

**TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School  
2016 Annual Report & World's Best Workforce Report**

**Prepared for Volunteers of America**

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# **2016 TrekNorth Annual Report & World's Best Workforce Report**

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## II. Report Introduction

### ***TrekNorth Mission Statement***

TrekNorth will develop leadership skills in all students through required participation in wilderness experiences and outdoor skill development, and will foster a sense of value for service through required participation in service experiences. 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.

### ***TrekNorth Vision Statement***

TrekNorth Junior & Senior High School is a place where all students pursue a rigorous course of study and challenging wilderness and service 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.

### ***Purpose of Report***

TrekNorth issues an Annual Report & World's Best Workforce report by November 1st of each year. This report is specifically issued to Volunteers of America, the organization that serves as the Authorizer for TrekNorth. This report is also available to any stakeholder, including students, families, and community members. The purpose of the Annual Report & World's Best Workforce Report is to provide data and information regarding the functioning of the school in several areas including school governance, school staff, student enrollment and performance, and school planning. Anyone with questions about the information included here should contact the Executive Director of TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School.

### ***Statutory Purpose***

TrekNorth exists for the primary purpose of improving pupil learning and student achievement. Other statutory purposes for TrekNorth include encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and creating new professional opportunities for teachers.

## ***General Information: History & Programming***

TrekNorth first opened its doors to students in September of 2003. This opening was the result of approximately two years of work completed by a group of Bemidji-area parents and teachers. When TrekNorth opened, the learning program was a hybrid of Project Based Learning and an Advanced Placement curriculum. Students met with advisors for a bulk of the day, but also attended various classes with a more specific focus. TrekNorth opened with approximately 160 students, and the staff quickly discovered that the PBL/AP model they were using was very ill suited for the student body. As the school progressed through its first two years, there was a shift to a model with less Project Based work and more traditional classes. By 2006, the school had expanded to include 7th-12th grade, and the programming had evolved to be focused on the skills and content that students needed for success in the AP classroom and beyond.

Currently, the TrekNorth Learning Program is anchored in an Advanced Placement/Pre-Advanced Placement Program and driven with a vertical-teaming approach. The school also added 6th grade in 2013. Goals for the learning program include raising AP Exam scores, improved performance on the MCAs 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, 50% of the students at TrekNorth are of minority descent, a group traditionally underrepresented in AP success rates. 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, in addition to increased success on the national AP Exams, will be 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 spring of 2016, TrekNorth started the process of expanding to become a full K-12 school district. The school hopes to achieve this goal in time for the start of the 2018-2019 school year.

### **III. Authorizer Information**

**Authorizer Name: Volunteers of America**

**Authorizer Liaison: Stephanie Olsen**

Authorizer Contact Information:

Volunteers of America

Education Center

924 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: 612-270-1998

Email: [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org)

#### **Authorizing, Accountability, & Relationship**

TrekNorth first contracted with Volunteers of America (VOA) for authorization for the 2003-04 school year, and in May of 2014 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. In the past few years, TrekNorth received awards from VOA for Excellence in Board Governance, Excellence in Financial Management, and Excellence in Academic Achievement.

Additionally, the added level of accountability created by on-site visits pushes TrekNorth to frequently compile, assess, and report on student achievement data. The reporting requirements to VOA means TrekNorth is always considering and using data to adjust the instructional strategies used by 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 testing, AP testing, the ACT, and in-class assessments. The contract between VOA and TrekNorth will expire in 2019, when both organizations will reassess the relationship. For more information, please see the “Accountability and Oversight System” attached to the end of this report.

## IV. School Governance

### Board Composition & Training Record

#### *Board Members for 2016-2017 School Year*

Last Name	First Name	Group Affiliation	Position	Term Start	Term End	Phone #	Email
Webb	Derek	Parent	Chair	Jun-15	Jun-17	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:dwebb@treknorth.org">dwebb@treknorth.org</a>
Adams	Chance	Teacher	** Member	Jun-16	Jun-19	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:cadams@treknorth.org">cadams@treknorth.org</a>
Banta	Bruce	Parent	** Treasurer	Jun-15	Jun-17	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:bbanta@treknorth.org">bbanta@treknorth.org</a>
Holman	Darryl	Comm. member	** Vice Chair	Jun-16	Jun-19	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:dholman@treknorth.org">dholman@treknorth.org</a>
Olson	Jodie	Teacher	Member	Jun-16	Jun-19	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:jolson@treknorth.org">jolson@treknorth.org</a>
Winger	Sarah	Teacher	Member	Jun-15	Jun-17	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:swinger@treknorth.org">swinger@treknorth.org</a>
Larson	Mark	Teacher	Member	Jun-16	Jun-19	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:mlarson@treknorth.org">mlarson@treknorth.org</a>
Miller	Ekren	Teacher	Member	Jun-15	Jun-17	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:emiller@treknorth.org">emiller@treknorth.org</a>
Wilson	Melanie	Parent	** Member	Jun-16	Jun-19	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:mwilson@treknorth.org">mwilson@treknorth.org</a>
McKeon	Dan	Exec. Director	ex-officio		N/A	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:dmckeon@treknorth.org">dmckeon@treknorth.org</a>
Thompson	Nicole	Business Mgr	**ex-officio/Sec.		N/A	218-444-1888	<a href="mailto:nthompson@treknorth.org">nthompson@treknorth.org</a>

#### *Board Training Record*

Last Name	First Name	Initial Board Training-Gov, Fin, Employ	Policy Governance Transition: Out of the Woods Consulting	Understanding Scores: Mary Overlie
Webb	Derek	11/2015	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	
Adams	Chance	05/2015	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Banta	Bruce	11/2015	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Holman	Darryl	09/2012	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Winger	Sarah	10/2014	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Larson	Mark	09/2012	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Miller	Ekren	11/2015	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Olson	Jodie	06/2010	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
Wilson	Melanie	10/2014	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16
McKeon	Dan	06/2010	8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	
Thompson	Nicole		8/16, 9/16, 10/16 w/ongoing coaching 11/16-02/17	Sep-16

## Board Operations

The TrekNorth Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month except July and December, when they do not meet. Board Meetings start at 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting minutes and announcements are available on the TrekNorth website. Board elections are held in May and the Annual Meeting is in June. 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 15-16

Month	Activity	Policy Type	Policy Title/Description
<b>July</b>			
	<b>No Meeting</b>		<b>First Month of the Fiscal Year</b>
<b>August</b>			
	<i>Informational</i>		Financial update- Year End
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec. Director Limitations	I. Global Limitations Monitoring Policy E: Emergency Succession (DR)
	<i>Monitoring</i>		Report on AP and State Testing
	<i>Action</i>		Approve Signatures, New Contracts, Special Ed. Director, Designate Newspaper, Bank Electronic Transfer New Members & Officers Officially Begin Term
<b>September</b>			
	<i>Informational</i>		Enrollment Report
	<i>Action</i>		Annual Report
<b>October</b>			
	<i>Informational</i>		Review Board/Staff Relationship Policies
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec. Director Limitations	Policy A: Treatment of students, Parents and Community (DR) Policy B: Treatment of Staff (DR)
<b>November</b>			
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec. Director Limitations	Policy D: Financial Conditions/Auditor Report (ER) Policy F: Protection of Assets (DR)
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Governance Process	Policy G: Board Committee Principles Policy I: Nominations and Elections
<b>December</b>			
	<b>No Meeting</b>		
<b>January</b>			
	<i>Action</i>		Appoint Director Evaluation Committee Establish Election committee
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Governance Process	II. Global Governance Commitment Policy A: Governance style Policy B: Board Job Description
<b>February</b>			
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Governance Process	Policy C: Agenda Planning Policy D: Board Chair's Role Policy E: Board Member Code of Conduct

	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec. Director Limitations	Policy D: Financial Condition (DR)
	<i>Informational</i>		Enrollment Report
<b>March</b>			
	<i>Action</i>		Election committee - solicit recommendations for nominations for board positions. Initiate process of evaluating Executive Director performance
<b>April</b>			
	<i>Action</i>		Mail out ballots and information on board nominees to all <i>eligible</i> voters Formal Director evaluation finalize
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec. Director Limitations	Policy H: Communication and Support to Board (BR)
<b>May</b>			
	<i>Action</i>		Review: Articles of Incorporation, (BR) By Laws (BR)
	<i>Informational</i>		Financial Update- Preliminary Budget
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Board-Ex Director Linkage	Policy III: Global Governance Management Connection Policy A: Unity of Control Policy B: Accountability of the Executive Director Policy C: Delegation to the Executive Director Policy D: Monitoring Executive Director Performance
<b>June</b>			
	<i>Action</i>		-Certify election results -Board Members elect, by majority vote, Board Officers Schedule new Board Member Orientation/training requirements -Parent Satisfaction Results
	<i>Action</i>		-Staff contracts -Lunch contract -Budget
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Ends	Review Ends Policies: Global Ends, 1-14 (DR/BR)
	<i>Monitoring</i>	Exec Director Limitations	Policy C: Financial planning /Budgeting (BR) Policy G: Compensation and Benefits (BR)
		Governance Process	Policy G: Cost of Governance
	<i>Informational</i>		Report from SLP and OAP Directors

## ***Board Accomplishments***

### *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. In 2014, 2015, and 2016 Volunteers of America recognized TrekNorth for Excellence in Board Governance.

### *Policy Governance*

Late in 2013, the TrekNorth Board made the decision to move in the direction of policy governance. Most recently, this has included formal training on the Carver Policy Governance model. The Board is learning how to better monitor school performance through governance policies in the areas of Executive Director Limitations, Board-Director Linkage, and Governance Process, and the Executive Director is learning how to issue high quality monitoring reports in each of those same areas.

## ***Board Challenges***

### *Policy Development*

TrekNorth has identified a lack of policy organization and policy development in several areas. Although many of the policies that are either lacking or disorganized are operational rather than governance, it is in the Board's interest to see them developed and organized. The end goal is to locate all of our current policies, create new policies where we have gaps, and then get all of them organized and online.

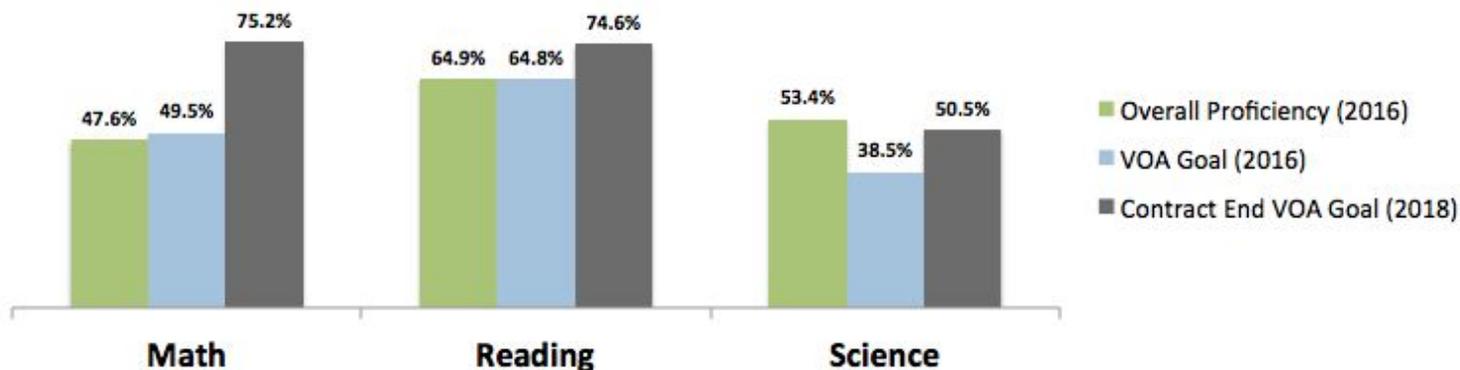
### *Board Training*

TrekNorth is always seeking new and relevant trainings for Board members, so they can keep abreast of changing requirements, legislation, and trends within the charter school world.

**Progress toward Charter Contract/WBWF goals:**

We continue to make uneven progress toward our charter contract/WBWF goals. In some places we are posting considerable gains, while in others we are holding steady rather than growing toward our overall goals. What follows is a brief overview of our progress toward our academic goals. A deeper analysis of our academic performance of 2015-16 follows in Section VIII: Academic Performance.

**2016 Proficiency Results**



**Reading**

*proficiency:*

goal: **64.8%** proficient... result: **65%** proficient  
We **achieved** our reading proficiency goal.

*growth:*

goal: mean growth score > **0.0000**... result: **0.0147**  
mean growth score (HS) = **-0.3872**, mean growth score (MS) = **0.2530**  
We **achieved** our reading growth goal.

*Since growth scores are Z-scores, anything that is a positive number reflects growth. Thus, our goal is to keep our mean growth score as a positive number.*

**Math**

*proficiency:*

goal: **50.9%** proficient... result: **47.6%** proficient  
We **narrowly missed** our math proficiency goal.

*growth:*

goal: mean growth score > **0.0000**... result: **-0.1907**  
mean growth score (HS) = **-0.5925**, mean growth score (MS) = **-0.0841**  
We **missed our** math growth goal.

**Science**

*proficiency:*

goal: **38.5%** proficient... result: **53.3%** proficient  
We **surpassed** our science proficiency goal.

## V. School Management

### Current Administrative Staffing

Position	Name	File Folder Number
Executive Director	Dan McKeon	413110
Assistant Director	Kristin Gustafson	377643
Operations Manager	Kirby Ganske	NA
Business Manager	Nicole Thompson	NA
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Mary Overlie	424707

TrekNorth employs a full-time Executive Director who oversees the general operations of the school, and who reports on a monthly basis to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director is responsible for school and staff management, curriculum and instruction, enrollment and marketing, and compliance and working with the authorizer of TrekNorth. The Director is licensed in the state of Minnesota as a teacher and school principal, and has served TrekNorth for 12 years in this capacity.

TrekNorth employs a full time Assistant Director. The Assistant Director oversees behavior management with the students of TrekNorth, serves as an instructional leader, and oversees the school safety plan. The Assistant Director is licensed in the state of Minnesota as a teacher and school principal.

TrekNorth employs a full time Director of Curriculum & Instruction. This person serves as a staff resource for instructional practices and curricular decisions, and develops systems for reviewing and acting upon data generated through student achievement.. The Director of Curriculum & Instruction is licensed in the state of Minnesota as a teacher and school principal.

TrekNorth employs a full-time Operations Manager. The Operations Manager is responsible for secretarial duties at the front desk, attendance monitoring, MARSS, the lunch program, managing substitute teachers, and for maintaining the facility.

TrekNorth employs a full-time Business Manager. The Business Manager creates and manages the annual budget, completes payroll, does all of the purchasing and ordering of school supplies, oversees the annual financial audit, and serves as the Board Secretary.

### *School Leader Review & Professional Development Plan*

TrekNorth currently employs Dan McKeon as the school's Executive Director. Mr. McKeon has been with TrekNorth since the school first opened in 2003, although he started at the school in the capacity of a classroom teacher and Director of the Outdoor Adventure Program. Mr. McKeon has a Master of Arts in Teaching earned from the University of Alaska-Southeast, and earned his administrative license in 2013 from Minnesota State University-Moorhead.

The TrekNorth Board of Directors conducted a performance review for the Executive Director in 2016. The process included conducting surveys with the entire TrekNorth staff and TrekNorth Board, and the survey form evaluated various components of the Director's work and scored them on a scale of 0-5, and provided the opportunity to give feedback and criticism in a narrative form.

This process is 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 2016, the Board will appoint both teaching and non-teaching board members to the Executive Performance Review Committee. The process is structured so the evaluation of the Director is focused on the primary areas of the Director’s work: overall programming, school finance, communication, leadership, etc. In the end, the Director is issued a Professional Development Plan that includes “maintenance items”, which are things the Board would like to see continue to be successfully managed, and “prescriptive items”, which are areas where the Board would like to see an increased focus.

### *Professional Development Plan for the Executive Director: 2016-17 School Year*

#### ***Maintenance Items***

##### **The Director Shall:**

1. Maintain student enrollment numbers that are sustainable to the school as indicated by the Director’s monthly report.
2. Continue to work with VOA in the exemplary manner in which you have done this year and in years past.
3. Continue to support staff with respect, care, and dignity and maintain a high degree of ethical integrity as defined by the Executive Director Limitations as you do now and have done in the past.
4. Maintain visibility in the community through media outlets, service and TrekNorth events.

#### ***Prescriptive Items***

##### **The Director Shall:**

1. Continue to work in conjunction with the Board to organize and facilitate the Board's move towards strong Policy Governance, including developing updated Monitoring Reports. This will include receiving training from our Board Consultant.
2. Lead the evolution of the TrekNorth Teacher Evaluation & Coaching process, including developing evaluation and coaching methods more compatible with teachers who’ve developed experience and expertise in their content and pedagogy. Ensure that any new developments build on the direction and success provided by the TrekNorth teaching rubric and the TrekNorth Leadership Team.
3. Oversee the TrekNorth K-12 Expansion Project, including the development of a physical facility, an educational program, staffing plans, and additional funding sources.
4. Create a system of visibility between administrative staff and teaching staff and implement it over 2016-2017 school year. Administration will demonstrate a commitment to communicating with teaching staff by being in their classrooms and conversing with them both as part of the formal evaluation process and outside of that process. Documentation of this goal would be within monthly Board Reports.
5. The administration shall provide leadership and advocate for underrepresented students at TrekNorth both through academics and support systems. The administration will explore alternative curricula and pedagogies designed to enhance underrepresented student learning and success.

## VI. Staffing/Teaching Faculty Information

### Teaching Roster

<b>Name</b>	<b>File Number</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Status for 2016-17</b>	<b>Term</b>
Aakre, Jennifer	409983	Science 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired July 2007
Adams, Chance	423272	Social Studies 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2005
Drimel, Leslie	428276	Science 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired May 2012
Fisher, Lisa	435261	Special Education 6-12	Returning & Active	Hired 2013 as teacher
Gustafson, Kristin	377643	Visual Art 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired July 2006
Harmsen, Erica	402513	Language Arts 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired April 2003
King, Tara	454170	Visual Arts 6-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2014
Krueger, Steve	463614	Humanities 6	Non-returning	Hired June 2013 as teacher
Lanz, Adam	455218	Language Arts 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired June 2012
Larson, Mark	438274	Special Education 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2010
McKeon, Dan	413110	Language Arts 9-12	Returning & Active	Hired April 2003
Miller, Ekren	455733	World Language 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired 2013 as teacher
Moen, Greg	302179	Science 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired June 2007
Moen, Londa	409240	Language Arts 7	Non-returning	Hired July 2014
Munson, Mike	290927	Social Studies 9-12	Returning & Active	Founder - 2002
Olson, Jodie	286778	Special Education 6-12	Returning & Active	Hired August 2009
Reeves, Michael		Science 6	New & Active	Hired June 2016
Overlie, Mary	424707	Math 7	Returning & Active	Hired August 2014
Wiggins, Andrew	998551	Social Studies 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired December 2004
Wiggins, Lia		Language Arts 6-7	New & Active	Hired June 2016
Winger, Sarah	464238	STEM 6	Returning & Active	Hired June 2013 as teacher
Zeman, Talia	424801	Performing Arts 7-12	Returning & Active	Hired 2004

## **Equitable Teacher Distribution**

TrekNorth is committed to ensuring all students, including low income and minority students, are taught by experienced and effective teachers who are highly qualified to teach their subject area. TrekNorth uses its teacher evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of teachers, and if teachers don't perform to a certain level, they are placed into a probationary stage and given more coaching in order to increase their effectiveness. If this coaching doesn't help, or if the teacher continues to underperform, their At Will Employment Agreement is terminated.

Because TrekNorth is a small school, all students rotate through the same roster of teachers. For example, we only have one core subject area teacher at each of the following grade levels: 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th. In other words, all 6th graders have the same Mathematics teacher, meaning there isn't limited access to one teacher out of many who is perhaps a more effective teacher. Between the size of our school and the way teaching is evaluated, TrekNorth ensures every student has equal access to effective teachers.

## **Access to Diverse Teachers**

While TrekNorth enrolls a racially and economically diverse student body, the teaching staff does not generally reflect this diversity. This is a typical challenge for rural schools that enroll a diverse student body.

### Teacher Retention & Turnover Rates

Year	# of Classroom Teachers	% of Returning Teachers	% of Teachers Departing	# of New Teachers
2007-08	13	69%	31%	4
2008-09	13	92%	8%	1.2
2009-10	14	93%	7% (1 Teacher)	2.4
2010-11	16	93%	7% (1 Teacher)	1.0
2011-12	16	88%	12% (2 Teachers)	2.0
2012-13	16	88%	12% (2 Teachers)	2.25
2013-14	19	94%	6% (1 Teacher)	3.0
2014-15	20	95%	5% (1 Teacher)	2.0
2015-16	20	100%	0	0
2016-17	20	90%	1.5	1.5

In TrekNorth’s 2007 Annual Report, there was a 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 has continued to retain teachers. The rising retention rate is indicative of the increasing level of institutional organization and staff satisfaction.

The 2016-17 teaching staff at TrekNorth represents the most experienced staff in the history of the school. There is extensive charter school teaching experience, and because the school has little turnover in teaching staff, the understanding of the TrekNorth program, goals, students, and operating systems is deeper than it’s ever been. 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 competitive 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.

#### **Professional Development at TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School**

TrekNorth has developed a rigorous, effective, practical, and mission-driven approach to teacher professional development. The development of teachers is composed of 4 components:

1. formative assessment of teaching performance within the TrekNorth Pop In Coaching system;
2. a summative assessment of teaching performance against the TrekNorth Teaching Rubric with the Executive Director;
3. the development of a Professional Development Plan by each teacher in concert with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction;
4. participation in Research Teams, which are small teams of teachers working collaboratively on specific aspects of quality teaching, such as classroom management or assessment.

*Non-Teaching Staff Information*

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>File Folder</b>	<b>Assignment/Subject</b>	<b>Years Employed by the school</b>	
Gannon	Dan		SPED Paraprofessional	5	
Ganske	Kirby		Operations Manager	11	
Lataila	Jennifer		Technology Coordinator	13	
Lanz	Jennie		SPED Paraprofessional	4	
Hutchins	Adrian		SPED Paraprofessional	New	
Peterka	Stephen		SPED Paraprofessional	New	
Webber	Ryan		SPED Paraprofessional	New	
Smith	Jerry		SPED Paraprofessional	New	
Ueland	Julie		SPED Paraprofessional	2	
Persson	Russel		SPED Paraprofessional	9	
Roscoe	Teresa		SPED Paraprofessional	3	
Snyder	Rebecca	471042	School Social Worker	4	
Thompson	Nicole		Business Manager	1.5	

## VII. School Enrollment & Admissions

*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
6	38	13	0	0	2	23	21	12
7	37	20	1	1	2	14	28	8
8	36	14	1	0	0	21	22	5
9	38	17	1	2	2	16	28	6
10	37	18	0	4	2	13	25	7
11	36	15	1	2	1	17	21	7
12	24	7	1	2	0	14	11	5
<b>Total</b>	246	104 (42.2%)	5 (2%)	11 (4.4%)	9 (3.7%)	120 (48.7%)	156 (63.4%)	50 (20%)

*Comparative School Enrollment: Percentage of Student Body by Demographic*

School	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	SPED	Poverty
<b>TrekNorth Junior &amp; Senior*</b>	42%	2%	4%	4%	49%	19%	60%
<b>Bemidji Middle School**</b>	21%	2%	1%	3%	74%	15%	47%
<b>Bemidji High School**</b>	14%	2%	1%	2%	82%	17%	37%
<b>Bemidji Lumberjack**</b>	67%	0%	2%	7%	24%	0%	93%
<b>Bemidji Alternative Education**</b>	28%	0%	0%	0%	72%	10%	32%
<b>First City School**</b>	57%	0%	2%	5%	37%	45%	100%
<b>BYLAW**</b>	30%	0%	0%	10%	60%	100%	100%

\* TrekNorth numbers are taken from current numbers (9-27-16)

\*\* District 31 numbers are from the 2015-16 school year

### *Executive Analysis of Enrollment*

Because TrekNorth has been operating for eleven years at full-capacity enrollment, numbers are not the concern they were in earlier years. However, a comparison of enrollment by demographic across the schools within Bemidji is interesting. While the percentage of American Indian students enrolled at TrekNorth is 42% (up from 23% in 2009-10), the percentage at Bemidji Middle School is 21% and even lower at 14% at Bemidji High School. But the numbers are much higher in other District 31 schools – American Indians are two-thirds of the student body within the Bemidji Lumberjack School, a remedial program with lower academic standards, and they make up half of BYLAW and First City School, two programs for at risk youth 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/Pre-AP level programming. Data related to enrollment in area schools demonstrates the fact that TrekNorth is doing more to deliberately address the achievement gap than other schools.

TrekNorth is in the eleventh 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 and positive articles about the school in the local paper over the past years.
3. **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.
4. **Online Marketing:** In 2015, TrekNorth started to purchase online advertising targeting parents of children in primary grades. This is part of an effort to educate the community about the programming, services, and accomplishments of TrekNorth, and hopefully increase the percentage of families who make TrekNorth their first choice rather than a second or third resort.

## ***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 dependents of school staff, to siblings of enrolled pupils, and to foster siblings 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:

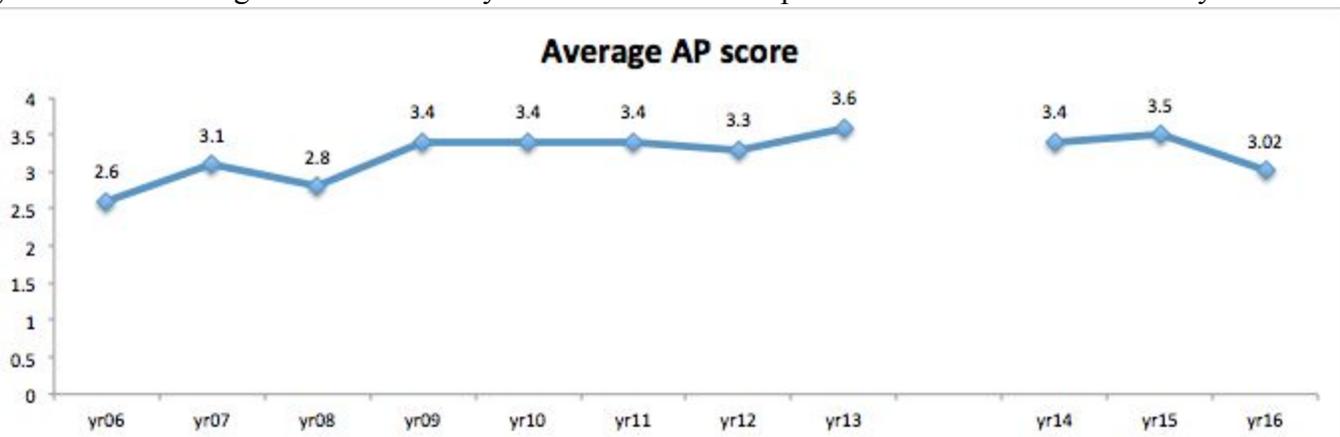
1. Parents and Students interested in enrolling at TrekNorth can request an Application for Enrollment from School Administration or via an online request, available at [www.treknorth.org](http://www.treknorth.org). Application and Enrollment Forms are attached as an addendum to this report.
2. Students 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.

**A copy of the TrekNorth Application is included as an addendum to this report. This admissions policy is available to the general public on [www.treknorth.org](http://www.treknorth.org).**

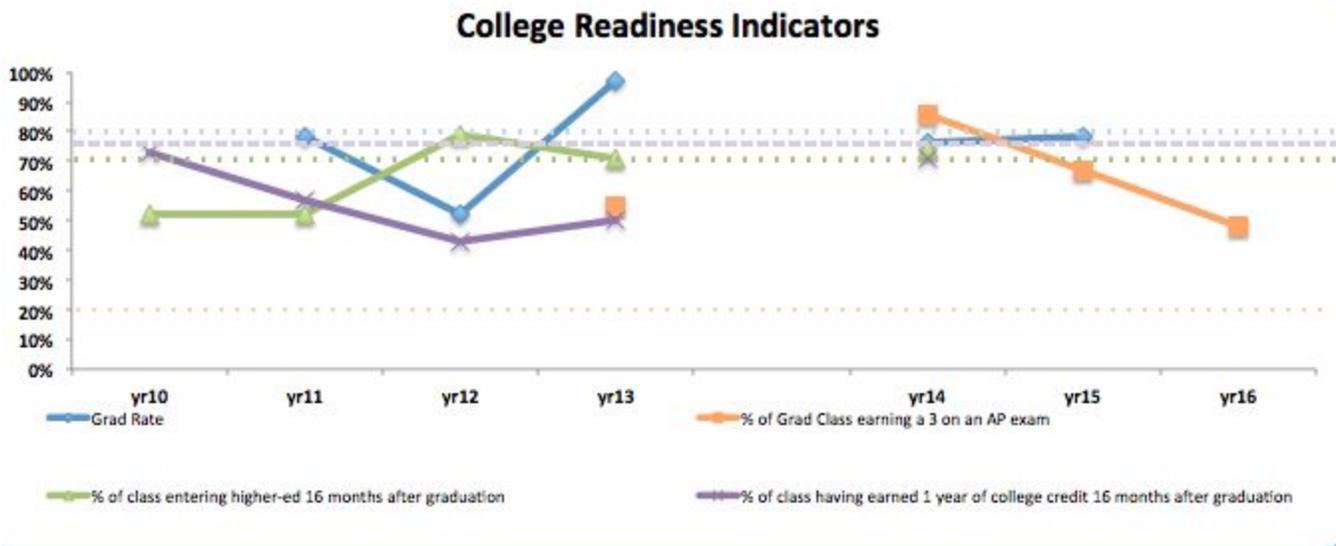
## VIII. Academic Program and School Performance

The TrekNorth Board of Directors and the faculty of the school consider results linked to Advanced Placement Courses and Exams as one of the most important pieces 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 structured its entire academic program to reflect the value TrekNorth places on AP results. The TrekNorth Mission Statement specifically states AP involvement and success as our highest aim, and believes that a student who can perform in the AP classroom is clearly ready to handle the academic rigor of the college classroom. TrekNorth made their commitment to Advanced Placement in the spring of 2005, and our ongoing results prove the wisdom of this commitment.

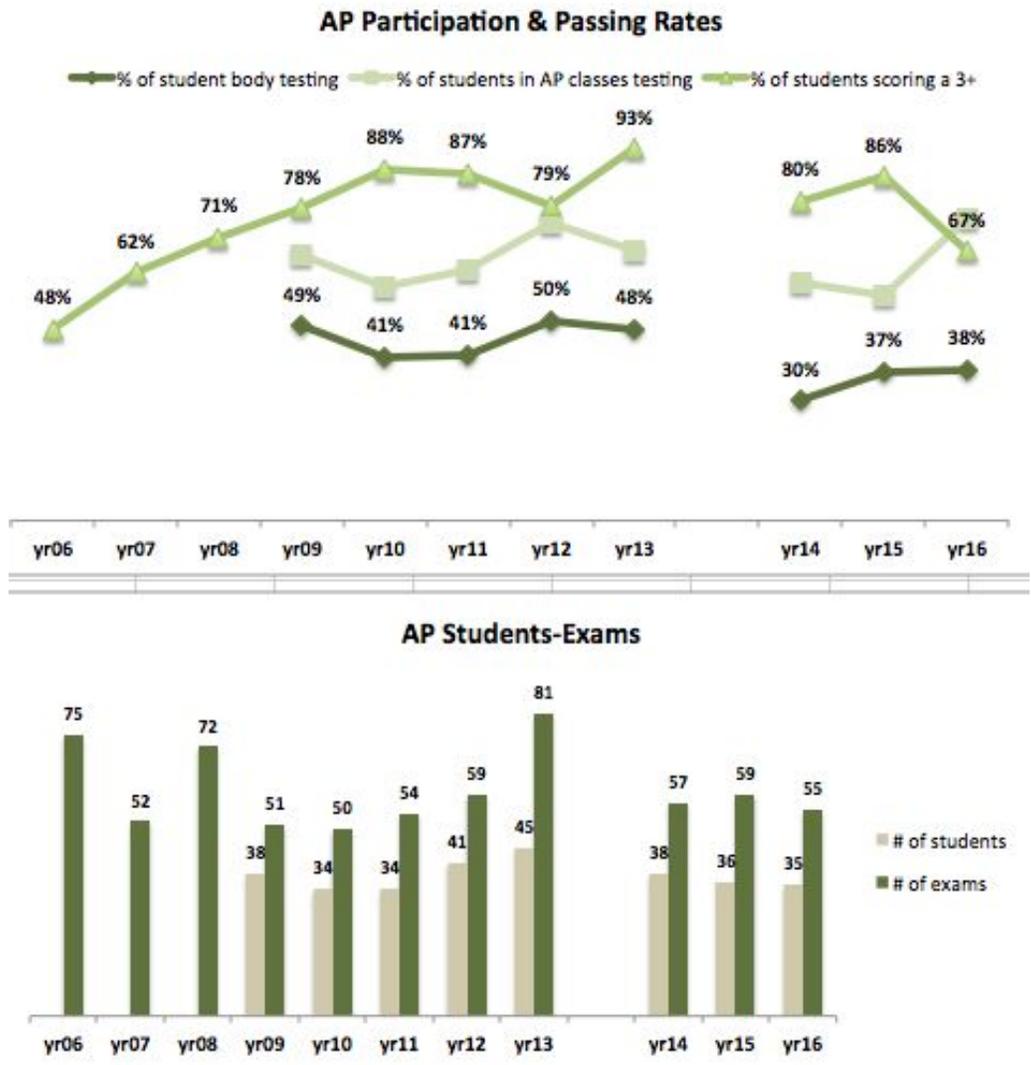
This first set of graphs helps illustrate the trends and patterns of the AP program at TrekNorth. A passing score on any given AP exam is 3. This first graph illustrates our average AP score since the inception of the AP program in 2005-06. As you can see, our average score went down in 2016. At the conclusion of these graphs, you'll find our insight into reasons why our overall academic performance data trended the way it did.



This graph notes several college readiness indicators that are now available via MDE reports. The orange line shows the percentage of our graduating class that scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. As you can see, this indicator also went down in 2016. The rest of the lines show trends related to our graduation rate and credit-earning habits of Trek graduates.



These two graphs illustrate our success with enrolling students in AP classes and subsequently passing an AP exam. The top graph illustrates the trend by percentages, the bottom by the raw numbers of students attempting AP exams. The break in the line represents our move to our new school building and the higher enrollment we had as a result. Even though this year saw us preparing a similar number of AP students toward AP exams in the spring, as we've shown in an earlier graph, this year showed a decline in the percentage of students earning at least a 3 on an exam.

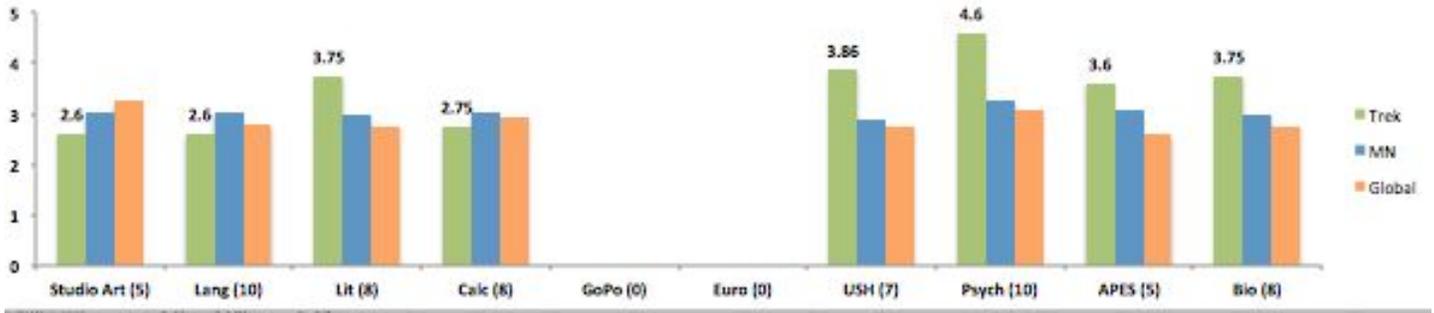


The CollegeBoard, the organization that sustains the global AP program, helps you analyze your results in comparison to the state and to the global pool of AP test takers in that discipline. This set of graphs daylights how the TrekNorth AP program compares to MN AP programs and to global AP programs over the course of the last 3 years. While it can't be said about this year, our mean performance on the different AP exams we

offer is higher than both MN and the global comparisons. The number you see in parentheses next to the test name is the number of test takers we had that year.

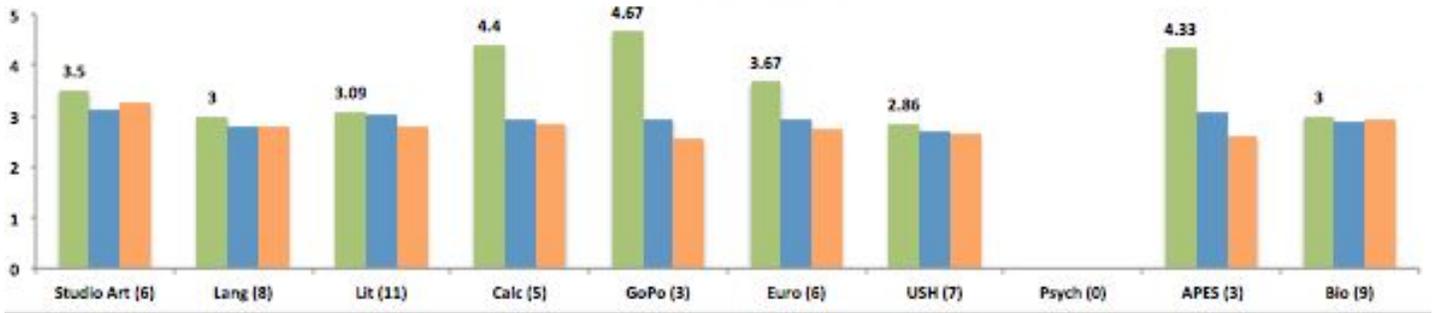
### 2014 AP Average Performance

(# of testers in parentheses)



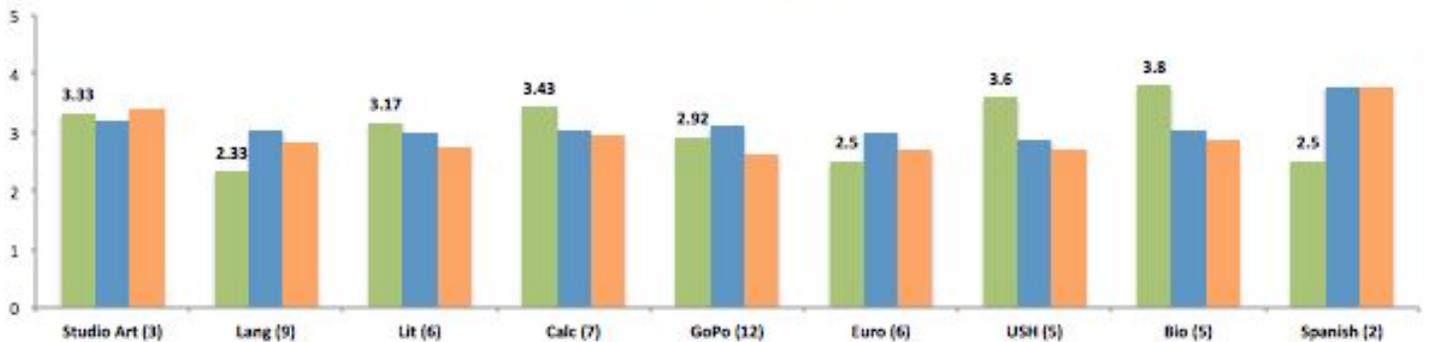
### 2015 AP Average Performance

(# of testers in parentheses)



### 2016 Average AP Performance

(# of testers in parentheses)



Our AP results, taken as a whole this year, don't match the pattern we are used to expecting from our academic program at Trek. It is too soon to tell whether the declines in our AP indicators are the result of a new pattern emerging in terms of AP-readiness or the result of one-year anomaly. In either case, we have retooled many professional development processes for the 2016-17 school year to better equip teachers with timely feedback about strengthening AP-readiness practices in their classes. Trek students are still enrolling in AP classes at the

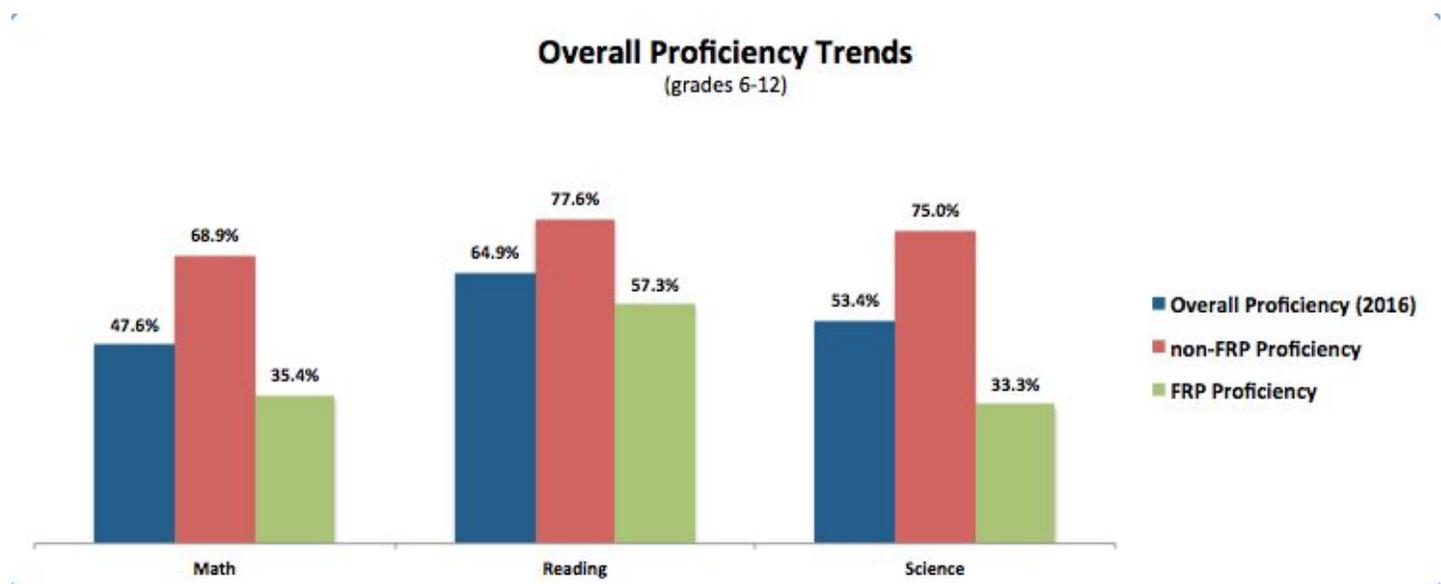
levels they have in previous years, but their readiness to meet the challenges of the exams now requires more in-depth instructional focus from us.

Usually our AP data leads us to conclude that once students enroll in an AP course, they tend to be highly successful on AP exams, speaking to the strength of our overall AP program. This year, however, it's becoming more clear that we need to continue to find ways to strengthen our AP-readiness program, maximizing ways to get students ready for the rigor of an AP classroom. Part of the decline of this year's AP indicators is reflected in the fact that many AP exams have been redesigned to focus on student's critical analysis skills. Through the new professional development processes unrolled in 2016-17, AP teachers and students alike are working to better meet the different quality of rigor inside these exams.

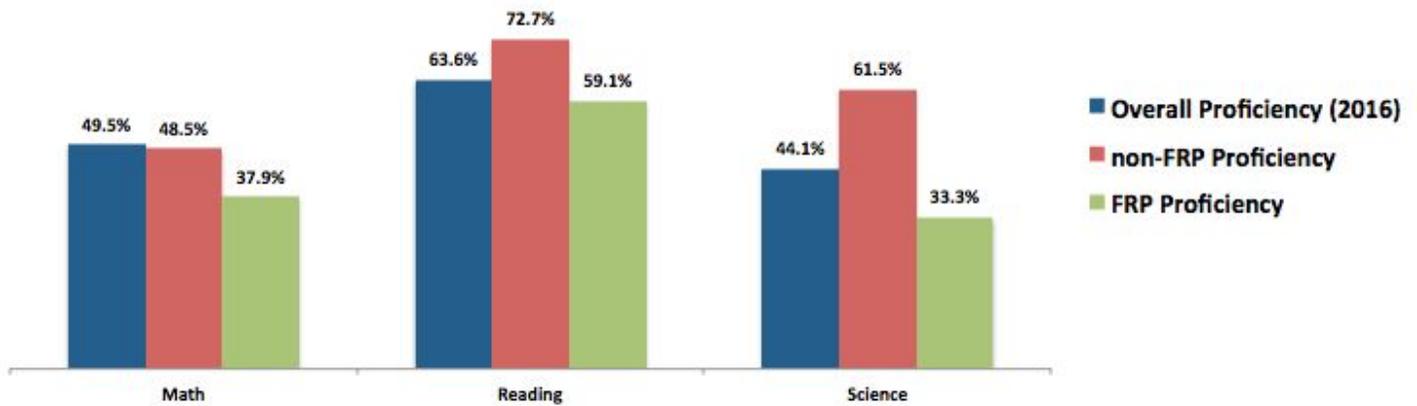
Widening the lens to our entire academic program, here are some graphs we've used to analyze the health of our AP-readiness program in grades 6-12. Since the rewriting of the MN Academic Standards over the course of the last 8 years, we've come to understand that the rigor of these standards is enough to prepare young people for the AP classroom. That is to say, if a student can be proficient at the academic standards at their grade level, we believe due to the rigor of those standards, that they are on track for becoming a successful AP student.

These graphs track student proficiency from middle school to high school in Reading, Math, and science. In addition, we've calculated the current gap in academic performance for each subject area, as well as the year-end GPA for each member of that class. A brief analysis follows each graph. These insights are summarized in the bulleted list at the end of this section as well.

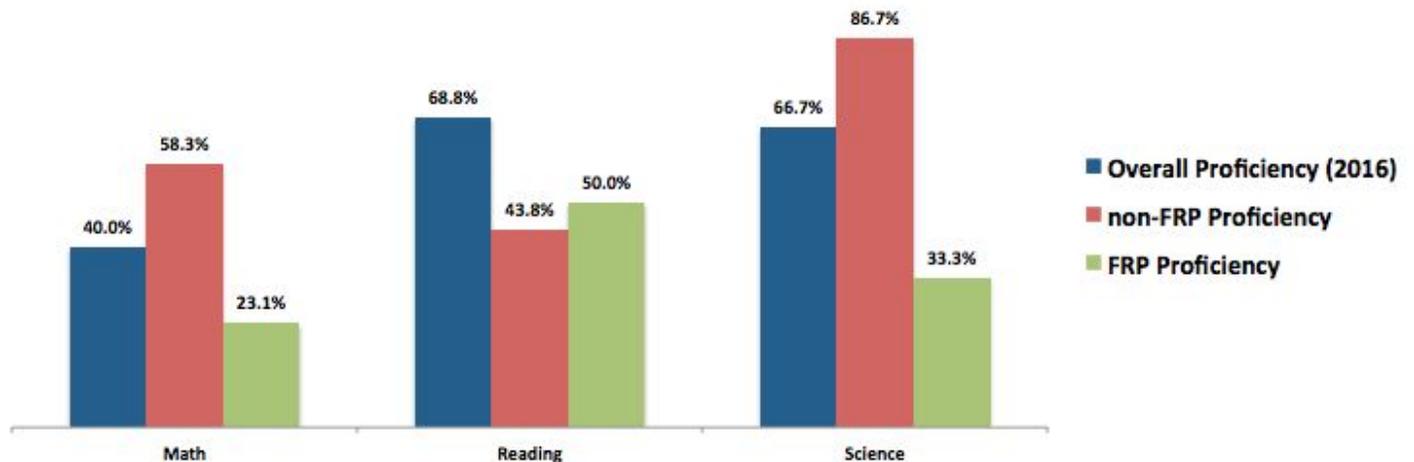
**Graph description:** Overall proficiency in Reading, Math and Science, including student sub-group performance for students identified under the FRP category. The subsequent two graphs show the same information, broken down by middle school and high school.



## Middle School Proficiency Trends - 2016



## High School Proficiency Trends - 2016

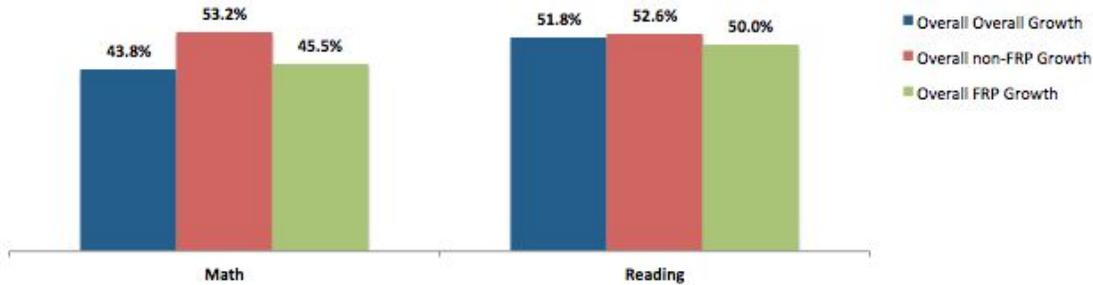


**Graph analysis:** While we are celebrating our strengthened performance in MS and HS Science, it is notable that Science consistently shows the largest gap in performance between students identified for FRP lunch and those that aren't. We are encouraged that the performance gaps in reading and middle-school math are nil to non-evident and will be continuing to amplify the best practices in those courses that contribute to this state of isolated equity in our programming.

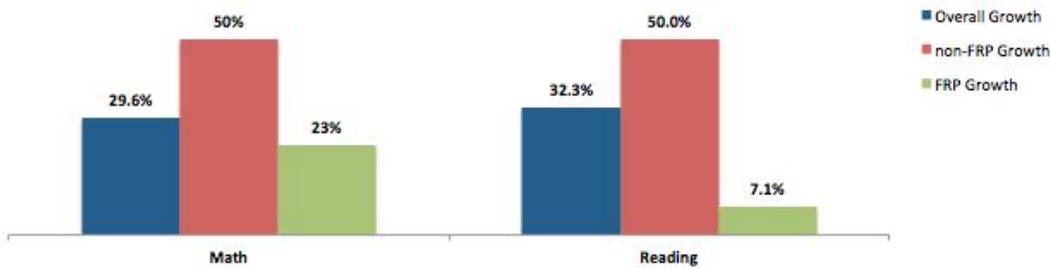
We also note that middle-school, generally, posts stronger proficiency results than high school. This supports our continued efforts with vertical standards-alignment and job-embedded professional development that we've undertaken at a more in-depth level than in the High School so far.

**Graph description:** Overall growth in Reading, Math and Science, including student sub-group performance for students identified under the FRP category. The subsequent two graphs show the same information, broken down by middle school and high school.

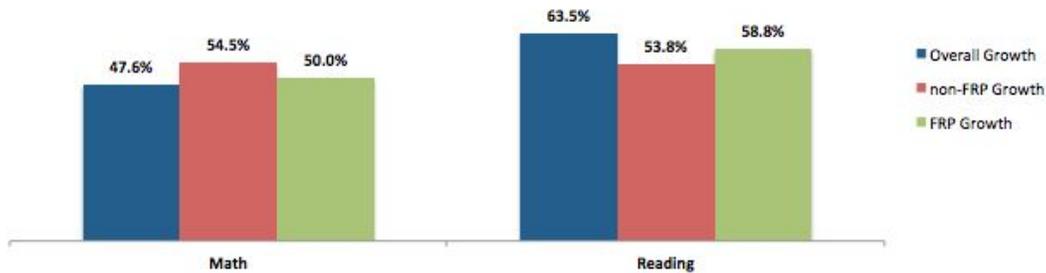
### Growth Trends - 2016



### High School Growth Trends - 2016

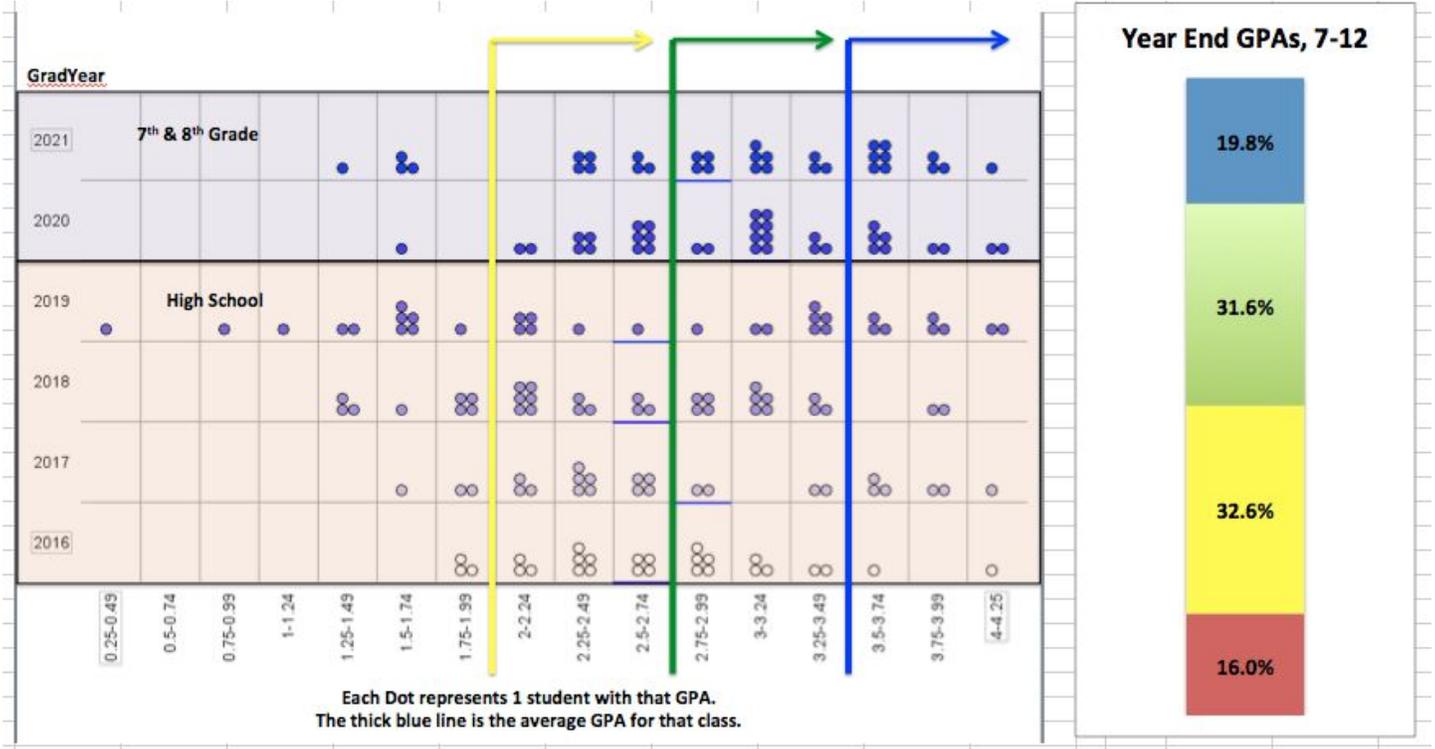


### Middle School Growth Trends - 2016



**Graph analysis:** As a whole system, we're encouraged by the fact that about 50% of students, regardless of the socioeconomic indicators, are meeting their growth goals, with the middle school demonstrating a more even distribution of growth results across socioeconomic status. On average, about 50% of students are expected to grow in any given year. Again the middle school is showing better performance in meeting this typical performance level, where the high school still struggles in this area.

**Graph description:** This histogram and bar graph shows the relative distribution of year-end GPAs as of 5/31/16. Students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher were coded with a blue indicator, 2.75 or higher a green, 2.5 a yellow. Anything below that, we don't consider a college ready GPA and it was coded in red.



**Graph analysis:** It's likely typical for a school to have about 50% of their student body posting a college-ready GPA of 2.75 or higher, like we did at the end of 2016. However, we have to decide as a program how that serves our AP-vertically aligned academic program, because an indicator such as this, without schoolwide intervention could limit the academic potential of more Trek students enrolling in AP classes. It's not that GPAs, by themselves would limit a student's enrollment in an AP course, but an adequate track record of school success could prove a barrier to student's own belief that they can match the rigor of an AP course.

Here are overall insights into our AP readiness data and some of the implications we see to our instructional program:

- In general, the middle school program shows more promise with equipping a greater fraction of Trek students with college-readiness skills at their grade-level. This seems to prove true across the board, nearly exclusively, in reading, math, science, growth and GPA performance. The challenge before us is continue this trend as students mature into our high school courses.
- Our AP program needs to focus on developing the skills students need to be ready to participate fully in AP, including passing an AP exam for college credit.
- The achievement gap in math is showing promise of evening out, for the 2nd year in a row. While our increase in proficiency is not yet where we hoped it would be at this stage of implementing our new program, we are encouraged by the fact the sizable performance gap in HS math is not evident to that degree in Middle School.

- The achievement gap in reading is beginning to even out as well. In the past, it has been variable and hard to pin-down which factors were driving that variability. Now the places, like MS reading, that post a sizable gap in reading growth aren't the pattern in the system overall
- Reading is now joined by Science as the stronger performing subjects in the school. The considerable changes we made to the scope/sequence of science instruction and assessment seemed to have paid off with this year's science results.
- MDE did not issue any new designations for the '16 school year. However, the department did calculate an MMR for each school, which helps us note our relative progress overall compared to other MN schools. Given our weaker performance in math and low growth in reading, TrekNorth High School was ranked 390th out of 427 high schools in MN. This is in stark contrast to 2015, when TrekNorth High School ranked 48th out of 423 high schools. TrekNorth Middle School now ranks 60th out of 246 middle schools statewide, down also, while not quite as drastically, from 2015 when the middle school ranked 23rd out of 240 middle schools statewide.

## Part IX. Legal & Contractual Compliance

### 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.

<b>Fiscal Management Goals</b>	<b>TrekNorth Results</b>
The school maintains a balanced budget.	In compliance
The school's financial audit will be submitted to the state by December 31 <sup>st</sup> .	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 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.

### Organizational Aptitude - Is the organization effective and well run?

#### Governance

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

<b>Governance Expectations</b>	<b>TrekNorth Results</b>
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	In compliance

school leadership and the Authorizer at least three days prior to each board meeting;	
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;	In compliance
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 World’s Best Workforce 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:

<b>Legal &amp; Contractual Compliance</b>	<b>TrekNorth Results</b>
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

## **X. School Climate**

### ***Parent Involvement & Satisfaction***

TrekNorth has several components to their parent involvement strategy. TrekNorth has an enrollment process that encourages parent involvement, including an Open House and Orientation event, as well as a Home Visit for new students. TrekNorth has two sessions of Parent-Teacher Conferences throughout the school year, and TrekNorth encourages parent involvement through 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.

TrekNorth also conducts an annual Parent & Family Satisfaction Survey, and those results, summarized below, are evidence that there is a high level of satisfaction amongst TrekNorth families.

#### *Parent Feedback Survey*

In the spring of 2016, TrekNorth issued an online survey to all parents/guardians of TrekNorth families. Questions deal with how welcoming TrekNorth feels, communication between school and home, how informed parents/guardians feel about the progress of their student, how informed parents/guardians feel about specific program opportunities, the amount of attention parents/guardians feel their child receives from teachers, and overall satisfaction with the school. There were generally 5 responses survey-takers could choose, with the first 2 being considered “positive responses” (i.e. extremely satisfied, moderately satisfied). In general, of the 21 questions that asked parents to rank their experience from generally positive to generally negative on specific aspects of the school, 17 had a positive response rate of 85% or higher, and all 21 had a positive response rate of 75% or higher. It’s fair to draw the conclusion that parents and guardians are having a positive experience with TrekNorth – that they feel welcome, valued, informed, and secure with their decision to send their student to TrekNorth.

#### *Parent Involvement Strategies*

As part of our strategic planning, we’ve identified that TrekNorth needs to implement more sophisticated and thoughtful strategies for parent involvement and parent education. Our goal is not to have parents do more volunteer work at the school, rather that they play an active and effective role in their child’s educational process and pursuit of college readiness. To that end, the current school year has parent involvement strategies that include structured home visits for each of our 6th grade students, parent events at TrekNorth in the evening that include guest speakers on subjects such as teenage wellness, drugs and alcohol, and social media safety, and a renewed effort to incorporate parents/guardians in the process of registering students for courses.

#### *School Culture*

Another outcome of our most recent strategic planning is a renewed focus on cultivating a positive school culture with an emphasis on educational focus. Our Assistant Director lead a collaborative effort between staff and students to identify core values held by members of the TrekNorth community, and then identified ways to make those values come to life through activities at school, practices we employ in terms of student discipline, and instructional strategies used in the classroom.

## XI. School Finances

### TREKNORTH JR & SR HIGH SCHOOL

#### BUDGETARY COMPARISON

YEAR END JUNE 30, 2016

	Final Budget	Actual	Variance of Final Budget
<u>Revenue</u>			
General Revenue	\$3,065,369	\$3,147,209	\$81,840
Food Service Rev	\$67,475	\$74,201	\$6,726
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,132,844</b>	<b>\$3,221,410</b>	<b>\$88,566</b>
<u>Expenditure</u>			
General Expenditure	\$3,081,470	\$3,144,386	\$62,916
Food Service Expenditure	\$64,525	\$74,826	\$10,301
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,145,995</b>	<b>\$3,219,212</b>	<b>\$73,219</b>
General Fund Excess of Rev over (under) Expenditure	\$(16,101)	\$2,823	\$(13,278)
Food Service Fund Excess of Rev over( under) Expenditure	\$2,950	\$(625)	\$2,325
General transfer out	\$(10,225)	\$-	\$(10,225)
Food Service transfer in	\$10,225	\$-	\$10,225
	\$-	\$-	\$-
Excess of Rev & other financing sources over (under)			
General Fund Expenditures	\$(26,326)	\$2,823	\$(23,503)
Excess of Rev & other financing sources over (under)			
Food Service Fund Expenditures	\$2,950	\$(625)	\$2,325
<u>General Fund Balance</u>			
Fund Balance/Beginning of year	\$929,369	\$929,369	\$-
Fund Balance/End of year	\$903,043	\$932,192	\$29,149
<u>Food Service Fund Balance</u>			
Fund Balance/Beginning of year	\$2,317	\$2,317	\$-
Fund Balance/End of year	\$2,317	\$1,691	\$(626)

TREKNORTH JR & SR HIGH SCHOOL

PRIOR YEAR COMPARISON REPORT

<u>Revenue</u>	FY15	FY16	Increase/Decrease
General Fund Revenue	\$3,100,634	\$3,147,209	\$46,575
Food Service Fund Revenue	\$55,643	\$74,198	\$18,555
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,156,277</b>	<b>\$3,221,407</b>	<b>\$65,130</b>
<u>Expenditure</u>			
General Fund Expenditure	\$3,934,017	\$3,144,386	\$210,369
Food Service Fund Expenditure	\$57,110	\$74,822	\$17,712
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$2,991,127</b>	<b>\$3,219,208</b>	<b>\$228,081</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$931,686</b>	<b>\$932,192</b>	<b>\$506</b>

Financial Highlights

- There were zero material findings in the External Audit of TrekNorth from FY2009 thru FY2015.
- The general fund unreserved fund balance increased by \$2,823.00
- Overall revenues increased by 2.91% while overall expenses increased by 9.92%
- The Finance Committee reviews all detailed financial data on a monthly basis and reports to the full Board for approval
- The Financial Audit was completed in July, 2016 by:  
 Miller, McDonald, Inc  
 513 Beltrami Ave NW  
 P.O. Box 486  
 Bemidji, MN 56619

***Executive Summary of Financial Status***

Overall, TrekNorth is in sound financial health. The ADM and student generated revenues increased again this year, which came about as a result of increased demand for student spots over the past six years. In response to this demand, TrekNorth relocated, which was a significant expense, but also expanded to include 6<sup>th</sup> grade and a small expansion to grades 7-12, which was a significant increase to revenue. The careful and conservative financial planning that preceded the expansion and relocation led the school to predict that the 2013-14 school year would include a decrease in the overall fund balance; however, the opposite was true, and the school actually increased the fund balance, albeit by a small amount in 2014, and by larger amounts in 2015 and 2016. TrekNorth continues to pay employees salaries that are competitive for the region, continues to provide an adequate amount of supplies and financial resources to teachers, and has also successfully planned the financial components of our major relocation project. The school has continued to use and develop financial practices that insure an ethical and effective use of the public dollar, and our academic results suggest that public dollars are being wisely spent at TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School. Furthermore, we were able to increase our fund balance despite the increased expenses associated with relocation.

## **XII. Innovative Practices & Program Challenges**

### ***Innovative Practices***

#### ***Advanced Placement/Pre-Advanced Placement Curriculum***

In 2005 TrekNorth committed to establishing a curriculum grounded in a genuine AP/Pre-AP approach. 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 last few summers have marked 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, many TrekNorth teachers have attended Advanced Placement Summer Institutes – either for their specific course or the vertical teaming institute for their department. 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 has moved 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.

#### ***Grade Expansion: 6-12***

TrekNorth, working with VOA, successfully expanded for the 2013-14 school year to include 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Now in the fourth year of offering 6<sup>th</sup> grade programming, TrekNorth currently has 38 6<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled, with more on the waiting list. This inclusion of 6<sup>th</sup> graders happened primarily for two reasons:

1. Data suggests that the longer students attend TrekNorth, the better they do within the Pre-AP/AP curriculum. By reaching into a younger grade with our vertically aligned curriculum, we expect to increase the percentage of students experiencing long term success at TrekNorth.
2. All of the Bemidji-area primary schools are K-5, so students were having to go to Bemidji Middle School for 6<sup>th</sup> grade before enrolling at TrekNorth. By offering 6<sup>th</sup> grade programming, students can now come directly to TrekNorth out of primary school, and potentially stay here until graduation.

#### ***Technology Investment***

When TrekNorth first opened, the school boasted a 1-to-1 student to laptop computer ratio. This deployment of technology to students was something that didn't work well over the course of the first year, and the school pulled back on technology investment for the next decade. This is not to say TrekNorth didn't have technology in the school – there have always been a few carts of computers and a lab, but the school was not at all progressive in its use of technology in the classroom. This weakness was identified through the strategic planning process, and integrating technology into the classroom became a focus area for the school for the current year. Through grants and a strategic allocation of funds from the overall fund balance, TrekNorth was able to commit more than \$150,000.00 towards improving the hardware, software, and infrastructure of

technology systems at the school. Additionally, TrekNorth has a .25FTE Technology Integration position to help teachers meet the goal of effectively integrating technology into their classrooms.

### ***New Facility***

TrekNorth suffered through significant limitations due to its location and lease between 2003 and 2013. In 2010, work began on a relocation project, with the goal being to successfully relocate in time for the 2013-14 school year.

TrekNorth now occupies a newly renovated 21,000sq. foot facility, just three blocks east of its former site. There are many significant improvements with the new site, including a multi-purpose commons area, 3+ acres of green space, improved classroom facilities, an expanded computer lab and testing center, improved science facilities, improved storage, and generally a facility more well designed for the TrekNorth program.

### ***State & National Recognition***

In May of 2016, *US News & World Report* ranked TrekNorth as the 2nd best high school in the state of Minnesota, and one of the top 25 charter schools in the United States. The metric used by this publication takes into account student performance on state assessments as well as their “college readiness index.”

Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education, through their application of the federal No Child Left Behind accountability program, does an annual ranking of public schools across the state. TrekNorth High School and TrekNorth Middle School both received a “Reward School” ranking in 2015, which is the highest ranking and reserved for the top 15% of school programs in the state. The measurement used by MDE includes four components: proficiency on state tests, student growth as measured by state tests, graduation rates, and a school’s progress on the achievement gap. Most impressively, TrekNorth High School is one of only 14 schools in the state of Minnesota to have received “Reward School” status for 5 consecutive years!

### ***Outdoor Adventure Program***

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 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 teen-agers. 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. 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 now a strong component of the TrekNorth program and a vital part of the TrekNorth experience. 2008 marked

the start of an official Service Learning Program and the establishment of a Service Learning Program Director. The Service Learning Program aims to create socially conscious citizens by providing opportunities for students to volunteer in their local and global communities, and has developed policies and experiences that help cultivate this mission with our student body. During the 2015-16 school year, students performed valuable service in the Bemidji area, Chicago, Pine Ridge, and West Virginia and their work took place in homeless shelters and soup kitchens, inner-city schools and food preparation and packaging organizations. *The combined service hours of our students was over 3000 hours!* 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. This program, too, makes our students into better students and better people.

### ***Teacher Development***

In order to achieve the goals in our mission statement, TrekNorth is hugely dependent upon high-quality instruction. Operating from the belief that, while some people may be born with a propensity for teaching, no one is born with the ability to be an excellent teacher, TrekNorth has created a strong Teacher Development Process. The process involves three major components: a rubric based holistic evaluation of teaching effectiveness, a series of formative pop in assessments to classrooms, and participation by each teaching in a Research Team.

First, TrekNorth has developed an extensive Teaching Rubric that assesses planning, delivery of instruction, classroom management, and assessment. Each teacher gets evaluated using this rubric, with the expectation that they receive a certain score. Teachers who do not earn that score are placed into a probationary period that includes more coaching and a re-evaluation plan. Second, TrekNorth has implemented a system by which the Director and Assistant Director “pop in” to classrooms on a frequent basis. When they do these formative assessments of teaching, they are looking for broad evidence of elements of the Teaching Rubric, and evidence that school-wide initiatives are being effectively implemented. Last, TrekNorth has also recently started its own variety of Professional Learning Communities, which the schools is calling Research Teams. These are small teams of teachers who are working collaboratively on some specific aspect of instruction - management, assessment writing, differentiation, etc.

In addition to the process described above, TrekNorth has developed a Performance Review document used to evaluate the performance of all teachers and staff members at TrekNorth. At the end of each year, during an employee's Performance Review meeting, the various components of the document get reviewed and each an employee receives a score on a 0-5 scale, with 3.0 being the expectation.

### ***Financial Management***

Overall, TrekNorth has excellent financial management. One can find evidence of this within the Financial Audit Report, or through a general perusal of TrekNorth financial documents. The school also has a fund balance in excess of 25%, and has managed to develop this fund balance despite the minimal increases to education funding over the past few years.

### ***Extracurricular 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 2015-16 school year, TrekNorth has a coed soccer team, boys and girls cross-country running teams, both boys and girls

Nordic skiing teams, and boys and girls Track and Field. TrekNorth also offers Knowledge Bowl for the Junior High students, Speech, Robotics, and Envirothon.

### ***Enrollment & Public Relations***

TrekNorth entered the 2016-17 school year with full-capacity enrollment and a long waiting list. TrekNorth is becoming a school where more Bemidji-area families will consider sending their children. Also, through positive word of mouth advertising as well lots of positive coverage in the local press, TrekNorth is starting to earn the respect of the community in general. This year, TrekNorth entered into the world of digital marketing, and now has an online presence aimed at families in Bemidji and the surrounding communities, particularly parents of students in primary grades. Our hope is to start to build a positive impression of TrekNorth in the minds of parents who make deliberate choices about where to send their children to school.

### ***Program Challenges***

#### ***Preparing Students for the AP Classroom and College***

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 more than 50% of our students are of minority descent. While an Advanced Placement program is a very useful tool for preparing students for the rigors of the college classroom, getting young students prepared for the rigors of AP is extremely challenging. TrekNorth has identified that a significant percentage of their incoming youngest students (6th-8th grade) are already on the wrong side of the "achievement gap", and this has negative implications for the makeup of our AP classrooms in the next 3-5 years.

In order to combat the achievement gap that TrekNorth is inheriting from other school districts (our 6th graders come from as many as six other districts in the Bemidji area), the school is working really hard to vertically align the curriculum in each department, including mapping out state standards and making sure that Pre-AP standards are also covered in our Pre-AP curriculum. Furthermore, the school has started to implement a more consistent classroom management strategy (ENVoY), and has a few teachers working to implement Thinking Maps, both of which are strategies proven to work with student populations that are typically underserved. On top of these things, the school has evolved the system for developing teachers, in recognition that getting our student body to be successful in the AP and college classroom will require truly excellent instruction.

#### ***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. TrekNorth also improves its standing in the community by continuing to produce notable results in terms of student achievement.

### **XIII. Future Plans**

In June of 2013, TrekNorth relocated to a 21,000 square foot building that had been renovated for the purpose of housing TrekNorth Jr. & Sr. High School. The school also expanded from approximately 190 students to 240 students, and added a 6<sup>th</sup> grade program to the current grade structure. Both of these were major changes for the school, and were the focus of Board and Administrative time over the past few years. Although TrekNorth occupies a new space and is now in the fourth year of having a 6<sup>th</sup> grade, those transitions are still being worked through and finalized.

Looking forward, the following projects are either underway or being considered:

1. Policy Organization & Development: TrekNorth needs to put considerable effort into organizing both operational and Board-level policies, and in developing policy in places where we are lacking. To this end, TrekNorth contracted with Board consultant, who has outlined a major board training plan to help TrekNorth truly follow a Policy Governance model. This is a major Board-level project for the 15-16 school year.
2. Exploring the possibility of a K-12 system for TrekNorth: academic data strongly suggests that students who start at TrekNorth early in their secondary careers do far better than students who come later, and it also suggests that TrekNorth enrolls high percentages of students who are significantly behind their peers in math and reading. For these reasons, it is possible that TrekNorth would do a better job of educating more students if the district was K-12 rather than 6-12. The TrekNorth Board, working with the current landlord of the property home to TrekNorth, has started to develop plans to become a K-12 school system. An Expansion Team was formed, and they've completed a rough draft of what programming would consist of in the primary grades, and they've worked with an architect to develop preliminary building plans and a site map. Those plans are currently under review by the city of Bemidji, and the Board will soon start to put together a fundraising strategy.

## XIV. World's Best Workforce Report (WBWF)

This part of our report gives the reader reference about where to find the essential elements of the statutorily required annual World's Best Workforce Report. The World's Best Workforce Report must contain:

- A. A report and results of the contract goals (See Section IV: School Governance)
- B. Workforce plan and goal results for closing gaps, ready for school and 3rd grade reading (See Section VIII: Academic Performance)
- C. Student and Parent Satisfaction (See Section IX: School Climate)
- D. Academic performance (See Section VIII: Academic Performance, other sections not included there are noted below)
  - a. Academic Program: Gifted/Talented Programming at Trek
    - i. Our Academic Acceleration policy is located as our Grade Advancement policy in our Parent/Student Handbook. In order to be considered for a grade advancement,
      - 1. a student must evidence a clear pattern for scoring at least one standard deviation above their current grade level on the reading and math MCA or its equivalent.
      - 2. In consultation with the school counselor, an affective measurement tool (ex: BASC) will be completed by student, current teachers, and family members to assess the student's social and emotional readiness for independent learning at the higher grade level.
      - 3. Student can shadow classes at the grade level while the determination about whether or not to advance is being considered. This experience can be factored into the teams' ultimate decision.
      - 4. After data is gathered, the decision to advance is made at a team level by the student, family members, school counselor, a current teacher, and administrative representative.
    - ii. TrekNorth Schools don't have pull-out programming for gifted/talented students, therefore does not have a need to identify students for that program at this time. G/T students at Trek are served in the following ways within current programming at our school: counseling services, academic advancement opportunities, and cluster-style instructional environments in middle-school language arts and mathematics. Should we move to a more comprehensive service model that includes direct instruction and support for students identified for g/t, we will be sure to use a multiple measurement matrix that includes non-traditional measurement tools to include all of our twice-exceptional and underrepresented g/t populations.
  - b. Assessment Committee: While teacher input has been a hallmark of our assessment selection process, we have amended our district assessment committee to include a parent too. As a district, we infrequently activate this committee, because our commitment to the types of assessments we administer has been pretty steady for the past three years. However, we will be activating this committee in the 2016-17 school year to look into options for replacing the OLPA assessment for the 2017-18 school year.