

TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School 2009 Annual Report

**Prepared for the Minnesota Department of Education
&
Volunteers of America**

Submitted October 1, 2009

**Prepared by:
Dan McKeon
Executive Director
TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School**

2009 TrekNorth Annual Report

Table of Contents

Part I: School Mission & Vision Statement	Page 3
Part II: Executive Summary	Page 4
Part III: Learning Program	Page 5-28
Program Information: Advanced Placement	Page 5
MCA-II Local Comparison Summary	Page 6-10
AP/ACT/BST/GRAD Results	Page 11-14
Schoolwide Goals & Accountability Plan	Page 15
Reading Results	Page 16
Math Results	Page 17
Language Usage Results	Page 18
AYP Goal	Page 19
MCA-II Goal Series	Page 19-21
Non-Academic Goals	Page 22-25
Teaching Staff Information	Page 26-27
Program Successes & Best Practices	Page 28-33
Part IV: Organizational Effectiveness	Page 34
Board of Directors & Operations	Page 35
School Leader Evaluation	Page 36
Parent Involvement & Satisfaction	Page 36
Student Enrollment Information	Page 337-38
Admissions Policies & Procedures	Page 39
Authorizer Information	Page 40
Addenda	
Student Application & Registration Forms	

I. School Mission & Vision Statement

Mission Statement

The mission of TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School is to prepare young people to make a positive difference in their local and global community. TrekNorth will maximize student academic success by challenging and supporting individual students on an academic path that includes participation in a spectrum of vertically aligned college-readiness courses, including AP courses. TrekNorth will develop leadership skills in all students through required participation in wilderness experiences and outdoor skill development. TrekNorth will support students by requiring parental collaboration in key areas, by providing parents the necessary education and training to be an effective partner, and by committing to the successful implementation of a comprehensive wellness curriculum. TrekNorth will actively guide students in their process of developing a positive self-identity and a responsibility to serve their community. TrekNorth will graduate students who have the desire and ability to build community.

Vision Statement

TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School is a place where all students pursue a rigorous course of study and challenging wilderness experiences designed to prepare them for college and life beyond. Students are nourished by a supportive, healthy, and safe learning community of engaged peers, teachers and families. Students develop strong academic and life skills that give to them a positive self-identity and a strong connection to their community and to the world at large. *TrekNorth is a community* and graduates are capable of deliberately creating other communities similarly characterized by compassion, sustainability, challenge, and global thinking.

TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School
Preparing Young People to Make a Positive Difference in Their Local & Global Communities

II. Executive Summary

There are many methods for measuring the success, or lack thereof, when it comes to public schools. While many schools can be successful here or there, through one measurement or another, a truly successful school is one that can show success through nearly any measurement. Such is the case with TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School. Be it enrollment, test scores, financial management, parent or student satisfaction, teacher turnover rates, or Board governance, TrekNorth, after only 6 years of operation, measures as a successful school. Over the past three years the school has been operating at a full capacity of students, and those students have taken more tests, both curriculum-based and standardized, and those test scores continue to rise. Furthermore, the staff has taken important steps towards unifying the Advanced Placement/Pre-Advanced Placement curriculum as well as the methods they use for delivering that curriculum, and the vast majority of students and families give tremendously positive feedback regarding their experience with TrekNorth. TrekNorth also demonstrates success through external measures, as the Minnesota Department of Education has deemed TrekNorth a school “Making Adequate Yearly Progress” two years in a row, and *US News & World Report* ranked TrekNorth as one of the top public high schools in the state of Minnesota two years in a row (December 2007, 2008).

While there are many success stories coming out of TrekNorth, the school continues to face the challenges that are an inherent part of operating a charter school in the town of Bemidji – public relations, marketing, etc. Even more significant challenges include maintaining the momentum the school has towards a fully-realized AP/Pre-AP curriculum, and finding ways to meet the needs of a student body that is quite diverse in regards to racial and socio-economic background, while at the same time pushing those students on to post-secondary academic experiences.

Enrollment trends at TrekNorth indicate that the school is becoming a more desirable alternative for local families. TrekNorth operated at full capacity for the last three school years, and has started the 2009-10 school year at full capacity and with more than 30 students on the waiting list. This is likely the result of both good performance on standardized assessments and positive word-of-mouth advertising done by students and parents who spread good reports about the school. TrekNorth has students from a large geographical area – everywhere from Park Rapids to Red Lake to Cass Lake to BlackDuck – an area bigger than the state of New Jersey.

Measures of academic progress, including Advanced Placement Exams, the MCA-II, the ACT, and curriculum-based measures, indicate that student performance and achievement continue to rise. The school has been operating with a curriculum founded in AP/Pre-AP programming for four full years, and many students have decided to rise to the challenge and enjoy the success of such a demanding curriculum. Teachers too have responded, and the staff becomes better and more unified each year in their delivery of the rigor, skills, and content of AP/Pre-AP materials.

Operating a charter school in Bemidji means running a business in a highly competitive market, and TrekNorth continues to search for effective marketing strategies. While

enrollment is good and classrooms are full, deep waiting lists have yet to develop. Public perception is quick to form and hard to change, but there is no denying the fact that change is indeed happening, and the result is that more parents are taking notice and more parents are considering choosing TrekNorth. The school's efforts to address these challenges are discussed under *Program Successes & Challenges*.

For a school to function with a fully-developed AP/Pre-AP curriculum several things must be in place. First and foremost, *the school must be staffed by individuals who genuinely believe that every student can and should take Advanced Placement courses*. TrekNorth is closer to this now than we've ever been before. Next, the staff must work to properly align their curriculum so that students can develop the skills, habits of mind, and exposure to content necessary to be successful at the Advanced Placement level. Finally, the staff must develop uniform approaches for the delivery of this aligned curriculum. These steps are part of a multi-year process for TrekNorth, and the school's efforts to overcome this challenge are also discussed under *Program Successes & Challenges*.

III. Learning Program

General Information: Advanced Placement

The TrekNorth Learning Program is anchored in the Advanced Placement/Pre-Advanced Placement Program and driven with a vertical-teaming approach. In the spring of 2005 TrekNorth made the commitment to developing a AP/Pre-AP Program, and this is the fourth year into that commitment. Goals for the learning program include rising AP Exam scores, improved performance on MCA-II and college-entrance exams, and a higher rate of TrekNorth graduates enrolling in post-secondary academic institutions.

The Advanced Placement Program is based on a foundation of high expectations. The basic premise is that all students, regardless of ethnic background or socio-economic status, can succeed in an environment of high expectations and academic rigor. The majority of TrekNorth students receive school lunch for free or at a reduced rate, and many of them, if they were to go to college, would be the first in their family to do so. Additionally, more than 30% of the students at TrekNorth are of minority descent, a traditionally underserved population. In order for the TrekNorth Advanced Placement Program to be successful, the staff has had to fully commit to the tenets, structure and rigor of Advanced Placement. The manifestation of this commitment will be increased success on the national AP Exams, but also a formalized and documented Pre-AP/AP curriculum that works like a vertical ladder, with students progressing up the rungs as they move through content and skill sets. Finally, another premise of Advanced Placement Programming is that this exposure to rigor and high standards should start earlier than high school; thus, in the fall of 2006, TrekNorth expanded to include grades 7 and 8, and we've made impressive progress with our 7th and 8th grade program over the past three years.

MCA-II Testing & Local Comparison

Executive Analysis of 2009 Results

Ultimately, MCA-II results are used in the computation of Adequate Yearly Progress through No Child Left Behind legislation. In 2009, as in 2008, TrekNorth was labeled a school “Making Adequate Yearly Progress”, meaning we’d met the targets for performance and participation on MCA-II Exams, but also with targets related to student attendance and graduation rates. So, by this measure, TrekNorth was successful with MCA-II testing.

Looking at more than simply NCLB and AYP, the 2009 results for MCA-II reveal both strengths and weaknesses of the TrekNorth academic program. First of all, of the 6 different MCA-II assessments TrekNorth is required to give, the school had the highest proficiency rate in the region on 4 of them (7th grade reading, 8th grade math and reading, and 10th grade reading). Reading is clearly a strength within the TrekNorth curriculum. All three grades tested scored higher proficiency rates than other area schools and were higher than state averages. Our math scores, while locally competitive, show that TrekNorth clearly needs to improve upon math instruction; regardless of the low scores statewide, TrekNorth students need to be capable of being successful on that assessment.

In order to get an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the TrekNorth curriculum and teaching staff, one must disaggregate the data into demographic groups. At TrekNorth, this means looking at proficiency rates for American Indian student and Low Income students. A table with this information is included; one will see that TrekNorth is clearly a school that serves all students well and is a school working towards closing the achievement gap.

2009 MCA-II Results & Local Comparison

7th Grade Math

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	7	Math	20	73 (D = 27%)
TrekNorth 08	7	Math	53	84 (D = 16%)
TrekNorth 09	7	Math	40	64 (D = 36%)
Bemidji 09	7	Math	50	
Blackduck 09	7	Math	59	
Bagley 09	7	Math	49	
Cass Lake 09	7	Math	46	
Schoolcraft 09	7	Math	42	
Red Lake 09	7	Math	8	
Walker 09	7	Math	40	
Laporte 09	7	Math	12	
State 09	7	Math	62	

7th Grade Reading

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	7	Reading	50	88 (D = 12%)
TrekNorth 08	7	Reading	63	84 (D = 16%)
TrekNorth 09	7	Reading	68	84 (D = 16%)
Bemidji 09	7	Reading	59	
Blackduck 09	7	Reading	59	
Bagley 09	7	Reading	61	
Cass Lake 09	7	Reading	49	
Schoolcraft 09	7	Reading	68	
Red Lake 09	7	Reading	16	
Walker 09	7	Reading	41	
Laporte 09	7	Reading	48	
State 09	7	Reading	64	

MCA-II

8th Grade Math

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	8	Math	40	65 (D = 35%)
TrekNorth 08	8	Math	23	45 (D = 55%)
TrekNorth 09	8	Math	68	84 (D = 16%)
Bemidji 09	8	Math	58	
Blackduck 09	8	Math	60	
Bagley 09	8	Math	32	
Cass Lake 09	8	Math	39	
Schoolcraft 09	8	Math	43	
Red Lake 09	8	Math	2	
Walker 09	8	Math	53	
Laporte 09	8	Math	17	
State	8	Math	59	

8th Grade Reading

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	8	Reading	62	71 (D = 29%)
TrekNorth 08	8	Reading	55	81 (D = 45%)
TrekNorth 09	8	Reading	88	96 (D = 4%)
Bemidji 09	8	Reading	67	
Blackduck 09	8	Reading	71	
Bagley 09	8	Reading	56	
Cass Lake 09	8	Reading	50	
Schoolcraft 09	8	Reading	77	
Red Lake 09	8	Reading	8	
Walker 09	8	Reading	69	
Laporte 09	8	Reading	48	
State	8	Reading	66	

MCA-II

10th Grade Reading

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	10	Reading	79	96 (D = 4%)
TrekNorth 08	10	Reading	81	94 (D = 6%)
TrekNorth 09	10	Reading	86	97 (D = 3%)
Bemidji 09	10	Reading	86	
Blackduck 09	10	Reading	79	
Bagley 09	10	Reading	72	
Cass Lake 09	10	Reading	45	
Harbor City 09	10	Reading	73	
Voyageurs 09	10	Reading	38	
Bemidji LJ 09	10	Reading	38	
Red Lake 09	10	Reading	11	
Walker 09	10	Reading	62	
Laporte 09	10	Reading	59	
State	10	Reading	74	

11th Grade Math

D = does not meet standard	P = partially meets standard	M = meets standard	E = exceeds standard	
School & Year	Grade	Subject	% of M + E	% of P + M + E
TrekNorth 07	11	Math	38	56 (D = 44%)
TrekNorth 08	11	Math	31	62 (D = 38%)
TrekNorth 09	11	Math	33	60 (D = 40%)
Bemidji 09	11	Math	44	
Blackduck 09	11	Math	20	
Bagley 09	11	Math	15	
Cass Lake 09	11	Math	15	
Harbor City 09	11	Math	32	
Voyageurs 09	11	Math	6	
Bemidji LJ 09	11	Math	25	
Red Lake 09	11	Math	2	
Walker 09	11	Math	30	
Laporte 09	11	Math	23	
State	11	Math	41	

MCA-II

Percentage of Students Testing Proficient by Demographic

Demographic & Subject	TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High	Bemidji High School	Bemidji Lumberjack	Bemidji Middle School
American Indian - Math	45%	32%	27%	22%
American Indian - Read	85%	76%	29%	34%
Low Income - Math	50%	19%	22%	39%
Low Income - Reading	79%	69%	50%	52%

Percentage of American Indian Students Testing Proficient in MCA-II Reading

Grade	State	TrekNorth
7	43%	86%
8	43%	86%
10	50%	80%

Percentage of American Indian Students Testing Proficient in MCA-II Math

Grade	State	TrekNorth
7	35%	43%
8	31%	57%
11	18%	25%

Advanced Placement Participation & Exam Results

Executive Analysis of 2009 Results for AP Participation & Exams

The TrekNorth Board of Directors and the faculty of the school consider results linked to Advanced Placement Courses and Exams as the most important single piece of data regarding student achievement. Our goal is to graduate students who are ready for the college classroom, and there is no more definitive proof of this than AP Exam scores of 3 or higher. TrekNorth has restructured their Accountability Plan and School Goals to reflect the value TrekNorth places on AP results. The TrekNorth Mission Statement specifically states AP involvement and success our highest aim, and believes that a student who can perform in the AP classroom is clearly ready to succeed in the college classroom. TrekNorth made their commitment to Advanced Placement in the spring of 2005, and the results prove the wisdom of this commitment.

2008-09 was TrekNorth's most successful year for AP participation and exam performance. Three simple pieces of data support that fact: first, our average AP Exam score was 3.44, which is a .61 increase from the previous year, and our highest average ever. Second, there was a 20% increase in the number of tests scoring 3 or higher. Finally, 50% of our 2009 graduates took and passed at least one AP Exam during their high school career (compared to 15% nation-wide and 14% state-wide). All of these point to the fact that TrekNorth is maturing programmatically, and more teachers are delivering high-quality instruction to a wider variety of students. This success is a result of four years of AP-driven professional development, with teachers gaining valuable experience in both the content and the skills necessary for their job.

AP Participation & Exam Averages

Year	# of students who completed an AP Exam	# of AP Exams completed	% of students who scored a 3 or better	Overall average AP Exam score
2006*	41*	75*	48%*	2.60*
2007	33	52	62%	3.15
2008	41	72	71%	2.83
2009	38	51	78%	3.44

- *there was no AP Exam Participation Policy in effect for 2006*

Advanced Placement Exam Results

Course	Year	# of Exams Completed	Average Exam Score
Biology	2006	13	2.143
Biology	2007	6	2.667
Biology	2008	6	1.5
Biology	2009	3	2.0

Calculus AB	2006	2	5.00
Calculus AB	2007	6	1.833
Calculus AB	2008	10	2.3
Calculus AB	2009	3	3.3

Language & Composition	2007	7	2.571
Language & Composition	2008	NA	NA
Language & Composition	2009	NA	NA

Literature & Composition	2006	13	2.077
Literature & Composition	2007	10	2.400
Literature & Composition	2008	17	3.176
Literature & Composition	2009	13	2.8

European History	2006	10	2.5
European History	2007	4	2.5
European History	2008	NA	NA
European History	2009	8	3.7

Psychology	2006	14	3.857
Psychology	2007	15	4.733
Psychology	2008	11	4.181
Psychology	2009	11	4.45

Course	Year	# of Exams Completed	Average Exam Score
US History	2006	10	2.00
US History	2007	4	2.75
US History	2008	14	2.571
US History	2009	7	4.0

Statistics	2008	8	2.375
Statistics	2009	6	3.3

Studio Art	2008	7	2.571
Studio Art	2009	7	2.6

ACT Results

Executive Analysis ACT Results from 2009

Because our program places such a strong emphasis on post-secondary planning, it is important that our students do well on college-entrance exams. It is concerning then, when compared to other testing results from 2009, the ACT data stands out as a glaring weak spot.

SUBJECT	TREKNORTH AVERAGE	STATE AVERAGE	NATIONAL AVERAGE
English 2007	23.0	21.8	20.7
English 2008	23.43	21.9	20.6
English 2009	21.3	22.0	20.6

Mathematics 2007	21.3	22.5	21.0
Mathematics 2008	22.0	22.6	21.0
Mathematics 2009	18.1	22.7	21.0

Reading 2007	24.0	22.8	21.5
Reading 2008	24.4	23.0	21.4
Reading 2009	23.6	23.1	21.4

Science 2007	21.7	22.5	21.0
Science 2008	22.8	22.5	20.8
Science 2009	21.1	22.6	20.9

Composite Score 2007	22.6	22.5	21.2
Composite Score 2008	23.3	22.6	21.1
Composite Score 2009	21.1	22.7	21.1

GRAD Results

TrekNorth students are required to pass state proficiency tests in order to receive a valid diploma. The graduating class of 2009 was the last class that had to pass the BST (Basic Skills Test), while the class of 2010 and beyond must pass the GRAD (Graduation Required Assessment for Diploma). Students who fail to pass one of these tests during their initial assessment are scheduled into certain classes so as to insure they'll get the instruction they need in order to test proficient when re-tested.

Test	Grade Level	Results # Passed / # Taken, % Passing
GRAD Writing	9	22/24 92%
GRAD Reading	10	25/29 86%
GRAD Math	11	15/30 50%
GRAD Writing*	10	2/4 50%
GRAD Reading*	11	2/5 40%

*These students re-tested because they've failed to meet the standards during previous opportunities.

School-Wide Goals & Accountability Plan

TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School Accountability Plan

In April 2008, the TrekNorth Board of Directors met for a strategic planning session. One of the primary areas of discussion was our out-dated School-Wide Goals and Accountability Plan, which hadn't been revised since the origination of the school. Yet, over the first five years of operation, TrekNorth had changed drastically, from a school with a project-based learning model to one completely driven by Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement learning. One of the end results of the strategic planning session was a brand new set of goals with a real focus on the measurements we consider most important.

Establishing Data Regarding Student Achievement

TrekNorth uses the results of the Minnesota state standards tests (MCA-II, GRAD), Advanced Placement exams, nationally-normed tests (ACT), and curriculum-based assessments to establish baseline data. This provides data that ranges from general to specific, and the combination of this data tells an accurate story of student achievement at TrekNorth. Additionally, the combination of this data gives us information about how we're competing with local schools, schools across the state of Minnesota, and schools across the United States, as well as information about how we're doing in relation to the goals we've set for student achievement in our school.

Academic Goal #1

All students will improve reading comprehension skills as measured by curriculum based measures, standardized test scores, and Advanced Placement performance.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
GRAD <i>Reading</i>	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Reading Exam is 90% or higher	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Reading Exam is 80%-89%	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Reading Exam is less than 80%
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X 86%	
MCA-II Reading <i>Grade-level Proficiency</i>	See AYP Goal and MCA II Goal Series below		
Pre-AP <i>Curriculum Based Measure</i>	75% or more of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on reading-based assessments.	50%-74% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on reading-based assessments.	Less than 50% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on reading-based assessments.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X 57%	
Advanced Placement <i>AP Exam Performance</i>	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above matches or exceeds the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 5% of the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 10% of the national mean per subject.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>	X Based on AP Exams that have significant reading comprehension		
ACT <i>Reading</i>	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is 80% or higher.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is 60%-79%.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is less than 60%.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X 61%	

Academic Goal #2

All students will improve mathematics skills as measured by curriculum based measures, standardized test scores, and Advanced Placement performance.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
GRAD <i>Math</i>	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Math is exam is 90% or higher	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Math is exam is 80%-89%	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Math is less than 80%
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>			X 50%
MCA-II Math <i>Grade-level Proficiency</i>	See AYP Goal and MCA II Goal Series below		
Pre-AP <i>Curriculum Based Measure</i>	75% or more of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned mathematics-based assessments.	50%-74% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned mathematics-based assessments.	Less than 50% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned mathematics-based assessments.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X 56%	
Advanced Placement <i>AP Exam Performance</i>	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above matches or exceeds the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 5% of the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 10% of the national mean per subject.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>	X Based on AP Calculus and AP Statistics Exams		
ACT <i>Mathematics</i>	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is 80% or higher.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is 60%-79%.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average is less than 60%.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>			X 27%

Academic Goal #3

All students will improve language usage and writing skills as measured by curriculum-based measures, standardized test scores, and Advanced Placement performance.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
GRAD <i>Writing</i>	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Writing is exam is 90% or higher	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Writing is exam is 80%-89%	Students receiving a passing score on the GRAD Writing is less than 80%
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>	X 92%		
Pre-AP <i>Curriculum Based Measure</i>	75% or more of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned writing-based assessments.	50%-74% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned writing-based assessments.	Less than 50% of students enrolled in Pre-AP courses will average 85% or better on AP vertically-aligned writing-based assessments.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X 64%	
Advanced Placement <i>AP Exam Performance</i>	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above matches or exceeds the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 5% of the national mean per subject.	The percentage of students scoring a 3 or above is within 10% of the national mean per subject.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>	X Based on AP Exams with significant writing		
ACT * <i>Writing</i>	The percentage of students exceeding the national average* is 80% or higher.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average* is 60%-79%.	The percentage of students exceeding the national average* is less than 60%.
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>			X 53%*

***As the national writing average was not available, the state average was used for purposes of this report.**

Academic Goal #4: AYP Goal

TrekNorth students will meet the requirements of AYP under the No Child Left Behind Act as established by federal and state law. Failure to meet AYP for three consecutive years will automatically result in the school being placed on Intervention with VOA, or if the school is already on Intervention failure to make AYP for three consecutive years may increase the school’s Intervention level.

2009 TrekNorth Results: TrekNorth is a school making AYP under the No Child Left Behind Act

Academic Goal #5: MCA II Goal Series

TrekNorth students will illustrate their progress while at TrekNorth through the MCA II goal series. These goals assure that students are making progress toward or maintaining high levels of proficiency of the state’s academic standards as evidenced through the state’s Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement II exam. The charter school’s performance on each indicator will be scored as:

- 4- Exceeds standard
- 2- Approaching standard
- 3- Meets standard
- 1- Does not meet standard

MCA II Proficiency: VOA-sponsored charter schools should perform as well as or better than the state, the district where the school resides, and schools with comparable demographics (schools in the same region that serve similar populations of students, as defined by socio-economic and minority status).

Indicator	4	3	2	1
MCA-II: Reading Percent of TrekNorth students, by grade, who meet or exceed expectations compared to the average:	Exceeds the comparison group by more than 5 percentage points	Within 5 percentage points of comparison group	6-10 percentage points below the comparison group	More than 10 percentage points below the comparison group
Statewide	8 th = 4 10 th = 4	7 th = 3		
in the Resident District	7 th = 4 8 th = 4	10 th = 3		
in the Blackduck District	7 th = 4 10 th = 4 8 th = 4			
in the Bagley District	7 th = 4 10 th = 4 8 th = 4			
in the Cass Lake District	7 th = 4 10 th = 4 8 th = 4			
in the Red Lake County District	7 th = 4 10 th = 4 8 th = 4			
at Harbor City School	10 th = 4			
at Voyageurs Exp. High School	10 th = 4			
TrekNorth Average Comparison	3.9			

MCA-II: Math Percent of TrekNorth students, by grade, who meet or exceed expectations compared to the average:	Exceeds the comparison group by more than 5 percentage points	Within 5 percentage points of comparison group	6-10 percentage points below the comparison group	More than 10 percentage points below the comparison group
Indicator	4	3	2	1
Statewide	8 th = 4			7 th = 1 11 th = 1
in the Resident District	8 th = 4		7 th = 2	11 th = 1
in the Blackduck District	8 th = 4 11 th = 4			7 th = 1
in the Bagley District	8 th = 4 11 th = 4		7 th = 2	
in the Cass Lake District	8 th = 4 11 th = 4		7 th = 2	
in the Red Lake County District	8 th = 4 11 th = 4			7 th = 1
at Harbor City School		11 th = 3		
at Voyageurs Exp. High School	11 th = 4			
TrekNorth Average Comparison		2.9		

MCA II Growth: Student level data are available to measure a student’s growth on the MCA II over time, if the student is continuously enrolled in a school. For more information on MCA II growth data go to the Minnesota Department of Education’s website.

Indicator	4	3	2	1
MCA-II: Reading Percent of students that made low, medium, and high growth	Low growth was less than 20 percent AND high growth was more than 30 percent	High growth percent exceeds low growth percent	Low growth percent exceeds high growth percent	High growth is less than 20 percent AND low growth is more than 30 percent
TrekNorth Results	X Low Growth 18% High Growth 46%			
MCA-II: Math Percent of students that made low, medium, and high growth	Low growth was less than 20 percent AND high growth was more than 30 percent	High growth percent exceeds low growth percent	Low growth percent exceeds high growth percent	High growth is less than 20 percent AND low growth is more than 30 percent
TrekNorth Results			X Low Growth 28% High Growth 27%	

Indicator	4	3	2	1
MCA-II: Reading Percent of students that are proficient with medium and high growth and not proficient with high growth compared to the percent of students in the same groups:	Exceeds the comparison group by more than 5 percentage points	Within 5 percentage points of comparison group	6-10 percentage points below the comparison group	More than 10 percentage points below the comparison group
Statewide	X TN Growth 73 State Growth 63			
In the resident district	X TN Growth 73 Dist. 31 Growth 63			
In comparable districts	X TrekNorth exceeded all comparable schools by more than 5 points (Average = 4)			
MCA-II: Math Percent of students that are proficient with medium and high growth and not proficient with high growth compared to the percent of students in the same groups:	Exceeds the comparison group by more than 5 percentage points	Within 5 percentage points of comparison group	6-10 percentage points below the comparison group	More than 10 percentage points below the comparison group
Statewide		X TN Growth 56 State Growth 59		
In the resident district		X TN Growth 56 Dist. 31 Growth 57		
In comparable districts		X TrekNorth average rubric score = 3.4		

Non-Academic Goal #1

All students at TrekNorth will participate in the Outdoor Adventure Program and Service Learning Program.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
OAP/SLP <u>Student Participation Rates</u>	90-100% of students will earn 1.5 credits through the OAP or SLP or a combination.	80-89% of students will earn 1.5 credits through the OAP or SLP or a combination.	Less than 80% of students will earn 1.5 credits through the OAP or SLP or a combination.
2009 TrekNorth Results	X 92%		

Non-Academic Goal #2

Parent Partners, the TrekNorth parent committee, will experience an increase in participation and a sustained presence in the school.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
Parent Partners <i>Average Meeting Participation</i>	TrekNorth averages 11-15 parents in attendance at monthly meetings	TrekNorth averages 7-10 parents in attendance at monthly meetings	TrekNorth averages 1-6 parents in attendance at monthly meetings
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>		X On average there were 7 parents in attendance	
Parent Partners <i>Event Coordination</i>	Parent Partners sponsors 5 or more events during the school year	Parent Partners sponsors 3-4 events during the school year	Parent Partners sponsors fewer than 3 events during the school year
<i>2009 TrekNorth Results</i>	X 5 Parent Partners Events were held		

Non-Academic Goal #3

TrekNorth students will demonstrate personal growth and increasingly healthy decision-making tendencies.

Indicator	High	Middle	Low
Search Institute Youth Asset Survey <i>Average number of reported assets</i>	The average number of student-reported assets will be 31-40	The average number of student-reported assets will be 21-30	The average number of student-reported assets will be less than 21
2008 TrekNorth Results*			X 17
Search Institute Youth Asset Survey <i>Decrease in risk behaviors</i>	The average number of categories in which students report a decrease will be 7-9	The average number of categories in which students report a decrease will be 5-6	The average number of categories in which students report a decrease will be less than 5
2008 TrekNorth Results*	Results unavailable due to interim between surveys		

**TrekNorth is in the process of deciding whether to continue the Search Institute Youth Asset Survey or make a switch to the Minnesota Student Survey, a free assessment offered through the MDE*

2. Special Needs Populations Academic Expectations

If a school’s special education or English language learner population exceeds 20 percent, then the school should also report the following information. This information is used to better analyze the school’s progress with high need populations.

The TrekNorth Special Education population does not exceed 20%.

3. Financial Viability – Does the school exhibit strong fiscal health?

The parties acknowledge that the Minnesota Charter Schools Law requires a charter school to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. This requirement has two underlying purposes: to ensure the successful operation of the school into the future and to ensure the proper use of public funds. Reporting on the following fiscal management goals will be included in each School Evaluation.

Fiscal Management Goals	TrekNorth Results
The school maintains a balanced budget.	In compliance
The school’s financial audit will be submitted to the state by December 31 st .	In compliance
The school will have a clean financial audit (i.e. no major findings).	In compliance
The school is current on all financial obligations, including, but not limited to: pension payments, payroll taxes, insurance coverage, loan payments and terms.	In compliance

The school will provide VOA with monthly financials at least three days prior to board meetings. Packets include at least the following: 1) detailed income/expense report, 2) cash flow sheet, and 3) check register.	In compliance
The school will develop and maintain a targeted fund balance determined by the school board for a projected period of years.	In compliance
The school board has a finance committee that meets monthly to review financials.	In compliance
All board members exhibit working knowledge of financial oversight.	In compliance

TrekNorth has provided VOA with a copy of its annual budget and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA Board has used the submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan for the current year. VOA has used the financial statements presented in the charter school’s annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior-year.

4. Organizational Aptitude - Is the organization effective and well run?

Governance

Reporting on the following Governance expectations will be included in each Performance Report:

Governance Expectations	TrekNorth Results
The Board of Directors will institute a review process, including timelines and written criteria, for the school leader;	In compliance
The Board of Directors will maintain a quorum for all board meetings;	In compliance
A board packet, containing the agenda, related documents, and monthly financials is distributed to all members of the Board of Directors, the school leadership and the Authorizer at least three days prior to each board meeting;	In compliance
The Board of Directors will comply with Minnesota Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. 471.705);	In compliance
The Board of Directors will institute an orientation process for bringing on new members;	In compliance
The Board of Directors will complete a self evaluation by March of each year;	Being developed
The Board of Directors will maintain a balance of skills and expertise among members at all times (i.e. business, marketing, legal, accounting, fundraising, human resources, education, etc.);	In compliance
The Board of Directors will maintain a “Board Binder” at all times which includes meetings minutes, board documents (bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc.), financial statements.	In compliance

Compliance

Each Annual Report shall specifically state the school’s performance in relation to legal and contractual compliance. Additionally, the school shall maintain a compliance folder on site that includes evidence of compliance for the following:

Legal & Contractual Compliance	TrekNorth Results
Minnesota Open Meetings Law (Minn. Stat. 471.705)	In compliance
Public Employment Relations Act (Minn. Stat. 179A)	In compliance
School district audit requirements (Minn. Stat. 123B.75 to 123B.83)	In compliance
Student immunization records (Minn. Stat. 121A.15)	In compliance
Minnesota Human Rights Act (Chapter 63)	In compliance
Equal opportunity in athletic programs (Minn. Stat. 121A.04)	In compliance
Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (Minn. Stat. 124A.40 to 121A.56)	In compliance
Minnesota Public Schools Fee Law (Minn. Stat. 123B.34 to 123B.39)	In compliance
Education of Special Education students (Minn. Stat. 125A.02, 125A.03, 125A.24, 125A.65)	In compliance
Educational data and records (Minn. Stat. 13.32, 120A.22 subd. 7, and 121A.75)	In compliance
Teacher licensure (Minn. Stat. 122A.18 subd. 1)	In compliance
Student legal records (Minn. Stat. 260B.171)	In compliance
The Pledge of Allegiance (Minn. Stat. 121A.11)	In compliance
Revenue for a charter school (Minn. Stat. 124D.11)	In compliance
PERA and TRA (Minn. Stat. 353, 354, and 354a)	In compliance
Applicable state and local health and safety requirements	In compliance
Minnesota Charter School Law (Minn. Stat. 124D.10)	In compliance
Conformance of the school’s governance structure pursuant to Section 4 of the contract	In compliance
Ongoing presence of management and financial controls required by Section 8 of the contract	In compliance
Administration of an open enrollment process and lottery pursuant to Section 7 of the contract	In compliance

Teaching Staff Information

Name	File Number	Assignment	Status	Term
Adams, Chance	423272	Social Studies 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2005
Bartlett, Melissa	426355	Language Arts 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired May 2008
Bernabe-Bjorklund, Maria	377507	World Language 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired May 2007
Carlson-Doom, Deborah	419642	Mathematics & Special Education 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired May 2006
Carman, Dave	438444	Social Studies 9-12	Non-Returning	Hired August 2008
Gustafson, Kristin	377643	Visual Art 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired July 2006
Harmsen, Erica	402513	Language Arts 9-12	Returning & Active	Hired April 2003
Jones, Jeff	400715	Mathematics & Computer Science 9-12	Returning & Active	Hired July 2006
McKeon, Dan	413110	Language Arts 9-12	Returning & Active	Hired April 2003
Moen, Greg	302179	Science 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired June 2007
Munson, Mike	290927	Social Studies 9-12	Returning & Active	Founder - 2002
Pietruzewski, Lydia	425395	Science & Mathematics 7-12 (worked as para- professional during 2008-09 year)	Returning & Active	Hired as full-time teacher July 2009
Olsen, Jodie	286778	Special Education 7-12	New & Active	Hired August 2009
Roy, Jennifer	409983	Science 9-12	Returning & Active	Hired July 2007
Wiggins, Andrew	998551	Discipline 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired December 2004
Wookey, Ronda	413236	Special Education 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2007
Zeman, Talia	424801	Performing Arts 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired 2004

Teacher Retention & Turnover Rates

Year	# of Classroom Teachers	% of Returning Teachers	% of Teachers Departing	# of New Teachers
2006-07	13	62%	31%	5*
2007-08	13	69%	31%	4
2008-09	13.2	92%	8%	1.2
2009-10	14.6	93%	7% (1 Teacher)	2.4

* Because of increased enrollment, TrekNorth added a teaching position for the 2006-07 school year.

In TrekNorth's 2007 Annual Report, there was a stated goal that TrekNorth would experience an 85% retention rate of teachers from the 2007-08 to the 2008-09 school year. As the chart above indicates, TrekNorth exceeded that goal, and 12 of TrekNorth's 13 teachers returned for that year. This trend of increased teacher retention continued into the current school year, with just one teacher deciding to leave for employment in another town. The rising retention rate is indicative of the increasing level of institutional organization and staff satisfaction.

The 2009-10 teaching staff at TrekNorth represents the most experienced staff in the history of the school. Between the relatively small number of teachers there is more than 100 years of teaching experience. Perhaps more importantly, there is collectively more than 50 years of Charter School teaching experience. Because working at a charter school entails unique challenges and duties, this data is important and indicative of a successful charter school.

There are several reasons why TrekNorth's retention rate of teachers is increasing, including rising salaries, improved institutional organization, less student transience, increased student achievement, and unique opportunities for leadership and ownership in the school. Several of these components are discussed in the *Program Success* section.

Program Successes & Best Practices

Advanced Placement/Pre-Advanced Placement Curriculum

In 2005 TrekNorth committed to establishing a curriculum grounded in a genuine AP/Pre-AP approach – and this means that every single student would enroll in AP/Pre-AP courses. One of the most substantial challenges in this commitment is the creation of a vertically-aligned curriculum. The development of such a curriculum is challenging because it requires first a philosophical commitment by every educator in the school, second it requires professional development opportunities formative enough to allow educators to even participate in the development of such a curriculum, and third it requires substantial amounts of time when department members can work together to actually create the curriculum.

The summers of 2007, 2008, and 2009 saw huge gains towards the realization of our goal of having a complete and aligned AP/Pre-AP curriculum. First, the hiring process resulted in having a higher percentage of teachers who believe *every single student can and should take Advanced Placement courses*. Second, most TrekNorth teachers have attended Advanced Placement Summer Institutes – either for their specific course or the vertical teaming institute for their department – each of these three summers. This not only raises the commitment level to AP/Pre-AP, it also gave teachers the knowledge and skills they need to develop the curriculum. Finally, TrekNorth has had seven days of in-service in August, rather than the customary three, and four of the seven were devoted entirely to planning time for departments to develop their vertically-aligned curriculum.

Now that the big pieces of the puzzle are in place, and the program has had an opportunity to mature, TrekNorth can move into the refinement stages, when individual teachers can be evaluated based on their participation in the development of the curriculum, as well as their ability to deliver this curriculum to students. While the school is far from finished with this work of implementing this important curriculum, the school is also much closer to achieving the goal than it has ever been before. Most importantly, AP Exam results show that the work being put into this curriculum is starting to pay off, as more students are experiencing more success on these important exams.

Outdoor Adventure Program

Now in its fifth year, the TrekNorth Outdoor Adventure Program (OAP) is probably the most ambitious and comprehensive public school outdoor education program in the nation. Nearly 100% of TrekNorth students traveled and learned through this program last year, and the goal remains 100% participation. The Outdoor Adventure Program of TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School aims to develop confidence, leadership, and integrity amongst student citizens by providing challenging and educational experiences in a wilderness setting. TrekNorth provides instruction in the areas of backpacking, rock climbing, canoeing, and winter skills. Students typically participate in 1-3 outings per year, some of them as long as 10-14 days.

The TrekNorth OAP has matured into a respectable and well-run program. The school's Outdoor Instructors, most of them also educators within the school, are all qualified and well-trained to provide challenging and well-managed wilderness experiences to teenagers. The OAP has developed signature destinations in order to provide exceptional experiences to students, and the structure of the school's budget allows every single student the opportunity to participate at very low or no cost. Earning credits through the OAP is a graduation requirement, but many students volunteer for many more trips than they actually need in order to meet the requirement. The reasons the OAP is so important and successful are numerous, but for the most part, kids learn skills that are important for healthy lifestyles, and they develop not only a respect for natural environments but also more meaningful and formative relationships with each other and with their teachers. The OAP makes the students better people, and it makes them better students.

Service Learning Program

An original part of the mission of the school but largely abandoned over the first four years, Service Learning is experiencing a revival at TrekNorth. 2008 marked the start of an official Service Learning Program and the establishment of a Service Learning Program Director. During the 2008-09 school year, students performed valuable service in the Bemidji area, Minneapolis, and Chicago, and their work took place in homeless shelters and soup kitchens, inner-city schools and food preparation and packaging organizations. This year, students are registered for service activities in the local area, Chicago, and Pine Ridge in South Dakota. The Service Learning opportunities are a nice partner to the OAP travel opportunities; many students who don't particularly enjoy the rustic characteristics of the OAP really enjoy the urban experience many of the service trips offer, and they come away from these experiences with a deeper sense of connection to their local and global communities, an essential experience considering the TrekNorth Mission Statement. Students are required to earn 3.0 Service Learning credits as a graduation requirement.

Home Visits & The TrekNorth Contract

By August of any year there are typically 45-55 new students registered to start at TrekNorth in September. Over the course of the summer, the Executive Director visits most of the new students in their own homes. The goals of these visits included initiating positive communication between the school and the home, an opportunity to review and discuss the TrekNorth Contract, and the opportunity for the students and families to get to know somebody from the school on a deeper level than simple student orientation provides. Response to the visits is quite positive, and the school year starts more smoothly and effectively because of this investment in communication and relationship building.

The TrekNorth Contract is a document that outlines the "job description" for every individual within the TrekNorth community, whether that individual be a student, a parent or guardian, or an educator. The TrekNorth Contract is the document that governs accountability on an individual level at TrekNorth, and all students and parents are expected to review and sign the document. During the home visits, the Executive Director can help parents and students review the TrekNorth Contract, and the discussion

about the expectations, because it took place in such a personal setting, becomes a meaningful document. Overall, the dividends of the home visits and contacts will be substantial as the year progresses, and this practice of visiting new students in their homes is something the Executive Director will continue to do.

Parent Partners & The Parent Event Series

Parent involvement at the junior and senior high school level is extremely difficult to generate. Other than Parent-Teacher Conferences, not much typically happens. In an effort to fight this tendency of non-involvement, TrekNorth has started an organization called Parent Partners. Any parent or guardian of a current or former TrekNorth student is invited to attend a monthly meeting at the school. The meetings have agendas, and the agendas include a report from the Director to the parents. Discussion includes school policy, school events, and event planning.

Parent Partner Goals

1. Increase communication between TrekNorth parents
2. Give TrekNorth parents a direct avenue of communication with the Director
3. Increase parent involvement within TrekNorth
4. Increase awareness within the Bemidji community of TrekNorth

School Finance Award/Financial Management

The School Finance Award, presented each year by the Minnesota Department of Education, usually to less than 20% of public districts in the state, is something TrekNorth aims to earn every year. TrekNorth has received this award five straight years, including 2009. Winning this award indicates the school is financially responsible with public dollars.

Overall, TrekNorth has excellent financial management. One can find evidence of this through the School Finance Award, within the Financial Audit Report, or through a general perusal of TrekNorth financial documents. The budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, based on a predicted enrollment of 155 students, plans a \$17,000 surplus, and the school still managed to make significant programmatic investments. The school also has a fund balance of more than 20% of the operating budget – another way to measure fund balance is by the number of months an organization could operate without expected income, and TrekNorth could run for 3 months – financial experts consider this to be indicative of a healthy fund balance.

Athletic Programs

Although many people would prefer that Bemidji Area District 31 be willing to cooperate with local charter schools so that all students could participate in extra-curricular offerings, this is not the case. In response, TrekNorth has started offering a small number of extra-curricular programs of our own. For the 2009-10 school year, TrekNorth has a coed soccer team, both boys and girls cross-country running teams, and both boys and girls Nordic skiing teams. TrekNorth also offers Knowledge Bowl for the Junior High students.

Tutoring & Saturday School

Because TrekNorth has extremely high academic standards, it is crucial that we offer extra forms of support for our students as they strive to meet our expectations. Part of this effort includes offering tutors two times per week after school and again on Saturday mornings. Students who need extra help with any of their classes are encouraged to work with the tutors, and parents/guardians are also encouraged to take advantage of this free assistance for their children.

Program Challenges

Pre-AP/AP Vertical Teaming & Curriculum Alignment

TrekNorth continues to work in the area of curriculum mapping and alignment amongst the various departments. Any success TrekNorth has at the AP level will be contingent upon a well-designed vertical curriculum. In order to facilitate this effort, TrekNorth hired College Board Curriculum Consultants to work with individual departments in August of 2008, and teachers continue to be evaluated on their ability to deliver an AP/Pre-AP aligned curriculum.

College Prep Curriculum

In support of our AP/Pre-AP curricular goals, as well as our desire to make college a possibility for every student, TrekNorth needs students to possess certain study skills and habits of mind in order to be successful. Over the years, a definite level of tension developed between what teachers expected from the students and what the students were capable of producing, or believed they were capable of producing.

For the 2007-08 school year TrekNorth added a 30-minute daily class for all students in grades 9-12 simply called College Prep I, II, III, or IV (I is for 9th grade, II for 10th grade, and so forth). During the subsequent two years, including the 2009-10 school year, improvements have been made to the College Prep Program. The class now meets twice per week for a total of 80 minutes. One focus of the curriculum is on study skills such as note-taking, reading comprehension, vocabulary expansion, and time management. Another major focus of the College Prep curriculum is to grow awareness within the student body of college admissions, college financing, and the college awareness. The final area of focus for the College Prep curriculum is test preparation, including preparing for state mandated tests and college entrance exams.

The TrekNorth student body is comprised of many individuals who aren't traditional college-bound students. More than 60% of our students receive free or reduced lunch, and 30% of our students are American Indian. If we are to not only prepare these students for college academically, but socially and emotionally, the College Prep class and curriculum needs to be successful.

Public Relations

TrekNorth's effort to become a valued educational institution in Bemidji continues. After a rough start over the first two years, TrekNorth has made progress, evidenced by an increasing enrollment by a wider variety of people, but the challenge of convincing the Bemidji-area populace of the legitimacy of TrekNorth remains. TrekNorth faces this

challenge through marketing efforts, including the newspaper, word-of-mouth, and website promotion.

Math Performance

As one can see from both our MCA-II and ACT scores, TrekNorth needs to improve upon proficiency percentages within math. Despite the fact that the school made AYP, and despite the fact that TrekNorth outperforms many area schools, the school is not satisfied with proficiency percentages that hover around 30-40%. To increase proficiency, TrekNorth is taking the following steps:

- Decrease the size of Pre-Algebra classes in the Junior High
 - The afternoon schedule of the Junior High was switched from 2 to 3 periods, which allowed for the creation of two sections of Pre-Algebra, one high and one low, and one section of Algebra I. Because it is the Pre-Algebra students who are at the highest risk for not testing proficient, this strategy should allow for lots of direct and personal math instruction for students in need.

- Purchase of additional math textbooks for Pre-Algebra
 - The purchase of new texts for Pre-Algebra widens the spectrum of content and skills available to our students through textbooks. The new texts specifically address strands of math where our students struggled on the MCA-II in 2009.

- Addition of new course: Algebra Foundations
 - Because TrekNorth requires students to earn 4.0 math credits, students are expected to go beyond the traditional sequence of Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. But depending on their post-secondary plans, not all students need to take Pre-Calculus, Statistics, or an AP math course. Because of this, TrekNorth has added a new course: Algebra Foundations.

- Better coaching of students in regards to ACT participation
 - One of the reasons our students tested quite low on the ACT is obviously because they were unprepared. However, unlike other schools to which we're compared, we pushed students to take the test who didn't really need to because their post-secondary plans didn't require an ACT score. Many of these students tested quite low. This year, we'll make better decisions about coaching students, and only have students who need to take the ACT in order to accommodate their post-secondary plans actually take the test.

Facilities

In 2003, TrekNorth entered into a 10-year lease with Arch Simonson of Bemidji Management, Inc. TrekNorth also received from the Bemidji City Council a Special Use Permit to operate a school within a commercial zone, and from the Bemidji Regional Airport Planning Commission a Variance to operate a school within Zone 2 (a zone that implies proximity to landing strips for aircraft). All of these factors combined mean that

TrekNorth is “stuck” in a facility that does not allow for the programmatic growth of the school. TrekNorth would benefit from a small expansion to its student body and more square footage for the facility, but neither of these are possible given the current situation.

To address the issue of facilities, the TrekNorth Board of Directors has created a Facility Committee, comprised of both teachers who are Board members and others who are not. The Facility Committee has met monthly starting in the spring of 2009. The Facility Committee has developed a timeline for the financial planning and actual construction or remodeling of a new facility, all of which will be completed no later than May of 2013.

IV. Organizational Effectiveness

Board Composition

TrekNorth Board of Directors

Current List (as of September 2009)

Julia Conlon (parent)
Board Chair
Finance Committee
jconlon@treknorth.org
Julia@evergreenhouse.org
51063 County Road 36
Bemidji, MN 56601
H: 218-444-9616
Term: June 2005-Present

Deb Larue (parent)
Governance Committee
114 Wilton Hill Rd NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-444-0828
Term: June 2008-Present

Lisa Peterson (community)
Board Secretary
Finance Committee
lpeterson@treknorth.org
lisap@nwmf.org
3945 North Country Circle NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
H: 218-444-6090
Term: June 2005-March 2009

Kristin Gustafson (teacher)
Program Committee
kgustafson@treknorth.org
6570 100th St NW
Walker, MN 56484
H: 218-547-4742
Term: Sept. 2006-Present

Andrew Wiggins (teacher)
Program Committee
awiggins@treknorth.org
218-785-2648
Term: June 2008-Present

Deb Carlson-Doom (teacher)
Governance Committee
dcarlson-doom@treknorth.org
2714 Beltrami Ave
Bemidji, MN 56601
C: 218-209-8386
Term: June 2006-Present

Jennifer Roy (teacher)
Program Committee
jroy@treknorth.org
2007 Agate Ln NW
Solway, MN 56678
C: 218-766-9673
Term: August 2007-Present

Jeff Jones (teacher)
Finance Committee
218-444-6013
218-573-3490
Term: June 2008-Present

Jim Walker (community)
jwalker@treknorth.org
jewalker@paulbunyan.net
809 Arch Lane SW
Bemidji, MN 56601
H: 218-755-8459
C: 218-556-7809
Term: May 2004-March 2009

Rochelle Johnson (parent)
Governance Committee
rochelle@paulbunyan.net
3524 Kimmur Road
Bemidji, MN 56601
Term: March 2009-Present

Mike Hruebin (community)
Finance Committee
minfin@paulbunyan.net
Term: March 2009-Present

Board Operations

The TrekNorth Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month except July and December, when they do not meet. Board Committee Meetings start at 6:00 pm and regular Board Meetings begin at 7:00 pm. Board Meeting minutes and announcements are available on the TrekNorth website. The Board of Directors uses the following monitoring calendar in order to plan Board activities and facilitate the monitoring of Board activities:

Board Monitoring Calendar

January	February	March	April	May	June
Board Training Calendar	Mid-Year Report Review	OAP Report	Board Elections	Budget Approval	Annual Meeting
Director Evaluation	Board Member Recruitment			Board Election Results	New Board Member Orientation
Testing Prep & Schedule Report	Director Evaluation Report			MAP Report	
	AP Report				
July	August	September	October	November	December
	AP & OAP Reports	Annual Report Approval	Audit Report Assurance of Compliance	Board Member Recruitment	
				MCA & MAP Report	

Board Accomplishments

Standing Committees

At the August 2006 Board Meeting the Board of Directors decided to create standing committees in the areas of Governance, Programming, and Finance. The goal of these standing committees is to create efficiency and effectiveness in board-level decision making, and it is clear that Board meetings have become more efficient and professional as a result of these committees.. The standing committees have been in effect since November 2006.

Strategic Planning

The TrekNorth Board of Directors first engaged in formal strategic planning in the winter of 2005, but finished a second two-day Strategic Planning Session in April of 2008. This more recent session was focused on Program, Facility, and Marketing. The end result was a revised Strategic Plan structured by Goals, Deadlines, and Resources, including

human resources. The session was very successful and should ensure continued progress in a positive, mission-driven direction for years to come.

Organizational Effectiveness

The TrekNorth Board of Directors has developed meeting routines and expectations for meeting preparation that have increased the overall effectiveness of the Board. This has been an important step towards becoming a strong governing power for the school.

Board Challenges

Board Member Recruitment & Training

The TrekNorth Board has gone through significant turn-over rates that have happened in addition to normal Board term and election turn-over. This has presented the problem of Board member training, because of the unique methods of Carver Policy Governance. This problem should be remedied by the work of the standing committees, which include recruitment and training for board members. TrekNorth has also generated a list of individuals to be considered for nominations to future vacancies on the TrekNorth Board. Some of the criteria involved in making this list include skill set, knowledge of charter schools, familiarity with TrekNorth, and commitment to the Bemidji area. Overall, in the years to come, the Board of Directors should become a more stable and predictable entity.

School Leader Review

The TrekNorth Board of Directors conducted their second performance review for the Executive Director in April 2009. The process included conducting surveys with the entire TrekNorth staff, and the survey form asked staff members to evaluate various components of the Director's work and score them on a scale of 0-5, as well as the opportunity to provide feedback and criticism in a narrative form.

This process will become an annual part of the Board's work, and the next review is scheduled to take place in January with the results being shared in February. As in 2009, the Board will appoint both teaching and non-teaching board members to the Executive Performance Review Committee.

Parent Involvement & Satisfaction

TrekNorth has several components to their parent involvement strategy. The two most important components, Home Visits and Parent Partners, are both discussed in the *Program Successes* section. Additionally, TrekNorth encourages parent involvement through Parent-Teacher Conferences, which are hosted once per semester, Powerschool, which is our student information system that parents can access online, and through a policy in the TrekNorth Employee Handbook, which states that teachers will notify parents/guardians when there has been "a substantial change in academic performance or behavior" of any student.

Student Enrollment

TrekNorth Enrollment By Grade, Demographic, & SPED Status (ELL is not applicable)

Grade Level	Total In Grade	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	African-American	Caucasian	Free/Reduced Lunch	SPED
7	19	6	0	0	0	13	19	5
8	32	11	0	1	0	20	16	4
9	29	8	0	0	1	20	18	2
10	30	7	2	2	0	19	17	7
11	29	7	0	0	0	22	21	6
12	33	6	0	0	0	27	8	5
Total	172	45 (26%)	2	3	1	121	99 (58%)	34 (19%)

Comparative School Enrollment: Percentage of Student Body by Race

School	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School	26%	1%	1%	<1%	70%
Bemidji Middle School	21%	1%	1%	1%	75%
Bemidji High School	15%	1%	1%	1%	82%
Bemidji Lumberjack High School	56%	0%	3%	1%	39%
Bemidji Alternative Education Center	36%	<1%	2%	2%	59%
First City School	45%	0%	5%	5%	45%
BYLAW	60%	0%	0%	0%	40%

Executive Analysis of Enrollment

Because TrekNorth has been operating for four years at full-capacity enrollment, numbers are not the concern they used to be. However, a comparison of enrollment by race across the schools within Bemidji is interesting. While the percentage of American Indian students enrolled at TrekNorth is 26%, the percentage at Bemidji Middle School is 21% and even lower at 15% at Bemidji High School. But the numbers are much higher in other District 31 schools – American Indians make up more than half of the student body within the Bemidji Lumberjack School, a remedial program with lower academic standards, and they make up more than 60% of BYLAW, another remedial program within District 31. In general, American Indian students are enrolled in lower-standard academic programs within District 31, while at TrekNorth they are enrolled in AP-level programming. One could make connections between the performance of American Indian students on state tests and the schools in which they are enrolled.

TrekNorth is in the fourth straight year of full-capacity enrollment. This is attributable to several methods of marketing:

1. Word of Mouth: Most parents and students who choose TrekNorth are deeply satisfied with their experience with the school, and they share their experience with others. Many people who make enrollment inquiries report that they decided to make the inquiry after hearing good things from a relative, co-worker, neighbor, etc.
2. Press Coverage: TrekNorth Administration meets periodically with local news reporters to discuss school progress relating to test scores, programming, and enrollment. There have been several major articles about the school in the local paper over the last twelve months.
3. Website Maintenance: www.treknorth.org has become a reliable source of information for the school, and more and more interested students and parents report visiting the website for information.
4. Local Advertising: TrekNorth periodically purchases advertising space in the local newspaper, promoting the unique TrekNorth program and putting emphasis on data that reflects positively upon the school.

Admissions Policies & Procedures

TrekNorth shall enroll any eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils will be accepted by lot, to be conducted annually on the third Friday in May. TrekNorth may limit admission of pupils within an age group or grade level. TrekNorth shall give preference for enrollment to dependants of school staff, to siblings of enrolled pupils, and to foster children of the parents or an enrolled pupil before accepting other pupils by lot. TrekNorth will not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability. A student continuing for the next year will be re-enrolled for the next year without re-application

Procedures:

1. Parents and Students interested in enrolling at TrekNorth can request an Application for Enrollment from School Administration or via an online request, available at www.treknorth.org
2. Students who submit a completed Application for Enrollment will be enrolled at TrekNorth if overall enrollment numbers and grade-level enrollment numbers allow.
3. The Executive Director of TrekNorth will encourage, but not require, an Enrollment Meeting, attended by the student, the student's parents, and the Executive Director.
4. If the student enrolls at a time when the school or the specific grade is at maximum capacity, the student will be placed on the Waiting List. Applications on the Waiting List will be ordered by date of application.
5. Applications that exceed availability that have been submitted prior to the third Friday in May will be placed in the Enrollment Lottery. Applications that exceed availability that are submitted after the third Friday in May will be placed on the Waiting List.

Authorizer Information

Authorizer Name: Volunteers of America

Authorizer Liaison: Katie Piehl

Authorizer Contact Information:

Volunteers of America

Attn: Katie Piehl

924 19th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: 612-310-8949

Authorizing, Accountability, & Relationship

TrekNorth first contracted with Volunteers of America (VOA) for authorization for the 2003-04 school year, and in May of 2009 received an unconditional renewal of authorization with Volunteers of America for the next five years. The relationship between TrekNorth and VOA can be described as positive and formative. TrekNorth continues to receive guidance from VOA in the areas of finance, learning program, and school leadership and governance. Additionally, the added level of accountability created by on-site visits thankfully forces TrekNorth to frequently compile, assess, and report on student achievement data. The combination of an Annual Report to MDE and VOA means TrekNorth is always considering data and using data to form the school. Because of VOA influence, TrekNorth is committed to using data to drive decision-making, and this has resulted in impressive gains in student achievement as measured by MCA-II testing, AP testing, the ACT, and in-class assessments.

