCCS Executive Director, Simon Tyler, completed his twelfth year as Director in 2022-2023. Principal Licensure: File Folder # 367631

8. Finances

As a charter school we are responsible for the education of children and for having a clear knowledge of business and fiscal responsibilities. Colleen Braucher is the Office Manager/Human Resources Coordinator and Keith Johnson is the Financial Officer. The PCCS Board and Finance Committee meet on the 4th Thursday of each month and the school's financial information is carefully reviewed and discussed at each meeting.

PCCS has steadily built a strong fund balance reserve, finishing FY23 with a fund balance of \$988,243 (41.5% of annual expenditures) which has kept the school fiscally sound and well positioned to weather unforeseen events. The audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2023 show General Fund total revenue at \$2,367,620 and General Fund total expenses in the amount of \$2,385,628 resulting in a Net Loss of \$18,008.

Abdo, an independent auditor, has conducted PCCS’s financial analysis. PCCS will provide audited financial statements to Northfield Public Schools and the Minnesota Department of Education on or before December 31, 2023.

9. Future Plans

During the 2021-2022 school year PCCS staff, board and community completed a comprehensive strategic review. The resulting 2022-2026 strategic plan aligns with the current authorizer contractual cycle. The plan was developed with a commitment to aligning to the school’s mission and purpose. Key focus areas were identified for each mission pillar. Additionally, a fifth strategic dimension was added, school sustainability.

Advisory committees, faculty and board reviews action item progress three times per year bringing a flexible, collaborative and problem-solving lens to our strategic actions.

PCCS Strategic Plan Overview 2022 - 2026

Mission Statement	Values
Prairie Creek is a community school	<i>Families, teachers, staff and students collaborate to create a joyful and challenging climate for learning.</i>
	<i>We work to build an inclusive environment to which all belong.</i>
	<i>We embrace the experiences, identities and perspectives we all bring.</i>
Strategic Focus Areas	Actions 23/24
Reestablishing community connections and traditions	Community Connections Committee will establish calendar of activities/ events, including three summer activities
Reviewing and enhancing communication and outreach to parents	Integrate new Community Connections leadership role
Parent education and events	Mental health - Utilize new funding to staff additional mental health and support services
Prairie Creek is a child-centered school	<i>Children discover their power in an experiential learning environment.</i>
	<i>We honor the whole child and attend to the well-being of each individual - socially, emotionally, physically, and academically.</i>
	<i>We strive to know children deeply and assure them of their value.</i>
Strategic Focus Areas	Actions 23/24
Environment Committee - collaboration with St. Olaf	Hoop House and Prairie Project development
Study of thematic learning and literacy	Review and implementation of READ act and revised literacy plan. Professional development on literacy connections with Social Studies / Science centered themes.
The Arts	Arts Residency - Opera creation and performance with St. Olaf faculty and students.
PCCS is a progressive education school	<i>We are committed to inquiry, innovation and reflective practice.</i>
	<i>We support children in developing the skills and habits of mind that cultivate a lifelong love of learning</i>
	<i>We share our philosophy and practice with others</i>
Strategic Focus Areas	Actions 23/24
Integrating Habits of Mind across the	Embed the Habits of Mind in philosophy and practice

program	
Professional Development focus on Literacy	Implementation of READ act including review of current practices and multi-tiered supports
Multi-Age structures	Review and enhancement of "bird buddy" multi-age system. Develop and pilot "guided bird buddies" program.
Prairie Creek works to make the world a better place	<i>We engage in democratic decision-making and problem-solving where children are empowered to speak their voice and effect change in pursuit of a just and compassionate world.</i>
	<i>We challenge and prepare one another to understand and actively resist racism and other societal injustices.</i>
	<i>We nurture a close connection with nature and promote environmental stewardship.</i>
Strategic Focus Areas	Actions 23/24
Embed educating for equity in to all programmatic areas	Coaching for Equity approach embedded in peer coaching model. In professional development, review equity focus with new literacy initiatives
Forest School Connections to Literacy	Professional development committee review of literacy connections across the curriculum, including outdoor learning.
Building and Grounds - Environmental Stewardship Initiatives	Collaboration with St. Olaf Environmental Studies class. Grant writing initiative to explore installation of geothermal heating and cooling /hoophouse projects
Sustainability	<i>PCCS is a public, progressive school committed to sustainable leadership, staffing, financing and building/ grounds management.</i>
Strategic Focus Areas	Actions 23/24
Teacher development	Full Implementation of Teacher Evaluation Plan utilizing Progressive Educator rubric
Sustainable staff recruitment and retention	Participation in St. Thomas charter school program - two resident teachers / New mentoring initiative for induction teachers
Special Education / Intervention Services	Transition to new PCCS' Special Education director
Financial sustainability	Development of strategic actions for financial actions for future financial sustainability
Building / grounds management	Transition to Affiliated Building Company model
Leadership sustainability	Implement next phase of leadership succession plan with new teacher leader roles