



# **2016-17 Annual Report and World's Best Workforce Report**

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## **I. Mission, Vision, and Core Convictions:**

### **Our Mission:**

Northeast College Prep will ensure strong academic, social-emotional, and talent development in every member of its diverse student body, thereby positioning each student for college graduation, career success, and positive community impact.

### **Our Vision:**

**Northeast College Prep students will be empowered** with strong academic skills and knowledge, social and emotional intelligence, deeply-developed personal talents, commitment to the common good, on-going support from the NECP community, and a deep love of learning.

**Northeast College Prep graduates will thrive** in the local, national, and international community in a wide range of professional fields.

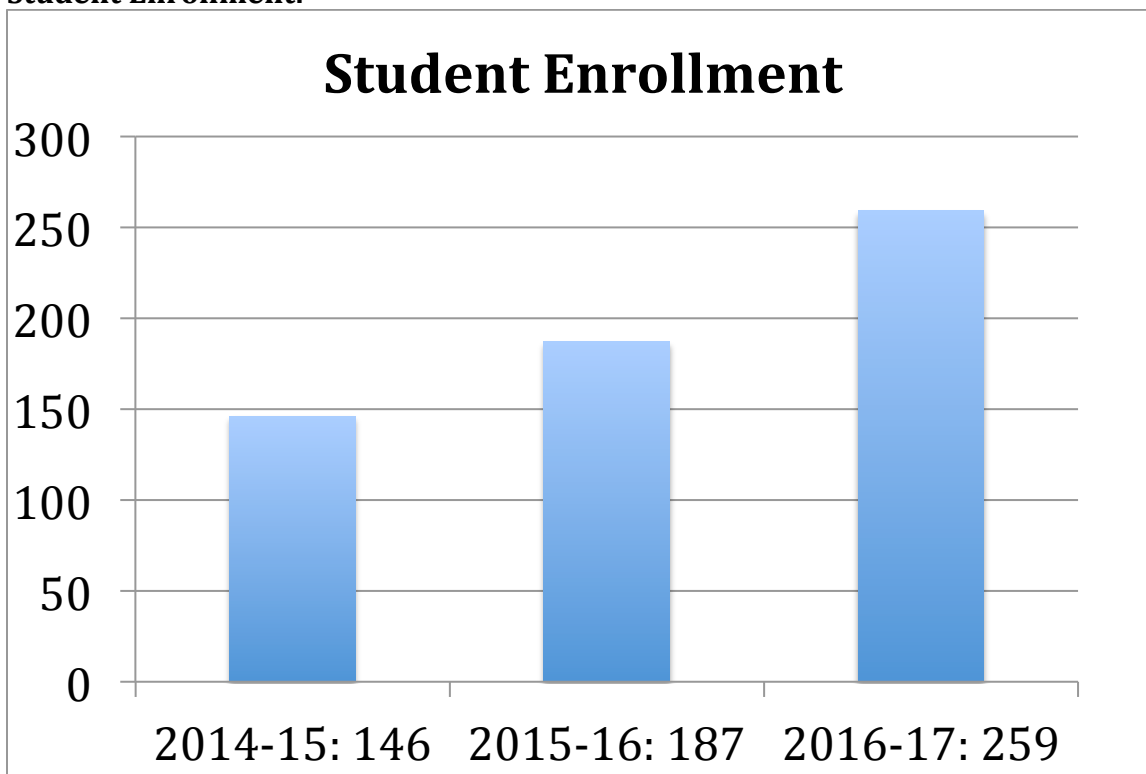
**Northeast College Prep's success will serve as a proof-point** that all students, regardless of background, flourish when a school's entire staff deeply believes in the potential and fully commits to the success of each and every one.

### **Our Core Convictions:**

1. All children have the potential for greatness within them.
2. Healthy childhood development requires strong academic, social-emotional, and personal talent development.
3. Strong academic development must be demonstrable through objective measures.
4. In all areas of childhood development, not everything that matters can be measured objectively.
5. Diversity enriches our experience and makes us better prepared for an increasingly complex world.
6. A long-term commitment between staff members to develop and support one another deepens a school's positive impact on its students and its community.
7. A child's education occurs amidst a partnership between the school and the family; a strong partnership increases the odds of a child's long-term success.
8. The clearest path to becoming a great school is to learn from great models.

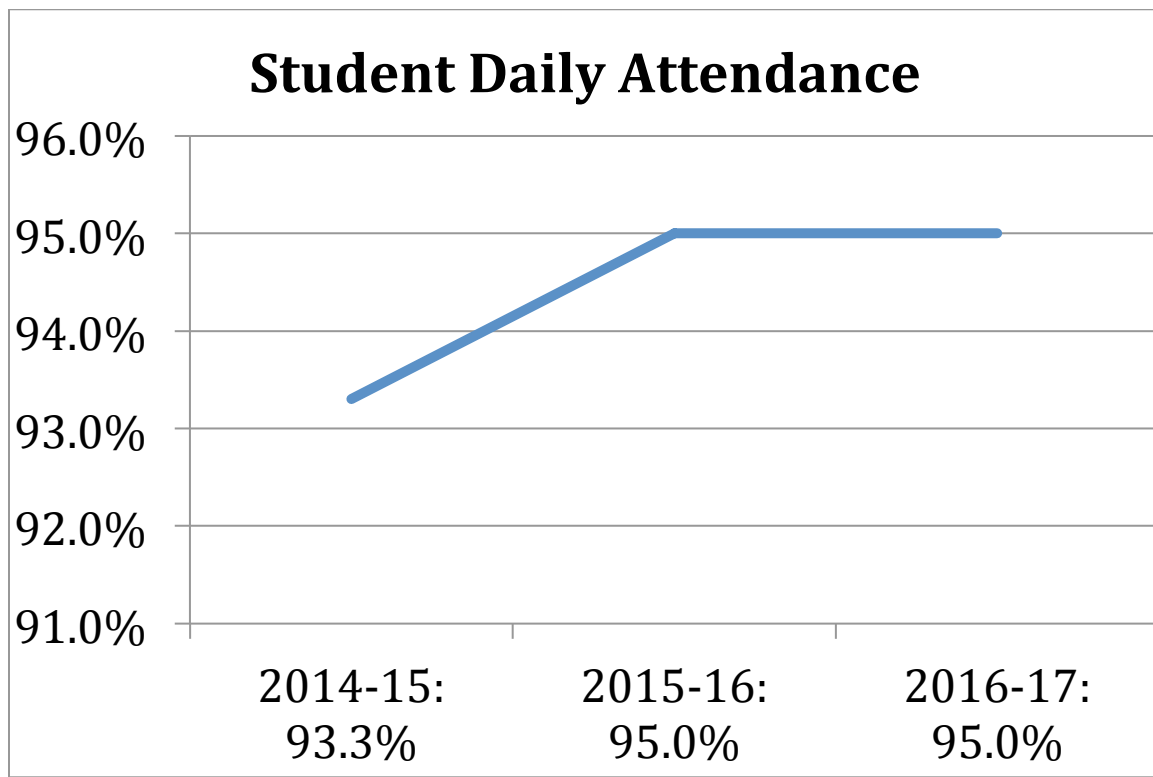
## **II. Student Enrollment, Attendance and Demographics:**

### **Student Enrollment:**



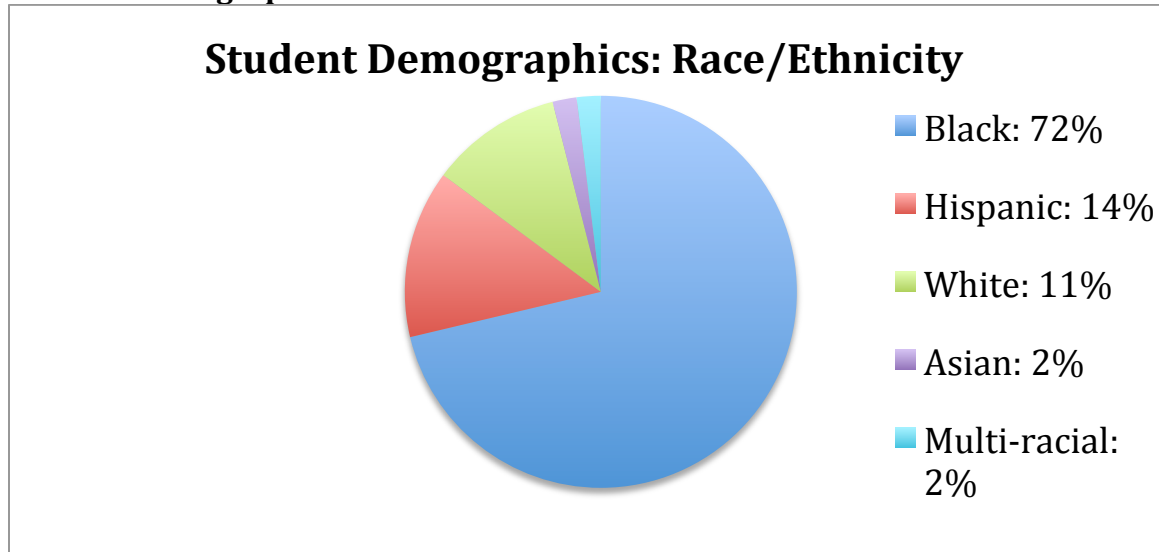
Our enrollment was strong for the third consecutive year. We added 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 2016-17, as we continued on our growth trajectory of adding one additional grade each year, up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. 2016-17 was our first year in our new, permanent home at 300 Industrial Boulevard Northeast. This not only enabled us to grow our enrollment by almost 40 percent from the previous year, but it also compelled us to do so, as we nearly tripled the size of our rented space from our first two years of operations. We had a much higher rent bill to pay, so we made strong efforts to bring in more students. For the first time, we had three kindergarten classrooms during the 2016-17 school year. We brought in about 110 new students from the end of 2015-16 to the beginning of 2016-17. This was about double the number of new students we had brought in the previous year. The school's strong reputation in the community continued to grow and spread, resulting in this high interest and strong enrollment. We also sent out a large number of mailings to the surrounding community, something we had never done before. This was effective in getting the word about our school and our new location, as it elicited over fifteen new enrollments.

### **Student Attendance:**

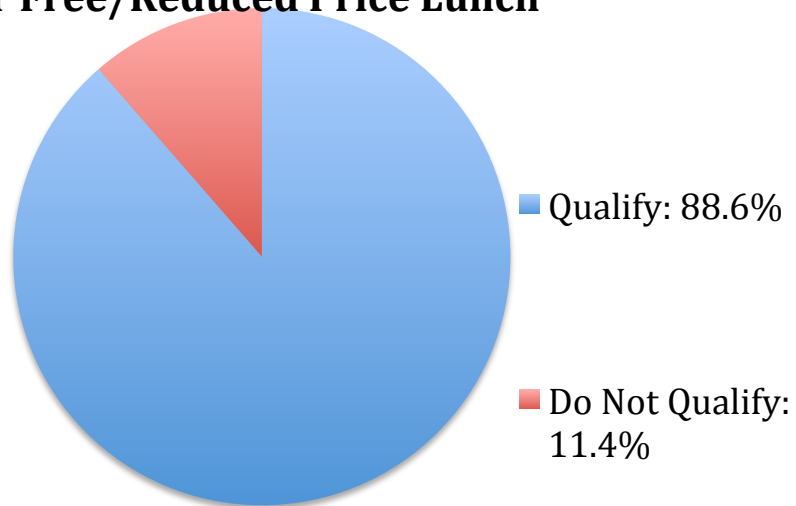


95 percent attendance is a goal in our authorizer contract. We did not hit that goal in our first year, but we did in our second year. Coming into the 2016-17 school year, we were confident we could hit this goal again. We already had several processes in place that had helped us increase our attendance rates in the previous year. Among these strategies the most effective was a half-time social worker who kept a close eye on any cases of excesses absences that had to be checked up on. These systems did, indeed, help us to achieve this goal of 95 percent attendance.

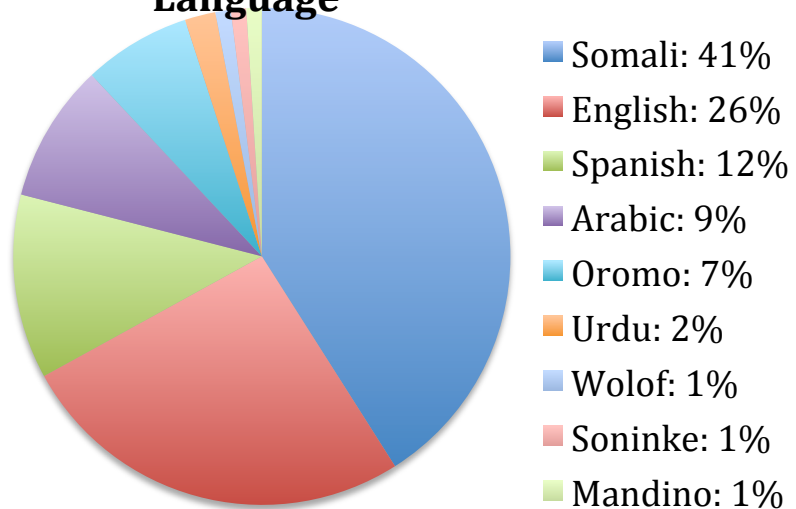
#### Student Demographics:



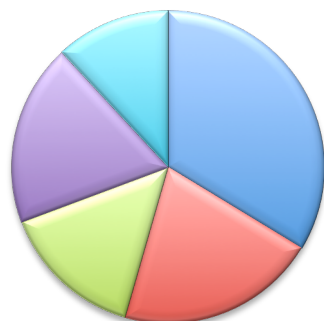
### Student Demographics: Students Qualifying for Free/Reduced Price Lunch



### Student Demographics: Primary Home Language



## Student Demographics: Where Students Live



- Northeast Minneapolis: 34%
- South Minneapolis: 21%
- North Minneapolis: 15%
- Columbia Heights: 19%
- Other Surrounding Communities: 12%

As you can see in the graphs above, our students are racially and ethnically diverse and they speak a lot of different languages in their homes. 72 percent identify as Black. Within that group identifying as Black, the largest majority of students are of Somali heritage, followed by African-American, Oromo, and West African. Within the group that identifies as White, almost all of those families are from the Middle East or North Africa, with four families being several generations Minnesotan. Within the group identifying as Hispanic, those families come primarily from Ecuador or Mexico. 70 percent of our students live in the city of Minneapolis, with about half of the Minneapolis residents residing in our home of Northeast Minneapolis, and other large contingents from North and South Minneapolis. The other 30 percent are concentrated primarily in Columbia Heights, but 12 percent live in other surrounding communities, including Fridley, Blaine, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center. The demographic diversity of our student population continued to grow in our third school year. In our younger grades (kindergarten, first, and second) in 2016-17, there was no single ethnic majority. When we choose recruitment events to attend, such as Minneapolis's Open Streets events and Head Start school fairs, and when we send out mailings, we do so in a very intentional way to ensure that all of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of our community has equal access to information about our school.

### **III. Student Attrition:**

From the end of the 2016-17 school year to the start of the 2017-18 school year we were able to determine the following data on student attrition/retention:

- Students who finished the 2016-17 school year: 260
- Current 2017-18 enrollment: 287
- Students who are new to the school for the 2017-18 school year: 66 (43 in Kindergarten)

- Students who returned for the 2017-18 school year: 221
- Students who did NOT return for the 2017-18 school year: 39
- Percentage of students who returned: 85.0%
- Percentage of students who did *not* return (2017-18 attrition rate): 15.0%
- 2016-17 attrition rate: 16.8%
- 2015-16 attrition rate: 22.8%
- Reasons for leaving the school:
  - Moved outside of transportation zone: 9 students (23%)
  - Distance and travel time to the school too long: 2 students (5%)
  - Not sure the reason (could not get in touch with family): 7 students (18%)
  - Got off the waiting list at another school: 2 students (5%)
  - Dissatisfied with transportation company: 2 students (5%)
  - Student was going to be retained in grade, family did not agree: 2 students (5%)
  - Chose another school: 17 students (43%)

85 percent student retention (continuous enrollment) is a goal in our authorizer contract. We met that goal exactly and continued to make progress in this area. The previous year our retention rate was 83.2 percent, and the year before that it was 77.2 percent. We are encouraged by this steady upward trend, but would still like to see our retention numbers higher. We invest a great amount of time and resources in each student that comes to our building. Our teaching approach and our curriculum takes a huge investment in teacher training and coaching. Getting our students accustomed to our expectations in the classroom and common spaces takes a large and on-going investment of time and resources. We are already in the planning stages for the summer of 2018. One measure we are planning to take to increase student retention is to invest in a staff member who will be paid to do outreach and staff the office over the summer (0.5 FTE or higher) to maintain close contact with our incoming and continuing families.

#### **IV. Governance and Management/Administration:**

We held our second round of board elections in June of 2017. This resulted in the re-election of Courtney Carter, a founding board member and current Board Treasurer. It also resulted in the election of Jessica Waletski, the parent of a current first grader and third grader. Jessica has had children in our school since the beginning of our start-up year in 2014. Our elections were held on the day of our School Carnival, June 4<sup>th</sup> and the following school day, June 5<sup>th</sup>. Around that time, one of our parent board members, Redouane Elattaoui, transitioned off of the board after serving admirably for three years. These changes left our board with the following composition:



Courtney Carter – Board Treasurer, Community Member  
[Courtney.carter@tntp.org](mailto:Courtney.carter@tntp.org)  
 612-644-0743  
 Founding Board Member: April 2013 to present

Katia Colon-Holmers – Board Member, Community Member  
[Katia.colon@gmail.com](mailto:Katia.colon@gmail.com)  
 612-205-1127  
 Founding Board Member: April 2013 to present

Jessica Waletski – Board Member, Parent  
[Jmwalet1@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmwalet1@hotmail.com)  
 763-607-4685  
 Board Member: June 2017 to present

Joanna Schneider – Board Chair, Teacher  
[boardchair@northeastcollegeprep.org](mailto:boardchair@northeastcollegeprep.org)  
 715-212-8406  
 Board Member: September 2014 to present

Joe Cole – Board Secretary, Teacher  
[jcole@northeastcollegeprep.org](mailto:jcole@northeastcollegeprep.org)  
 612-998-5786  
 Board Member: September 2015 to present

Jenna McKenney – Board Member, Teacher  
[jmckenney@northeastcollegeprep.org](mailto:jmckenney@northeastcollegeprep.org)  
 651-271-8370  
 Board Member: June 2016 to present

Mohamed Idle – Board Member, Parent  
[Moidle67@gmail.com](mailto:Moidle67@gmail.com)  
 952-594-0532  
 Board Member: June 2016 to present

Bill Graves – Board Member, Community Member  
[boardgovernance@northeastcollegeprep.org](mailto:boardgovernance@northeastcollegeprep.org)  
 612-743-5879  
 Board Member: June 2016 to present

The board members bring a wide range of skills and experiences, including legal, financial, fundraising, and previous charter school board experience. Our board chair, Joanna Schneider, transitioned from interim chair to chair during the 2016-17 school year. Joanna is a highly respected teacher and founding member of the school community who brings with her prior charter school board experience from previously serving on the Hiawatha Academies board of directors.

## **V. Board Member Training:**

Our board members continue to take advantage of charter school board training opportunities in order to better equip themselves to perform the duties of a high quality charter school board. Over the 2016-17 school year, the following board training sessions were conducted at board meetings:

- December 2016: Board Finance Training with Nick Taintor of Beltz, Kes, Darling and Associates: How to Read a Board Financial Report (Board Members Carter, Colon-Holmers, Graves, Schneider, Cole, McKenney, Idle, and former Board Member Elattaoui attended)
- August 2017: Board Governance Training with Beth Finch of Charter Source: Practices of High-Performing Boards (Board Members Graves, Schneider, Cole, Idle, McKenney, and Waletski attended)

Board Members also took advantage of opportunities outside of regular board meetings to acquire more training. Board Members attended the following board training opportunities through the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (of which we are a member) during the 2017-18 school year:

- November 2016: Board Governance Training (Board Members Cole, McKenney, Idle, Graves attended)
- October 2016: Financial Oversight Training (Board Member Graves attended)
- September 2016: Employment Matters Training (Board Member Idle attended)
- April 2017: Employment Matters Training (Board Member Cole attended)

## **VI. Staffing:**

Northeast College Prep is characterized by a hard-working, intelligent, dedicated, patient, and caring staff. Our teachers now average five-and-a-half years of teaching experience. In most cases, these years of experience are in diverse urban classrooms. In addition to staffing our school with people with successful urban teaching experience, it has been a top priority to have a diverse staff that reflects our students' languages and heritage. Currently, 49% of our staff are people of color; 33% of teaching staff are people of color; and 14% of classroom teachers are people of color. For almost all of the racial and ethnic groups that each comprise at least 8% of our student population (Somali, African-American, Hispanic, Arabic descent), we have at least 2 staff members who share their heritage. We still have a lot of work to do—we would like to see the percentage of staff members of color well over 50 percent within the next 3 years—but we surpass the majority of the schools around us in terms of staff diversity.

We had the following staffing structure during our third year (2016-17):

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Kindergarten	2	2	3
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2	2	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	1	2	2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	2	1	2
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0	2	2
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0	0	2
Physical Education	1	1	1
Spanish	1	1	1
Arabic	1	1	1
Art	0	0	1
ESL	1	2	2
Academic Intervention	0.3	2	2
SPED Teachers	1	2	3 (1 added Nov. 2016)
SPED Paraprofessionals	1.2	3	7.67 (2.67 added mid-year)
Office Manager	1	1	1
Director	1	1	1
Assistant Director	1	1	1
Academic Interventions Coordinator	0	1 (added Oct 2015)	1
Dean of Students/Talent Development	0	0	1
Office Assistant/ Interpreter/Outreach/Kitchen	2.5	2.5	3
Total FTE	19	27.5	39.67

*Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers:*

All of our classroom teachers in 2016-17 had a license in Elementary Education. All of our specialists and supporting teachers also had the appropriate licensure area except for a few cases in which we applied for and were granted a personnel variance. All grade level teams do common planning for all subject areas and all planning is aligned to state standards. During the 2016-17 school year, students took quarterly math interim exams, as well as three Fountas & Pinnell reading assessments and three FAST reading and math exams throughout the year to ensure that they were progressing through state standards and appropriate grade level skills. Regardless of which classroom students are in (each grade has two classrooms; kindergarten had three in 2016-17), students are engaging with the same rigorous grade level standards and thus have equal access to a rigorous curriculum.

**VII. School Director Professional Development Plan**

Early in the 2016-17 school year, Northeast College Prep obtained a grant to hire an external consultant to guide the school through a strategic planning process. The goal was to produce a completed strategic plan by the summer of 2017 that could serve as a guide for the school's major decisions over the next three school years. Completing a strategic plan by the summer of 2017 was also a condition the school agreed to in its original five-year authorizer contract. Over the course of the strategic planning process, one of the things that the participants examined was the leadership capacities and needs of the School Director. This process culminated in the school applying for and receiving grants to work with two external service providers, The Achievement Network and EdFuel. The Achievement Network will work with the Director and the rest of the school leadership team members throughout the 2017-18 school year in order to increase their capacity in the area of teacher coaching and data driven instruction. EdFuel will provide executive coaching to the Director in areas identified as growth areas for him after an initial assessment. The Assistant Director will also receive executive coaching.

Another part of the Director's professional development plan is to obtain principal licensure. Northeast College Prep's Director, Carl Phillips, has met with staff at the University of Minnesota's administrative licensure program. He already holds a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University in New York, New York, and needs eleven credits to obtain an administrative license in Minnesota. Part of his official professional development plan is to obtain that license by the end of 2018.

### **VIII. Finances:**

Northeast College Prep finished the 2016-17 school year in strong financial health with a fund balance over \$500,000 (11.8%) despite a small annual deficit of \$1,814 for the 2016-17 school year. This is a very strong position to be in after just three years of operations. The keys to this success have been strong enrollment, sound management, and robust fundraising. We achieved this financial stability despite moving into a new building at the beginning of the school year and having major expenses associated with the move, such as building out a wi-fi system, equipping the classrooms with technology and furniture, etc. Despite those expenses, we were able to keep staffing on pace with the increased enrollment and continue to enhance the quality of the academic program. We believed it was critically important to maintain a well-staffed, high quality program with plenty of resources available to teachers and students, even though this led to a small deficit. During the 2016-17 school year, we leaned on our history of strong enrollment and financial management, dipping just slightly into our reserves, rather than continuing to build them up. This was a strategic decision made by the leadership team and school board to prioritize building our brand and reputation over building up reserves. As a third year school, this was the right strategic move for the school.

One financial highlight of the 2016-17 school year was being named a recipient of the Minnesota School Finance Award for the third consecutive year.

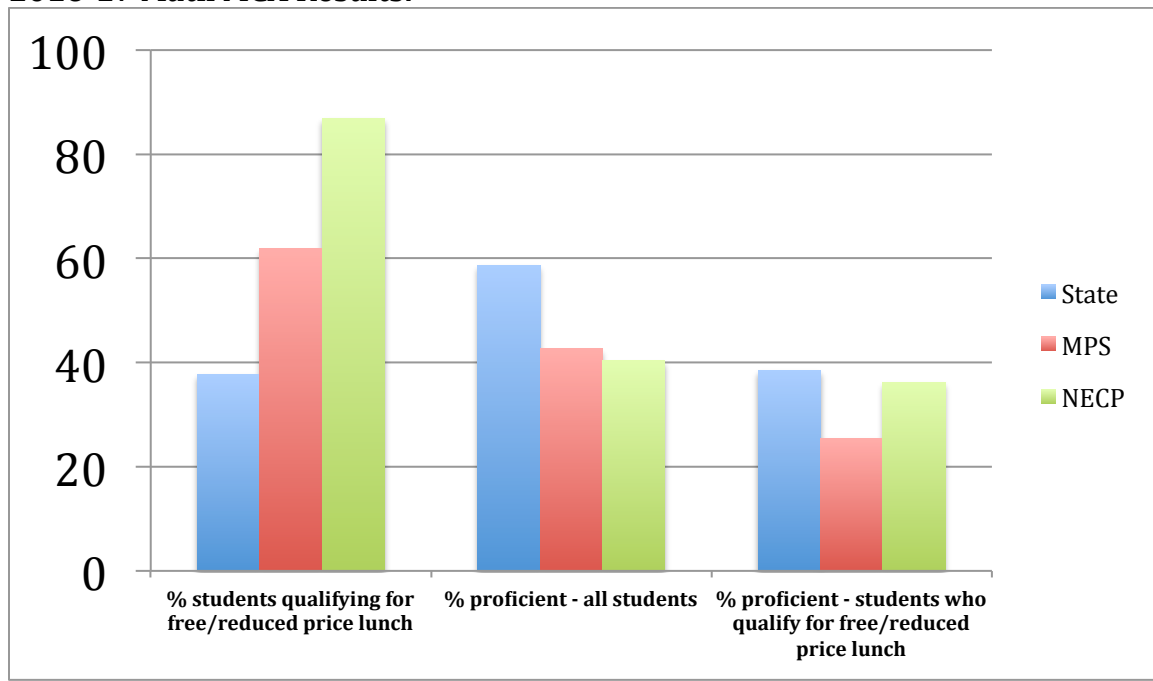
This is awarded to schools to recognize timely submission of financial data, strong financial health indicators, and accuracy in financial reporting. Another highlight was a third consecutive strong year of private fundraising. We raised the following amounts from the following donors:

- Smikis Foundation: \$60,000 plus an additional \$60,000 committed each of the next two years (FY18, FY19)
- Prospect Creek Foundation: \$50,000
- WEM Foundation: \$75,000
- David Winton Bell Foundation: \$15,000
- Sauer Family Foundation: \$20,000
- Minneapolis Foundation: \$50,000
- RKMC Foundation for Children: \$50,000
- Great MN Schools: \$35,000
- Individual donors: \$15,000
- KaBOOM! (playground funded by Target): over \$100,000 value

### **IX. Academic Performance:**

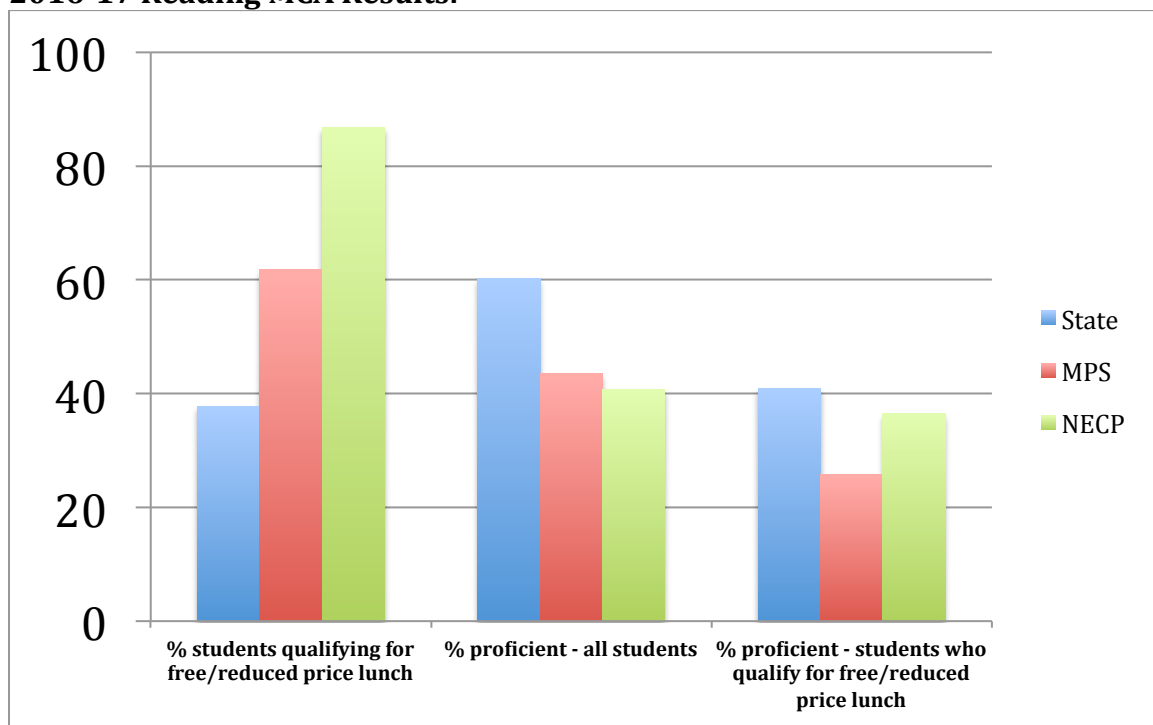
Given that our student population was overwhelmingly from minority racial and ethnic groups and 88.6% qualified for free or reduced price lunch, our student achievement goals aligned with the goals of the World's Best Workforce legislation to ensure that all students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy and all achievement gaps are closed.

#### **2016-17 Math MCA Results:**



2016-17 was the first year in which our reading results outpaced our math results on the MCAs. Our math scores dipped from where they had been in our first two school years—from 46.9% proficient in 2014-15 and 51.9% in 2015-16 to 40.3% in 2016-17. As is evident in the graph above, though our students' scores lagged behind those of the Minneapolis district when comparing all students, when disaggregated by free/reduced price lunch status, our students' scores exceeded the Minneapolis district's scores. It is possible that in ramping up our focus for professional development on reading instruction, we did not spend enough professional development time on math instruction during the 2016-17 school year. This likely has something to do with the drop in our math scores. We invested a lot of time and resources over the summer of 2017 in measures that we hope will return our math MCA results to their previous levels and beyond. Among these measures was creating six-week math assessments that align to state standards and are spiraled in a way that seeks to ensure that students have mastered all grade level skills before the MCA comes. In previous years, we had only done quarterly math assessments, and they were scheduled in a way that made it more possible for students to not have fully had a chance to master grade level standards before taking the MCAs. We also have plans to spend more professional development time digging deep into these six-week assessments, examine the depth of rigor of each question, and backwards plan from them to ensure mastery of standards at the requisite depth of rigor for each standard.

#### 2016-17 Reading MCA Results:



Our reading MCA results for the 2016-17 school year were an encouraging sign to us that our heavy investment in professional development for reading instruction is bearing fruit. Our reading proficiency scores rose from 25.9 percent in

2015-16 to 40.7 percent in 2016-17, a 14.8 percentage point increase. In comparing all students, our students' results were well below the state's and slightly below the Minneapolis district's. It is noteworthy, though, that when the MCA reading score data is disaggregated for free/reduced price lunch status, our students' scores significantly exceed those of the Minneapolis school district and are only slightly below those of the state. We hope that the significant upward trajectory reflected in the 2016-17 scores continues to be a trend during the 2017-18 school year. We plan to build on the effectiveness of our professional development initiatives in reading instruction in the coming school year.

Although we are not yet meeting most of our authorizer goals that compare our entire student population to that of the state and the Minneapolis Public Schools, we thought it would be worthwhile to compare our results to those of the Minneapolis district schools in closest geographical proximity to Northeast College Prep. The table below shows that comparative data:

	MATH PROFICIENCY	READING PROFICIENCY	% FRL	FRL MATH PROFICIENCY	FRL READING PROFICIENCY
NORTHEAST COLLEGE PREP	40.3%	40.7%	88.6%	36.2%	36.5%
WAITE PARK ELEMENTARY	69.3%	61.4%	49.9%	56.9%	43.1%
SHERIDAN ELEMENTARY	20.3%	18.0%	94.1%	19.7%	17.0%
CITYVIEW COMMUNITY	42.6%	13.3%	91.8%	9.2%	13.2%
MARCY OPEN ELEMENTARY	47.1%	51.4%	53.9%	29.7%	36.7%
WEBSTER ELEMENTARY	41.7%	33.3%	60.4%	20.0%	13.3%

All red cells in the above table indicate areas in which *Northeast College Prep's results exceed those of the comparative school*. It is evident here that when results are disaggregated by students who qualify for free/reduced price lunch, our results significantly exceed the majority of the Minneapolis district schools that are in close geographical proximity to our school.

### 2016-17 FAST Math and Literacy Assessment Results:

Among our academic goals in our authorizer contract are goals related to our students' performance on a nationally-normed assessment. These goals relate to students who have been continuously enrolled in our school for four years, so it is not yet possible to assess whether or not we have met these goals. The 2016-17 school year was our second year using the FAST assessment for our nationally-normed reading and math assessment. We gave it to students in the fall, winter, and spring of the 2016-17 school year. Overall in reading, in grades 1-5, students made an average of three percentile points of growth from fall to spring. This means that, for example, a student that began the year reading in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally vis-à-vis peers across the country, would have ended the year reading in the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile, thus passing three peers over the course of a single school year.

In math, average student growth was one percentile point over the school year. Like the MCA math exams, these results were lower than expected. We will be



monitoring growth in math through the new six-week math interim exams and the FAST assessments in fall, winter, and spring once again during the 2016-17 school year.

### **X. Professional Development:**

Meaningful, on-going, job-embedded professional development was a major area of focus in our third year once again. Erika Sass, our Assistant Director, continued to give targeted observations and coaching to our teaching staff as she had in our first two years. Joanna Waggoner-Norquest, our Academic Interventions Coordinator, joined Erika in giving targeted observations and coaching to our teaching staff. She also spearheaded several other initiatives:

- Our efforts to introduce a new reading assessment, the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment, to guide our reading instruction
- Our efforts to get our library off the ground
- Our efforts to ramp up reading instruction, with a particular emphasis on effective guided reading instruction and independent reading support.

The opening of our new library was a major accomplishment of the 2016-17 school year. This was generously made possible by a large grant from the Prospect Creek Foundation to fund the library. Opening the library proved instrumental in increasing students' interest in reading on their own and increasing the amount of time they were doing so in and out of school.

We also had a total of 19 full days of professional development over the course of the school year, as well as 2 hours every Friday afternoon (students are dismissed two hours early on Fridays). This added up to close to 200 hours of professional development over the course of the school year. Professional development topics included the following areas of particular focus:

- Reading instruction:
  - How to administer and use the data from the Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment (given three times during 2016-17)
  - Guided reading instruction with a particular focus on:
    - How to plan for and deliver rigorous small reading group lessons
    - How to set up your classroom stations and rotations so that the teacher can focus in on the small guided reading groups while the rest of the class is engaged in productive, rigorous work
  - Independent reading with a particular emphasis on:
    - How to conference with students about their independent reading book so that their independent reading time is helping them become a better reader



- How to increase students' excitement about reading and how to increase the amount of independent reading they are doing.
- Responsive Classroom (RC) strategies, procedures, and techniques
  - RC continues to be a foundational piece of our teacher training approach. By the end of summer 2017, all teachers who had been with us for two years had been trained for at least one full week in formal RC training. We also spent well over 5 hours during 2016-17 doing "in house" RC training within our staff. We will continue investing in this training, as the RC approach has shown great results in creating a peaceful, caring community, and in developing self-regulation strategies and intrinsic motivation in students.
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) training
  - All of our teachers who joined us either in the first year or the second are now trained in at least level one IB PYP. We began to send some more senior staff to level two IB training. We also had an official visit from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) in October of 2016. This brought us one step closer to becoming an IB Authorized World School. We are expecting this to be finalized in early 2018.
- Educational Non-verbal Yardsticks (ENVoY) techniques
  - We sent over twenty staff members to a two-day ENVoY training in early August of 2016. All of our staff that joined us in the first (2014-15) or second year (2015-16) has had ENVoY's foundational "7 Gems" training twice, and all those who joined us in our third year (2016-17) have had it once and will have it again in the 2016-17 school year. ENVoY, like RC, continues to be a foundational program in our approach to managing classrooms and common areas.
- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies for English Learners
  - Because two-thirds of our students are English Learners, this must always be an area of emphasis. All of our teachers are not just content teachers, but language teachers; we are clear about the importance of this from the very outset with our teachers.
- Welcoming Schools community building and anti-bullying strategies
  - We did several Welcoming Schools training sessions to create a safe and bullying-free environment for all students.

## **XI. Parent Satisfaction**

Parent satisfaction with the school continues to be very important to us. Early in the school year, before our first parent/guardian-teacher conferences in November, our teachers conduct home visits. This was the third year we have done those. Once again, they were a highly effective strategy in our work to establish a foundation of trust and understanding between our families and our staff. We also held monthly family evening events at the school, including an Open House in September, parent-teacher conferences in November and March, Festival of Nations in January, and a Community Resources/Literacy event in May. In order to measure parent satisfaction, we sent out a parent survey in February of 2016. We received a response rate of 51%. We were pleased with the results, which were as follows:

	Very +	Somewhat +	Somewhat -	Very -	No answer recorded
<b>How happy is your child at NECP?</b>	84%	11%	3%	1%	1%
<b>How much is your child learning at NECP?</b>	84%	16%	0	0	0
<b>How safe is your child at NECP?</b>	92%	7%	0	0	0
<b>How welcome do you feel at NECP?</b>	95%	5%	0	0	0
<b>How satisfied are you with the school's lunch program?</b>	76%	16%	8%	2%	0
<b>How satisfied are you with the school's bus service?</b>	55%	25%	11%	3%	0
<b>How satisfied are you with the communication that you receive from the school?</b>	89%	5%	3%	0	2%
<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with NECP?</b>	86%	10%	0	0	4%
<b>Would you recommend NECP to your family or friends?</b>	90%	7%	3%	0	0

## **XII. Innovative Practices**

We believe that our combination of programs (International Baccalaureate, Responsive Classroom, ENVoY, Talent Development) is quite innovative. Our large number of school hours, professional development hours and abundant teacher coaching is also innovative and aligned to what research suggests is most important for schools serving a high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Another innovative aspect of our school model is the language instruction and the way we offer two specialist classes daily. All of our students are learning both Arabic and Spanish, in addition to the primary language of instruction, which is English. Students have one hour of language classes every day, rotating between Arabic and Spanish on alternating days (e.g. the Gusties, a first grade class, has one hour of Spanish on Mondays and Wednesdays and one hour of Arabic on Tuesdays and Thursdays). Students also have either art or physical education every day, ensuring that there is time for either artistic expression or physical movement

each day (in addition to daily recess). Fridays are shorter days because students are dismissed at 1:30, so students rotate between the four specialist classes.

Our Talent Development Program is also innovative in that we are making it a part of what we do to ensure that all of our students find meaningful opportunities to discover and develop their unique personal talents. During the 2016-17 school year for the first time, we had a staff member, our Dean of Students, who had student talent development as part of her job description. She was able to build on a database of talent development opportunities in the community that was initiated the year before, share information with families so that they could connect their children to some of these opportunities, and work closely with some of our highest-needs students to help guide them into talent development opportunities. She also started a database for all students that will track their interests and emerging talents over time. One highlight of our talent development program was an evening event at which families could come to the school to learn about, connect to, and sign up for talent development opportunities in the community. We plan for this to become an annual event.

One of our great accomplishments during the 2016-17 school year was securing a grant from KaBOOM!, an organization that helps schools and communities throughout the country to fund and build state-of-the-art playgrounds. We think the process we went through to make this happen, from a long application, to bringing in students and families to design the playground, to securing over 150 volunteers from our school community (who teamed with 150 volunteers from Target), to building the actual playground on a single day (the 10<sup>th</sup> day of school of 2016-17), was nothing short of innovative.

Another innovative practice from 2016-17 that we would like to highlight is a measure we took to increase the diversity of our staff, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of classroom teachers of color. Hiring a diverse staff that reflects the student population that we serve has always been a top priority for our school. Over our three years of existence, we have discovered several barriers that make it difficult to do so. One of those barriers is the fact that young aspiring teachers of color are disproportionately impacted by the financial challenge of student teaching. It is simply impossible for many of them to go without any income over the period of student teaching. Recognizing this, in January 2017 we applied for and were awarded a grant to hire an “Apprentice Teacher” for the 2017-18 school year. This teacher was to be a person of color who was within one year of getting a teaching license, but was facing the financial barrier of student teaching. We designed this position for that person to be paid while doing their student teaching at Northeast College Prep, with the agreement to then transition into a classroom the following year. We will have this person working with one of our strongest teachers in the 2017-18 school year, so that she will be set up well to take over a classroom successfully the following school year. This grant also will fund enhanced recruitment efforts of teachers of color. Our commitment to the goal of staff diversity has resulted, over time, in strong staff diversity numbers relative to

other schools locally, and we hope this grant will help us push those numbers even higher.

### **XIII. Future Plans**

As a young and growing school, we always have plenty of plans for the future. In the short-term (the 2017-18 school year), we have several new initiatives kicking off. This begins with our academic goals for this coming school year. We have always had academic goals each year, but over the 2017 summer, propelled by the strategic plan, and aided by our nascent work with The Achievement Network, we spent more time than we ever have on establishing a set of succinct, focused, appropriately comprehensive academic goals that will drive our work during the 2017-18 school year. They are:

- Students doing the cognitive heavy-lifting (students doing the hard mental work)
- 100% of students achieve their Fountas & Pinnell (F & P) reading level growth goal:
  - If they start the year below grade level, they make at least 1.5 years of growth
  - If they start the year at grade level, they make at least 1.3 years of growth
  - If they start the year above grade level, they make at least 1.0 years of growth
- By the end of the year, 100% of students are scoring at 80% or higher on interim exams (math and specialist classes)

We have several other new initiatives this school year. We are very proud to have obtained a grant through the Minnesota Department of Education's Alternative Delivery of Specialized Intervention Services (ADSIS) program. This enabled us to hire three academic intervention teachers and a full-time social worker for the 2017-18 school year. These positions will be funded at 55 percent through the ADSIS grant; we will fund the remaining 45 percent through general education funds. We have never been able to fund a full-time social worker before. These academic intervention teachers will be instrumental in helping us meet the particular academic needs of a wider range of students. Our school serves students from an incredibly diverse range of racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic, backgrounds and circumstances. Meeting the particular needs of each student is an on-going challenge. Having these academic intervention teachers will greatly enhance our school's capacity to meet all of their needs. The social worker will provide leadership and support in meeting social and behavioral needs for our students. She will also assist our student's families in accessing needed resources outside of our school.

Building on the success of our "Saturday Clubs," we hope to expand that program during the 2017-18 school year with more offerings and more Saturday sessions. There was overwhelming support for this program from parents and

students. This could grow into an after-school program in the medium-term future. Every year, we get several requests for after-school programs from parents. Because of our long school day (8 hours) and our desire to focus on a limited number of things in order to ensure we are doing them well, we have shied away from opening the door to after-school programs, but that is something we re-visit each year. We recognize that after-school programs could be effective in helping us to better pursue the talent development aspect of our mission.

We are also looking at various avenues for increasing parent participation and decision-making in the school. We expect to initiate some listening sessions around this topic by late winter of 2018.

A major plan on the horizon for the spring of the 2018-19 school year will be expanding into the lower level of our new building. Currently, we have enough space to house our program for one more school year, but we will need additional space by the time the 2019-20 school year begins. We have an option in our lease to expand into the basement level of our current building once we need that space. We expect to initiate this process over the summer of 2018.

#### **XIV. Authorizer Contact Information**

If you would like to contact Northeast College Prep's authorizer directly, you may contact Liz Wynne at:

Student Achievement Minnesota  
P.O. Box 581639  
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1639

<http://www.samnllc.org/contact-us>