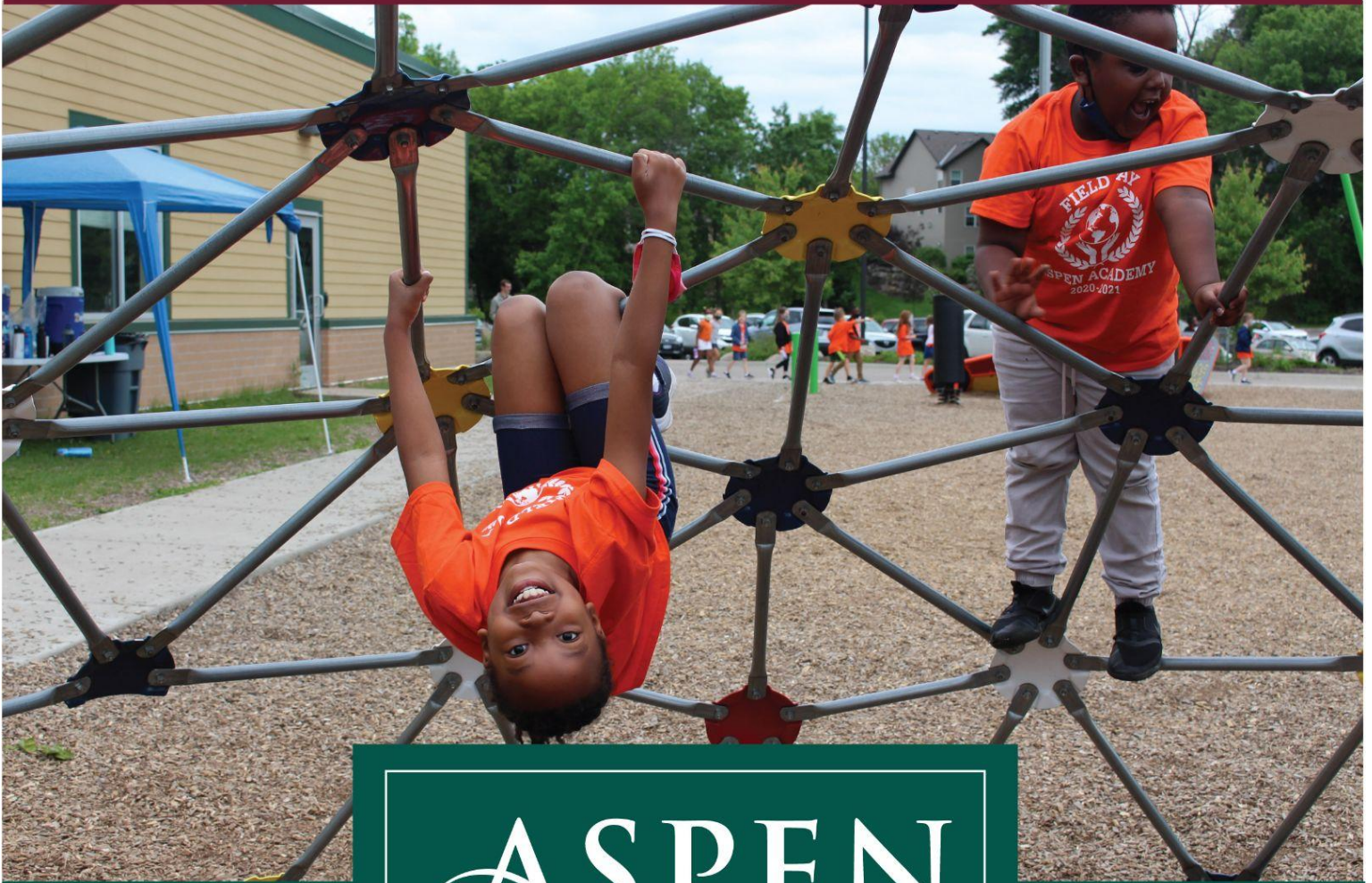


2021 Annual School Report



ASPEN
ACADEMY

A 2019 National Blue Ribbon School

T H I N K

Tenacity | High Expectations | Integrity | No Excuses | Kindness



ASPEN ACADEMY 2021 Annual School Report

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Introduction

Aspen Academy 4184 is a state recognized 'High Quality' public charter school which is in its 14th year of operation. The school serves students in grades K-8. Founded in 2008 by a group of parents who wanted a more academically challenging curriculum option in the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities, Aspen Academy started with 104 students in a church building serving grades K-3. Today, Aspen Academy is in its own building after two expansions serving over 650 students. Authorized by Friends of Education, Aspen Academy offers a rigorous academic education that follows Minnesota Academic Standards and uses Core Knowledge Sequence as the content foundation.

The mission of Aspen Academy is to provide students with a well-rounded, Core Knowledge based education which meets the intellectual, creative, and social needs of each child.

The mission is achieved through our daily vision in preparing students for future educational opportunities and life in a global society by creating an academically rigorous, literature-rich environment where class sizes are small, and a strong sense of community is built and valued.



2020-2021 Highlights

Over a decade of growth and development has supported Aspen Academy in being a leader amongst other public schools. In a year like no other, Aspen Academy has celebrated many highlights and successes while enduring a pandemic and various modes of learning formats; from hybrid, to full distance, to back on site.

Aspen started the year being featured on KSTP and MPR for our computer club, The Penguin Corps' work to refurbish old, donated computers for student use during the pandemic--helping provide equitable access to education by closing the digital divide at the school during hybrid and distance learning. This creative approach of teaching students valuable tech skills and having them provide a solution to close the digital divide, helped Aspen Academy receive the 2021 MESPA STEM Innovation Award, be a 2021 EdTech Finalist as a "Trendsetter in Education," and helped Mr. Stu Keroff, leader of the Penguin Corps, be named as a semifinalist in the Minnesota Teacher of the Year award.



Aspen worked to still provide many virtual activities and check-ins such as "lunch bunch" with the school counselor where students were invited to have a virtual lunch with the school counselor and their classmates during distance learning. Parents were invited to zoom into student presentations in the classroom. Full-time distance learning scholars were celebrated for their hard work and class participation with our weekly Distance Learner of the Week award.

During 2020-21, Aspen saw a large need in the community; many families were either unemployed or underemployed due to the pandemic. Aspen held a successful virtual giving tree during the winter months to help the Aspen community.

Aspen finished the year with outside celebrations for eighth grade graduation, the spring band and orchestra concert, a modified Field Day, and an outdoor nature camp celebration day for middle schoolers.

Governance and Management

School Management and Administrator Biographies

Melanie Jiskra, K-8 Principal

Ms. Jiskra has served as the K-8 principal for the past four years. She has over 16 years of teaching and instructional coaching experience and 9 years in school administration. She earned her Masters of Education in Arts and Educational Administration through Saint Mary's University. Melanie has worked in traditional public schools, rural and urban settings, K-12 schools and elementary schools. Ms. Jiskra teaches aspiring principals through Saint Mary's University and trains Reading Corps Tutors across the state of Minnesota. Melanie's educational career highlights include being the recipient of the 2021 MESPA STEM Innovation Award, the United States Department of Education 2019 National Blue Ribbon School award, and being a Minnesota Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist. Melanie's passion lies in curriculum, instruction and assessment. She leads professional development, handles the day to day onsite operations of the school and has implemented data driven decision making to all aspects of Aspen Academy intervention and instructional models. She has been a part of a new partnership with the University of St. Thomas in their Charter School Residency program, is a selected member of the ServeMinnesota Education Stakeholder Committee, and has led Aspen Academy to be a part of a research study with Reading Corps. Her favorite part of the day remains the morning when scholars arrive with smiles and a readiness to learn!

Mr. James Jotter, Assistant Principal

This is Mr. Jotter's 2nd year as the assistant principal of Aspen Academy. He began his educational career as a middle school teacher for 11 years at a juvenile treatment and corrections facility. Mr. Jotter was then offered to become the Principal of MIB High School where he stayed in this position for 6 years. He earned his Master of Education in Arts and Educational Administration Degree through Saint Mary's University. He attended Bemidji State University for his undergraduate degree with a degree in K-8 education. He has enjoyed working with so many kids throughout his career in many different settings. He is passionate about restorative practices to help kids meet their full potential and grow socially and emotionally along with their academics.

Mr. Eric Sandberg, Dean of Students

Mr. Sandberg is in his third year at Aspen Academy in his role as dean of students. He attended St. Olaf College where he graduated in 2011 with his bachelor's degree in Social Studies Education. After his undergraduate he obtained a high school social studies teaching position at Northfield High School. In addition to his teaching assignment at Northfield he coached high school football, softball, and headed up the strength and conditioning program. In 2013 Mr. Sandberg obtained the Youth Development Coordinator position for Faribault

Public Schools. This position entailed coordinating numerous youth programs across the district focusing on academic and enrichment goals. After four years a new position was created to include additional programming and responsibilities; mainly coordinating after school and summer STEAM programming for 600 students in grades 1-8. He is currently wrapping up his master's degree in Educational Leadership through Minnesota State University-Mankato. Mr. Sandberg will continue with administration coursework upon completion of his master's degree.

Development of Leaders

Melanie Jiskra, K-8 Principal

Licensed Principal Professional Development Plan 2020-2021 Summary

Goal 1: Establish relationships with staff, students and parents.

- Be present at arrival and dismissal to talk to parents
- Offer opportunities for family involvement through unique ways due to Covid 19
- Take time to be with the students and learn about their interests
- Create collaborative team building opportunities to deepen relationships with staff

Goal 1 Met: Melanie established more relationships with staff, students and families by being present during arrival and dismissal as much as possible, as well as visiting with students during lunch times, classroom visits, recess and monthly THINK awards to learn more about their interests and accomplishments. There were family meetings made available through Zoom during the times of hybrid and distance learning, including conferences, committee and board meetings, student check ins and IEP meetings. Team meetings were held both through Zoom and in the school gym to facilitate all staff's needs. While in the gym, staff were able to participate in collaborative team building activities while keeping social distance.

Goal 2: Continue to learn more about social emotional learning and students in trauma to better support teachers and students.

- Participate in professional development on ACES and mental health
- Participate in trainings offered by MESPA, Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association
- Participate in the MDE Charter Schools Leadership Cohort

Goal 2 Partially Met: Melanie met all of the above goals other than the professional development on ACES. There was no training offered in the surrounding areas or through Zoom during the last school year. Participation in the MDE Charter Schools Leadership Cohort was increased in attendance from the previous year.

Goal 3: Stay relevant and current on best practices of effective leadership (law, statute, etc.)

- Attend professional development on leadership when available
- Read and study professional resources
- Seek out past mentors for observations, feedback, etc.
- Attend MESPA professional development
- Special Education emphasis

Goal 3 Met: Melanie attended professional development on leadership and current best practices focusing on law, updated statute and policy updates. She attended the MESPA virtual conference and connected with past sped director for questions on sped issues and previous supt. for other day to day operational, finance and staffing questions. Melanie also met weekly the last half of the school year with CPA firm to learn more on the current and upcoming year's budget.

James Jotter, Assistant Principal

Professional Development Plan 2020-2021 Summary

Goal 1: Learn more about Charter school policies and finance

- Participate in school finance meetings
- Meet with school accountant and business manager
- Learn through MSBA policies
- Attend school board meetings

Goal 1 Met: Mr. Jotter attended school finance and facility committee meetings while also meeting with the school accountant and business manager on a regular basis. Mr. Jotter has also attended numerous board meetings and has read much information about charter school board policies through the MSBA site. The MSBA site is very insightful to how Charter schools are governed compared to a traditional public school. Mr. Jotter attended the Back to School Legal Update for School Administrators this summer. This was very informational on any new laws or court decisions based on school practices. The conference also addressed current issues that schools were facing around the state and what they are doing and what the law states on handling them.

Goal 2: Grow relationships with staff, students and their families

- Meet more parents at school functions and meetings
- Socialize with students during lunch and recess
- Use restorative practices to build relationships with students

Goal 2 Met: Mr. Jotter has remained visible to staff and students throughout the day and takes the time to be active with the students during lunch and recess. He has also been active in the daily activities of student management promoting and practicing restorative practices. Mr.

Jotter attends staff meetings and speaks with staff often on students' behaviors and best practices. Speaking with the kids allowed for building relationships with the kids based on trust and understanding.

Goal 3: Continue and improve Support for the Administration Team

- Continue to have weekly admin meetings
- Check in daily for daily reviews of events
- Continue to ask and give support when needed

Goal 3 Met: Mr. Jotter has been active in his support of the administration team by attending meetings and continually checking in with the admin team to review best practices and ensure Aspen Academy is running smoothly and areas needing to be addressed get resolved quickly. Meeting regularly allowed for making sure situations were handled and by whom. Mr. Jotter also attended the Special Education Law and Leadership Conference this past summer.

Eric Sandberg, K-8 Dean of Students

Professional Development Plan 2020-2021 Summary

Goal 1: Grow as a leader through increased participation in leadership activities

Goal 1: Met: Mr. Sandberg participated in Charter School Leadership trainings and continued to stay informed with the pertinent information and communications of the network. Mr. Sandberg actively led staff meetings, professional development opportunities, and led the arrival, dismissal, and recess teams to ensure a positive student, staff, and family experience. Mr. Sandberg supported the administrative team and contributed to the critical decisions of running Aspen Academy.

Goal 2: Implement strategies to promote social emotional learning and improve student mental health

Goal 2: Met: Through Eagle Hour students participated in numerous activities promoting connecting with classmates and improving the overall student experience. Mr. Sandberg planned activities for middle school students in collaboration with middle school staff to ensure students were participating in activities that met needs of students above and beyond academics. A major focus was on giving students the opportunity to connect with one another and to provide safe environments to share their experiences.

Goal 3: Implement effective summer programming to reduce the “summer melt” and promote positive social experiences among students.

Goal 3: Met: Our administrative team successfully launched the first Eagle Academy summer programming. Scholars participated in two, three week blocks of summer programming that incorporated math, literacy, and social emotional instruction led by licensed teachers. Survey responses from students, staff, and families were very positive in regards to academics and

social emotional metrics. Mr. Sandberg and the administrative team plan on growing Eagle Academy to reach additional students and offer additional programming for next summer.



School Board

The Aspen Academy School Board is the governing body that sets policy and provides oversight of the school through its five standing committees. The Aspen board is composed of 5 parents, 3 teachers and 1 community member. Board elections take place every November and those elected are seated at the January meeting. Information about the election process is sent to parents and teachers in September with a deadline for responses. Candidates interested in running for a seat on the board are asked to respond to a slate of questions which is shared with parents and employees as well as complete a Conflict of Interest form.

The annual election of board officers took place at the January 19th meeting. At that time, Misty Schutrop was elected Board Chair, Micahel Faulise was elected Vice Chair, Rob Allison was elected Treasurer and Stephanie Smitley was elected Secretary.

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Board Member Name/Email	Type of Member	Term	Office Held	Committees	Meeting Attendance Rate
Misty Schutrop misty.schutrop@aspenacademymn.org	Parent	Jan. 2020 - Present	Chair	Governance	91%
Michael Faulise michael.faulise@aspenacademymn.org	Parent	Jan. 2020 - Present	Vice-Chair	Finance / Facility Strategic Planning	73%
Robert Allison robert.allison@aspenacademymn.org	Parent	June 2021 - Present	Treasurer	Finance / Facility	91%
Stephanie Smitley stephanie.smitley@aspenacademymn.org	Teacher	Jan. 2020 - Present	Secretary	Program Services Governance	100%
Stephanie Peterson stephanie.peterson@aspenacademymn.org	Teacher	Jan. 2021 - June 2021		Strategic Planning	64%
Kesley Carlson kelsey.carlson@aspenacademymn.org	Teacher	Sept 2020-Feb 2021		Program Services	100%
Andrew Price andrew.price@aspenacademymn.org	Parent	Jan 2021 - Present		Marketing Strategic Planning	100%
Andrew Petrenko andrew.petrenko@aspenacademymn.org	Parent	Jan 2020-Present		Strategic Planning	82%
April Schafer april.schafer@aspenacademymn.org	Community Member	Jan. 2020 - Present		Marketing	91%

Special Board meetings during the 2020-2021 school year were held on: July 13, 28, September 15, January 14, 25, March 8, 29, April 15, May 4, 25 and June 2.

The School Board has five committees which meet throughout the year. Committee meetings are published on the school's community calendar located on the school website, as well as on the board in the lobby outside of the main office. The board agenda lists all five committees and has room for discussion by either the committee chair or the Director/admin team to address any matter that falls under the purview of the committee. In addition the Director/admin team provides the board with a monthly report that covers these areas. This report is also used as the vehicle for administration to report to the board its compliance with MDE and authorizer reporting.

The following is a list of committees, chair of the committee and meeting dates.

Committee	Committee Chair	2020-2021 Meeting Dates
Governance	Misty Schutrop	August 20
Facility & Finance	Robert Allison	Aug 18, Oct 20, Nov 17, Feb 23, March 16, April 20, May 18

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Strategic Planning	Andrew Price	Oct 13, Nov 17, May 5
Marketing	Andrew Price	Oct 13, April 29
Program Services	Stephanie Smitley	Sept 9, Oct 7, Feb 11

The school board members completed the following trainings:

Date	Training Topic	Attendees
October 20	Fastbridge Data and Goals Review	Schutrop, Allison, Carlson, Price, Peterson, Faulise, Smitley
November 17	Special Education Overview	Schutrop, Allison, Smitley, Carlson, Schafer, Price, Peterson, Petrenko
December 8	World's Best Workforce Summary and Plan	Carlson, Peterson, Allison, Schafer, Price, Petrenko, Smitley, Schutrop
February 23	Special Education Update	Faulise, Smitley, Peterson, Petrenko, Carlson, Schafer, Price, Allison
March 16	Winter Data, Fastbridge and Fountas and Pinnell Assessment Results	Schutrop, Schafer, Smitley, Allison, Faulise, Petrenko, Price
May 18	Charter Contract Renewal Review	Schutrop, Faulise, Petrenko, Price, Allison, Schafer, Smitley

Individual board member trainings:

Date	Training Topic	Attendee
August 18	Charter Source: Legislative Update	Stephanie Smitley
June 23	Charter Source: OML-Return from Pandemic State of Emergency	Stephanie Smitley

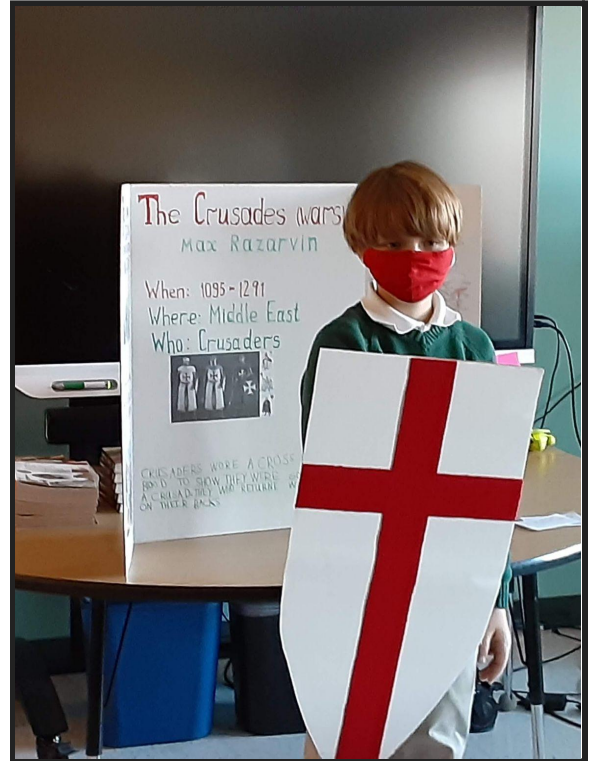
Staffing

In the 2020-2021 academic year, Aspen Academy employed 46 full time licensed and four part time teachers. All teachers employed by Aspen Academy are licensed, or approved for licensing, and meet state requirements for public education instructors. In addition, Aspen Academy employed 19 non-teaching support staff.

Aspen Academy had four staff who worked with an Out of Field Permission granted by the Minnesota Department of Education: Amanda Wolf for Special Education Academic and Behavior Strategist .2% FTE has college classes to support inclusive environments used for support in lieu of qualified substitute teachers. Mandi Berndt for Grades 4-8 latin .2% FTE. Stephanie Peterson Special Education Academic and Behavior Strategist 1.0 FTE is an experienced teacher with multiple years at Aspen, needed to step out of her general education

position for the year and was able to provide differentiated instruction and support to the special education team. Patrick Kloeckner-Walters MS Theater .1% FTE, was continuing to work on finishing his theater license.

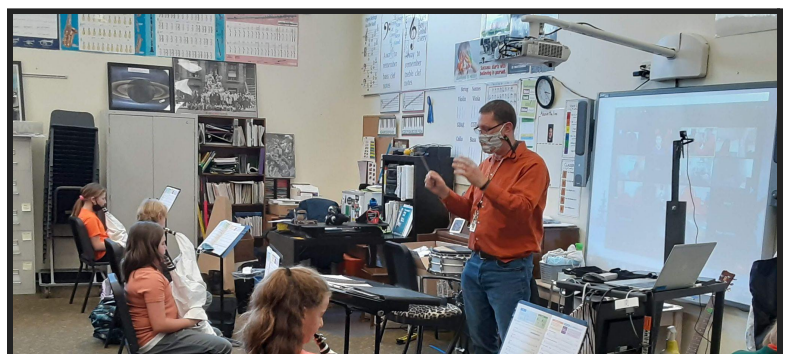
Aspen Academy teaching staff is selected through license review, interview with hiring team and final interview with administrator to review job description, policies, procedures, salary and benefits.



School Enrollment Process

Aspen Academy offers a free-access, well rounded Core Knowledge public education. Aspen follows all Minnesota statutes regarding the application and admission procedures for public charter schools.

Each year, applications are available fall/winter for enrollment the following fall. Procedures and deadlines are posted on www.aspenacademymn.org and explained during prospective



parent open houses. School administrators attend the Prior Lake Community Expo and Dan Patch Days each year in addition to prospective parent open houses to promote Aspen Academy and the open enrollment process. This past year we held virtual tours for prospective families and the Prior Lake Community Expo and Dan Patch Days were canceled due to the pandemic.

All applications received during the open enrollment period prior to the deadline will be on equal footing for the lottery. Applications are time- and date- stamped upon receipt. If more applications are received than space per grade level are received, the school holds a public lottery. In the fall of 2019 we started the application process for the 2020/2021 school year.



Applications were released online on October 7 with a due date of December 20th at noon. The lottery was held on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 4:30 PM in the media center. Aspen provides sibling/foster and sibling/staff preference to families with currently-enrolled students and children of staff. Current families/staff must submit an application before the close of the open enrollment period for sibling/foster and sibling/staff preference. Applications

received after the open enrollment period are numbered and responded to in the order in which they were received.

School Enrollment History

Aspen Academy opened in the fall of 2008 with 134 students enrolled K-3rd grade and has grown to an enrollment of 638 students in K-8th grade as of the 2020/2021 school year. Aspen has had two significant events due to growth; the first was breaking ground to build its own school structure in 2012 and an addition to that structure in the 2017/18 school year. Aspen Academy serves 5 sections each in Kindergarten and 1st grade, 2nd through 4th grade has 4 sections, 3 sections in 5th grade, 2 sections of 6th and 7th grade, and 1 section of 8th grade.

The tables that follow show Aspen's school year historical and projected enrollment by grade level. Numbers represent actual average head counts based on state-reported data.

HISTORICAL ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL

Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2014-15	66	66	66	67	66	66	47	50	45	539
2015-16	66	66	66	65	64	64	39	23	30	485
2016-17	76	68	68	69	67	57	41	26	14	486
2017-18	85	86	64	67	65	59	27	38	23	512
2018-19	82	83	87	66	67	65	43	19	25	537
2019-20	111	88	92	84	67	70	39	31	14	596
2020-21	107	110	91	87	79	70	38	30	26	638

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL

Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2021-22 *actual	99	110	102	88	86	75	65	32	25	682
2022-23 *projected	88	88	110	110	88	88	65	65	35	737
2023-24 *projected	88	88	88	110	110	88	65	65	35	737
2024-25 *projected	88	88	88	88	110	100	65	65	35	727
2025-26 *projected	88	88	88	88	88	100	75	65	50	730

Innovative Practices and Implementation

In an unprecedented year in education, Aspen Academy was recognized for two major awards due to its innovative practices in technology. Once again, the Penguin Corps was nominated and selected as the state of Minnesota's MESPA Innovation Award Recipient. The MESPA Innovation Award partners with the Science Museum of Minnesota and is awarded to the one school that meets the following four objectives:

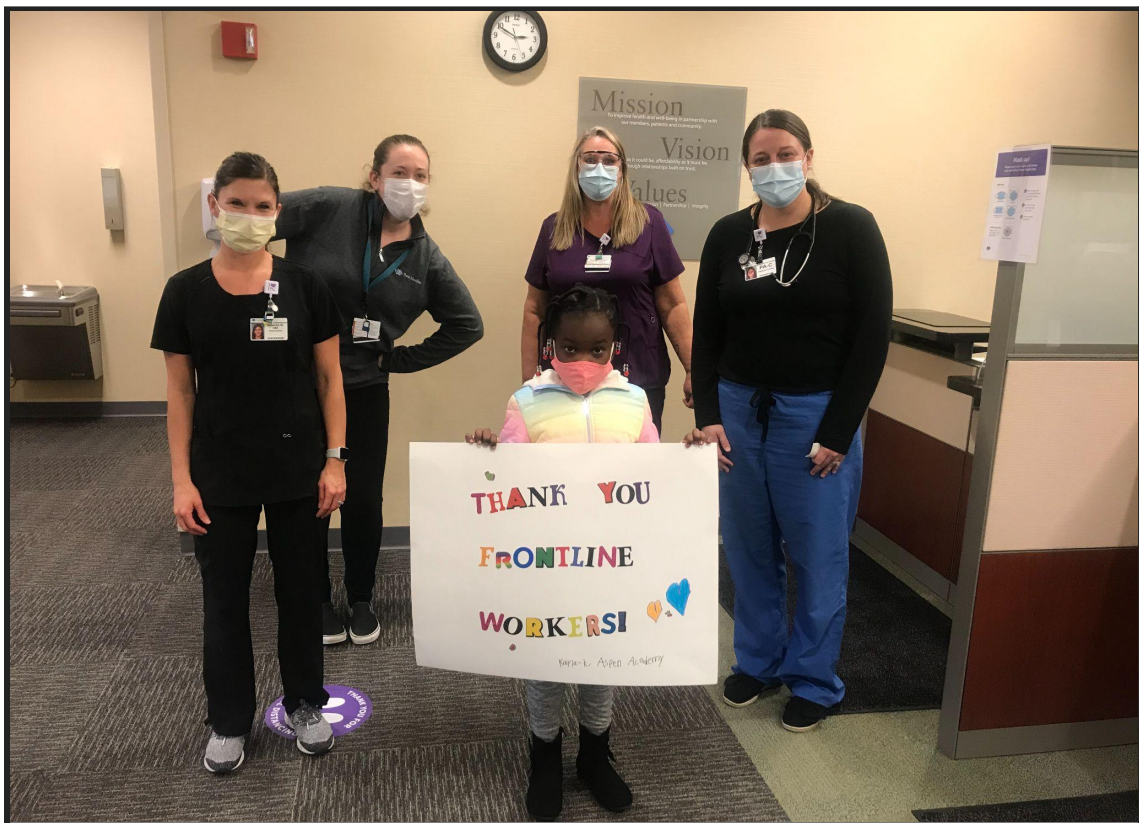
- Demonstrate impact on school community (solution or outcome oriented)
- Are replicable
- Are inclusive and support diversity
- Are sustainable and/or have potential growth

The EdTech Awards, in its 11th year, recognizes people in and around education for

outstanding contributions in transforming education through technology to enrich the lives of learners everywhere. Aspen Academy was recognized as a finalist for the Trendsetter in Education 2021 award. It is through these experiences our scholars were able to set up our instructional model during the pandemic. Each scholar had their own device during distance learning because of the work of the Penguin Corps.

Aspen Academy was able to offer synchronous learning. This set us apart from the surrounding districts as a model of choice as parents were searching for ways to keep their scholars continually challenged and engaged during the school day. Classroom teachers and specialists taught full days and interventionists still met with their groups. The staff worked incredibly hard to ensure the high expectations of the academic rigor was maintained.

Aspen's THINK values continue to be the most influential in the school's success in meeting the mission and vision, the thread that runs through all that we do every day for every student is our continuing application of THINK (Tenacity, High Expectations, Integrity, No Excuses, and Kindness) principles. The THINK principles encompass developing those critical character traits that are necessary for reaching the district's mission and vision. With the implementation of THINK principles, the explicit teaching, modeling, and practice of the human values that make the world a better place not only leads to students reaching outcomes, but to developing agents of change who will have far-reaching positive impact in the world.



Curriculum

Language Arts

The Common Core ELA standards are the driving force for what we teach in Reading/English language arts. To meet standards, Aspen Academy implements Core Knowledge. Core Knowledge is a curriculum which systematically outlines topics to be studied by each grade level, ensuring that no gaps in instruction occur; teachers know what students have experienced in previous years and build on the common foundation to deepen and enhance additional learning.

Three times a year, elementary students are assessed on their early literacy skills, comprehension, and fluency. Using running records from the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, teachers determine instructional reading levels. From the data, teachers are able to differentiate lessons and develop leveled guided reading groups to target specific skills and address standards that are not mastered. The use of informational text is the primary genre used during reading lessons. Additionally, universal screening is conducted in fall, winter, and spring for both elementary and middle school students. This screening is conducted through Fastbridge. Students not on target for seasonal benchmarks are identified with further diagnostic testing and provided additional support through interventions. All students undergoing interventions have their progress monitored weekly for response.

Best-practice instructional strategies are utilized to bring the curriculum resources to life for Aspen Academy scholars. This includes training for all teachers on the Teach Like A Champion/ Uncommon Schools strategies, which involve teachers implementing habits of discussion, formative assessment, cooperative learning, and project-based learning. Support staff, including Title 1 and EL teachers, push into classrooms to support guided reading groups during core instruction, as well as having some pull out groups for intervention work. Aspen Academy utilizes a balanced literacy approach and guided workshop model within the classrooms. Through use of running records, universal and diagnostic screening, and common grade level assessments, teachers use data to determine flexible groups and instructional decisions.

Aspen Academy has continued to update their scope and sequence with a new reading curriculum in grades K-2. It is the first time that the school has had a common curriculum used across all primary elementary grade levels. Collaborative Classroom has supported social emotional learning in addition to the guided reading workshop model for our youngest readers. Plans to implement Collaborative Classroom in grades 3 and 4 next year are in progress as well as vertical standards alignment for grades K-8.

Math

Math instruction is designed to address the Minnesota Math Standards. Multiple curriculum resources are used to meet standards. Aspen Academy follows the Singapore Math philosophy, which is defined as instruction that supports students as they move through the stages of deeper math. The school uses Math in Focus as their curriculum, having adopted the newest edition in 2019 - 2020.

Teachers utilize the CPA (concrete, pictorial, abstract) approach, which allows for students to be introduced to concepts in a tangible, hands-on way and then deepens understanding and application as they progress to increasing levels of abstraction. Specific strategies Aspen Academy teachers implement include number bonds, bar modeling, and mental math. The important component in this math instructional approach is that, at any time, students are fluidly moving between the CPA levels with concepts. This creates a natural differentiated experience for students.

Aspen Academy uses the Math In Focus cumulative assessments to monitor student retention of the curriculum. Aspen recognizes that Math In Focus does not meet all of the Minnesota State Standards and therefore teachers have worked with the math specialist to design and implement instruction to meet those standards and incorporate those standards into the cumulative assessments. The cumulative assessments are designed to be standard-specific and rigorous and provide detailed data on each student.

Following these assessments, teachers and teacher leaders review the data and make instructional decisions. One important piece of the data meetings is planning “re-teaching” lessons for students who did not demonstrate mastery. The grade level will create and offer choices for how the re-teaching lesson(s) will be delivered. Following the re-teaching lesson(s), students are given a formative assessment to assess mastery, and the data review continues. In addition to the cumulative assessments, Aspen Academy utilizes the best practice of triangulating data. Students also take the FastBridge math assessment three times a year, and, along with examining student work samples, the educational team is able to create an individualized learning plan for each student.

Science

Our science teaching supports student interest, inquiry, and project-based learning and is aligned to the MN State science standards. With the core knowledge thread of science running through the classes, students are able to dive deeper each year into the biological, physical, and earth sciences.

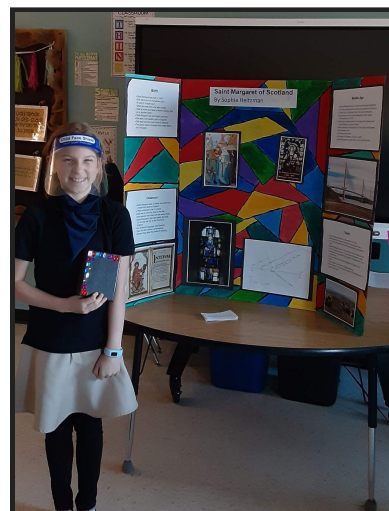
For example, if we take biological science throughout the scholar's years at Aspen, kindergarteners learn about their five senses and by third grade, students dissect cow eyes. In fifth grade, they dissect fish and frogs, and by middle school, students are dissecting rats, squids, and owl pellets. Additionally, our physical building location offers a backyard pond that connects inside learning to outdoor learning. During the winter season, students in grades K-8 set out bird feeders and learn to identify and classify the different bird species through observation. Our kindergarten students sprout plants in their classroom and then plant them in the front of the school, while second graders develop an insect museum where their research and model insects are on display.

Students in the middle school grades apply their learning of cross-curricular areas during the SciVentBerg Fair. This project-based learning experience includes the use of a scoring rubric aligned to standards. Fifth grade gets introduced to the SciVentBerg fair with an entry level research project. Sixth grade students are responsible for conceiving, building, and demonstrating an invention. Seventh graders take their unit on engineering and simple machines to a new level by working together to build a complex Rube Goldberg machine. Eighth graders apply their knowledge of the scientific method to perform an experiment and gather data. They then analyze their results and draw conclusions by use of a scientific paper, display board, and oral presentation. Through these events, parents and community members join the school as competition judges. Students in grade 6 attend Eagle Bluff, an environmental camp for three days each year to experience hands-on lessons of various science projects in an authentic nature setting. Students build community through this camp and learn valuable skills to promote responsible behavior and treatment of our Earth and local environment.

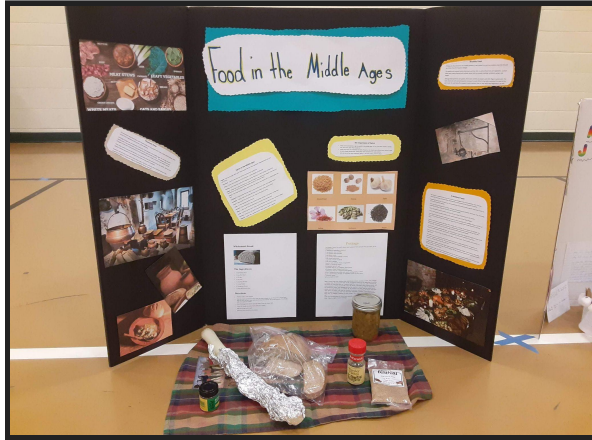
Students are assessed through rubric scores on projects, classroom assessments, and, in grades 5 and 8, state standardized science tests.

Social Studies/History

Teaching in social studies/history/civic learning and engagement incorporates the depth of rich literature from the Core Knowledge curriculum, aligned to the state standards, and allows for students to have choice in ways to demonstrate their learning. Project-based learning is the major type of instruction utilized. In first grade, students learn about Early World Civilizations and create a sarcophagus for King Tut. Third graders focused on individual projects because of Covid restrictions. Students completed and presented individual research reports on different regional Native American groups. Students also wrote their own myths after studying Roman and Norse



mythology in our Ancient Rome and Vikings Units, integrating social studies and writing skills. Sixth grade students create illuminated manuscript pages in art and then use Latin text to create their own manuscript page.



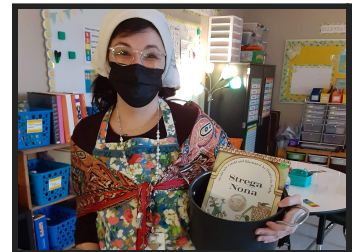
The literary selections within each grade level for the social students/history/civic learning and engagement are often set in those parts of the world and time periods being studied. Some of the texts used include *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, *King Arthur and the Round Table*, and *Animal Farm*. Assessments include rubric scoring on projects and reports, along with classroom tests.

Other Curriculum Areas

Aspen Academy offers music, band, physical education and health, art, Spanish, and Latin as our specialist curriculum areas. All students in grades K-8 receive 50 minutes of specialists daily. All of the specialist curriculum areas integrate the Core Knowledge curriculum into their classes.

Art

Art supports the acquisition of the essential skills of the elements of art and principles of design. Students learn about the artists, art periods, artworks, and elements of art listed in core knowledge. For example, students in 4th grade study Gothic architecture and art of the Middle Ages. They make their own art with inspiration from different artists, artworks, and art movements. Much of the core knowledge for art at each grade level complements what they are learning in history class.



Music

Band is offered for students in fifth grade through eighth grade and meets twice a week. Musicians learn about reading and writing music notation, improvisation, and composers from different eras. The middle school band also integrates the Core Knowledge history periods into their music selection, studies, and performances. Band supports state standards and essential skill acquisition every day as students perform alone and in groups. Band students evaluate music after concerts and small group performances to refine skills. Orchestra is offered before school twice a week,

starting with students in fourth grade. Individual and group lessons are offered throughout the school day for mastery of skills.

Choir is a budding program at Aspen. Now in its third year as a program, students are building off of previous years knowledge in Music class and applying musicianship skills of reading rhythms and tonic solfa as well as standard choral octavos. In the past year the program has had both mixed choir, TTBB, and treble ensembles. In the past year students have worked individually on their voices by submitting videos of their singing and utilizing technology tools. Students have resumed singing together and are continuing to refine ensemble skills such as diction, blend, balance, articulation, and partwork.

Music is offered weekly for 50 minutes for students in grades K-4. The MN state standards define the essential skills needed to be acquired by students. Through these grades, music study and learning happens through the different eras, which align with the Core Knowledge curriculum. Students in grades K-5 are taught through a Kodaly based approach. Music history of the medieval, renaissance, baroque eras are studied.

Physical Education/Health

Physical Education lessons in grades K-8 are skill based on the National Physical Education standards. Students in grades K-2 get PE class twice a week, while third and fourth grades get PE classes 1 time per week for 50 minutes, and students in grades 5-8 receive PE 1 time per week for 43 minutes. Students in grades 5-8 get health education once a week for 43 minutes. Topics covered in health include the new social emotional curriculum of Second Step. The topics covered include goal setting and growth mindset, bullying and harassment, emotional health, and empathy. The usual health topics of personal health, nutrition and body systems continue to be covered. Due to the PLC work, gym teachers have intentionally incorporated math, science and literacy into games; and brought out movement breaks for students in hallways to promote brain breaks and physical activity. While in distance learning, families participated in the Walk Across America project with their scholars.

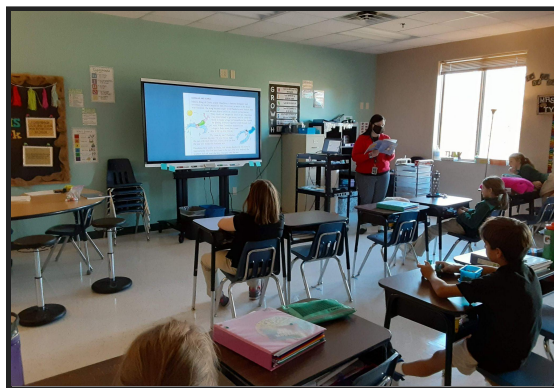
World Languages

In the fourth grade, Latin is offered for 49 minutes once a week. During these grades, the focus of Latin instruction is on enjoyment, exploration of another language, culture, time period, and supporting general education goals. Latin specifically ties into grammar and vocabulary acquisition and connecting Latin roots to words in English, which students are learning in language arts, and reinforces the Core Knowledge subjects of mythology and Roman history that were taught in primary grades, while deepening and expanding students' understanding of these topics. Students also learn about prominent

Roman mythology through reading and examination of related Roman art and architecture.

In middle school grades, Latin is offered once a week. While there are no Minnesota state standards for Latin, the class adheres to the new American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards and the most recent Standards for Classical Language Learning. This means students focus on communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Students in grades 5-7 read from Latin for Children which is published by the Classical Academic Press and in grade 8 they read the second Minimus Book. Then they enrich their understanding of the topics covered through independent research, creative projects, and discussion of archaeological artifacts and primary texts. Students use Latin to read, write, speak, and listen to level-appropriate texts and use those texts to learn about Roman culture and history. This supports Core Knowledge covered in Social Studies, for which Greco-Roman history is a major unit in sixth grade. Students meet standards for connections and comparisons through drawing connections between what they learn about the Latin language and Roman culture to what they are studying in their other classes; they are encouraged through games, assignments, and class discussion to find the similarities and differences between Romans and themselves, the Latin language and the other languages they know, and to recognize the Latin roots of their vocabulary in health, science, language arts, and other core subjects.

Our Spanish program starts in kindergarten and goes through eighth grade. Elementary students receive Spanish instruction on a weekly rotation. Elementary Spanish classes use the TPRS approach (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling), with stories, songs, activities and games to help students acquire the language.



Middle school students (grades 5th-8th) have one 49-minute Spanish classes each week. Spanish also uses the ACTFL proficiency standards and primarily focuses on the four modes of communication (speaking, reading, writing and listening) in class. Cultural topics are also discussed during class and students are encouraged to make connections and comparisons to their own cultures. Core knowledge topics are also included throughout the middle school lessons. Additionally, middle school students in 6th-8th grade also have the option to take a Spanish literature elective. In Spanish Lit, students read books

specifically written to teach the language using familiar vocabulary and language structures. These novels also include the opportunity to discuss more cultural topics.

Academic Performance

Aspen Academy follows the Core Knowledge curriculum scope and sequence and aligns it with Minnesota state standards. Aspen uses a variety of standardized assessments to measure student achievement and academic growth, including standardized tests (MCA III and FastBridge), interim testing, content area assessments, formal and informal teacher observations, and formative and summative assessments.

Aspen Academy compares performance with the State of Minnesota and with the neighboring district of Prior Lake/Savage according to the charter contract with Friends of Education. The following data will outline the performance of Aspen with regard to the charter goals.

During FY 2021, Aspen Academy was in the process of a charter renewal and therefore continued the goals from the previous charter contract. New goals were established to begin July 1, 2021.

Charter Goal 1: State Assessments (weighted 50%)

Sub Goal 1.1: Absolute proficiency: At the conclusion of the FY 2020, the school-wide proficiency rate for the preceding four years will average no less than:

- *25 percentage points higher than the state average for all students in math*
- *20 percentage points higher than the state average for all students in reading*
- *22 percentage points higher than the state average for all students in science, the state average for each subject computed for the same grades as offered by the School.*

Result: Based on the 2021 MCAs, Aspen Academy was 11 percentage points higher than the state in math, 12 percentage points higher in reading, and 16 percentage points higher in science.

World's Best Workforce Charter Contract Target: All third graders can read at grade level. In addition, by the conclusion of FY 2020, the third grade proficiency rates will be no less than 26 percentage points higher in reading than the state average.

Result: Based on the 2021 MCAs, Aspen Academy was 11 percentage points higher than the state of Minnesota.

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MCA Subject	2018 Aspen	2018 State	2019 Aspen	2019 State	2021 Aspen	2021 Sate
Math 3-8	79.3%	57.6%	73.9%	55.4%	55.0%	44.0%
Reading 3-8	72.2%	60.3%	69.3%	59.6%	64.2%	52.3%
Science 5 & 8	72.5%	51.7%	66.7%	50.4%	58.4%	42.7%

Sub Goal 1.2: Comparative Proficiency: Each year, the school district will demonstrate higher school wide proficiency rates than the Prior Lake-Savage School District for reading, math and science (for the same grades as offered by the school).

Result: Aspen demonstrated higher proficiency rates in all tested content areas in 2021. This was an increase of Aspen Academy scoring higher proficiency rates in all tested areas since standardized assessments two years ago. All data across the state showed decline due to Covid 19 pandemic.

MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS - HISTORICAL PROFICIENCY RESULTS

Subject	2017		2018		2019		2021	
	AA	PLS	AA	PLS	AA	PLS	AA	PLS
Math 3-8	82.1%	81.0%	78.1%	76.9%	73.9%	74.5%	55.0%	51.9%
Reading 3-8	75.4%	73.4%	71.6%	72.7%	69.1%	71.3%	64.2%	56.9%
Science 5 & 8	83.6%	81.1%	72.5%	69.9%	66.7%	68.3%	58.4%	46.8%

*AA = Aspen Academy, PLS = Prior Lake Savage (comprised of data from Jeffers Pond Elementary and Hidden Oaks Middle School)

An important part of this academic goal is the comparison of Aspen Academy to the district in which it lies, Prior Lake Area Schools. Below is a table showing comparison of demographic information.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON: ASPEN ACADEMY AND PRIOR LAKE AREA SCHOOLS

Demographic Category	Aspen Academy K-8* Pulled from MDE on 11/11/21	Prior Lake/Savage* Pulled from MDE on 11/11/21
English Learner	8.3%	2.7%
Special Education	11.3%	12%
Free and Reduced Lunch	11.1%	11.2%
Native American	0.5%	0.7%

Asian	13.3%	5.2%
Black	16.4%	5.7%
Hispanic	3.4%	5.6%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0%
Caucasian	60.9%	77.2%
Two or More Races	5.3%	5.6%

Sub Goal 1.3: Growth: As published by the Minnesota Department of Education, each year the school's combined average growth z-score will exceed 0 in reading and math.

Results: Not reported by the Minnesota Department of Education any longer.

Sub Goal 1.4: Achievement Gap Reduction: World's Best Workforce Charter Contract Target: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed. By the conclusion of FY 2020, for both reading and math, the proficiency rate for each subgroup for which the School had publicly-reportable / sufficient counts in 2016 will be no less than:

[40% of (100-2016 subgroup proficiency rate)] + 2016 subgroup proficiency rate

Sub Group	2019		Goal		2021	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Special Education	32.3%	45.2%	76.9%	81.5%	28.6%	26.0%
Free/Reduced Lunch	54.3%	60.0%	66.9%	77.3%	36.2%	36.2%
Asian	87.0%	95.7%	86.1%	95.4%	70.6%	68.6%

Results: Aspen Academy did not meet this goal with any of these subgroups.

Goal 2: Nationally Normed Assessments (25% weight)

Sub Goal 2.1: Each year, the School will administer a nationally normed assessment in at least grades 4 and 8

For 4th grade students who remain in the School through 8th grade:

- If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was less or equal to 25%, 50% of the students will increase their national percentile ranking by a minimum of ten percentage points, and*

- *If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was between 26-40%, 50% of the students will increase their national percentile ranking by a minimum of five percentage points, and*
- *If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was over 40%, 50% of the students will increase their national percentile ranking.*

Results:

ACT Aspire comparison of students who attended Aspen in 4th grade and 8th grade			
	If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was less or equal to 25%, 50% of the students would increase their national percentile ranking by a minimum of 10 points	If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was between 26-40%, 50% of the students would increase their national percentile ranking by a minimum of 5 points	If their 4th grade national percentile ranking was over 40%, 50% of the students would increase their national percentile ranking (in any amount).
Reading	100% = met goal	N/A	50%= met goal
Math	100% = met goal	100% = met goal	0%= did not meet goal

Sub Goal 2.2: World's Best Workforce Charter Contract Target: All students are ready for career and college. Each year, a minimum of 80% of 8th grade students will take the ACT Aspire and a minimum of 65% of those students will exceed the state average.

Results: Only 65% of Aspen's 8th graders took the ACT Aspire assessment in the spring of 2021. The low percentage, due to Covid concerns, did not meet the goal of 80%.

Goal 3: Professional Development (10% weight)

100% of teachers will receive professional development training annually, as determined by School records.

Month	Professional Development Topic
August	New Staff Licensed Teachers: Infinite Campus, HR, All About Aspen, Google Classroom/Technology, Data Driven Decision Making, Core Knowledge & Curriculum Training, PBIS THINK model, ENVOY training, All Staff: Covid 19 Safety Protocol, Special Education Accommodations/Modifications, and Early Interventions Student Support Team; CPI Verbal Interventions; Sped Teachers and Paraprofessionals: CPI Physical Holds Training
September	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for

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	Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort; Culturally Responsive Teaching: Blended Learning/Google Classroom Training
October	Sped Teachers and Paraprofessionals: Data Collection Design, Measurement & Data Analysis; PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort; Culturally Responsive Teaching
Month	Professional Development Topic
November	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Paraprofessionals & Educational Assistants: Distance Learning Technology Support Training/Prep; Licensed Staff: Online Guest Teacher Plans; Data Review & Progress Monitoring
December	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort;
January	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort;
February	All Staff: Functional Behavioral Assessment; Positive Behavior Supports; PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort;
March	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort;
April	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort; Kirsten Tyler, Lauren Trovarello, Sarah Meyer, Eric Sandberg, Melody Sandell, Jennifer Japel, Darby Thomas, Kristine Kempainen, Stephanie Smitley & Eric Sandberg - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference (Trauma and Mental Recovery After Covid) ADHD; Addressing Racism to Create Healthy Environments for All of Our Children,
May	PLC's - 1 time per month; Licensed Teacher selected topics: Number Talks, Integrating Core Content into Physical Education; Integrating Movement into Core Content; Google Certified Educator; Center for Collaborative Classroom Reading Curriculum, New Teacher Cohort; Math in Focus Summer Academy (new licensed classroom teachers) Center for Collaborative Classroom Summer Institute (new licensed classroom teachers and Melanie Jiskra)

Goal 4: School Culture (15% weight)

Sub Goal 4.1: Academic Governance: The School will implement an Academic Governance Plan and Calendar to critically evaluate and strategically lead the School's academic performance and improvement. The School shall include a summary of its findings in the School's board minutes no less than twice annually.

Result: The school board met on October 20, 2020 to discuss the school's MCA performance and Fastbridge fall data. Board members were also given regular updates on winter (March 16, 2021) and spring Fastbridge, in which data was collected and compared across grade levels and included a summary of the results and analysis of where students are and future plans.

Sub Goal 4.2 Retention: Each year, the School will increase it's student retention rate until it achieves a minimum 90% student return rate for students entering into grades 1-5 and 60% return rate for students entering grades 6-8.

Results: The student retention for our elementary grades for the 2020/2021 was 85%, short of our 90% goal. Enrollment was very fluid during the fall of 2020 due to the community pandemic, families looking for the different options based on teaching models.

Aspen Academy's goal is to retain as many of its students as possible in middle school and has moved forward with adding elective classes for students choice, and adding athletic sports as an after school option (during non-pandemic years). Typically, Aspen sees a dip in retention in the 5th to 6th grade year, which is a result of families deciding to start middle school with their district of choice due to concern over open enrollment restrictions at the highschool level, academic elective options, and athletic sports options. Aspen changed its middle school model to add grade 5 to hopefully retain our middle school students. Currently grades 5-8 are considered middle school, with a retention rate of 74% which exceeds our middle school goal. The goal is still to increase retention between fifth and sixth grade.

HISTORICAL STUDENT RETENTION

Grade	2016-17	%	2017-2018	%	2018-2019	%	2019-2020	%	2020-2021	%
K Returning to 1st	68/77	88%	86/88	98%	68/87	78%	66/83	80%	93/111	84%
1st Returning to 2nd	68/71	96%	86/95	91%	85/93	91%	68/83	82%	77/88	88%
2nd Returning to 3rd	69/80	86%	64/70	91%	85/91	93%	79/87	91%	76/92	83%
3rd Returning to 4th	67/75	89%	67/77	87%	65/73	89%	59/67	88%	73/84	87%
4th Returning to 5th	57/60	95%	64/78	82%	71/73	97%	63/67	94%	58/67	87% 3
5th Returning to 6th	41/56	73%	59/97	61%	35/70	50%	53/65	82%	24/70	34%
6th Returning to 7th	26/27	96%	27/38	71%	41/49	84%	24/43	56%	30/39	77%

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7th Returning to 8th	14/18	78%	37/41	90%	20/26	77%	13/19	68%	24/31	77%
Average	410/464	88%	490/584	84%	470/562	84%	425/514	83%	455/582	78%

Sub Goal 4.2 Continued: ...and a minimum 70% teacher retention rate for those teachers the School asks to return.

Teachers and non-licensed staff are reviewed two to three times during the school year. This past year, we had a number of staff members that left during the academic school year. Of the 50 licensed staff members, we didn't have any licensed teachers resign during the school year. Aspen Academy invited 48 staff back for the 2020/2021 school year. Of those offered positions, 7 chose to resign for the following reasons: taking a different position, taking a position closer to home, and not returning to teaching due to family changes.

Results: Retention rate of staff asked to return was 85%, which exceeds our goal.

2020-2021 LICENSED STAFF

Name	File Folder No.	Assignment	Year Hired	Resigned	Non-Renewal	Returning
Gretchen Boie	458520	Classroom Teacher	2013			Yes
Darby Thomas	422730	Classroom Teacher	2008			Yes
Jennifer Dyer	373990	Classroom Teacher	2014	X		No
Jennifer Japel	449625	Classroom Teacher	2017			Yes
Kristine Kemppainen	426944	Classroom Teacher	2013			Yes
Marilyn Torvik	308819	Classroom Teacher	2013			Yes
Lauren Trovarello	1002893	Classroom Teacher	2019			Yes
Carissa Moe	503793	Classroom Teacher	2018			Yes
Melody Sandell	510704	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Johanna Haseltine	1001892	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Kristin Behrens	348313	Classroom Teacher	2011			Yes
Taylor Kruse	501772	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Cara Wiese	421058	Classroom Teacher	2013			Yes
Veronica Woodward	472318	Classroom Teacher	2018			Yes
Rachel Mong	503174	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Tia Westad	513855	Classroom Teacher	2019	X		No
Alex Hobart	507021	Classroom Teacher	2018	X		No

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Rebekah Parker	1001529	Classroom Teacher	2019	X		No
Diane Sterna	403650	Classroom Teacher	2010			Yes
Olivia Lietzau	1002149	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Rebecca Bauer	1005671	Classroom Teacher	2020			Yes
Name	File Folder No.	Assignment	Year Hired	Resigned	Non-Renewal	Returning
Kirsten Tyler	472335	Classroom Teacher	2013			Yes
Lindsey Adams	396061	5/6 Math	2018			Yes
Kelsey Carlson	1000169	MS English	2019		x	No
Madison Zoromski	1000376	MS English	2019			Yes
Jodi Ovrebo	411237	MS Math	2019			Yes
Stu Keroff	428164	MS Social Studies	2019			Yes
Alan Hergott	501664	MS Social Studies	2019			Yes
Patrick Walters	487785	5/6 Science	2019			Yes
Cindy Carey	440594	MS Science	2017			Yes
Sarah Meyer	501091	Art - K-8	2017			Yes
Lea Brynestad	317275	Art K-8	2020	X		No
Nate Sickmann	500350	PE K-8/Health	2018			Yes
Barry Gross	417902	Music - K-8	2014			Yes
Scott Fairweather	370968	Band/Music - MS	2017			Yes
Amy Jacobson	451230	Spanish - K-8	2012			Yes
Elissa Christensen	492066	Spanish K-4	2019	X		No
Rachel Gulachek	487999	ELL - K-8	2016	X		No
Alicia Valiant	46 0425	Sped - K-8	2018			Yes
Stephanie Peterson	467785	SPED 5-8	2014		X	No
Stephanie Smitley	433554	In House Substitute	2017			Yes
Rebecca Veer	516262	In House Substitute	2020			Yes
Brandy Mosser	411676	SPED K-4	2019			Yes
Nicole Harris	385975	SPED 5-8	2020			Yes
Mandi Berndt	488896	ELL/Latin	2019			Yes
Angela Dunn	465719	Title 1	2012			Yes
Zach Jiskra	507543	PE/Health	2019			Yes
Stacie Milton	1006500	In House Substitute	2020			Yes

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SUPPORT STAFF

Name	Assignment	Year Hired	Resigned	Non-Renewal	Returning
Ryan Fritze	Paraprofessional	2017			Yes
Kelsey Lewis	Educational Assistant	2020	X		No
Ali Sanchez	Educational Assistant	2020	X		No
Nicole Grams	Paraprofessional	2016			Yes
Kayla Bramhall	Paraprofessional	2018			Yes
Name	Assignment	Year Hired	Resigned	Non-Renewal	Returning
Tim Spika	Paraprofessional	2018			Yes
Tuyen Stephany	Paraprofessional	2019			Yes
Sarah Krueger	Paraprofessional	2020			Yes
Phillip Poole	Paraprofessional	2019			Yes
Jenna Hatch	Paraprofessional	2019			Yes
Cheryl Nogan	Paraprofessional	2020	X		No
Nadine Penny	Counselor	2016	X		No
Rita Marshall	Custodian	2018			Yes
Nereyda Mina	Custodian	2018			Yes
Jean Brening	Receptionist	2018			Yes
Diane Hummel	Business Manager	2008			Yes
Julie Martini	Enrollment/MARSS	2019			Yes
Christi Heitzman	Communications	2019			Yes
Maureen Stevenson	Health Aide	2019			Yes
Molly McGrath	Nutrition Services	2019			Yes

ADMINISTRATION

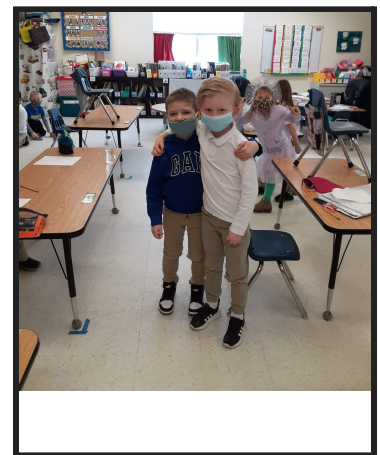
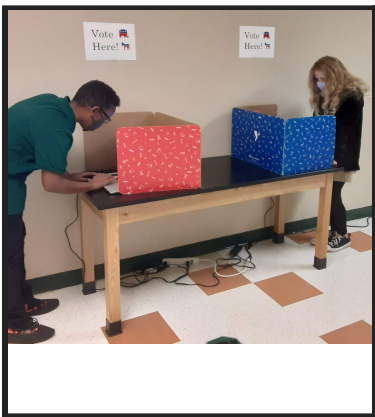
Name	File Folder No.	Assignment	Year Hired	Resigned	Non-Renewal	Returning
Dr. Connie Gayle	376866	Director	2018		X	No
Melanie Jiskra	380483	Principal	2017			Yes
James Jotter	412142	Vice Principal	2020			Yes
Eric Sandberg	462825	Dean of Students	2019			Yes

Operational Performance

Aspen Academy began its charter school contract with Friends of Education on June 11, 2007 and had its first five-year renewal on June 1, 2016 and recently had its second five-year renewal on June 15, 2021. Friends of Education monitors Aspen Academy in the areas of programming, reporting and academic performance. In the area of programming, Friends of Education continues to provide oversight and support for both Core Knowledge implementation and the Singapore Math program. Friends of Education requires monthly financial reports which also includes a board approved budget and audit report. They also monitor the school's reporting to the Department of Education. Aspen Academy also reports student academic performance to Friends of Education four times a year. These reports include data and trends for both nationally normed tests as well as state required tests. Friends strongly encourages the use of data to guide instruction and the monitoring of student test scores and checks with the school to find out what steps are being taken toward meeting these goals.

Aspen Academy is sponsored by:

Friends of Education
Beth Topoluk - Liaison
1405 Xenium Lane N.
Plymouth, MN 55441
Phone: 952-745-2718



Financial Performance - STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

	Budgeted Amounts		Actual Amounts
	Original	Final	
Revenues			
Other local revenue	\$ 173,055	\$ 173,055	\$ 120,303
Revenue from state sources	7,084,020	6,780,218	6,545,934
Revenue from federal sources	161,352	400,839	469,130
Sales and other conversion of assets	-	-	250
Total revenues	<u>7,418,427</u>	<u>7,354,112</u>	<u>7,135,617</u>
Expenditures			
Current			
Administration	230,410	230,410	225,039
District support services	653,009	689,390	670,875
Elementary and secondary regular instruction	2,778,572	2,844,198	2,707,137
Special education instruction	1,420,597	1,482,836	1,168,378
Instructional support services	64,269	66,733	59,698
Pupil support services	285,579	285,579	243,692
Sites and buildings	1,586,518	1,606,632	2,154,346
Fiscal and other fixed cost programs	15,300	15,300	24,535
Capital outlay			
District support services	27,022	11,406	6,545
Regular instruction	99,000	140,567	228,098
Special education instruction	3,000	-	7,027
Sites and buildings	-	32,315	29,625
Total expenditures	<u>7,163,276</u>	<u>7,405,366</u>	<u>7,524,995</u>
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures	255,151	(51,254)	(389,378)
Other Financing Sources (Uses)			
Loan proceeds	-	613,267	613,267
Transfers out	(6,640)	(45,960)	(48,782)
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>(6,640)</u>	<u>567,307</u>	<u>564,485</u>
Net change in fund balance	<u>\$ 248,511</u>	<u>\$ 516,053</u>	175,107
Fund Balance			
Beginning of year			<u>1,332,554</u>
End of year			<u>\$ 1,507,661</u>

Key financial highlights for the 2020-2021 fiscal year include the following:

- Total net position at June 30, 2021 was (\$4,137,520)
- Overall General Fund revenues were \$7,135,617 and \$613,267 of other financing sources as compared to \$7,524,995 of expenditures and \$48,782 of other financing uses.
- Days cash on hand as of June 30, 2021, was 46 days.
- Debt service coverage ratio as of June 30, 2021, was 1.15.

Future Plans

Aspen Academy will continue to focus on the growth of the middle school, especially between the fifth and sixth grade. With the current enrollment projections, a building space study was completed and growth study showed we are near capacity. Grade level sections will be set as the fifth section of kindergarten which started in 2018 moves through the grades.

In the 2018-2019 school year, Aspen Academy's school board along with their Executive Director began the process of creating a new five year strategic plan. The strategic plan was scheduled to be completed by the start of the 2019 school year when administration was to start the initial focus on six new initiatives. Although the full implementation of the strategic plan was put on hold due to the pandemic, Aspen continued to make strides towards the new objectives. The board and administration will focus on updating the plan post-pandemic.

The school will also be focusing their attention on school safety. While there are procedures in place for emergencies, a more comprehensive school emergency plan is needed. School administration will attend and be certified as part of the School Crisis Emergency Team and provide more extensive school safety training for teachers. Aspen Academy will continue to work with the Prior Lake School District to partner as a safety response school. The next steps will include more in depth training for staff and also parent education on the protocol along with development of a reunification plan.

Development of programming for gifted and talented scholars is also a part of our future plans. We have a need for scholars that are ready for either content and/or grade level advanced academic opportunities. Research on this programming will begin this year.

The school received two awards last year in the midst of a pandemic! The STEM Innovation award was presented to Aspen Academy Principal Melanie Jiskra in reference to the Penguin Corps Linux Club, led by teacher Mr. Stu Keroff. This award was only awarded to one school in the state and was sponsored by MESPA and the Science Museum of Minnesota. The second award was being recognized for the EdTech Finalist as a "Trendsetter in Education."

Aspen Academy is extremely proud of its scholars and the dedicated teaching and support staff. It was a year like no other and the tenacity of this group was second to none. Through changes in leadership, learning formats and teaching methods, our staff stayed student centered and we accomplished many amazing things.

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