

Improving the Definitions and Measures of Student and School Success

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Case studies of the effort in Minnesota

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INTRODUCTION

From the beginning, the effort to create new and different—non-conventional—schools has everywhere had to confront the difficulty in fitting to the definitions of traditional school and schooling, to the concepts of ‘performance’ and to the requirements for ‘accountability’ set in state law and enforced by the state agency.

The issues raised for the chartered schools have been especially serious, given that, certainly in Minnesota, this sector was created to be a kind of R&D program for public education. Efforts are under way now in this state to develop definitions of objectives and measures of success, for school and student, appropriate to the new and non-conventional—especially to the personalized — approaches to learning and teaching.

This report describes the effort taken by 11 schools two charter authorizers that have shown progress in delivering and evaluating personalized learning. They are:

- Innovative Quality Schools (Chartered School Authorizer)
- Novations Education Options (Chartered School Authorizer)
- Minnesota New Country
- EdVisions Off Campus
- Paladin Career and Technical High School
- Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy
- Venture Academy
- Avalon School
- Great River School
- High School for Recording Arts
- Open World Learning
- Harvest Best Academy
- Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists

The report frames each school’s accountability/evaluation model through a four-part “metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response” framework. To determine whether or not a school has achieved quality, it must identify a metric to evaluate, set a goal to define success within that metric, identify the performance outcome, then respond to that outcome. This framework, applied to each school, must then be used by those schools to learn about themselves and grow as learning organizations in response.

The 11 schools in this paper are the schools we identified as doing this kind of research and development in the education sector, upholding the original mandate of chartered schools as places of educational innovation and experimentation.

This paper does not focus on performance along traditional standards. Readers can find those outcomes for themselves via publicly available avenues online should they wish to do so. In your browser window, for example, ask for “Minnesota Report Card”. Also, consider the academic standards <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/120B.021> set in state law and at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/120B.35> the provisions for assessment and accountability. Both can be viewed on the Legislature’s website.

Some of the schools included here aim only for an ‘adequate’ level of student performance on the state standardized tests, in order to be able to make available more instructional time on other learning outcomes they value highly. Or to make possible a personalized learning experience. In a personalized school a student might choose to specialize in math, science, or literacy; setting goals for herself or himself; rather than aiming to score high on the state assessments. In such schools students are able to set their own goals and receive support from the school to meet those goals.

This report is a description, not an evaluation, of positive, constructive, alternative approaches to schooling and to achievement under way and evolving in Minnesota. The report paints a clear picture of how schools engaged in personalized learning across the state define and measure their work.

Except for Open World Learning the 11 schools described are chartered schools. Beyond the accountability obligation that lies on schools generally, a chartered school negotiates a contract with its authorizer and follows the specifics of that contract. This permits chartered schools if they wish to design their accountability framework for more personalized programs.

This research presented in this report will, we hope, support educators in learning about the effectiveness of their approach to schooling. Once they know that, they can learn from each other how better to deliver personalized education. Knowing about the relative success of personalized learning programs in Minnesota will also help students, parents, caregivers, and the communities that students enter, choose the best school for their needs. It will help the schools improve their ability to raise healthy young people equitably.

FINDINGS

Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and Novation Education Opportunities (NEO): Single-Purpose Authorizers of Chartered Schools in Minnesota

This report includes a summary of the work of the two most prominent chartered school authorizers to appear throughout, Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) and Novation Education Opportunities (NEO). They are included for their ability to assess and evaluate their schools work along the lines of personalized learning.

They are single-purpose authorizers, which means they exist solely as authorizers of public chartered schools and for no other purpose. This single focus allows these authorizers to specialize in their roles as authorizers and innovate on the practice of authorizing and evaluating the schools in their portfolios.

IQS

The mission of IQS is “to authorize charter schools that are innovative and successful in preparing students to achieve their full potential” (IQS, 2020, p. 3). IQS evaluates the success of its schools on an annual basis, then reviews the overall growth and progress of each school using this data every five years to aid their assessment of each school’s contract through a renewal process. As well, the schools authorized by IQS evaluate students for growth based on only their progress at the school, which allows each school to evaluate the impact of the school on student growth over time.

The IQS ScoreCard System

The IQS ScoreCard represents the system used by IQS to hold its schools to a certain standard of excellence and support them in response to the outcomes along those identified measures of success. The schools within the IQS portfolio use the ScoreCard system at the school level to guide conversations around ongoing organizational learning and improvement. The ScoreCards are also reviewed annually between the school and IQS, then revised in response to the outcomes of each school. When IQS Chartered Schools receive feedback from IQS, they use it to set priorities and action plans for the future and compile these goals in what IQS calls the School Improvement Plan, developed annually. The ScoreCard system is IQS’ version of the metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response model of evaluation established in the introduction of this report.

The ScoreCard uses a four point scale. This scale has been broken down point by point to identify clearly, for the schools in the portfolio and IQS, what a given point represents. The language of Intervention, Progressing, Target, and Exceeding aligns to each point within the four point scale as follows:

1. Intervention (0.0-1.9): “Evidence some requirements and key indicators are not being met. The school may have received multiple notices from IQS and/or governing agencies within the past 12 months regarding an issue, complaint, and/or deficiency that needs to be addressed. Corrective action planning is required as a part of the school’s School Improvement Plan. (Note: For schools in their first year of operation, it is considered to be an ‘introductory’ benchmark)”
2. Progressing (2.0-2.9): “The school is making progress toward the attainment of its target benchmark. Action plans that focus on continuing improvement will be a required component of its School Improvement Plan”
3. Target (3.0-3.9): “There is evidence that the school is meeting requirements established in the charter agreement and ScoreCard”
4. Exceeding (4.0): “There is evidence that the school exceeds the target benchmarks and is performing at a level of excellence” (IQS, 2021).

ScoreCards are used to track and support the work of each school within its portfolio across five axes of performance. They are: 1) mission and vision, 2) governance, 3) school and student performance, 4) finance and, 5) general operations. Alternative measures of evaluation that support the personalization of student learning, such as “Interest Driven Learning,” are measured and tracked in the Performance section of each school’s ScoreCard. To develop this portion of the ScoreCard, IQS hired and worked with researchers at the University of Minnesota.

The Performance section uses what’s called the Next Generation Assessment Portfolio System (NGAPS) to evaluate school performance in an inclusive way. The NGAPS and Alternative Measures for student success found in each school’s Performance section of the school ScoreCard may include measures of student performance in social-emotional learning, the 21st Century Skills of collaboration, communication, creative thinking, critical thinking, college/career readiness, and more.

IQS’ Student Portfolios for School Performance

To develop its system of evaluation to assess alternative measures of student and school success, IQS worked with one of its schools, the Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, to develop a student portfolio system. The student portfolio system is IQS’ expanded definition of student success in working form. Their *Report of Year Two Progress of the Next Generation Assessment Portfolio System (NGAPS)* describes it as meant to:

Demonstrate student learning and growth through a variety of assessments that represent various aspects of student learning and achievement. The portfolio provides ongoing feedback and evidence of progress in the process of learning as well as the product. A portfolio allows for the inclusion of individualized artifacts that honor differences in student learning styles (IQS, 2020, p. 77).

Portfolios are housed online for ease of access. Each portfolio displays outcomes from formative and summative assessment measures, each aligned with educational standards and

personalized learning objectives for the student. Students are also able to access and actively propagate their portfolios over time, making the portfolios a tool in students' learning process as they start to manage representations of their own progress and performance. Portfolios also become a source for teacher reflection and response to student performance, thus facilitating the response step of the metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response framework at the student level. Teachers discuss student portfolios with guardians and parents of students, using it as an alternative representation of student progress when compared to state standardized-test performance.

Examples of alternative, summative student performance metrics include the Life Skills Rubric designed to measure things such as organization and communication skills, the HOPE Survey designed to measure change in student feelings of hope over the course of a year, daily reflections on college and career readiness, credit completion, and results from community satisfaction surveys.

NOVATIONS (NEO)

NEO works with schools in its portfolio to establish baseline metrics of accountability that fall along the lines of traditional metrics of success as required by the State of Minnesota. It allows each school to tailor these metrics for the specific school's context, mission and education program.

Each school uses an excel spreadsheet, pre-populated with required metrics, and is then allowed to add metrics to this tracker as long as those metrics are established with the support of NEO's Implementation Guide. For example, Avalon has added "Mobility" to its framework, which tracks the number of students moving in and out of the school each year, a metric widely seen to represent a school's ability to provide a stable, welcoming and supportive environment to its students.

The Implementation Guide helps ensure the reliability of added measures, which, together with the traditional standards, comprise each school's Performance Framework. NEO schools must achieve 50% on their Performance Framework to be considered "passing." NEO responds to each school's Performance Framework on an annual basis with support for each school in areas of need according to outcomes documented in the Framework.



The two authorizers studied, created under the innovative model enacted by the Minnesota Legislature in 2009, both also have an innovative arrangement for management.

NEO employs an executive director, but for most oversight of its schools contracts with a group of Advisors. IQS has no directly-employed staff; its board contracts with a two-person management team and to oversee and support the schools has agreements with a 'cadre' of professionals experienced in all dimensions of school organization and operation.

This arrangement gives NEO and IQS access to a greater breadth of expertise than possible through the employment of full-time staff, at the same time reducing personnel costs.

Schools in the IQS Portfolio

The following schools are members of the IQS portfolio and currently implement the IQS School ScoreCard system of evaluation: Minnesota New Country School, EdVisions Off-Campus, Paladin Career and Technical High School, Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, and Venture Academy.

Minnesota New Country: Chartered School at Henderson

Minnesota New Country (MNCS) is a teacher-powered school that opened in 1994. It is one of the first chartered schools in the country and one of the first teacher-led schools. The school has no employees: The board contracts with a workers' cooperative, EdVisions, formed by the teachers, who set up the school to do project-based learning.

The school has from the start had a clearly stated vision and mission; wanting students to reach their full potential as purposeful thinkers and setting their own personal goals. MNCS, now authorized by IQS (earlier, by the local district), tracks many of the same metrics as EdVisions Off-Campus, but is a place-based, on-campus program.

SCHOOL CLIMATE		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Small learning environment	Student to teacher ratio, with emphasis on relationships: 1:11 teacher to student ratio (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7)	MNCS has a 1:11 student:teacher ratio in grades K-12. The school maintains this number by closely monitoring its capacity compared to its enrollment and budgets for its capacity each year. The school maintained an upper school enrollment of 133 students in 2017-18 with a waiting list and a lower school enrollment of 87 with a waiting list. The school sets an annual enrollment cap and does not allow enrollment beyond that number. It determines the likelihood of maximum enrollment and the need for a waiting list based on interest throughout the previous year in school tours and calls received on behalf of interested students and families. Advisory groups consist of 15-19 students each.
Student attrition	New Country tracks the reasons for students departing from the school community.	In 2017-18, the school lost a total of 37 students, 17 of whom were graduating seniors. Other reasons for student attrition included a students family moving out of the area, court-related reasons, a student choosing to pursue their GED instead of a high school diploma, and "other."

SCHOOL CLIMATE		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Staff retention rate	The school aims to retain almost all or all of its staff on an annual basis.	97% of staff and 100% of licensed staff
School climate surveys	Although New Country uses the district-provided climate surveys for students and parents, they review these to better understand the areas of the New Country program most appreciated by students and parents in order to strengthen those.	In 2017-18 the school found students and parents most appreciated the following about the school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on/Project-based learning • Acceptance of Different Learning Styles • Small Size • Student-centered/Individual Attention • Quality of MNCS Staff (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 12)
HOPE Survey	New Country seeks to foster growth in hope for its students over the course of the student experience at the school. The school says results help inform staff in setting goals (personal, professional and academic) for the coming year. New Country does not identify a benchmark for the use of this survey, except to note that results typically show growth over time.	New Country analyzes HOPE scores for each year as well as over the course of each student's total lifespan at the school. Without providing the minutiae of this data, the school has found that the longer a student remains at the school the more they grow in hope over the years. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 13)

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Project-based learning	"progress toward completing academic standards for graduation, through capstone and other projects, is tracked through Project Foundry and shared with students and parents at least 3 times each year" (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 10)	On the MNCS ScoreCard, it is stated under their project-based learning goal that "Goal TBD - In process with MNCS PBL Team - this may come in 2021-2022" (Minnesota New Country, 2021).
Access to staff	Secondary students have access to any staff member that will be of assistance and support as they work on reading, math or project work throughout the day. Secondary students request an advisor each year, based on best fit and student need, for the following year with parent and staff evaluation and approval of selection.	1:11 teacher to student ratio in grades K-12 (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7).

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Technology availability	New Country knows access to technology is crucial for students learning through a project-based framework and seeks to provide 1:1 tech to its students.	In 2017-18 the school provided technology at a 1:1 ratio to every one of its students

FINANCIAL METRICS		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Finances	New Country provides a detailed breakdown of its finances each year that includes a narrative regarding growth in certain revenue streams and increasing costs. No specific benchmarks are named for its financial metrics each year.	In addition to a detailed breakdown for each area of expense, New Country identified in its 2017-18 annual report that it experienced growth in operating grants and contributions as well as state-aid grants. At the same time special education, elementary and secondary costs increased proportionally to enrollment. The school provides specific data on each of these elements of its financial portrait.

COLLEGE-GOING METRICS		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Post-secondary plans and college matriculation:	"100% of students graduating will have completed post-secondary planning. This can include admission to college, a training program or developing a plan for the next steps needed for the graduate to enter the workforce. Each student's plan will be based on his/her skills and needs at the time of graduation" (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 16).	"100% of graduating seniors in 2017-2018 had post-secondary plans in place... Note: 53% of graduating seniors went on to two or four year colleges/universities, 24% entered training/apprenticeship programs, 18% entered the workforce, and 6% entered the military" (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 16)
Percentage of MNCS Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors had a meaningful college and career exploration experience within their grade level capstone project.	"In 2016-2017, 100% of MNCS Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors at MNCS had a meaningful college and career exploration experience within their grade level capstone project. Our goal for 2017-2018 was for that data trend to continue." (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 16).	93% (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 16)

Staff Development

New Country seems to support staff development with an eye on the student population's needs. Staff development, therefore, serves as the school's predominant response mechanism to the aforementioned metrics and benchmarks. The table below, therefore, identified metrics, benchmarks, outcomes where appropriate and responses where appropriate.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Experience, Effectiveness and In-Field Teachers	No benchmarks set.	90% (20/22) of licensed staff were fully licensed 10% (2/22) had special permissions and will be pursuing the full license in 2018-2019. 63% of the licensed staff have >10 years of teaching experience. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7)
Access to MNCS teachers for all students is built in to the academic program at MNCS	Secondary students have access to any staff member that will be of assistance and support as they work on reading, math or project work throughout the day. Secondary students request an advisor each year, based on best fit and student need, for the following year with parent and staff evaluation and approval of selection. Elementary students participate in weekly Genius Hour opportunities when students are able to explore a topic they are curious about and connect to teachers outside of their daily advisories. Elementary classrooms are multi-age allowing for students to be placed with the teacher that will best provide the student with the needed content and level of material. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7)	No outcomes identified for these benchmarks.
MNCS continues to support quality professional development opportunities for all staff	Benchmarks for staff development are set and re-set each year based on student performance. The school assesses academic performance data, HOPE survey data, and the rest of the school's performance profile then makes a determination as to what areas of professional development its staff might benefit from.	MNCS Staff Professional Development in 17-18 included: TIES (technology), Project Read, Orton Gillingham, Kurtzweil, MAAP (MN Association of Alternative Programs), RTI training, Pathways Math, Responsive Classroom, Teacher Powered Schools, EdVisions Cooperative HR training, IQS assessment review, EdVisions Hope Survey, MSBA Board Training, MACS workshops. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7)

Some other staff development metrics at Minnesota New Country include a response, as part of the “metric-benchmark-outcome-response” framework. Firstly, the “annual staff retreat” metric states its response as: MNCS reviews achievement and student engagement data at a district wide staff retreat held each spring. The data review is used to set future goals for the district, each school site and for the site-based teams that manage the school (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7).

Additionally, the “principal evaluations” metric states, as its benchmark, that MNCS is a teacher powered school where all staff serve on administration and curriculum teams and are evaluated through the Q-Comp process on both their instruction and their leadership within the school. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7). The outcome for this metric states that QComp rubrics are used for the entire staff, the outcomes of which are measured in the manner described in the “Metrics” column to the left. Lastly, the response for this metric is that staff are offered contracts and increased salaries based on effectiveness and growth measured annually during 3 classroom/advisory based observations and evaluations of professional development plans and site based team participation and effectiveness. (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7).

New Country’s site-based management strategy has been sharpened and developed over the course of the school’s more than 25 year history. It is designed to empower a dispersed model of leadership, with staff rotating through various roles over the course of their time at the school. Partially as a result of this process, and also because staff retention generally signals a well-functioning school supportive of a stable environment, New Country’s staff retention metric matters quite a bit to the long term sustainability of its model. According to the school’s annual report, “Every staff member serves on 1 or 2 administrative and 1 curriculum team, which allows for a natural indoctrination to the model. These teams bring their recommendations for the program to the larger staff for approval; ultimately report to the school board” (Minnesota New Country, 2018, p. 7) Its site-based management teams include:

Administrative/Site-Based Teams

- Personnel: Human Resources
- Finance: Budgets/Spending/Revenue
- Outreach: Marketing/PR
- Technology: Network/Computer/etc.
- Transportation: Busing and vehicle maintenance
- Building: Maintenance/Cleaning/Lease
- Q-Comp: Staff Evaluation and Professional Development
- Data and Assessment: Testing and analysis

Academic/Curriculum/PDP Teams

- Math: Math Curriculum Review and Support
- Reading: Language Arts Curriculum Review and Support

- Experiential Learning/Orientation/Middle School: Develop and Implement best method for Transitioning students into MNCS/Middle School
- Supporting Students Together Team: Collaborate and inform staff on interventions and meeting needs of struggling students
- Project Based Learning: PBL Research and Training

A nonprofit corporation, EdVisions, Inc., was organized in 2000 to receive and administer the initial grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to spread this model of teacher-led and project-based school. MNCS in some years has had 400 or more visitors; most from this country, some from other nations; its teachers have been in England, The Netherlands, Japan, Australia and China.

EdVisions Off-Campus: Online Chartered School

EdVisions Off-Campus is an online chartered school founded in 2004 by EdVisions, Inc. It serves just over 100 students each year. As a result of its virtual nature, the school emphasizes “getting out into the world” and incorporates this emphasis in its evaluation model.

In addition to traditional metrics of evaluation, the school measures its students using the IQS Life Skills Rubric and NGAPS Performance Framework. The school is careful to reference its achievements and measurements in relation to other free, public, online chartered schools. EdVisions Off-Campus is also a teacher-led school, a characteristic reflected in its evaluation process through such metrics as staff retention. In addition to Metrics, Benchmarks and Outcomes, EOC offers its strategy toward each of the following metrics in its Annual Report.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
HOPE Survey + Experiential Education	EOC students will outperform the national HOPE average of 50.1. “(1) Students participating in the experiential education trip will respond with an average overall Hope score of 53.00 or above. (2) Students participating in the experiential education trip will respond with an average hope of 3.75 or above in the Peer/Personal Belongingness subcategory. (3) Students participating in the experiential education trip will respond with an average hope of 7.0 or above in the emotional engagement subcategory.” (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)	EOC students demonstrated an average HOPE score of 52.09 and demonstrated +0.09 growth from Spring to Spring. “47 students participated in the Experiential Ed trips, the had an average score of 53.85 on over all Hope, an average score of 3.92 regarding peer to peer belongingness and an average score of 6.33 on emotional engagement.” (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5) EOC also uniquely tracks the HOPE scores of its returning students to determine its impact on student HOPE over longer periods than one year.
Strategy: Provide seminars for participation • Student involvement • Multiple Trips: Dog Sledding and Boston (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)		

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Growth in Life Skills Rubric	<p>“(1) 80% of students that have been tracked for 1 year on the life skills rubric will gain at least 2 skills. (2) 60% of students that have been tracked for 2 years will have gained at least 1 new life skill.</p> <p>Strategies: Gather example rubrics from special education, general education and senior team; Identify resources for training; Each member of the team will test out a rubric; One team member will attend course on “Alternative Assessment” (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)</p>	88.5% of students that were tracked for one year on the life skills rubric gained at least 2 skills (i.e., growth); 96% of students that were tracked for one year on the life skills rubric gained at least 1 skills; The average number of skills gained was 6.6 in year one and 3.6 in year two. (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)
<p>Strategy: Pilot, 8-12 week social emotional learning support group for students • Skype wellness chat for staff to report on their wellness activities • Offer hiking excursions to students • Apply 1-3 ideas learned from wellness conference • Seminar on psychology and relationships • Continue staff wellness Thursdays (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)</p>		
Wellness	<p>(1) Develop and record a Pre and Post measure for students in social emotional group</p> <p>(2) 70% staff will identify 2- 3 available strategies to improve work and wellness satisfaction. (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)</p>	Student who attended the SEL group offered feedback, 70% staff identify 2- 3 strategies to improve work and wellness satisfaction. (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)
<p>Strategy: Gather example rubrics from special education, general education and senior team • Identify resources for training • Each member of the team will test out a rubric • One team member will attend course on “Alternative Assessment” (EdVisions, 2018, p. 5)</p>		

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Small learning environment	EOC aims to maintain its student:teacher ratio of 8:1 and student:staff ratio of 16:1 from year to year.	According to EOC’s annual reports, the school has succeeded in this effort, but identifies it as a consistent challenge.
Student retention rate	EOC doesn’t set a benchmark here, but acknowledges retention as challenging for online schools generally.	<p>EOC has been able to achieve retention rates in the range of the 80th percentile.</p> <p>The school identified establishing an advisory model for daily check-ins and to support the development of relationships throughout the school. Relationships, EOC notes, are the most important component of their retention strategy. Once established, EOC’s advisory system met every day of the week for one hour with a focus on counseling and relationship-building.</p>

SCHOOL CLIMATE		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Parent and student satisfaction surveys	EOC establishes targets (benchmarks) for parent and student satisfaction in response to areas of remediation. For example, in 2018 the school set a goal of 70% of staff identifying 2-3 strategies to improve “wellness satisfaction,” which implies the school measures its ability to support student wellness by way of its satisfaction survey responses.	EOC documents outcomes of these satisfaction surveys thoroughly, providing question-by-question measurements for everything from the school’s support with student projects to the school’s support of student mental health. These responses are broken down at each level of the institution, from teacher to school leader to authorizer, to determine how each should respond to the data in their work moving forward.
Staff retention rate	To the best of our knowledge, EOC does not identify a benchmark for staff retention. Ideally, schools maintain the majority of their staff in order to then maintain student-staff relationships over time and support stability for students. But, the assumption that a school should never change any of its staff suggests the school has the best staff it possibly can, which is unlikely to be true. So, although EOC retained 100% of its staff in 2018 as seen to the right, its unclear to what extent EOC reads that as positive and/or worthy of some sort of response.	In 2018, EOC retained 100% of its staff.

EOC is among the schools described in this report to tie the effectiveness of its project-based learning approach to education to a measure on their parent satisfaction survey. In the 2017-18 school year, roughly 60% of parents agreed that project-based learning at EOC was an effective way for their students to learn (EdVisions, 2018, p. 6). As well, the school notes, but does not go further in explaining the importance of the fact that its staff, collectively, has over 100 years of experience with project-based learning and charter schools. While this experience matters, to a degree, the school does not tie this measurement to others regarding the effectiveness of its online, project-based learning model.

Teachers at EOC are members of the Edvisions Cooperative, formed ten years earlier by teachers setting up Minnesota New Country School. EOC identifies its teacher-powered governance model as important to the school’s ability to remain student-centered, but identifies it also as a challenge when working to remain compliant with its authorizer and the state. A teacher-powered model at EOC means rotating leadership, which means rotating through varying degrees and types of expertise. Continually to improve its teachers’ abilities to lead the school, EOC participated in a national conference for teacher-powered schools to remain abreast of best practices in the areas they identified as needing improvement.

The school uses the QComp process established by the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, designed to support, develop and evaluate educators in their professional practice. This means

staff identify a QComp Team each year that is responsible for the evaluation and improvement of staff-identified areas for development. Staff design and are beholden to rubrics of professional performance, used for improvement on such practices as “competence with instructional technology,” “school culture,” and “time management” (EdVisions, 2018, p. 17-19).



Paladin Career and Technical High School: Chartered School in Blaine

Paladin Career and Technical High School, initially established in 2003 as Liberty High Charter School, is a school for students in grades 9-12, authorized by Innovative Quality Schools (IQS), in Blaine, Minnesota. Paladin maintains a small school community to ensure that students have equal access to staff, with a student to teacher ratio of 9:1 (Paladin, 2020, p. 35). In the 2019-2020 school year Paladin had a total enrollment of 264 students (Paladin, 2020, p. 6).

Paladin places special emphasis on setting its students up for success after high school graduation, cultivating resilience, and meeting individual needs through restorative and trauma-responsive techniques. This holistic approach encompasses academic, social, and emotional growth, and recognizes the importance of elements such as food, shelter, and access to health-care. Paladin states its mission as the following: “Paladin nurtures a learning community that empowers students in their pursuit of social, emotional, and academic growth, thereby creating a foundation for a successful future” (Paladin, p. 5).

Personalization at Paladin

Paladin personalizes learning for students by fostering resiliency. Paladin aims to meet not only the academic, but also the social and emotional needs of students. Daily success meetings, support seminars, and mental health services are all included in Paladin’s restorative approach to resolve conflict, hold students accountable, and work together. Paladin believes this approach is necessary, because “if a student’s basic needs are not being met, they are going to have a difficult time focusing on their academics” (Paladin, 2020, p. 16).

Paladin uses the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study to determine how traumatic experiences that students face during childhood manifest in teenage years/adulthood to impact learning (Paladin, 2020, p. 17). Paladin students have, on average, higher ACEs scores than the national norm. The 2019-2020 annual report for Paladin indicates that 31% of Paladin students have an ACEs score of 4+, compared to just 12.5% nationally (Paladin, 2020, p. 18). Because of this, mitigating these traumas and helping students succeed is essential to Paladin’s approach. For example, Paladin staff “prioritized self-care, provided resources to meet basic needs, and facilitated safe spaces” during the Spring of 2020 when the challenges of COVID-19 and the murder of George Floyd exacerbated the underlying trauma of students (Paladin, 2020, p. 17).

To address barriers to student success, such as those indicated by the ACEs survey, Paladin has implemented the CASEL social emotional learning framework. CASEL is a framework

integrated into seminars, project-based learning, and experiential learning that focuses on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Paladin, 2020, p. 21). These competencies are also enforced by Student Success Coordinators, those managers that address student needs and lead circle processes to promote resilience amongst students (Paladin, 2020, p. 9).

To measure the success of CASEL, students and staff complete virtual forms as a way to recognize virtuous deeds. Completion of this form “allows students to become active participants, rather than passive observers, in building a supportive school community that is focused on the strengths and contributions of all its members” (Paladin, 2020, p. 21). Another element of social emotional learning at Paladin is the Court of Honor, a positive behavioral intervention and support program that places emphasis on virtues of duty, civility, and achievement to shape a positive school climate and culture. “Civility points” are granted to students by staff and other students to positively reinforce these virtues (Paladin, 2020, p. 8). Civility points, positive feedback from teachers and other students, are kept in a historical record for each student. These records can be printed and disseminated at conferences for families to have evidence of student social and emotional growth at Paladin (Paladin, 2020, p. 26).

Additionally, Paladin personalizes learning for students through a one-year graduation rate. The purpose of a one-year graduation metric is to account for the realities of Paladin’s student population such as high mobility and credit deficiency. This metric is calculated “based on credit completion in their final year of high school” (Paladin, 2020, p. 28). Students must earn 22 credits in 4 years to graduate. Therefore, students that earn 5.5 credits annually are considered “on track” for graduation (Paladin, 2020, p. 28).

The academics at Paladin include project-based learning, experiential learning, work-based learning, PSEO, and a specific emphasis on technology to prepare students for the modern-day workforce that will feature advanced technical skills and knowledge (Paladin, 2020, p. 23-29). Part of this technological focus includes a 1:1 ratio for student Chromebooks (Paladin, 2020, p. 28). Paladin’s academic model is innovative and alternative, with support for guidance offered by Student Success Coordinators, recognising that “traditional educational settings do not accommodate all students” (Paladin, 2020, p. 27).

As an IQS school, Paladin is evaluated based on the authorizer scorecard that covers five categories: mission and vision, governance, school/student performance, finance, and operations. The scoring criteria on the IQS scorecard follows a 4.0 scale. On the Paladin ScoreCard, there is no information available as to the response component of the metric-benchmark-outcome-response framework, except for the “attendance intervention plan/measures” metric. The benchmark for this metric states that, “Using underlying reasons for absences, develop a plan to meet students’ needs. Provide positive reinforcement and data visualization for students” (Paladin, 2021). While there is no available outcome, possibly due to the implementation of new attendance measures, the response states that there was, New attendance intervention measure. Other Interventions include: Auto Calls, SSC Calls, Truancy Letters Sent, Success Meetings Held” (Paladin, 2021).

PERSONALIZATION AT PALADIN

Metric	Target Benchmark (3.0-3.9)	Outcome
Social/Emotional Support Multiple Measure	“Fewer than 75% of but greater than 50% of students who need support are benefiting from social skills and emotional health support provided at Paladin. This is demonstrated by the percentage of students with an ACEs score of 1 or greater who are receiving 1) RTI support Interventions (any tier), 2) special education services, 3) participating in social/emotional health programs such as a) healthy relationships, boys group, girls group, pre-hab, safe space, D.A.S.H., sex plus, etc. or b) going to counseling (on or off site).” (Paladin, 2021)	Exceeding Target Benchmark (4.0): “Greater than 75% of students who need support are benefiting from social skills and emotional health support provided at Paladin. This is demonstrated by the percentage of students with an ACEs score of 1 or greater who are receiving 1) RTI support Interventions (any tier), 2) special education services, 3) participating in social/emotional health programs such as a) healthy relationships, boys group, girls group, pre-hab, safe space, D.A.S.H., sex plus, etc. or b) going to counseling (on or off site).” (Paladin, 2021)
Career and College Transitions Curriculum Multiple Measure	“Career & College Transitions program provides college transitions options and work experience options, and is serving between 50% and 75% of the student population. This includes Work-based learning and career experience curriculum and Paladin's College & Career Readiness Learning Targets, including any of the following: 1) PSEO enrollment, 2) College and Career Fair attendance, 3) College visits, 4) College entrance exams taken, 5) Updated resume and cover letter, 6) Career Interest survey taken” (Paladin, 2021)	Meeting target benchmark (3.5)
Standards	“All state standards, school standards, authorizer requirements, and school-board standards (collectively known as Paladin Learning Targets) are embedded into the curriculum of the school” (Paladin, 2021)	Meeting target benchmark (3.5)
Graduation Rate Multiple Measure based on 1-year graduation rate (Cohort Defined)	“Fewer than 70% but greater than 50% of continuously enrolled Paladin students will graduate in or before their 1-year grad year cohort, as calculated in their senior-credit school year” (Paladin, 2021)	Meeting target benchmark (3.0)

PERSONALIZATION AT PALADIN		
Metric	Target Benchmark (3.0-3.9)	Outcome
Student Satisfaction Multiple Measure	"Students' level of satisfaction with their school in the areas of safety, social/emotional support, acceptance, learning, and hope is between 85% and 90%" (Paladin, 2021)	Meeting target benchmark (3.0)
Parent Satisfaction Alternative Measure	"Parents' level of satisfaction with their school in the areas of safety, social/emotional support, acceptance, learning, and hope is between 85% and 90%" (Paladin, 2021)	Meeting target benchmark (3.5)

Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy: Chartered School in Wright County

Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy (JGESA) is a chartered, teacher-led school serving students in grades 6-12. The rural setting of JGESA, that includes a large outdoor space with wooded areas and a lake, allows for a focus on environmental education and the development of environmentally conscious students. JGESA has a small school community and places emphasis on personalized learning through a project-based learning model that encourages self-motivation and independence, and also meets state standards.

The mission of JGESA is to step "out of the classroom, and into the world", as is evident through a project-based learning model that emphasizes community involvement, volunteering, and environmentalism (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 3-7).

Personalization at JGESA

Personalization is evident in all areas at JGESA, including the administration. JGESA is a teacher-powered school following a "teachers as owners" model which "promotes a culture of leadership, accountability, and pride unmatched in traditionally top-down hierarchical districts" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, p. 13). Therefore, teachers facilitate the day-to-day and long-term success of the school, as well as work together to make all decisions (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 13-14).

At JGESA, staff are referred to as "advisors" for their advisory, rather than teaching, role in students' learning. There is a ratio of 6:1 for students to advisors, to ensure that all students receive the support they need (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, p. 14). The learning model at JGESA also features daily, multi-age advisories that allow for mentorship and guidance, and are centered around three foundational concepts: restorative practices, con-

flict resolution, and the use of Circles (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 14). This builds relationships, increases student engagement, and develops autonomous learners that have a say in their education. To formally measure engagement, however, JGESA uses the Hope Survey (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, p. 14).

To manage projects, students use a project-based management tool called Headrush. JGESA was a pilot school for Headrush, a helpful management tool for project-based learning that allows for both student individuality and the completion of Minnesota state graduation standards (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 14-15). Project-based learning at JGESA involves a defense of learning to advisors, an individual reflection process, and project presentation showcases for families and the public.

JGESA also uses an assessment tool called the “JGESA Skills Rubric for Lifelong Learners” that “helps students, families and staff continually assess student growth in numerous areas including: social skills, self-awareness, self-management, environmental education and stewardship, and decision making” (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, p. 16). Students self-assess their life skills, and then the data is discussed with students, families, and advisors throughout the year to monitor life skills. Additionally, JGESA states that “language from our skills rubric is integrated throughout our school day, during advisories and throughout the project process to ensure a comprehensive and thorough approach in addressing the social-emotional life and academic skills of all students” (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 16).

JGESA, as a school authorized by IQS, uses its Next Generation Assessment Portfolio System (NGAPS), an assessment system that sets the goal “to explore, draft, develop, and define tools and procedures for measuring student success, to create a ‘menu of assessments’, and to share learning and ideas for future consideration” (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, 2020, p. 16). JGESA, specifically, had the goal of using student portfolios to assess student learning on formative and summative assessments.

JGESA, as an IQS school, utilizes the scorecard format as described in the IQS authorizer section above. The following table highlights some metrics and target benchmarks, as listed on the JGESA scorecard, that are unique to the school. Additionally, on this JGESA scorecard, there were no indicated outcomes for any of the following metrics or benchmarks. Although some of the following benchmarks read as though they may be outcomes, they are in fact listed as benchmarks on the scorecard.

PERSONALIZATION AT JGESA	
Metric	Target Benchmark (3.0-3.9)
Achievement of Student Groups (Internal)	“80-89% of students will make ‘adequate’ progress on the annual goals and objectives as described in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) per reporting period (2 per year)” (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).

PERSONALIZATION AT JGESA	
Metric	Target Benchmark (3.0-3.9)
Graduation Rate (JGESA Cohort Defined)	"85-90% of students graduated based on their JGESA assigned cohort/grad year" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
Student Satisfaction	"Students' level of satisfaction with their school in the areas of safety, acceptance and learning is greater than 80% but lower than 90%" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
Parent Satisfaction	"Parents' level of satisfaction with their school in the areas of safety, acceptance and learning is greater than 80% but lower than 90%" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
Teacher Satisfaction, Hope Survey	"Hope Scores between 47.5 and 49.9" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
JGESA Skills Rubric	"90-99% of students and their advisors will generate an evidence-based portfolio to demonstrate progress over time toward targeted MN State Standard Completion" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
Experiential Learning Opportunities	"80-89% of students will participate in an experiential learning opportunity in support of the school's mission/vision" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).
All students career- and college-ready by graduation	"Using MCIS, 100% of JGESA's 9th grade students enrolled by October 1st, will participate in college and career exploration activities and further develop their Personalized Learning Plans. By or on the annual school-designated commencement date, 100% of JGESA graduates will have post-secondary plans and/or post-secondary admission. Using the HOPE Survey, JGESA will maintain a mean of hope of at least 50.0" (Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy, n.d.).

Venture Academy: Chartered School in Minneapolis

Venture Academy opened in 2013. It serves students in grades 6-12. The goal of Venture Academy, which refers to its students as trailblazers of the next generation, is to "implement a personalized learning model that closes the vast college- and career- readiness gap that confronts economically disadvantaged youth in the Twin Cities" (Venture Academy, n.d.).

Venture Academy emphasizes opportunities for small group instruction, with a ratio of two teachers to every 15 students (Venture Academy, n.d.). According to the Venture Academy website, 95% of the study body is considered low income, 33% are English Language Learners, and 25% are in special education. Venture Academy supports its students by providing each student with internet-connected technology, such as Chromebooks. Additionally, the demo-

graphics show that 60% are Latino, 8% are American Indian, 35% are African American, 5% are Caucasian, and 2% are two or more races (Venture Academy, n.d.).

Given this diverse student body, Venture Academy has stated in its 2019-2020 World's Best Workforce report that its goal is to increase teachers of color by 25% in the next two years by creating "pathways for teachers of color to become highly qualified and fully licensed professionals" and developing "an equitable organization where teachers of color feel welcome" (WBWF, p. 4). On the 2019-2020 World's Best Workforce report, Venture Academy indicates that their district reported annual data about "student access to racially and ethnically diverse teachers" (Venture Academy, 2020, p. 5). Venture Academy also measures its teacher retention rate, which was 100% in the 2019-2020 school year.

Personalization at Venture Academy

Venture Academy encourages its students to learn through entrepreneurial leadership. This metric is referred to as "interest driven learning", and includes internships, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, PSEO, student leadership, and project-based learning. In their 2019-2020 scorecard, Venture Academy states that 100% of their students participated in one of the following: project-based learning, entrepreneurship, internship, or PSEO. The Venture Academy website also states a utilization of Social Emotional Learning in the academic program.

Venture Academy places special emphasis on preparing students for their next steps in life after graduation. As part of this, Venture conducts student follow-up surveys and exit interviews with students who leave the school and students who graduate. Counselors at Venture Academy also help seniors set college and career goals, as is measured using the college and career readiness metric.

Additionally, Venture Academy offers credit recovery and summer school options to help students stay on track for either four- or six-year graduation (WBWF, p. 9). Venture Academy states on its website that "graduates from the class of 2020 have been accepted to 232 colleges and universities" (Venture Academy, n.d.). Venture Academy also states that "Overall, 53% of graduates will be matriculating, or have matriculated, to a four-year college or university, and 23% will be matriculating, or have matriculated, to a two year institution" (Venture Academy, n.d.).

Below are Venture Academy-specific indicators from their IQS scorecard.

PERSONALIZATION AT VENTURE ACADEMY		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Student Follow-Up	"The school will conduct, at least bi-annually, a follow-up survey OR exit interview of all students who either left the school to attend high school elsewhere or have graduated from the school" (Venture Academy, 2021)	"Typical amount of students left this year — some leave from 8 to 9th. Consistently lose about 10-12 students" "We only lost 1 family for any reason other than 15 day drop since the start of the school year. They moved." (Venture Academy, 2021)
Interest Driven Learning	"Between 75% and 89% of high school students participate in at least one of internship, apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, PSEO, student leadership and/or PBL" (Venture Academy, 2021)	"100% of students received one of PBL, entrepreneurship, internship or PSEO during their time" (Venture Academy, 2021)
College and Career Readiness	"Between 75% and 89% of students have set college and career goals" (Venture Academy, 2021)	"100% of seniors have identified a plan with counselling and we are working through their plan with them" (Venture Academy, 2021)
Equitable Use of Discipline	"The percentage of students within a certain subgroup that receive a suspension is within 11% and 20% of whole" (Venture Academy, 2021)	"We only had 5 total suspensions this year due to physical violence" (Venture Academy, 2021)

Schools in the Novations Portfolio

Avalon School: Chartered School in Saint Paul

Avalon School is a school for students grades 6-12. Authorized initially by Hamline University and now by Novation Education Opportunities (NEO), the school was founded in 2001 and uses project-based learning (PBL) as its curricular focus. In addition to PBL at its foundation, Avalon has a small school community of approximately 242 students and utilizes a collaborative decision-making model that involves mixed-age advisory groups. This instills its goals of modelling democracy, acceptance, and a passion for learning in its students.

Metrics, Benchmarks, and Outcomes at Avalon

School success at Avalon is based upon an authorizer-developed framework. NEO evaluates Avalon using its Performance Framework, displayed at the end of Avalon's Annual Report.

This Performance Framework features a variety of indicators, grouped under 4 categories that each account for a different percentage of possible points the school can earn: (1) Academic

Performance Indicators (52.94% of possible points); (2) Climate Performance Indicators (11.76% of possible points); (3) Operational Performance Indicators (14.71% of possible points), and; (4) Finance Performance Indicators (20.59% of possible points). Points are awarded for each indicator following a 3-level performance rating scale: exemplary (2 points); satisfactory (1 point), and; not satisfactory (0 points). According to this framework, “Each school must earn 50-70% of points possible overall and in each area to be automatically recommended for a three-year contract renewal” (Avalon, 2020, p. 103).

This framework is helpful in identifying the metrics, benchmarks and outcomes of the “metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response” framework. Here, the “exemplary” category, as it is the highest possible outcome, can be used as a benchmark for each metric. However, it should be noted that not achieving an exemplary standing in each metric does not signify a failure, as there is still a “satisfactory” standing and each school must earn only 50-70% of possible points overall for contract renewal.

Personalization at Avalon

Avalon works to personalize learning for its students through various student-centered techniques, including an advisory model and project-based learning.

Avalon uses a group-based advisory model that consists of daily check-ins to encourage effective communication and learning support for each student. Advisory groups may involve activities such as daily check-ins, book clubs, problem-solving activities, and substantive field trips. Avalon strives to keep its advisory groups small in size, to ensure an environment of meaningful student connection. Each advisory group is led by an advisor, who acts to “help students bring the conversation back to what they value and how those values emerge in the work they do” (Avalon, 2020, p. 26). Advisors help guide students in pursuing their goals and progress, connecting in either daily, weekly, or bi-weekly meetings. Students have the same advisor for up to three years in the middle school, and four years in the high school, allowing for a strong and purposeful relationship.

The democratic nature of student advisory groups is echoed in the governance structure of the school overall, which follows a teacher-powered model. At Avalon, all teachers are equal in the decision-making process, and all decisions are passed based on a “fist-to-five” voting process (Avalon, 2020, p. 15). The success of Avalon’s democratic teaching model, as well as its impact on students, is reflected in their teacher retention rates, teacher attrition rates, and results on the parent satisfaction survey.

Avalon also works to personalize learning through its project-based learning curricular model. This model allows for student independence and a way to connect learning to one’s interests and the world outside of school by supporting students in choosing and designing their projects in honor of each students’ passions. The effectiveness of project-based learning is evaluated using project rubrics to determine where students are struggling, meeting the standard, or excelling (Avalon, 2020, p. 19).

METRICS, BENCHMARKS, AND OUTCOMES AT AVALON

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Teacher Retention Rate	95%	Avalon's teaching staff is not as diverse as its student body. 85% white majority staff. Largely due to the high teacher retention rate. "We have worked hard to consciously seek and partner with outside organizations that better reflect our student body, including offering an Ojibwe Language class taught by a fluent speaker. When we do have openings, we have also worked to be thoughtful in where we post, how we recruit, and how we interview teacher-candidates" (Avalon, 2020, p. 20)
Teacher Attrition Rate	No benchmark provided.	5% (Avalon, 2020, p. 18)
Parent Satisfaction	"At least 95 percent of parents agree (4) or strongly agree (5) that Avalon School is a positive Learning Environment" (Avalon, 2020, p. 102)	Exemplary - 2 points earned The 2019-2024 Additionally, 717/755 (95%) of possible family conferences were conducted
Number and growth of students in student advisory groups	"We strive to keep the number of students in each advisory low" (Avalon, 2020, p. 11)	"Next year we will keep the MS number to 18 in each advisory. We will add two new students to the high school so six advisories will be at 22 students and two at 23 students, for a total enrollment of 250 students" (Avalon, 2020 p. 11)

CLIMATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Attendance Rate	"At least 95% attendance rate" (Avalon, 2020, p. 101)	Avalon does not include an outcome for their attendance for the 2019-2020 school year, perhaps due to attendance complications from the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, no conclusions can be made about attendance as it compares to district rates.
HOPE Scale	"New students to Avalon enrolled before January 1st will as a cohort on average demonstrate an increase of more than 2 scale score points" (Avalon, 2020, p. 101)	Exemplary - 2 points earned "The 2019-2024 combined average HOPE Scale increase is 4.94 with a 93.22% participation rate of HOPE Scale Respondents" (Avalon, 2020, p. 1-2)

CLIMATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Mobility	"Fewer than 10 percent of students transfer out of school after October 1 based on most recent MDE Mobility Report data available at the MDE Data and Analytics site" (Avalon, 2020, p. 102)	N/A

OPERATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Compliance	"No infractions" (Avalon, 2020, p. 102-103)	Exemplary - 10 points earned

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Awards	"NEO Stewardship Award in Finance Recipient" (Avalon, 2020, p. 103)	Satisfactory - 1 point earned "The school earned an MDE FY 2019 School Finance Award for FY 2018 financial reporting" (Avalon, 2020, p. 103)
Fund Balance	"Reserve is at least three months' expenditures (20%) as measured by end of year reserves" (Avalon, 2020, p. 103)	Exemplary - 10 points earned "The school has built a fund balance reserve of 37.09% in 2018-2019" (Avalon, 2020, p. 103)
Financial Audit	"No findings cited in the audit" (Avalon, 2020, p. 103)	Satisfactory - 1 point earned

Other

In addition to these indicators on NEO's Performance Framework, Avalon identifies a number of additional metrics and their outcomes in their Annual Report. However, many of these metrics and outcomes do not indicate the benchmark that it is associated with.

Metric	Outcome	Response
Number of Student Turnovers	36 students withdrew during the 2019-2020 school year "for one reason or another" (Avalon, 2020 p. 9)	"This amount of turnover is hard on staff as on-boarding new students mid-year is difficult. We are working on a mid-year orientation program in order to make mid-year transitions easier on everyone" (Avalon, 2020 p. 9)

Evaluating Personalized Learning

Project-based learning is the foundation of personalized learning at Avalon. Avalon states in its 2019-2020 annual report that, just as students have the responsibility to determine the content of their projects, they also work alongside staff and family to assign deadlines, demonstrate their knowledge, and establish criteria for evaluation (Avalon, 2020, p. 23).

Avalon evaluates personalized learning, such as their project-based learning, through project rubrics. Project rubrics allow the school to collect data that determines the areas in which students are either struggling, meeting standards, or exceeding. The Avalon 2019-2020 annual report states that, “based on these results, adjustments can be made to provide greater focus on a certain aspect of the project process, either to improve the practices of individual teachers or school-wide” (Avalon, 2020, p. 19). The expectations that are identified on these rubrics are determined through teacher meetings and standards are created to also include state standards and benchmarks.

Great River School: Chartered School in Saint Paul

Great River School (GRS) offers learning experiences for students that follow a robust Montessori and International Baccalaureate (IB)-based education. The goal of GRS is to integrate academic and social experiences and prepare students for meaningful and responsible interaction with the world. GRS was opened in 2004, serves students in grades 1-12 and, in the 2020-2021 school year, GRS had a total of 779 students.

GRS personalizes education for its students through two key pedagogical approaches: Montessori and International Baccalaureate. Montessori education emphasizes independence, organic learning, peer-teaching, and guidance of students through different developmental periods. Specifically, GRS states their “mission is to nourish the self-construction of the children in our classrooms” (Great River School, 2020, p. 7).

The IB Diploma Program is the 11th and 12th grade curriculum at GRS. This program requires students to “study and take examinations in a subject from each of six groups (English, Spanish, Global Politics, Mathematical Studies, Environmental Systems and Societies, Visual Arts, Music, or Theatre), ensuring breadth of experience across disciplines. To earn the IB diploma, students study three courses at the higher level (HL) and the others at the standard level (SL)” (Great River School, 2020, p. 8). In the 2019-2020 school year, 89% of IB Diploma candidates were successful in earning their diploma.

GRS sets “IB Curriculum Successful Completion (Grades 11-12)” as a metric. These contractual goals are agreed upon with the school’s authorizer, yet it is not indicated specifically how these benchmarks are set. Exemplary is defined as “More than 85% of graduating students earn 11th and 12th grade core HS credits through completion of IB college-level certified curriculum and PSEO”, satisfactory as “70-85% of graduating students earn 11th and 12th grade core HS credits through completion of IB college-level certified curriculum in the combined

FY 2020-FY 2025”, and not satisfactory as “less than 70% of graduating students earn 11th and 12th grade core HS credits through completion of IB college-level certified curriculum.” In the 2019-2020 school year, GRS saw 100% of participating students earning IB credits in 11th and 12th grades.

GRS also sets a “completion of creativity, activity and service program (an IB verified standard program (grades 11-12)” metric. Exemplary is stated as “at least 90% of students in 11th and 12th grade meet or exceed all CAS standards”, satisfactory is “80-89% of students in 11th and 12th grade meet or exceed all CAS standards in the combined FY 2020-FY 2025”, and not satisfactory is “fewer than 80 percent of students in 11th and 12th grade meet or exceed all CAS standards.” In the 2019-2020 school year, GRS saw 115 students in 11th and 12th grade meeting or exceeding all CAS standards. This was out of a total 115 11th and 12th grade students, indicating that 100% of students met all CAS standards.

Metrics, Benchmarks, and Outcomes at GRS

School success at GRS is based upon the same authorizer-developed framework as at Avalon. This framework is developed by NEO in partnership with the MN Department of Education. NEO has created this rubric to make “charter school performance a transparent and manageable characteristic to measure.” The reauthorization of GRS in 2015 coincided with the development of this framework.

This Performance Framework features a variety of indicators, grouped under four categories that each account for a different percentage of possible points the school can earn: (1) Academic Performance Indicators (53.19% of possible points); (2) Climate Performance Indicators (6.38% of possible points); (3) Operational Performance Indicators (21.28% of possible points), and; (4) Finance Performance Indicators (19.15% of possible points). Points are awarded for each indicator following a three-level performance rating scale: exemplary (2 points); satisfactory (1 point), and; not satisfactory (0 points). According to this framework, “Each school must earn 50-70% of points possible overall and in each area to be automatically recommended for a three-year contract renewal.”

This framework is helpful in identifying the metrics, benchmarks and outcomes of the “metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response” framework. GRS notes in its 2019-2020 annual report that “This renewal framework allows Great River School to continuously monitor our performance against the criteria agreed upon with our authorizer, so we may adjust in real-time to our operational goals in order to stay in good standing” (Great River School, 2020, p. 14). Here, the “exemplary” category, as it is the highest possible outcome, can be used as a benchmark for each metric. However, it should be noted that not achieving an exemplary standing in each metric does not signify failure, as there is still a “satisfactory” standing and each school must earn 50-70% of possible points overall for contract renewal.

CLIMATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
5-point parent satisfaction survey	An exemplary outcome indicates that “At least 80% of parents agree (4) or strongly agree (5) that they would enthusiastically recommend GRS to a close relative or friend as a place to send their child” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	<p>In the 2019-2020 school year, 206 parents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend GRS. This was out of a total 368 parents surveyed. Therefore, the parent satisfaction survey percent was 55.98%, and the percent participation of parent respondents was 37.44%. Therefore, this outcome was not satisfactory, as “less than 60% of parents agree (4) or strongly agree (5) that they would enthusiastically recommend GRS to a close relative or friend as a place to send their child” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)</p> <p>This result may be due to only 368 responses out of 983 possible parents that could have responded to the survey (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020). Additionally, on the 2019-2020 annual report, it is stated that “In this time of school expansion, we anticipated that these scores may be lowered because of times of great transition and change in the program scale and numbers of students impacted and families enrolled” (Great River School, 2020, p. 33-34).</p>
Mobility	An exemplary outcome indicates that “Fewer than 10 percent of students transfer out of school after October 1 based on most recent MDE Mobility Report data available at the MDE Data and Analytics site” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	A baseline mobility percent for years 2014-2019 is given. The number of students transferring out after October 1st was 67. The total number of students October 1st was 2,428. The mobility percent was 2.76% for years 2014-2019.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Compliance: school is compliant with contract and statute	An exemplary outcome indicates that there are “no infractions” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	An exemplary outcome was earned

FINANCE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Awards	An exemplary outcome indicates “NEO stewardship award in finance recipient” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	The ScoreCard indicates that 0 finance points out of a possible 18 were earned. This indicates a “not satisfactory” performance rating, or perhaps there are no available outcomes for the finance performance indicators, maybe due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FINANCE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Fund Balance	An exemplary outcome indicates “reserve is at least three months’ expenditures (20%) as measured by end of year reserves” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	The ScoreCard indicates that 0 finance points out of a possible 18 were earned. This indicates a “not satisfactory” performance rating, or perhaps there are no available outcomes for the finance performance indicators, maybe due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Financial Audit	An exemplary outcome indicates “no findings cited in the audit” (Novation Education Opportunities, 2020)	The ScoreCard indicates that 0 finance points out of a possible 18 were earned. This indicates a “not satisfactory” performance rating, or perhaps there are no available outcomes for the finance performance indicators, maybe due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluating Personalization at GRS

Personalization appears minimally at GRS in comparison to other schools in this report. Its conception of personalization unfolds through the IB program for older students and Montessori for younger students. While Montessori supports a high degree of personalization, with students learning through doing and making in the tradition of Dewey and others, the IB program offers little personalization except the actual choice of the IB pathway. While the NEO model of authorizing and evaluating its charter schools is unique in the ways identified in the GRS profile here, the level of personalization afforded to the school by its authorizer outperforms the degree of personalization offered by the school to its students in this case.

High School for Recording Arts: Chartered School in Saint Paul

High School for Recording Arts (HSRA) is authorized by Pillsbury United Communities Office of Public Charter Schools. Like all chartered schools in Minnesota, HSRA is considered its own school district, which allows for greater flexibility in terms of leadership.

Officially authorized in 1998, the school was granted permission to serve young people who have been pushed and kicked out of other schools through an alternative re-engagement model. Doing so means taking students that the non-chartered public system has failed, who are oftentimes behind in grade-level proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic, and providing them with a high quality education.

Despite being recognized as having this mission, the state held the school to traditional standards of accountability under the No Child Left Behind legislation, with respect to the proportion of students graduating ‘on time’. The school challenged this designation in court and won the right to base success for the school and its students on comparisons with sim-

ilar schools, rather than with traditional schools serving a different demographic. Since that time, the school has been a leader in the movement for alternative forms of evaluation and accountability.

HSRA serves a student population ages 14-21, 89% of whom qualify for free/reduced price lunch and 29% of whom have been diagnosed with a learning disability. As well, 85% of students enter the program an average of 1.6 years behind in credit accrual/progress toward graduation. Out of HSRA's most recent full-year enrollment of 348 students, just over 40% of students were houseless/highly mobile. HSRA's average student has attended 4.5 schools before enrolling and stays at HSRA longer than at any other high school. The ethnic breakdown of HSRA's student population is: 75% African-American, 9% Hispanic, 8% Native-American, 5% Caucasian, and 3% Hmong, Pacific Islander or Other.

For each metric below, the school has a benchmark, whether loosely defined via narrative or specifically defined in a quantitative way. For each metric, the school can receive any of the following three designations: "goal met, goal partially met," or "goal not currently met." Here are some of the metrics, benchmarks and outcomes from HSRA. HSRA has designed its own set of validations and uses a competency based progression of learning to focus on mastery over seat-time and assist the school in personalizing its learning for each student. Using the school's advisory system, HSRA develops a personal learning plan with each student that identifies student interests and supports individual goal-setting. This PLP then becomes a reference for the student and educators when working to design a personalized learning experience for each student throughout the school year.

SCHOOLWIDE METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
One-Year Graduation Rate = "Proportion of students enrolled 10/1 who are grad eligible based on credits, combined with proportion of students who enroll later but are deemed grad candidates based on credits, who do graduate by year's end." (High School for Recording Arts, 2020)	Due to challenges students face before enrolling at HSRA, the school rarely sees students for all 4 years of high school, which means a 4-year graduation rate would likely produce a rate closer to 0% than 100%. For that reason HSRA uses a one-year graduation rate.	HSRA's 2019-20 Annual Report states that the "Annual graduation rate will be at least 85% for each year... HSRA's 2019-20 Graduation Candidates list included 41 students, of whom 38 graduated by year's end (grad-rate of 93%)" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)
Number of graduates accepted to post-secondary	"At least 90% of HSRA graduates will be accepted to college or other post-secondary institutions as evidenced by acceptance letters in their digital portfolios." (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 21)	In 2019-20 "All graduates applied for and were accepted in a post-secondary program" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 21)

SCHOOLWIDE METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Retention, new students: “Proportion of students both enrolled at least 45 consecutive school days and attending at least 30 school days” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 19)	“There will be at least 50% (of total students enrolled for any part of the year)” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)	“There were a total of 227 students newly-enrolled at HSRA during 2019-20. Of these students, 178 or 78% remained enrolled at least 45 days consecutively, and attended at least 30 days” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)
Retention, Established Students	“Among students who attend at least 30 days during the school year, HSRA will meet its stick-rate of 70%” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)	“Retention by this measure was 90%, based on 397/400. There were a total of 440 students who attended HSRA at least 30 days during 2019-20; of these students: 326 remained enrolled the last day of school, 39 graduated, 32 transferred to another district, 43 did not remain engaged (33 withdrew after 15 consecutive days absent; 5 moved or withdrew without requesting a transcript; and 4 were committed to correctional facilities)” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)

ACADEMIC STUDENT-LEVEL METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Number of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) developed	“At HSRA, every student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP); for special-needs students, the PLP advances the goal of the IEP” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 28)	Every student develops a personal learning plan upon enrollment and maintains that plan through the school’s advisory model, which offers personalized guidance to each student along their education and life journey.
Number of credits earned by student	“Students enrolled for a full semester and attending at least 75% of days enrolled will make expected progress toward graduation, defined as earning on average at least four credits/semester” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)	“average number of credits earned by students meeting the criteria (total of 130) was 5.80, significantly exceeding the goal of 4” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 20)
Number of credits earned via projects	“at least 75% of students who are continuously enrolled and attending at least 75% of days enrolled will earn at least some of their credits through school-based projects” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 21)	“there were a total of 60 students enrolled throughout the 2019-2020 year and attending at least 75% of days enrolled; review of credits earned shows that all of these students earned at least some credits through projects” (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 21)

ACADEMIC STUDENT-LEVEL METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Growth and effective service for homeless students	"Earning 5 credits per semester is considered to be on-track for graduation" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 23)	"an analysis of semester-credits earned, by homeless/highly mobile students who remained continuously enrolled for a full semester, showed that these students earned an average of 4.6 credits per semester in 2018-19, and 4.7 credits in 2019-20... so most homeless students who are able to remain continuously enrolled at HSRA are in fact making the expected academic progress" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 23)

HOLISTIC STUDENT-LEVEL METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
HOPE Survey: The HOPE Survey measures student levels of hope and has been correlated with academic performance. Generally, the higher a student's level of hope, the better their academic outcomes.	"HSRA students will continue to show higher ratings on EdVisions' Hope Survey than students at traditional schools... traditional schools: 47.66" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 21)	Overall Hope rating of 53.24 (spring 2019)

INSTITUTIONAL FINANCES METRICS, BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Audit Findings	"HSRA will reduce the number of audit findings over time, moving toward the goal of no more than three minor findings" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)	"goal met - there was one minor finding in the auditor's report for FY 2020, reported at the November 2020 Board meeting" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)
Fund Balance	"HSRA will demonstrate healthy finances by increasing its fund balance" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)	"Goal met - Fund balance increased in FY20 by \$521,160, from \$1,301,080 to \$1,822,240, per FY20 audited Financial Statement" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)
Fundraising:	"HSRA will raise an increasing amount of revenue from grants and donors" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)	"Goal partially met - HSRA received \$268,365 from grants/donations during Fiscal 2020. This is less than in the previous year, when grants totaled over \$900,000 including a single \$500,00 grant; however the FY total is greater than in either of the two fiscal years prior to that" (High School for Recording Arts, 2020, p. 22)

For some of the above metrics, the school provides a benchmark against which the outcome might be measured from other schools. For example, the HOPE Survey Outcomes show traditional schools scoring below HSRA. This seems to be an important comparison, since one might assume HSRA's students would have less hope than traditional school students given the challenges they face as a result of systemic forms of marginalization based on race, class and other social factors. The fact that HSRA performs better than traditional students means the school has been an important factor in improving student feelings of hope.

Other metrics are more difficult to track, but have been measured through rigorous academic research at one point in time throughout the school's history.

For example, the school serves a number of young people with histories of involvement with the criminal justice system. A 2013 study showed that roughly 65% of HSRA's new enrollees can be categorized as system-involved, i.e. having been or currently going through some sort of legal battle. That same study found this number drops to 13% by the time students graduate from the school, an impressive achievement when considering the implications of system involvement. Tracking these metrics from year-to-year requires more resources than the school has available, though. So while this achievement was shown for 2013, it's unclear to what extent that data holds today.

Recent academic research on the school has also shown it capable of disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline (Basford et al., 2021) and its workforce/vocational training program in the recording arts has been shown to increase attendance and enrollment (Lipset, 2020). Due to its unique model and student population, HSRA's ability to identify metrics, benchmarks and outcomes could be seen as a standard-bearer within the chartered and alternative school sectors for its ability to identify and measure metrics unique to its mission and model.

Open World Learning: District School in Saint Paul (formerly Saint Paul Open School)

Open World Learning is one of the oldest personalized schools in Minnesota and is a part of the Saint Paul public school district. Having just celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2021, Open World Learning was founded by Dr. Wayne Jennings under the name of Saint Paul Open School. Today, the school serves 450 students between grades 6 and 12 through an advisory model designed to facilitate project-based learning. That's roughly 75 students per grade-level, but OWL doesn't maintain grade levels. Instead, it fosters a democratic environment through mixed-age groupings.

Success for each student is measured in a number of different ways, performance on these metrics then informs success for the school. In addition to the development of graduate portfolios over the course of their time at OWL, students are assessed by way of a standards-based

grading model. Their performance on these standards are held against benchmarks set in conjunction with the student, their guardians and the student's Crew leader (a.k.a. advisor) at the start of the year.

OWL's "response" mechanism in its version of the metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response framework rests on its Crew advisory model. If a student's outcomes do not meet their identified benchmarks, presumably the school, the student, their Crew leader, and their guardians respond by working together during daily Crew meetings and twice-yearly conferences in February and June to discuss what needs to change to support the student moving forward. In this way, the school has set itself up as a learning organization to respond to student outcomes.

Metrics and Benchmarks at OWL

One way OWL uses evaluation is to monitor its ability to personalize learning, which it tracks through metrics tied to its size and the systems it has designed to facilitate that personalization. We have identified and grouped two of these metrics and their benchmarks as follows:

Metrics and Benchmarks at OWL	
Metric	Benchmark
Small School Environment	450 students, 75 per grade level, 12-15 per Crew Leader
Crew Advisory System	12-15 students per crew leader, start-of-year goal-setting with students and guardians, 1:1 relationship with each student, daily Crew meetings, and twice-yearly conferences in February and June. In these conferences students lead by showing their accomplishments and sharing what challenges may remain. They prepare for the conferences with their Crew and Crew leader by "gathering samples of high quality work from each course and rehearsing for their leadership roles" (Open World Learning, 2021).

Academic Metrics and Benchmarks

OWL tracks its academic metrics along two axes: 1) benchmarks set with students and their guardians and, 2) the graduate profile of each student. Graduate profiles at OWL are complete when a student has produced and presented their graduate portfolio, completed their service learning requirements, and been accepted into college.

On their way to completing their graduate portfolio, students participate in project-based learning, interim courses, and standards-based assessment. Benchmark-setting meetings between Crew leaders and students cover each of these topics in order to establish benchmarks to be met or exceeded over the course of the year in each category.

ACADEMIC METRICS AND BENCHMARKS	
Metric	Benchmark
Project-based learning (PBL)	OWL designs its curriculum around learning expeditions à la the Expeditionary Learning model. At OWL, projects “allow students to investigate issues in our school, the community and the world. The study of big ideas enables us to weave together work in multiple subject areas. Students are given time to think about important issues, time to experiment, and time to understand what they’ve learned” (Open World Learning, 2021). Of note, the school does not track the proportion of learning done via PBL as compared to other modalities. The benchmark for this metric is one service learning project each year and one Senior Project before graduation per student. This metric is based on the school’s graduation rate, which demonstrates the number of students who meet this benchmark to graduate on-time.
Interim courses	Interim Courses appear annually in the spring as mandatory moments of project-based, expeditionary learning. OWL provides roughly 12 different phenomena for students to choose from. Based on a student’s choice, they will engage in an expeditionary project meant to foster student participation in the Twin Cities community.
Standards-based assessment	The school, as part of Saint Paul Public Schools, must ensure students meet traditional graduation requirements of credit accrual. In order to do so in a way that honors personalization and student-centeredness, the school evaluates learning using a “Novice, Developing, Proficient, or Exemplary” scale. It then converts these evaluations to a grade that translates to credit using their standards-based grading tool available HERE . In their Crew meetings, students identify the learning target they’re aiming for, then hold themselves to that benchmark with the support of their Crew leader and the school community.
Graduation	OWL has expanded its definition of student success towards graduation by requiring 300 total hours of service experience, ensuring at least a modicum of project-based learning. Half of these hours unfold within the school, the other within the community, with students earning a required minimum of 50 hours per year starting in 7th grade.
Graduate Portfolio	A student’s graduate portfolio is a bound document filled with exemplary models of student work and reflections upon that work across six areas: Coherent Communication, Science and Technology, Mathematics, Social Studies, Personal Development, and Service. The portfolio also includes a summary reflection, post-graduation plan, and a minimum of three letters of recommendation. These portfolios are presented to a committee of community members of the students’ choosing.
College Acceptance	A minimum of one acceptance into a postsecondary institution is required for students to graduate.

School Success Metrics and Benchmarks

In its efforts to unfold this personalized system in an equitable fashion such that each student gets what they need, rather than each student getting the same thing, OWL tracks a number of metrics tied to behavior and discipline by race, gender, ethnicity, grade, home language, special education status, and more. Two such metrics are the school’s suspension rates and dropout trends. Suspension and dropout rates at OWL are slightly lower overall than the rest of Saint Paul Public Schools.

Metrics such as suspension and dropout rates do not measure student success along academic lines, per se, but more so the school's ability to successfully serve its students in a healthy way. The school uses the Saint Paul Public School data tracking system to benchmark itself against other public schools in Saint Paul along these same lines, ensuring that it remains on the "less punitive" side of the spectrum. We don't yet know, however, how OWL responds when it sees its dropout and suspension rates rising, or whether it seeks to lower them further than where they currently stand.

Harvest Best Academy (HBA): Chartered School in Minneapolis

Harvest Best Academy (HBA) serves African American and primarily K-8 students from low-income backgrounds. Opened in 2008 as Best Academy, the school is authorized by Osprey Wilds. In 2018, Best Academy merged with Harvest Prep to create Harvest Best Academy.

HBA uses education to inform academic, social and moral development, and as a way to shift the socioeconomic trajectory of their larger school community. The school was created with the unique cultural and academic needs of African American students in Minnesota in mind, aiming to implement culturally relevant messaging, a "gap-closing framework," and college readiness. The specific population at the foundation of the school still holds true, as, in the 2020-2021 school year, 780 of 785 students were Black and 90% qualified for free/reduced priced lunch (HBA, 2020, p. 6-7).

HBA personalizes learning through the use of a Gap-Closing Framework, informed by a Learning by Doing model. Models of Learning by Doing are shown to be successful in serving students from low-income backgrounds, asking five essential questions: "(1) what do my students need to know and be able to do?; (2) what are the most effective ways to teach what they need to know?; (3) how do I know that they got it?; (4) if they didn't get it after I taught it, then what?; (5) what if they have already mastered the material before I taught it?" (HBA, 2019, p. 5).

In the Gap-Closing Framework, student achievement is envisioned to be at the center, working in a symbiotic relationship with teaching. Student achievement and teaching are supported, more broadly, by administration and academic and operational supports. This model also includes a high-expectations/no excuses culture.

Student achievement, as well as the demographics of the school, are evident in the way that HBA personalizes the structure of its school year. Rather than working learning into an already established school calendar, HBA prioritizes student achievement by expanding the school year. Such an expansion helps remediate obstacles for low-income students, such as summertime learning gaps (HBA, 2019, p. 20). As a result, HBA students spend 25% more time in school than students at a typical Minnesota public school.

In conjunction with the Gap-Closing Framework, HBA uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. RTI is a Student Support System (S3) that targets student needs and students who are behind by providing additional support. The RTI theory holds that 80% of students are sup-

ported by the standard curriculum, at tier 1, while 20% of students are either right below grade level, at tier 2, or far below grade level, at tier 3. HBA builds in a 50-minute intervention block into their school schedule to address and support individual needs of students at tiers 2 and 3 (HBA, 2019, p. 25). To determine tiers, HBA uses student outcomes on state standardized tests.

HBA works toward achieving World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Goals in five areas: (1) ready for kindergarten: all students are ready for kindergarten; (2) reading well by 3rd grade: all students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy; (3) achievement gap closure: all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed; (4) career and college ready: all students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school; (5) graduate from high school: all students graduate from high school. These goals are echoed in other indicators of school success and accountability at HBA.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: GOALS AND BENCHMARKS		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Regulation of social and emotional control	"From FY19 to FY22, the average of the annual percentages of students eligible for Fun Friday celebration using the school-wide behaviour management system will be at least 80%" (HBA, 2020, p. 12)	"On average, from September, 2019-March 9, 2020 HBA averaged 80% attendance and participation in the Fun Friday celebration" (HBA, 2020, p. 12) "WBWF goal areas addressed by this goal: achievement gap closure" (HBA, 2020, p. 12)
Number of suspensions	"From FY19 to FY22, the number of suspensions will decrease 10% each year OR by 20% over two years from the baseline of 236 suspensions in FY18" (HBA, 2020, p. 12)	"HBA had 114 suspensions in FY20" (HBA, 2020, p. 12) "WBWF goal areas addressed by this goal: achievement gap closure" (HBA, 2020, p. 12)
Kindergarten readiness	"Over the period of the contract, students at Best will demonstrate readiness for kindergarten as measured by student participation in kindergarten readiness activities sponsored by the school" (HBA, 2020, p. 19)	"In the 19-20 school year, 85% of kindergarteners (incoming) participated in the kindergarten round up event" (HBA, 2020, p. 19) WBWF goal areas addressed by this goal: ready for kindergarten
Student and parent satisfaction	No benchmark identified for this metric.	"Over 80% of our parents are satisfied with Best Academy. Over 75% of respondents also indicated that their child feels safe at school and has a positive relationship with their child's teacher" (HBA, 2019, p. 29)

Environmental Education

Osprey Wilds, the authorizer, is rooted in environmentalism, aiming to encourage its portfolio of high performing charter schools to instill an environmental connection and commitment within its school communities. HBA works to integrate environmental education into any and all areas of learning (HBA, 2019, p. 36-37). Its specific measures related to environmentalism are indicated below.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Environmental Awareness</p> <p>Family activity sheet: Uses “Jay’s Tree” (a lesson focused on the conservation of trees and the importance of only using the resources that one needs) as a guide. The family activity sheet invites families to work together to determine how they can conserve resources while at home, conserve paper, recycle products, and dispose of trash properly (HBA, 2019, p. 29-30)</p>	<p>Overall Benchmark: “Scholars and staff at Best Academy have the awareness, or are increasing their awareness, of the relationship between the environment and human life” (HBA, 2019, p. 29)</p> <p>Benchmark 1: “80% of K-1 scholars will complete and turn in the family activity sheet” (HBA, 2019, p. 30)</p> <p>Benchmark 2: “80% of Best K-1 students will complete an exit slip, identifying at least 3 products made from trees and other natural resources” (HBA, 2019, p. 30)</p>	<p>Outcome 1: “K-1 had 184 scholars at Best. Less than 50% of students returned their family activity sheet to school. Teachers made multiple attempts to have this activity completed at home and returned to school with little avail” (HBA, 2019, p. 30)</p> <p>Outcome 2: “100% of K-1 scholars completed an exit slip identifying products made from natural resources. 167 of 184 scholars were able to identify 3 different products made of natural resources. This equaled 90.7% of K-1 scholars meeting this goal” (HBA, 2019, p. 30)</p>
<p>Environmental Attitudes</p> <p>Attitude: “Scholars and staff at Best Academy have an attitude, or are increasing their attitude of, appreciation and concern for the environment” (HBA, 2019, p. 32)</p>	<p>“80% of Best classrooms grade K-8 will show a positive change from their Arbor Day Surveys. The survey will be given before and after Arbor Day activities” (HBA, 2019, p. 32)</p>	<p>“681 scholars took the post survey (100% of students) with 87% of the scholars showing a positive change in their attitudes from the survey. 8% of scholars showed a decrease in their attitudes from the pre-survey with only 5% of scholars overall showing no movement. 592 of 681 Best Academy scholars showed a positive change in their attitudes from their pre to post-survey” (HBA, 2019, p. 32)</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
<p>Environmental Education Field Trip</p> <p>"Students in Grade 5 will take a two-day trip to Eagle Bluff Learning Center. Students will learn and have the opportunity to experience their natural environment. There will be a pre-test and post-test created to show growth both in knowledge and change in attitude" (HBA, 2019, p. 33)</p>	<p>"80% of participating Best Academy fifth grade students will show a positive change on the Affinity for Nature Scale" (HBA, 2019, p. 33)</p> <p>Affinity for Nature Scale includes a range of 6 response options (false, somewhat false, a little false, a little true, somewhat true, true) and 5 questions: I like being in nature; I want to spend time outdoors; I enjoy the freedom of being outside; I am comfortable in the outdoors; I feel connected to the natural environment (HBA, 2019, p. 34)</p>	<p>"Due to financial reasons, scholars in 5th grade were not able to attend Eagle Bluff this school year. Families were unable to make the payments for many scholars so the trip was cancelled" (HBA, 2019, p. 34)</p> <p>Based on this outcome, the school indicates that not being able to attend Eagle Bluff was a challenge related to that year's implementation of environmental education. In its plans for environmental education next year that "New ideas for fundraising have been discussed to ensure that scholars will have the opportunity to attend Eagle Bluff" (HBA, 2019, p. 38)</p>
<p>Environmental Skills</p> <p>"Scholars and staff at Best Academy have or are increasing their problem solving and critical thinking skills as it relates to the environment and human life" (HBA, 2019, p. 34)</p>	<p>"80% of Best students in grade 3-8 will average at least a 3 on a 4 point rubric based on the following criteria: identifying an environmental problem, analyzing methods that have already been created to solve the problem, developing an action plan, presenting the plan to other classes during community meeting" (HBA, 2019, p. 35)</p>	<p>"425 scholars in grades 3-8 had their projects assessed by the rubric. Of these scholars, 377 students averaged a 3 or higher on the rubric for their work on their environmental issues project. This totaled 88.75% of 3rd-8th grade students meeting this goal" (HBA, 2019, p. 35)</p>
<p>Environmental Action</p> <p>"Scholars and staff at Best Academy demonstrate the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment" (HBA, 2019, p. 35)</p>	<p>"Identify at least three ways (in addition to picking up trash) that they can take care of the environment around their home, school or neighborhood" (HBA, 2019, p. 35)</p>	<p>Fall clean up: 100% of scholars completed an exit slip and identified three different ways they could help the environment</p> <p>Spring clean up: 93.7% of students were able to identify three different ways they could help the environment shown on their exit slips (HBA, 2019, p. 36)</p>

HBA's Response Mechanism

With regards to the "response" component of the metrics-benchmarks-outcomes-response framework, HBA indicates some responses to metrics and outcomes, but not to all, to support their students and families. For example, HBA actively recognized the impediment to environmental education programming that resulted from the financial inability of its students to attend the Eagle Bluff trip. In response, new fundraising efforts were put in place to ensure that this trip can be carried out in the future, and that students have access to experiential opportunities within environmental education.

Additionally, HBA recognizes its role in moving toward decreased levels of suspension. In the 2018-2019 annual report, HBA indicates that it aims to be more proactive about student discipline, including praising and supporting behavior by students that is consistently positive (HBA, 2019, p. 15). Support for students is also a key aspect of HBA's "gap-closing-framework", which highlights this value as being of high importance to the school. However, responses to measurements and outcomes is not actively present in HBA's reports.

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists: Chartered School in Saint Paul

SPCPA is a public performance arts high school, authorized by the University of St. Thomas. Opened in 2005, the mission of SPCPA is "to provide the highest caliber of academic and artistic education for aspiring pre-professional performing artists in the areas of instrumental and vocal music, theater, and dance, and to fully prepare students for college and conservatory" (SPCPA, 2020, p. 4).

SPCPA places a particular emphasis on placing students in arts-based colleges and conservatories. This is shown in the graduation matriculation data from SPCA: of the 75% of students in the 2019-2020 graduation class who are attending college, 44% have chosen to major in dance, theater, or music. And 60% of the students who are pursuing the arts in post-secondary education had to gain admittance to the conservatory program through an audition. Additionally, the importance of the arts at SPCA is reflected in its teaching staff. The 2019-2020 annual report indicates that, "Arts Department Chairs guide an arts staff that is completely composed of current working professional artists, more than 80% of whom completed a college conservatory program, to prepare students for conservatory and the profession" (SPCA, 2020, p. 15).

A mission-specific academic goal at SPCPA is that more than 90% of students that graduate annually attain acceptance into one or more colleges or conservatories. SPCPA tracks post-secondary matriculation based on not only college entrance, but also conservatory entrance. The following metrics demonstrate SPCPA's deep commitment to preparing their students for careers in the arts.

For the 2019-2020 school year, the graduate acceptance rate was 99% with 99% of students having applied to 1 or more college or conservatory, and 75% of students entering college or conservatory after high school. This 75% is lower than previous years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (SPCPA, 2020, p. 9-10). Of this 75%, 44% of graduates pursuing college are focusing on dance, music or theater. Of those pursuing arts in post-secondary education, 60% were accepted into audition-based degrees (BFA or BM). Therefore, these students are ahead of their college peers due to their completion of a four year conservatory program in high school.

Accountability in the Arts

Arts-based objectives were formulated by each arts department (theater, musical theater, dance, instrumental music, and vocal arts) that account for technical proficiency and preparedness in performance. Specified training routines are implemented into the curriculum to help students achieve these objectives. The spring jury performances are used each year to measure results. (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there are no available results for the 2019-2020 school year.) In the following chart, the benchmark is for the 2020 school year, and the outcome is from the 2018-2019 school year. SPCA organizes its objectives according to performance target, rationale, and strategies (SPCA, 2020, p. 12).

Strategies are implemented into the curriculum based on the performance target objective (SPCPA, 2018, p. 22). Before the pandemic, each performance target also included measures for results and growth rate.

For example, in the 2017-2018 school year, the performance target for the theater department indicated that “the goal is for 90% of 9th and 10th grade theater students to be identified as *proficient* in the area of PREPARATION.” (SPCPA, 2018, p. 23). The rationale behind this performance target was to help students understand the real-world application as it relates to auditioning. Preparation strategies were implemented into class time, including the preparation of monologs and visits by professional casting directors to reinforce the rationale. The result was 98% of students identified as proficient in preparation at the 2018 Theater Juries. Here, the growth rate shows that “26% more 9th and 10th grade Theater students in 2018 were identified as *proficient* in the area of PREPARATION than at Theater Juries in 2017” (SPCPA, 2018, p. 23). This example clearly emphasizes achievable and actionable arts-based objectives, holding true to the values of the school.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE ARTS			
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome	Response
Theater: “Students will be physically grounded while performing their monologs, with weight evenly distributed on both feet.” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“The performance target is 70% of 10th grade students identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Physical Presence.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“In the 2018-2019 school year 40% of 10th grade students were identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Physical Presence.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“Shift Sophomore Movement class curriculum to place greater emphasis on intentional movement, and awareness of physical habits. Practice present stillness, known as ‘acor neutral.’ Create exercises that focus on posture and alignment” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE ARTS

Metric	Benchmark	Outcome	Response
Musical Theater: “Students will demonstrate an emotional connection to material to fully act a song.” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“The performance target is 90% of 11th grade students identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in the area of ‘Breath Management.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“In the 2018-2019 school year 70% of 11th grade students were identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Emotional Connection.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 12)	“Develop lessons devoted to text analysis, in which students break down and analyze the lyrics to a song. Place focus on telling the story of the song in their own words to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the material. Develop exercises to activate imagination and emphasize point of view to practice the concept of the ‘magic if.’ How would I feel IF I were in this situation?” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)
Dance: “Students will develop cross lateral coordination between the upper and lower body.” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	“The performance target is 75% of 11th grade students identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Coordination.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	““In the 2018-2019 school year 50% of 10th grade students were identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Coordination.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	“Implement a Developmental Movement unit in which students explore how children first learn cross lateral movement through crawling and rolling. Build cross lateral movements into daily warm-ups to provide regular practice. Build lessons in which students create their own cross lateral movement patterns” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)
Instrumental Music: “Students will demonstrate an understanding of characteristic expression of a wide variety of repertoire and be able to play their instrument accordingly.” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	“The performance target is 75% of 11th grade students identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Expression.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	“In the 2018-2019 school year 50% of 11th grade students were identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Expression.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)	“Model appropriate use of expression through listening to masters in a wide variety of styles and teacher demonstration. Analyze the performance of others to identify the elements of expression. Create lessons in which students practice verbal and musical articulation of signature stylistic elements. Provide a diverse repertoire that allows students to explore multiple expressive styles” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 13)

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE ARTS			
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome	Response
Vocal Arts: “Students will exhibit an understanding of breath management in singing, through different registration, showing applied concepts in performance repertoire.” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 14)	“The performance target is 70% of 11th grade students identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Breath Management.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 14)	“In the 2018-2019 school year 50% of 11th grade students were identified as ‘Proficient’ or ‘Exemplary’ in ‘Breath Management.’” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 14)	“Place greater emphasis on breath management in singing class. Implement lessons on the breathing apparatus so students understand the physiology of breath. Place emphasis on breath during warm-ups, adding exercises that focus on volume and range. Provide individual repertoire that allows students to practice breath management in their most challenging register” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 14)

Other Accountability

SPCPA is also focused on closing racial and economic opportunity gaps. With regard to teaching staff, SPCPA states a goal of ensuring that low-income students, students of color, and American Indian students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers. As a result, SPCPA “actively recruits teachers of color to ensure that the demographics of the student population are reflected in staffing to the extent possible. In 2019-2020, 24% of SPCPA teachers were teachers of color. Overall, 32% of students at SPCPA in 2019-20 were students of color. The expectation for the 2020-21 school year is for the percentage of teachers of color at SPCPA to exceed the percentage of students of color” (SPCPA, 2020, p. 16).

Although there is a disparity between academic teachers of color and teaching artists of color at SPCPA, the school’s efforts to increase representation can be seen through the number of teaching artists who are persons of color. At SPCPA, 1 out of 19 academic teachers are persons of color and 11 out of 54 arts teachers are persons of color.

SPCPA also uses parent/guardian satisfaction surveys, as outlined below for the 2019-2020 school year.

OTHER ACCOUNTABILITY		
Metric	Benchmark	Outcome
Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Surveys	No benchmark available for this metric.	Of 425 families, 114 were surveyed, indicating 96% of parents/guardians rating their student's experience prior to distance learning from "good" to "excellent". During distance learning, 83% of parents/guardians rated their student's experience as "good" to "excellent" (SPCPA, 2020, p. 11).

Evaluating Personalized Learning

The arts could be considered a more personalized form of education than non-arts-based approaches because one's artistry and artistic identity are one's own. Even when performing works written by another, an artist must interpret, adapt, and articulate a given piece in their own voice.

For that reason, the evaluation of personalized learning at SPCA actually looks like the standardization of competencies in the arts through the development of rubrics designed to measure student performance in areas considered ambiguous to many outsiders to the arts. SPCA has designed rubrics to measure such arts competencies as one's ability to prepare for a performance, manage one's breathing and so forth.

SPCA does not, however, personalize its academic work to a great degree. The separation of a more personalized arts program from its more traditional academic program means SPCA engages in the act of personalization on behalf of its students only to a certain degree.

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