Exploration High School

Annual Report
2021-2022

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Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 3
Student Enrollment, Demographics, and Attrition	p. 4
Innovative Practices	p. 4-5
Academic Performance	p. 5-6
Staffing	p. 6
Governance and Management	p. 7-8
Finances	p. 8
Strategic and Future Plans	p. 8

Introduction

Exploration High School (ExHS), located in Northeast Minneapolis, is a public charter school that opened in September 2021 with ninth and tenth grade, serving 49 students in its first year. ExHS is expanding to grade 11 in 2022-23 and grade 12 in 2023-24 to fully be a 9-12 high school. The school offers an innovative project-based curriculum that emphasizes community problem solving and field experiences.

Mission Statement

Built upon a foundation of academic excellence and a mindset to drive change, Exploration High School graduates are empowered with 21st-century skills to solve the problems in their communities.

Vision

Creating a school of self-driven learners who collaboratively work to solve problems in their community of intrinsic interest and external value.

School Description

Exploration High School (4279-07-010)
First Year of Operation: 2021-22
Grades Served: 9-10

School Calendar and Hours of Operation

First Day of School: September 7, 2021
Last Day of School: June 9, 2022
Instructional hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00am - 3:45pm with an early release of 3:00pm on Wednesdays

Authorizer

The Minnesota Guild
James Zacchini, Executive Director
jim.zacchini@guildschools.org

School Enrollment and Demographics

School Year	Grade 9	Grade 10	Enrollment Total	ADM
2021-22	37	12	49	48.66

- 67.3% of our students, on average, qualified for free or reduced-price meals.
- Based on end of year state reporting, 63.3% of our students identified as Hispanic, BIPOC, or two or more races
- 24.4% of students qualified for SPED services
- Majority of students reside in Northeast Minneapolis, North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and New Hope

Student Attrition

Over the course of the school year, 4 students transferred out of and 5 students transferred into Exploration High School. Of students enrolled at the end of the school year, 3 did not return for the current year.

9th through 11th grade students that were in attendance from September to May the previous year will return to EHS the following school year. ExHS has a superb student return rate after their first year of operation. 96% of students completing the FY22 school year returned in FY23.

Innovative Practices

We at Exploration are continually looking to adapt our practices to the unique needs and gifts of our students. This translates into a lot of student agency, personalized experiences, project-based learning, community asset learning, restorative practices, experiential learning, and collaborative teaching. Below are examples that transpired during the 2021-2022 school year that demonstrate these practices:

- Switch to Interdisciplinary Co-teaching model
    - Midway through the year, after listening to what our students were saying about their core subject classes, we decided to make a shift which resulted

in pairing core subjects teachers together. This led to much more fluid interdisciplinary learning that both students and teachers responded well to. Here's additional information on the community garden build.

- End-of-year Community Asset Project with Public Exhibition
    - These projects are designed to help students connect their passions to needs within our community and beyond. Each student has worked on identifying a problem in their community and designed a workable solution. Here is June's Exhibition.

- Field Experiences
    - Being a "public school for public good," our students know that learning happens beyond the walls of our school building. Despite limitations with budget and transportation, our students got to have field experiences such as outdoor education at Camp Fire MN including an overnight camping experience, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gold Medal Flour Museum, College Fair at Twins Stadium, Friends of the Mississippi River, and Appetite for Change.
    - Our teachers had a very special field experience in the spring of 2022. We earmarked funds from our Charter School Program grant for each of our teachers to travel to a national exemplar school and learn from it. Schools included XQ Super Schools Iowa Big (Grand Rapids, IA), Crosstown High (Memphis, TN), and New Harmony High School (New Orleans, LA). Teachers produced a report by the end of the school year that they delivered to peers, informing what innovative practices they observed, sparking conversation for how we want to put our Exploration twist on things.

Academic Performance

Below are our authorizer goals, tied to academic performance. Majority of our first and second operational years will be gathering baseline data.

1. Students continually enrolled for 2 years will earn "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations" on the MCA Reading assessment in FY23; beginning in FY24, students will meet or exceed expectations on the MCA Reading and Math assessments
    - We don't have the data yet as this was our first operational year.

2. 100% of enrolled students will take the College and Career Readiness Assessment (CCRA+) annually. Beginning with FY 2023, a minimum of 80% of students will see an increase in their critical thinking subscore, which is an academic growth-related indicator. The first year the CCRA+ is administered (fall of 2022 - FY23) will establish students' baseline score. Please note an update in the name of this assessment.
    - We don't have the data yet as this was our first operational year.

3. ExHS graduates will complete all components of the Community Asset Projects ("CAPS") program, as measured by the CAP Rubric.
    - 100% of our students end last academic year with completing a successful Community Asset Project, showcased at our Public Exhibition of Learning.

4. ExHS graduates will have earned credit for at least one post-secondary course or an equivalent in trade certifications.
    - We started planning for work-based learning opportunities in eleventh grade when all students will earn this credit.

Staffing

In the 2020-21 school year, ExHS employed 5 FTE licensed teachers to serve 49 students in grade 9 and 10. This included 1 special education teacher. Our student to staff ratio was 7:1.

Teacher Retention

ExHS retained 100% of teachers for the 2022-23 school year.

Name	Assignment	File Folder
Liz Ford	SPED Facilitator	510798
Noelle Geyer	English Facilitator	487158
Clarisa Gonzalez	Paraprofessional	
Dave Heighington	School Director	
Meghan (Mat) Hunkins	Math Facilitator	487799
Hannah Witzig	Science Facilitator	507712
Nat Turner	Social Studies Facilitator	503811

Governance and Management

2021-2022 Board of Directors

Director	*Position*	*Term*
Hibo Ali	Community Member	Ends 6/30/2022
Kowanna Anderson	Community Member	Ends 6/30/2023
Jon Bacal	Community Member	Ends 6/30/2022
Stephen Kemp	Treasurer, Secretary (Community Member)	Ends 6/30/2023
Ryan Rodriguez	Community Member	Ends 6/30/2024
Nathan Strenge	Board Chair (Community Member)	Ends 6/30/2024

For the 2021-2022 school year, the Board of Directors met the third Monday of each month on Exploration High School's campus. Open meeting laws were followed by posting meeting times and previous meeting minutes on the school's website.

Most of the work of the Board happened at monthly committee meetings. The standing committees include Finance, Governance, and Community Outreach & Development. The committee rosters include:

Finance	*Governance*	*Community Outreach & Enrollment*
Stephen Kemp (Director) Ryan Rodriguez (Director) Joseph Sovine (TAG) Dave Heighington (School Leader)	Stephen Kemp (Director) Dave Heighington (School Leader)	Nathan Strenge (Director) Jon Bacal (Director) Hibo Ali (Director) Beth Karges (Parent) Dave Heighington (School Leader)

All Directors completed mandatory Board trainings outlined by the Minnesota Department of Education. All trainings, excluding the Financial Management portions, were conducted asynchronously using mncharterboard.com. Contact Director Stephen Kemp (stephen.kemp@explorationhighschool.org) for copies of the Certificates of Completion for each Director.

The Financial Management portion was facilitated in-person by Joseph Sovine of EdFin (formerly The Anton Group) at the October 18, 2021 Board Meeting.

Employment Policies & Practices	Board's Roles & Responsibilities	Financial Management
• Look Out for Conflicts of Interests • Develop and Use Policies	• Abide by the Bylaws • Conduct Open Meetings	• Presentation by Joseph Sovine on 10/18/21

2022 Annual Meeting & Board Elections

Exploration High School's first Annual Meeting was held on May 23, 2022, on the campus of Exploration High School. A notice was sent to all families and school staff ninety days before the meeting to solicit interested community members, families, and current staff to run for three open positions on the Board.

Five candidates applied and all had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the eligible voters at the Annual Meeting. The voters elected Marisa Rivera Lugo (community member), Liz Ford (teacher), and Jay Dean (community member).

Finances

Revenues	Expenses	Year-end Fund Balance
$1,005,404	$1,081,152	$114,926

Annual Audit

Future Plans

ExHS will expand to 11th grade in 2022-23 and 12th grade in 2023-24, thus being a complete 9-12 secondary school. Our enrollment target is 75 students in 2022-23 and 105 students in 2023-24. We have plans to continue growing and move into a new facility in the coming years that will meet our growing needs.