World's Best Workforce ANNUAL REPORT

For the 2019 – 2020 Academic School Year

Submitted to
Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center,
Authorizer
November 1, 2020

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I. Introduction and School Information

Excell Academy for Higher Learning
Charter School No. 4068
6510 Zane Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55429
763-533-0500
www.excellacademy.org

Serving grades Pre-K – 8
Founded in 2001 by Mrs. Sabrina Williams

Excell Academy is proud to submit the nineteenth Annual Report of Excell Academy for Higher Learning, Charter School No. 4068. The purpose of this report is to highlight and effectively communicate the Academy's programs, operations, growth, successes, and opportunities for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Mission

The mission of Excell Academy for Higher Learning is to equip and prepare its learners for higher levels of education and to be positive, productive citizens. Excell Academy will achieve its mission by identifying, nurturing, and developing its learners' academic gifts, talents, and creativity. With the belief that every student is capable of pursuing an achievement at a higher level, Excell Academy offers exceptional learning experiences and quality curricula to foster the learners' fullest potential.

Vision

Excell Academy for Higher Learning's Board of Directors envision excellent staff, excellent curriculum, excellent student body, and excellent parent and community involvement in the program. In addition, Excell Academy's goals include providing:

- Our students with learning opportunities and academic experiences which normally are not made available to them;
- High standards and high expectations for all our learners
- Support in academic, social and emotional issues that are specific to the learners and their families.
- A culturally comfortable learning environment in which students are free to express themselves intellectually, creatively and effectively
- An environment where individual and cultural differences in teaching and learning styles are acknowledged
- A racially, culturally and economically diverse student body

- A socially and academically responsive curriculum, in which problem-solving and critical thinking apply to the culture and history of diverse groups
- Content about minority groups integrated as a regular integral part of the curriculum "Real-Life" learning experiences
- A "continuous progress" system for individualized learning
- Multi assessments to monitor student achievement
- Staff members who are active and proactive in seeking professional development to work effectively with diverse populations of students
- Extended--day enrichment activities and homework assistance
- Parental involvement in training and development
- Opportunities for community partnerships and other types of community involvement.

Authorizer

Excell Academy's authorizer is Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods). The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for Minnesota students through effective charter school authorizing. This mission is distinct from and aligned to the organization's overall mission to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning.

Excell Academy has been authorized by Osprey Wilds (OW) since FY2010. In 2018 Excell was granted a one-year extension for the 2018-19 school year. The charter contract-renewal was addressed in the fall of 2018 with an Application for Charter School Renewal submitted to the Authorizer on September 14, 2018. We are pleased to note that the renewal was granted, and for five years, the maximum allowable term.

OW's oversight program articulates specific school goals and expectations with respect to four areas: Academic Performance, Financial Performance, Operations/Governance, Environmental Education Mission Match.

Osprey Wilds, Charter School Division.

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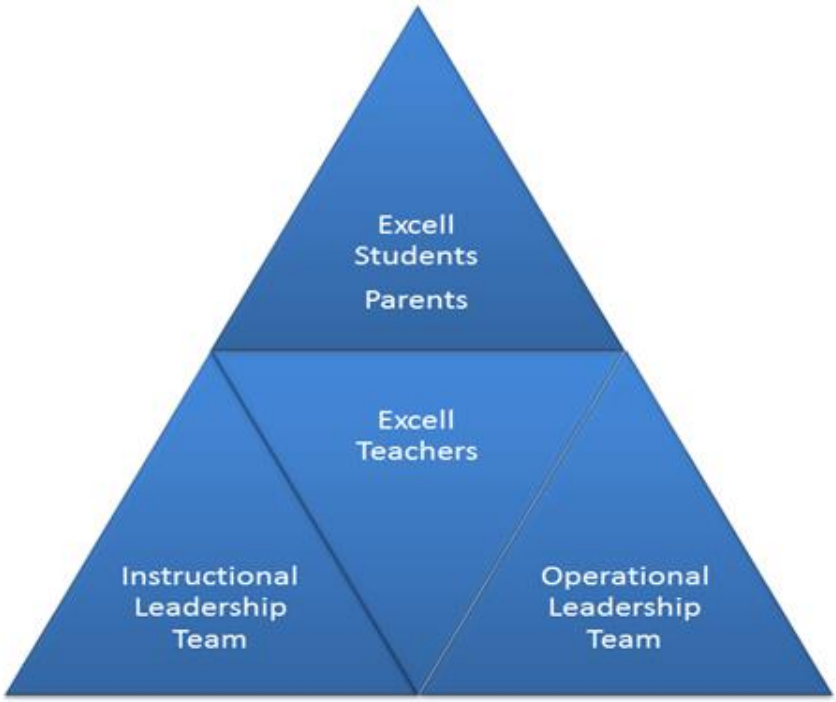
Excell Academy Philosophy & Framework



Core Values / Operating Principles

#1 A love for children and belief that every child can and will learn
#2 High expectations of self, students and co-workers
#3 Commitment to outreach and involve the broader community in Excell
#4 Commitment to creating a culturally inclusive and safe learning environment
#5 Commitment to supporting student academic success and social competence
#6 Commitment to individual needs of students
#7 Contribute to the success of the entire organization

Excell Academy continued to enjoy notable academic success during 2019-20 while continuing to serve a population of students from traditionally under-served backgrounds. When Minnesota schools were required to close their doors and transition to distance learning in March 2020, Excell Academy established a distance learning plan designed to meet the needs of all students and student groups regardless of their current level of access to technology and the Internet. The first goal of the plan was to get Internet-accessible devices to families that did not have them and secondly to ensure that all students had Internet access. Primary platforms for students to access learning content were electronic: Seesaw for grades pre-K through 3rd and Google Classroom for 4-8; Excell Academy provided paper-based work to families as a back-up. The Distance Learning Plan was updated in May and again in August for the 2020-21 school year; see section XVI below for details.

II. Implementation of Primary and Additional Statutory Purposes

Improve Pupil Learning - We believe the combination of a caring, well-trained staff, a differentiated multidimensional meaningful curriculum, sensitivity to cultural diversity and individualization, multi assessments and strong parent and community involvement will result in improved pupil learning for all Excell Academy students. We also believe pupil learning improves with the training and implementation of higher-level and critical thinking skills, which research (Bloom, B.; Maker C.J., 1989, Tomlinson C., 1997) has shown to promote independent life-long learning. Also, Excell's implementation of aspects of the Responsive Classroom model (RC) has promoted student learning in that students are attaining the greatest cognitive and social growth when they learn to care for themselves and the school environment. Daily experience in the class has taught us to integrate academic and social learning throughout the school day, nurturing students who are informed, ethical problem solvers. Also, Excell Academy has adopted McREL's research-based *Instructional Planning Framework*. This school-wide researched based framework promotes teacher and student academic collaboration and results in teacher motivation as well as increased student achievement. In addition, Excell's students wear uniforms which educational research (as well as our own data) has shown to reduce anxiety levels in students therefore, improving learning.

Increase Learning Opportunities for Pupils - Excell Academy's multi-dimensional curriculum, along with the implementation of *Creative Curriculum* in our Kindergarten Readiness program. In Excell's K-8 program, *National Geographic Reading Curriculum*, *Everyday Math* and *Saxon Math*, not only challenges

our students academically, but also stimulates interest, classroom participation and further study. Through our collaboration with and support from the community and local businesses, and our encouragement of service learning, students have ample opportunities for meaningful real-life experiences and nontraditional learning opportunities. Students also have the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities that are normally not made available to minorities and economically challenged children. Some enrichment activities that increase learning opportunities for pupils include Community Interaction activities. Community interaction continues as an important practice at Excell. Excell Academy's goals in this area are that all students will have an opportunity to benefit from community partnerships and/or other types of community involvement annually. A record of enriching learning activities includes:

- Charter School Athletic League
- Local Library Partnership
- Book Fair
- Read to Succeed Night
- Math Night
- Cultural Awareness Night
- Toys for Tots for the needy
- Insight Newspaper
- MN House of Rep and Senate for Charter Schools funding and advocacy
- MN Humanities Commission partnership
- "Beating the Odds" Challenge*
- Fundraisers
- Summer SMARTS*
- Summer Feed the Community Food Program*
- Junior Achievement
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Recycling Trash Clean Up
- Excell Keeping in Touch (KIT) Program*
- Excell Academy Excellence Award
- D.A.R.E.
- Khan Academy Tutoring Program
- MN Reading and Math Corps
- Technology Recycling Program
- Hennepin County Recycling & Composting Program

*Summer programming, not held summer 2020; however, Summer SMARTS was replaced by the Community Heroes daycare program for children of essential workers beginning spring 2020.

III. Student Enrollment & Demographics

Excell Academy's enrollment, which increased slightly in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19, is expected to remain stable or grow somewhat again, in 2020-21. See the K-8 enrollment data below.

Figures shown below are data recorded by MDE as of October 1, with Average Daily Membership (ADM) as recorded by the school once the school year is complete. In addition to the K-8 figures reported in the table, Excell served 65 preschoolers, up from 54 in 2018-19. There were 51 preschoolers enrolled for the 2020-21 school year, as of early October 2020.

Number of Students Enrolled	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21 (as of early Oct.)**
Kindergarten	59	64	58	57
1st Grade	61	44	63	62
2nd Grade	49	50	47	55
3rd Grade	50	46	51	46
4th Grade	53	44	47	52
5th Grade	50	48	49	47
6th Grade	30	28	31	47
7th Grade	32	28	28	33
8th Grade	28	26	26	30
Total	412	378	400	429
Total ADM (Average Daily Membership) for year	**407.47**	**399.48**	**432.89**	

Student Demographics

Excell Academy has had a steady trend in our students' demographics as shown in the table below.

Demographic Trends	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (as of early Oct.)
Total Enrollment K-8	412	378	400	429
Male	200	176	200	
Female	212	202	200	
Special Education	58	52	54	
LEP	114	99	85	
African American	376	352	377	
Latino	25	21	19	
Asian/PI	6	2	0	
American Indian	0	0	0	
White	1	0	0	
Multi-racial	4	3	4	
F/R Lunch	378	Over 90%	362	

IV. Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility

Student Attendance

Excell Academy has continued to have a steady attendance rate as shown in the table below.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Overall Student Attendance Rate	93.6%	93.2%	93.5%

Note: a break-down of 2019-20 attendance data by grade shows that the rate was brought down significantly by the pre-K students. When only grades K-8 are considered, the attendance rate would be over 95%[1].

Student Attrition

[1] Average Daily Membership of pre-K students in 2019-20 was 35.72 students, and these students' average rate of attendance was only 57.8%. Kindergartners' average attendance rate was 95.0%, and all of grades 1-8 posted average rates of attendance above 95%.

Analysis of the past two years' enrollment data shows that of 316 grades K-7 students enrolled at Excell Academy by October 1, 2018, 295 remained to the end of the school year. Of these 295 students, 246 or 83.3% returned to Excell for the 2019-20 school year, by Oct. 1, 2019. This is an increase over the previous year when retention rate by this measure was 71.9%.

Percentage of students[2] who are continuously enrolled between October 1 of 2018-19 school year and October 1 of 2019-20 school year.	**83.3%**

Student Mobility

Analysis of 2019-20 enrollment data shows that of the 424 students enrolled for any part of the school year, 371 or 87.5% were enrolled for at least 95% of the year. This is a slight decline from the previous year, when 90.4% of students were enrolled at least 95% of the school year.

Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the 2019-20 school year.	**87.5%**

Note: in the past, MDE has provided data regarding student mobility within a given school year, in a spreadsheet listing other words, the number and percentage of transfers in and out of each public school in Minnesota each school year. However, the Department stopped reporting this after the 2016-17 school year. Therefore this data, which has been reported in previous Annual Reports, is no longer available.

[2] Does not include students who completed Excell Academy's program, i.e. 8th graders from 2018-19.

V. Educational Approach & Curriculum

Overall Educational Approach and Core Curricula

Excell Academy's Research and Evaluation Coordinator provided this summary, of these aspects:

> Teachers and staff at Excell Academy for Higher Learning have high expectations for all learners. Our teachers develop conceptual knowledge and manage the content of the academic curriculum. Teachers plan lessons and develop learning objectives based on declarative and procedural knowledge in order to ensure a clear balance of learning in content and skills. We strive to lead and instruct our children to success by ensuring that the students are learning what is being taught through their individual mental processes, such as recalling, recognizing, reflecting, analyzing, evaluating and understanding as well as creative, higher-level and critical thinking.
>
> Excell Academy uses National Geographic Reach Curriculum for reading, which is aligned to the Common Core Standards and provides many resources for EL students. For mathematics, the Middle School uses *Saxon Math* and a teacher researched and developed math matrix. Everyday Math, Singapore Math, along with other specific quality math resources are used to supplement the instruction. For Science instruction, Excell utilizes Pearson Interactive. And our PK Excell Academy uses Creative Curriculum as the main framework for learning.
>
> The curricula, however, are only resources for teachers to use in standards-based lesson planning, instructing and assessing. Teachers and grade level teams are responsible for supplementing areas where

the curriculum being used does not fully cover a Minnesota standard and omitting material from the curriculum that is not linked to a standard. Utilizing the Learning Objectives strategy, as clearly described in a practice profile developed for our school, teachers are expected to post standards-based learning objectives in student-friendly language. These objectives included declarative (know & understand) and procedural (be able to) knowledge with success criteria for providing feedback.

National Geographic Grades K-5

Reach for Reading is a content-based program that strives to instill a passion for reading in all the content areas. Through this program, every student can unlock the power of reading. This program is structured in that it follows the same format for each lesson, but it is flexible to reach each student where he or she is. *Reach for Reading* provides leveled readers where the students are reading the same content, but at a level, they can access. It also focuses on building background knowledge that many of our students do not have. The teacher can adapt the program to meet the needs of his or her classroom.

Saxon Math Grades 6-8

Saxon Math is a curriculum developed around the philosophy that students learn most effectively through gentle development of concepts practiced over a considerable period of time. Such incremental development and continual practice and review allow students to become familiar and comfortable with math concepts since topics are never "dropped" but are instead developed in complexity. *Saxon Math* is founded on the premise that by building a foundation for fundamental math skills, students will receive more satisfaction and success from math and develop more self-confidence in their mathematical abilities. To achieve this end, the Saxon approach is highly structured. The earliest grades follow a scripted program so teachers know what to say and how to say it. The programs are divided into lessons that are taught sequentially, guaranteeing all students will cover the same material in a uniform and consistent manner, which again ensures all students a chance at genuine learning in their math classes.

Pearson Interactive 2-8

Interactive Science is a complete science curriculum for students. Lessons engage students in science inquiry; STEM activities; and problem-based, hands-on learning. Blended print and digital experiences engage students. Interactive Science includes strong literacy connections for elementary learners. High-quality science resources, strategies, and guidance help teachers awaken students' sense of curiosity as they learn about science.

Second Step PK-8

Second Step provides a fully integrated framework for protecting elementary school students and promoting their social, emotional, and academic success. Every lesson is age-appropriate, easy to teach, and fun to learn.

Second Step Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) gives students the tools to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Handwriting Without Tears PK-1

HWOT uses fun, engaging, and developmentally appropriate instructional methods to help students master handwriting and make it into an automatic and comfortable skill.

Assessments and Instructional Leadership Approach

In the fall of each academic year, all students are given the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessments in Reading, Math and Science. These tests help to identify students that are below, on-level or above grade level in order to determine what interventions or enrichment each student needs. Weekly standards-based common assessments in reading and math inform instruction and evaluate each student's progress towards meeting state academic standards. In weekly data meetings based on these assessments administrators and teachers evaluate student data, identify benchmarks needing re-teaching, determine if students should be referred to STST, prior to being evaluated for Special Education needs.

However, due to the shift to distance learning in March 2020, assessments were interrupted in the spring. The MAPs were administered in the fall and winter but not in the spring.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) analyzes student data alongside implementation data provided through our practice profiles. The data meetings provide timely student data related to the implementation of research-based strategies and implementation data provides data on the fidelity of implementation and the health of the system related to implementing the strategy. The ILT responds accordingly if additional support and PD need to be provided to improve system health and give the resources that teaching staff need to faithfully implement instructional strategies. The ILT (which includes all PLC lead teachers) can then provide those resources through the PLCs by building capacity in those teaching staff in leadership positions (lead and mentor teachers).

PLCs were structured in 2019-2020 by area of emphasis and experience. Two PLCs were organized according to how many years teachers had been at Excell, for first and second year teachers. These PLCs focused on Restorative Practices, Daily 5 and Academic Language. Part way through the school year Excell's PLC's were rebooted to focus on the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) System which was implemented to help teachers implement our positive behavior systems. Once Distance Learning started due to the global Covid 19 pandemic, PLCs were re-formed around grade-level bands.

The role of the PLCs and Lead Teachers is key both in providing support to the teaching staff as well as in providing the necessary feedback loops that reveal specific needs for additional support to teachers. PLC leads report back to the ILT, staff surveys are given to determine teachers' level of comfort with the strategy and next steps are determined by the ILT and implemented through the PLCs.

The shared leadership model of the ILT encourages a collaborative professional culture, leads to high levels of collective efficacy and teacher buy-in. Also, this has a direct relationship to teacher performance and effectiveness as evidenced by Excell Academy's implementation data (high levels of proficient implementation of strategies), and student performance data, though Growth Target data from MAP tests is not available for 2019-20.

Student Teacher Support Team (STST) and Special Education in 2019-20

Excell Academy's STST meets weekly to discuss individual student concerns. At STST meetings, all involved parties discuss individualized interventions to support students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. If interventions are successful in increasing student progress, they are continued and monitored. If, after a period of several weeks, interventions are not yielding progress, or if a student is demonstrating an immediate need, the student will be referred for a special education evaluation. If the student qualifies for special education services, the team will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students with an IEP may receive a variety of specialized services in small groups outside of their classroom or through specialized support within the general education classroom based on their individual needs.

During the 2019-2020 school year, 46 students were discussed at STST meetings including 22 students who were continuing interventions from the past school year, and 24 new referrals. Of those students referred for interventions, 3 moved on to a referral for special education evaluation, 3 transferred out of the district during the school year, 36 continued intervention support through the school year, and 4 resulted in no further concerns after implementation of temporary interventions. Of the 5 students who were referred for special education evaluation, 3 students qualified for special education services and 2 did not qualify. Additionally, 8 parents requested special education evaluations for their children.

Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, a total of 62 students (with fluctuating enrollment) received special education services at Excell Academy. Excell employed 4.5 full-time Special Education Teachers and 16 paraprofessionals for most of the school year to meet the needs of these students. Related services, such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Developmental/Adaptive Physical Education (DAPE) were provided by contracted specialists. Excell Academy served students with a variety of disabilities, including: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Cognitive Delays (DCD), Developmental Delays (DD), Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH), Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Other Health Disabilities (OHD), Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Speech/Language Impairments (SLI). Depending on their needs, students received anywhere between 15 to 1000 minutes per week of specialized services based on their IEP.

VI. Innovative Practices & Implementation

Innovative and Unique Aspects:
Over the past nineteen years, Excell has grown from 65 students in kindergarten through fourth grade to over 400 students in grades Pre-kindergarten through eighth. Excell Academy for Higher Learning is a full-service educational facility that prides itself on a variety of educational support and (low cost/no cost) services that are made available for its students and families.

Excell Academy has implemented several innovative practices. The school has implemented an innovative schedule that puts a focus on both core instruction and intervention or W.I.N. Time (for What I Need). The schedule allows the classroom teachers to focus on quality reading and math instruction while science and global studies courses are taught by content specialists. The science and global studies specialists also provide extra prep time for classroom teachers who use this time to develop common assessments, adjust instruction and participate in weekly data meetings.

To support positive behavior throughout the school, Excell Academy utilizes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS was fully implemented in 2018-19, resulting in an overhaul of the behavior management system. In 2019-20, Excell Academy leadership identified the need to adjust

its behavior management system to better address students social-emotional learning needs. To accomplish this, Excell Academy has revised its behavior management system to implement a Community Care Model. The aim of the Community Care Model is to integrate what the school has done with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with culturally-informed instruction. Excell Academy has also begun to implement a "house" system modeled on that used at Ron Clark Academy, a highly successful middle school in Atlanta, Georgia. School leadership undertook planning for the Community Care Model during the summer of 2020 and is implementing this with a Community Care team in place beginning fall 2020.

Excell Academy continues to gather and track behavior data through SWIS, the PBIS data system, with the aim of becoming more aware of and able to respond proactively to the sources of behavior issues. All staff have been trained in PBIS. Students can earn PBIS Rewards, now tracked electronically, when exhibiting positive behaviors Points earned through PBIS Rewards count for the student's house.

Also, Excell Academy continues to implement the Second Step social-emotional development and bullying prevention curriculum to supplement PBIS (begun in 2018-19). Second Step is a locally developed program that provides activities which have been built into morning meeting time, to impact all students. Another program that supports social-emotional learning is Zones of Regulation (see www.zonesofregulation.com). Excell Academy utilizes the Zones of Regulation framework to support students' ability to self-regulate their emotions.

Excell prides itself on the variety of educational support and (low cost/no cost) services that are made available for its families. Before and After School programming was discontinued in the spring of 2020, and summer programming canceled, due to COVID-19 and the transition to distance learning.

However, the Community Education program's Before and After school care program, "Summer S.M.A.R.T.S." (for Science Math Arts Reading/lit. Trips and Sun) was replaced by a "Community Heroes" program providing childcare for essential workers, beginning in the spring of 2020. The Community Heroes program takes appropriate safety precautions, operating from 9am – 4pm and also providing a limited number of spaces for families who are experiencing difficulty with distance learning. As a COVID-19 pandemic response effort, Community Heroes continues to operate, as of fall 2020.

These programs enhance our school mission and vision by providing additional parent requested services all in one location. The academy may or may not charge tuition for some of its additional programs. Here is some detail on the educational support programs that are offered at Excell Academy:

Summer School: Excell Academy provides a five- or six-week summer school program for student's Pre-K-8th grade. The academy's summer school program offers reading and math instructional interventions for referred students of Excell Academy. This instruction is provided by licensed teachers with paraprofessionals assisting as needed. The summer school instructional day is from 8:45 am - 12:15 pm.

Breakfast and lunch are provided for all students. Summer school operated in summer 2019 but was canceled for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Summer Breakfast & Lunch Program: Excell Academy offers free breakfast and lunch for children up to age 18 in the community. This summer food service program is provided by the Minnesota Department of Education Nutrition Program and the federal nutrition program (also canceled summer 2020).

Employee Daycare: Excell Academy prides itself on having created a purposeful community where employees are collectively efficacious and committed to the academy's core values. Our employees have a work ethic of excellence and providing as many conveniences and accommodations to support this dedicated spirit throughout is an opportunity to continue to cultivate a positive workplace. Excell-ent Child Care is a fully licensed daycare that was developed with our employees in mind to provide high quality convenient childcare on site.

Excell-ent Child Care is open from 7:30 am - 6:00 pm Monday through Friday on staff workdays. The employee daycare is also open during the summer to accommodate 12-month and summer school employees. Employees complete registration and their children are enrolled on a first come first serve basis. Childcare services are tuition based.

Tutoring: Excell Academy offers before school and/or after school tutoring from October through March each school year. Tutoring is made available to all students K-8 who are referred by a teacher. Tutoring is free to all participants. The tutoring program provides math intervention as needed for each student. Khan Academy's free online math program is used for math intervention along with other teacher selected resources. Tutoring is individualized and differentiated for each student to raise proficiency in mathematics. Tutoring services are at no cost to students.

Excell Academy's Early Childhood Learning Programs: Excell Academy offers several early childhood options for our families, including the following:

Preschool for 3.5 - 5-year olds - This instructional play-based preschool program gives parents the opportunity to give their young children a head start on social learning experiences. Through play-based social interactions and intentional exposure to everyday age-appropriate life skills development opportunities, Excell's 3.5 - 5-year olds are being prepared for a formalized pre-kindergarten program the following year.

Kindergarten Readiness Program for 4 - 5-year olds - Excell has operated a successful kindergarten readiness (K-readiness) preschool aged program for the past ten years. This program exists to prepare our young students for kindergarten the following year. The K-Readiness program is a full-day, everyday

program with a half-day option. Excell's K-Readiness program was developed to provide strong foundational social and academic experiences for pre-kindergarten aged students in order to prepare them with the necessary skills for kindergarten. Statistics show that, on average, young children of the demographics that Excell serves (over 90% free and reduced lunch eligible), are ill prepared for kindergarten, lacking literacy, language, and other necessary skills to be successful in kindergarten. Therefore, a program such as Excell's K-Readiness program gives a young child a head start and affords these students a better opportunity to succeed in their formal education journey. Excell's K-Readiness program is helping Excell meet its mission by "equipping and preparing students with the tools they need for higher levels of education and to reach their maximum potential."

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) – In the spring of 2014, Excell Academy was approved to offer a prekindergarten program, which has been in place since. This free pre-K program is play-based learning focusing on language, literacy, and social and emotional development. The VPK program is a Minnesota State Government funded program to give Minnesota families the option to enroll their pre-kindergarten aged children (four years old by September 1st) in public education before starting kindergarten. The VPK program is daily, Monday through Friday during the school year for 3.5 hours per day.

All of Excell's early learning programs are fee based unless otherwise indicated (VPK is free). All of Excell's fee-based programs are Minnesota *Parent Aware 4 Star-Rated* and have scholarships available for all qualifying families. Classrooms consist of a staff-to-student ratio of 1:10 in each classroom including at least one teacher and one teacher's aide in each classroom. In addition, one teacher, who is licensed in Early Childhood education, supervises and mentors the staff of Excell Academy's Early Learning Programs.

Excell Academy's Preschool and Kindergarten Readiness program's curriculum is aligned with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs). The preschool *Creative Curriculum* focuses on specific domains or content areas; each domain covers developmentally appropriate goals for three through five-year olds.

Like the K-8 programs, Excell Academy's existing early childhood programs transitioned to a distance-learning format in the spring of 2020 and remain online as of October 2020. One early childhood educator remained on site with a set of students to accommodate those families who are essential workers.

Our families greatly benefit by having all of their children attend Excell Academy's PreK-8 programs. This allows for focused and common instructional practices; which research has shown to increase student achievement. Also, when young underserved and economically disadvantaged children are given the opportunity to be well prepared for their formal education, there is a much greater probability of educational success and narrowing the achievement gap. The families not only benefit by receiving a

quality education but receiving it free or at a reduced cost. In addition, familyies with more than one student benefit from having all students at the same location and provided with the same transportation.

Successes and Challenges

Excell Academy's Research and Evaluation Coordinator provided the following summary of the school's key successes and challenges from 2019-20:

> The Covid 19 pandemic interrupted the school year around the globe and presented the main challenge we faced in 2019-2020. It presented the greatest challenge to delivering high quality instruction from the point when schools were closed and lock downs put in place as well as the greatest challenge to measuring student progress given the cancellation of local and statewide tests.
>
> While our winter data suggested that students were growing during the school year (with high levels of growth in the middle school grades especially), we were not able to assess at the end of the year where students were at academically. Typically the period between winter and spring testing is an intense time of teaching standards, regrouping students based on need, reviewing content and finally taking the end of the year tests.
>
> Distance Learning itself provided many challenges and opportunities for growth. First of all, access to technology was a barrier for some families. All families have been provided with devices and in some cases internet access (through hot spots) so that they can access online learning.
>
> When we first started Distance Learning in the Spring of 2020, Grades PreK through 3rd grade used the Seesaw learning platform while grades 4 through 8 used Google Classrooms to connect with their teachers and access lessons from their classroom and specialist teachers. In the fall of 2020, we are transitioning and implementing the use of Schoology in order to provide a better experience for families based on the feedback we received. We are also adding daily live instruction which will lead to greater student/teacher interaction and connections with our families. Based on family feedback, we recognized the need for a more structured day that still provides for flexibility for families. Daily live instruction is scheduled and will be recorded for students who are not able to attend the live virtual sessions. They will be able to access the content when it is convenient for them.
>
> In addition to this, we are recognizing the need to build community with students and staff virtually during this distance learning period. The Community Care Team has developed a model that integrates our PBIS strategies, culturally responsive teaching strategies, community building activities and restorative practices into a morning meeting model that seeks to allow students to connect to one another and teachers. We want students to feel affirmed in their cultural identity and prepared to face academic challenges together. This community care model is being implemented in the fall of 2020.

Excell Academy Schedule and Calendar

The daily schedule at Excell is focused on providing the proper interventions and enrichment (see WIN Time) as well as providing significant time for core instruction at grade level. See the attached School Calendar (Appendix A).

VII. Academic Performance: Goals & Benchmarks

Progress on OW Contractual Academic Goals & WBWF Alignment

Excell Academy normally reports in this section on Indicators for the Academic Goals in nine of 11 areas based on its contractual obligations to Osprey Wilds. The Academic Goals also address the four World's Best Workforce areas, i.e. Ready for Kindergarten, Reading Well by 3rd Grade, Achievement Gap Closure, and Career and College Ready. The Indicator areas are:

- **Indicator 1: Mission – Related.** Goal based on an inquiry based (higher level thinking skills), school developed rubric (1-4). WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 2: English Language Learners.** Goal based on proportion of EL students testing Proficient on MCA's and proportion meeting targets for growth in English Language proficiency. WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure

- **Indicator 3: Reading Growth.** Goal based on proportion of students meeting expected growth targets established by NWEA for fall to spring administration of the NWEA MAP assessment in reading. WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 4: Math Growth.** Goal based on proportion of students meeting expected growth targets established by NWEA for fall to spring administration of the NWEA MAP assessment in mathematics. WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency.** Goal based on aggregate proficiency index scores on the MCA in Reading, grades 3-8. WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 6: Math Proficiency.** Goal based on aggregate proficiency index scores on the MCA in Mathematics, grades 3-8. WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure, Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 7: Science Proficiency.** Goal based on aggregate proficiency index scores on the MCA in Science, grades 5 and 8
- **Indicator 8: Proficiency in Other Curricular Areas** (not applicable)
- **Indicator 9: Post-Secondary Readiness** (not applicable)
- **Indicator 10: Federal and State Accountability.** Goal based on Excell Academy's performance under the State of Minnesota's North Star Accountability System (during 2019-20 no new schools were identified as requiring any level of support under the North Star system). WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure Career and College Ready
- **Indicator 11: Attendance.** Goal: Excell Academy students will maintain a minimum 95% attendance rate in each school year during the contract period.

Excell Academy's academic data picture has shown that over the last several years, implementing the high-expectations educational approach described above, formative assessment strategies that are standards based and focused on making learning objectives and success criteria clear, has resulted in increased student achievement. That growth stalled in math in 2018-19; hence a priority for 2019-20 was to focus on math instruction while continuing positive performance in Reading. However, with the disruption of instructional programming due to the pandemic, Excell Academy's focus shifted to supporting the transition to distance learning, and maintaining community despite the challenges of distance learning (see section XVI). Also, with the cancellation of spring assessments, the data to measure growth is not available.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) data which is typically reported in this section, is not available for spring 2020 due to these tests having been canceled. Internal assessments at Excell Academy were mostly suspended as well, in the spring. Many of Excell Academy's English Learner students took the ACCESS test; however, the state did not provide the same accountability reports that

measure progress towards language proficiency, and ACCESS data does not represent a full picture of the academic language growth from the 2019-2020 school year[3].

However, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments were given in the fall and winter (though not in the spring). Data from this source is relevant to Indicators 3 and 4. Those results are summarized below, followed by attendance data (Indicator 11).

NWEA MAP Results

The NWEA MAP assessments were given in the fall and winter of 2019, in Reading and Math for grades 1-8 and also in Science for grades 5 and 8. Thus, the only school wide growth data available to report for 2019-2020 is the percentage of students making their Fall to Winter growth targets on the NWEA MAP assessment. This data is usually used to focus on improving instruction and preparing for growth into the Spring and is not used to assess progress.

With that caveat, the following table summarizes the available MAP data. It shows that students were making progress before the onset of the pandemic (52.9% in math, 48.55% in reading and 68.8% in science). It shows very strong growth in the middle school grades especially.

Excell Academy MAP Results, Fall-Winter 2019: Percentage of Students Making Winter Growth Targets			
	Percent Meeting Math Targets	**Percent Meeting Reading Targets**	**Percent Meeting Science Targets**
1	47.06%	41.18%	
2	43.24%	28.57%	
3	62.50%	58.33%	
4	32.56%	42.86%	
5	40.48%	52.27%	66.67%
6	61.29%	45.16%	
7	85.71%	60.71%	
8	69.23%	72.00%	75.00%
Total	**52.90%**	**48.55%**	**68.80%**

[3] Many students who began the ACCESS in spring 2020 did not finish all four domains of the test due to the pandemic, and a limited number of students were allowed to test in the Fall of 2020 if they were at the point of potentially exiting Academic Language Services. Excell Academy hopes to be able to report on these results in the 2020-21 annual report.

Attendance Data

Goal: Excell Academy students will maintain a minimum 95% attendance rate in each school year during the contract period.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal: Excell Academy narrowly missed this goal. Excell Academy's overall average attendance rate during 2019-20 was 93.5%. This is essentially unchanged from the previous year when the attendance rate was 93.2%. However, all of grades 1-8 posted average rates of attendance above 95%; see discussion in the Student Attendance, Attrition & Mobility section above.

VIII. Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation

The specific areas of need in the school's education program that were identified at the start of the 2019-20 school year, and the data the needs were based upon.

Excell Academy's leadership team identified the need to revisit math instructional strategies due to a decline in MCA scores there and made this a priority for 2019-20. Another priority was to improve teaching strategies for reading, especially in the early grades, and to ensure that all teachers are teaching young students the foundational skills for reading in a systematic way. An important goal is for all students to be reading by third grade, and toward this end Excell Academy is adopting the Science of Reading approach, based on the neuroscience of reading (planned during the spring/summer of 2020 for implementation during 2020-21).

The priorities for improvement in the core academic areas of math and reading remain, but as with most schools Excell Academy's focus shifted in the spring of 2020 to implementing and then improving the implementation of distance learning. This remained the highest priority during the summer of 2020 as the distance learning program was revised for the fall.

The school's process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards

Students' progress is measured via review of MAP data (MAP Growth assessments normally given three times/year to all students); fluency screening via CBM in grades 1-6; progress monitoring for groups receiving interventions; FAST for early reading/early literacy in grades K-1. Formative Assessment practices are standards based. The FAST and CBM's in reading are used to inform reading/ELA teachers' work – if less than 50% of students are meeting a target, a classroom-wide intervention is carried out over two weeks based on the PRESS framework (Pathway to Reading Excellence in School Sites), to ensure mastery of content before moving on. In 2019-20, a new assessment was utilized for Kindergarten and Pre-K, the Gold Assessment. For 2020-21, plans are underway to administer the MAP remotely; other assessments may or may not be administered depending on their feasibility, e.g. the FAST is likely to be used if Excell Academy is able to shift to a hybrid learning model.

The school's process for disaggregating data by student group in order to assess the school's educational effectiveness in relation to these groups.

Most of Excell Academy's students, over 90%, fall into the Black and Free/Reduced-eligible subgroups. There is, however, a subgroup of English Learners, consisting of 85 students or 21% of the student body as of fall 2019. In past years, Excell Academy's English Learners have outperformed their peers statewide based on academic proficiency rates shown on the MCA's. Excell Academy has established an Academic Language Development (ALD) team, to focus on helping English Learners and supporting the acquisition of academic language for all students[4]. Excell Academy's academic leadership looks at MCA data disaggregated by groups, and the ALD team has specific goals for their students.

The school's process to review and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of instruction and curriculum.

Periodic review of curricula and ongoing review of the efficacy of instruction – *See narrative in above in above section V, Educational Approach & Curriculum*

The school's system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all instruction and curriculum, taking into account strategies and best practices, student outcomes, school principal evaluations under section 123B.147, subdivision 3, and teacher evaluations under section 122A.40, subdivision 8, or 122A.41, subdivision 5;

[4] The three ALD teachers and several others participate in an Academic Language PLC, established during the 2019-20 school year.

Instructional Leadership Team, Professional Learning Communities, and QComp - *See narrative in above section V*

Specific information on strategies for improving instruction, curriculum and student achievement.

Excell Academy strives to implement education effectiveness practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, technology, and a collaborative professional culture that develops and supports teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness.

Approaches in place include McREL, Formative Assessment, Science of Reading, PRESS - *See narrative in above sections V & VI.*

Education effectiveness practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, technology, and a collaborative professional culture that develops and supports teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness.

As described above (introduction to Educational Approach & Curriculum section), Excell Academy strives to ensure the effective implementation of standards-based instruction and common assessments. Excell Academy has an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) made up of highly qualified and experienced staff members representing every department of the school and including Professional Learning Community (PLC) Lead Teachers. The ILT guides the work of the school as it seeks to ensure the implementation of evidence-based instruction, collaboration, and coordination of student and staff support systems.

The presence of the PLC Lead Teachers on the ILT allows for consistent communication to teaching staff and provides an avenue for feedback from teaching staff to the ILT. The ILT's work has led to the development and implementation of standards based common assessments. Teachers are now able to give students a weekly assessment that demonstrates the benchmark proficiency levels of their class. Weekly data meetings, with the Executive Director, Academic Dean, and Research and Evaluation Coordinator, provide an opportunity for grade level teams to analyze data and make necessary instructional changes.

The school's process for examining the equitable distribution of experienced and qualified teachers across the district and within school sites using data, including how the school uses this data to set forth strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers.

Excell Academy has a number of practices in place to ensure its students equitable access to experienced, effective, and in-field teachers. As noted in last year's World's Best Workforce report:

- Excell Academy's student population has a very high percentage of Black Students and Students receiving Free and Reduced-Price lunch.

- In addition to this, we have a significant English Learner population. All the teachers in ALD (working with EL students) are licensed in their area and are effective teachers based on Excell Academy's Teacher Development and Evaluation program.
- For these reasons Excell Academy has no internal gaps with respect to access to high-quality effective teachers. Excell Academy makes every effort to recruit, train and retain high-quality teachers who are licensed in their teaching area. We have robust job embedded professional development offered through PLCs that raises the quality of our teachers as well. Low turnover rates have resulted in consistent high-quality instruction throughout the school and for all students.
- All teachers are fully licensed, aside from one community expert. Teacher retention is good: 90% of teachers from 2019-20 returned for the following year (all but four of 41 teachers).

Districts are required to provide an assurance on their World's Best Workforce Summary Report that teacher equity data is publicly reported. Include the percentage of experienced educators (more than three years of teacher experience), the percentage of licensed educators teaching in the area(s) in which they are licensed, the percentage of educators with advanced degrees (a master's degree or more), and the percentage of racially and ethnically diverse teachers. Describe the school's strategies to increase equitable access to effective and diverse teachers.

Excell Academy's teacher equity data will be publicly reported. At present (October 2020), the MN Report Card shows 68% of Excell Academy's educators have over three years' experience (28 of 41 teachers), and 95.5% of courses at Excell are taught by licensed educators. Twelve percent of teachers at Excell have advanced degrees (five of 41).

Excell Academy ensures its students access to diverse teachers. As stated in last year's WBWF report:

- At Excell we make every effort to recruit a diverse body of educators. We have several licensed and classroom teachers that represent diverse backgrounds. In addition to this we have several educators including paraprofessionals from diverse backgrounds that represent our student body.
- At Excell we encourage quality paraprofessionals to consider the field of teaching and have some currently enrolled in licensure programs.

Also, Excell Academy is part of a Children's Defense Fund project partnering with several universities to help minority staff members attain teaching licensure.

IX. Student & Parent Satisfaction

Student, parent and staff feedback is very important to the life and culture of Excell Academy. Student, staff and parent surveys have been utilized to monitor stakeholder (student, parent, and staff) satisfaction. Results have been very positive overall, but there is always room for improvement.

Excell Academy asked its parents to respond to a School Environment Survey in January 2020, and 41 parents responded. Responses from these parents indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school:

- 85% of parents responding to the survey (35 of 41) gave the highest or next-highest rating, on a five-point scale, to Excell Academy's communication with parents and families about behavior policies and systems
- 83% gave the highest or next-highest rating to Excell Academy's current school wide behavior system (only one gave it the lowest rating, Not effective at all)
- 98% indicated they fell welcome at Excell and feel comfortable communicating with their child's teacher

Other survey questions asked parents to comment on what they see as the most important thing for their child to receive at school, which approaches to behavior management they favor, and how they see their role in supporting their student.

Excell Academy also surveyed parents regarding distance learning; there were 32 responses to the Parent Distance Learning survey at the beginning of May 2020. While not a satisfaction survey as such, responses to this survey also indicated satisfaction with teachers: When asked to respond to the statement, *My student feels supported by their teachers*, all but three of the survey respondents checked the highest rating, for Agree (three checked the middle rating). Likewise, all but two of the survey respondents picked the highest rating when asked to comment on their satisfaction with communication from their child's teacher.

X. Environmental Education

The mission of Excell Academy's authorizer, Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, is to "instill a connection and commitment to the environment and people of all communities through experiential learning." Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center defines environmental education as the implementation of values and strategies that foster learning and create environmentally literate citizens who engage in creating healthy outcomes for individuals, communities, and the Earth. The overarching goal of environmental education is an environmentally literate citizenry. The test of environmental literacy is the capacity of an individual to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment. This requires sufficient awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to create a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

Excell Academy's coordinator for environmental education provided this update on the school's EE efforts during 2019-20, concluding with an update on EE for 2020-21, as of the second week of October:

> Excell Academy has continued to approach environmental education with a focus of what is in front of the student in their environment, what is near the student's environment, and what can we do to promote EE today and in the future, wherever that might take our students. This year more than ever before, I saw students and staff engaging and truly wanting to be part of the solution and passing their knowledge forward in authentic ways.

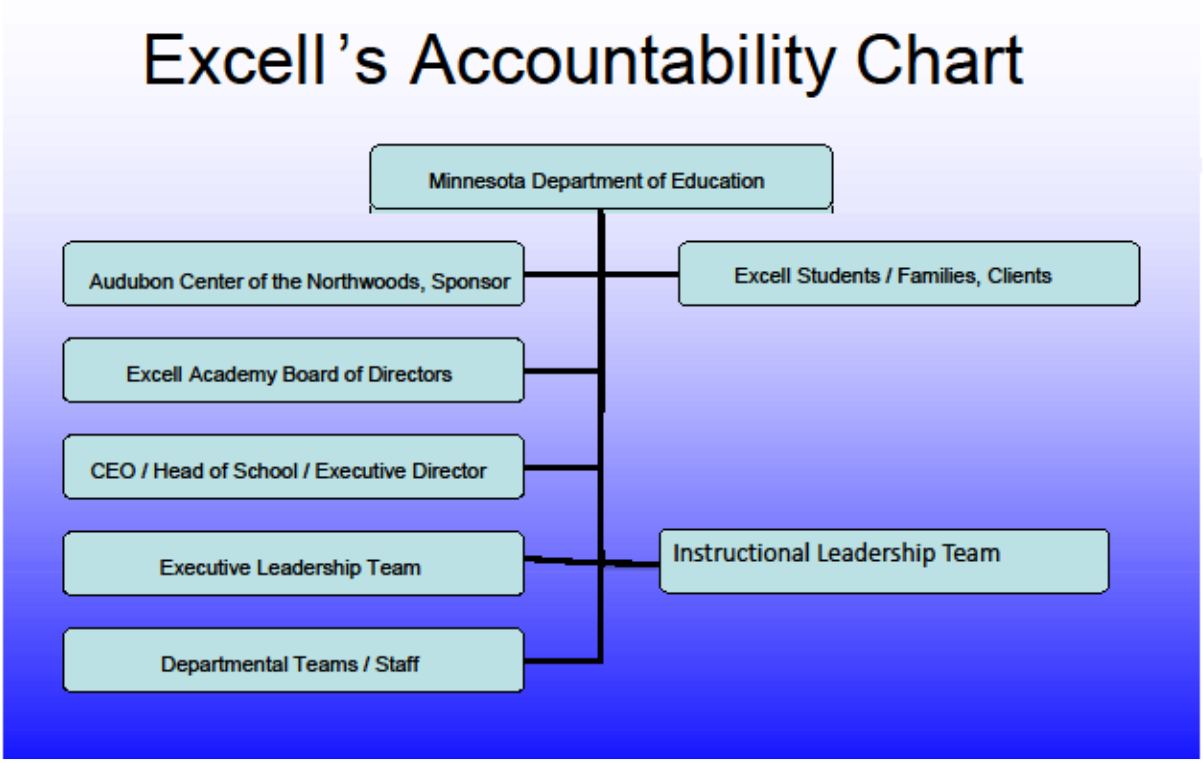
This past school year we found success in creating an Environmental Learning Plan that targeted what our students NEED and where we are at as a school. Though we had anticipated having the ELP completed much sooner in the school year and having a soft rollout in the spring, COVID 19 changed that. Our staff is excited that the ELP is a document that can be modified and changed as our student needs change. Challenges were understanding how to draft the ELP, timing, and of course Distance Learning and COVID 19.

During Distance Learning, students were asked to interact with their environments in real world lessons across grade levels and subject matter. Teachers worked hard to make an unimaginable and ongoing event an opportunity for students to explore their worlds. Some of the interactions with the outside environment were limited by parent/guardian comfort level due to the pandemic. As a community, we looked at all factors and did our best to be flexible while keeping our students' emotional, social, and physical needs paramount.

Our plans for EE for the upcoming (2020-21) school year are numerous. This past year we have found success in creating an ELP that targets what our students need and what we need to do to continue to help prepare them for their future. We will be rolling out our ELP and the specific details and needs from staff in the upcoming month(s). Once the infrastructure is in place, we are focused on making sure the staff have the knowledge and resources needed to implement our goals. Part of that planning involves the SEED team (as well as other educators) coming together to assess what our current curriculum addresses and how we can enhance that prior to the start of the next school year. We see Distance Learning, in part, as an opportunity to engage students AND their families in their home environment and in places they frequent. Now that Excell Academy for Higher Learning is into its fifth week of Distance Learning and routines have mostly been established, we feel more confident in directing our attention to completing our ELP and focusing on our goals.

XI. Governance & Management

At Excell Academy, school leadership including governance and management of the school, are shown in the Accountability Chart below.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Excell Academy complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter contract and school bylaws relating to:

- **School board composition**: Excell Academy's Board is composed of five community members, two teachers, and one parent.
- **Board governance:** Excell Academy has adopted and actively uses the Carver model of policy governance. All members have been trained in policy governance at the board orientation.
- **Board training:** Excell Academy board members are trained in three areas: Board Governance, Financial matters, and Employment matters. Board members receive additional training in other specific areas as those opportunities arise as well as annual development.
- **Conducting board meetings**
    - Excell Academy uses Robert's Rules for conducting board meetings and are compliant with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law.

- All materials (i.e. Minutes, Financials, etc.) are sent to board members for review at least 7-10 days prior to the board meeting.

- **Policy:** Excell Academy's board of directors has established policies in the areas of Results, Board Operations, Relationship of Board to Director, and Executive Limitations. Specific policies are reviewed for compliance at each monthly board meeting. In addition, our policy review committee annually reviews and revises the policies as needed. Excell Academy's Results policies have been aligned with our charter contract goals
- **Data**: Excell Academy's board of directors receives regular financial and educational data for review. In addition, the board of directors is given organizational documents for review and approval prior to the established deadlines (i.e. budget, annual report, audit, etc.).

Excell Academy Board of Directors Roster for 2019-20:

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term End Date	Email Address
John Allen	Chair	Community	5/2018	7/2018	7/2021	JohnAllen@excellacademy.org
Riki Baker	Member	Teacher	5/2019	7/2019	7/2022	rikibaker@excellacademy.org
Edna Granger	Member	Community	5/2018	7/2018	7/2021	ednagranger@excellacademy.org
Keith Griffin	Member	Community	5/2019	7/2019	7/2022	keithgriffin@excellacademy.org
Jartue Kroma	Member	Teacher	5/2018	7/2018	7/2021	jkroma@excellacademy.org
Monica McGill	Secretary	Parent	5/2017	7/2017	7/2020	mmcgill@excellacademy.org
Casey Morrissette	Treasurer	Community	(Appt. by Board)	7/2018	7/2020	caseymorrissette@excellacademy.org
Oliver Spraggins	Vice Chair	Community	5/2019	7/2019	7/2022	oliverspraggins@excellacademy.org
Katy Yelle	Member	Teacher	5/2017	7/2017	7/2020	kyelle@excellacademy.org

Excell Academy's Board met throughout the 2019-20 school year, in every month but December, transitioning to virtual meetings beginning in March. Excell Academy's spring 2020 Board elections were concluded at the Annual Meeting on June 25. Excell Academy board information is posted online at http://www.excellacademy.dreamhosters.com/about/board-of-directors/.

Excell Academy is committed to having a confident, prepared, and trained board of directors. Each member has or will receive multiple training opportunities. In addition to the state-mandated training, members have attended a wide variety of board-specific training. Training received by Excell Academy board members in 2018-19 was as follows:

Initial Training

Below is information on the initial training required by the statute completed by each current board member.

Initial Training				
Board Member Name	**Original Date Seated**	**Board's Role & Responsibilities**	**Employment Policies & Practices**	**Financial Management**
John Allen	5/3/2012	7/21/2012 SBS	7/21/2012 SBS	7/21/2012 SBS
Riki Baker	7/19/2019	08/06/2019 MSBA	08/6/2019 MSBA	8/06/2019 MSBA
Edna Granger	8/25/2016	03/11/2017 MACS	1/17/2017 Tom DeGree	6/13/2017 Rhonda Cordova
Keith Griffin	7/19/2019	08/06/2019 MSBA	08/6/2019 MSBA	8/06/2019 MSBA
Jartue Kroma	7/20/2018	08/06/2019 MSBA	08/6/2019 MSBA	8/06/2019 MSBA
Monica McGill	1/26/2017	7/22/2017 Cincy Reuther	6/26/2017 MACS	7/22/2017 Clifton LarsonAllen
Casey Morrissette	11/1/2009	7/21/2012 SBS	7/21/2012 SBS	7/21/2012 SBS
Oliver Spraggins	5/25/2015	08/06/2019 MSBA	08/6/2019 MSBA	8/06/2019 MSBA
Katy Yelle	7/22/2017	2/24/2018 MACS	2/24/2018 MACS	7/22/2017 – Clifton LarsonAllen

Annual Training

The table below provides information on the ongoing annual training attended by each current board member in FY2020:

Annual Training – FY 2020			
	Board Retreat, 7/21/2019	**Board Training provided by MN School Boards Association**	**Board Retreat, 7/18/20 (held virtually & in person)**
John Allen	ATTENDED		
Riki Baker		ATTENDED	ATTENDED

Annual Training – FY 2020			
	Board Retreat, 7/21/2019	**Board Training provided by MN School Boards Association**	**Board Retreat, 7/18/20 (held virtually & in person)**
Edna Granger	ATTENDED		ATTENDED
Keith Griffin		ATTENDED	ATTENDED
Jartue Kromah	ATTENDED	ATTENDED	ATTENDED
Monica McGill	ATTENDED		ATTENDED
Casey Morissette	ATTENDED		ATTENDED
Oliver Spraggins	ATTENDED	ATTENDED	ATTENDED
Katy Yelle			

MANAGEMENT

Excell Academy's management is first accountable to the Minnesota Department of Education to fulfill its charter of educating students based on the state's approved and/required statutory purposes (see approved charter and/or contract with authorizer Osprey Wilds - formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods).

Second, Excell Academy's Board of Directors are accountable to our state-approved authorizer, Osprey Wilds to fulfill the legal contract of included statutory purposes, agreed-upon goals, and all other agreements and fiscal and legal requirements to operate a successful and sustainable public charter school. In addition, Excell Academy is also accountable to our students and their parents / guardians, as these are our clients and it is our responsibility to serve their educational needs with excellence.
Third, Excell Academy's Executive Director/CEO is held accountable by the academy's Board of Directors (see BOD sections above). The BOD has set policies that include executive limitations that the Executive Director/CEO is accountable for and is monitored regularly at monthly board meetings.

Excell Academy's Executive Director/CEO adopted a Shared Leadership Model in which she established two key leadership teams: The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ELT supports the CEO by sharing school operational and business management responsibilities. Members of the ELT include the Executive Director/CEO, the Facilities/Transportation Director, onsite Business Manager, the Human Resources Team and the Academic Dean. The ILT shares academic duties, namely the instructional leadership responsibilities of a school principal. Members of

the ILT include the Executive Director/CEO; the Academic Dean; lead classroom teachers and lead teachers with specific areas of representation within the academic areas of Special Education, Title I, and Academic Language Development.

The implementation and management of these leadership teams have proven to be very successful. The implementation of Excell's Shared Leadership Model has been key to the transformation of our school culture and allows the implementation of strategies with fidelity and staff buy-in. This system of leadership has increased school-wide communication, in addition to improving academic instruction and data tracking.

ADMINISTRATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Sabrina R. Williams, Founder and Executive Director

Fiscal Management - Sabrina has been responsible for the management of the finances of Excell Academy for the past 21 years, including during the academy's pre-operational year where she obtained and managed state and federal start-up grants. Sabrina has learned how to effectively communicate and collaborate with financial management vendors (accounting firms and auditors) keeping in mind the uniqueness and intricacies of the Minnesota charter schools finance systems. Sabrina has been trained in all of MDE's charter school finance systems as well as a plethora of non-profit financial management topics and systems.

Education - Sabrina is well qualified as an instructional leader. She has over 12 years of public and private professional classroom instructional experience as well as over 21 years of Education Administration and Leadership experience including performing District, Principal, and Superintendent responsibilities and duties as the Chief Education Officer and Executive Director of Excell Academy. Sabrina has earned two Bachelor of Science degrees, Master's Degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, and Gifted, Creative and Talented Education, Certified in Nonprofit Leadership and Management, NISL Principal's Academy - University of MN Certification, and has earned a plethora of educational and leadership certifications, awards, and recognitions.

Curriculum and Instruction - As stated above, Sabrina holds master's Degrees in Curriculum and Instruction and Gifted, Creative and Talented Education from the University of St. Thomas, and certified as a McREL Classroom Instruction that Works (CITW) facilitator. She has over 32 years of experience in curriculum and instruction design, development, and implementation. Sabrina mentored licensed educators in St. Paul Public Schools in curriculum and instruction development and implementation as well as worked on a collaborative team of educators to write curriculum for the St. Paul Public School District. Sabrina has been instrumental in leading Excell Academy's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) in researching, creating, designing, developing and implementing evidence-based curriculum and

instructional practices school-wide. As a result, Excell Academy's student achievement has grown significantly over the past seven years.

School and non-profit management - Sabrina founded, planned, organized and developed Excell Academy for Higher Learning, Inc. She wrote the business plan and Excell's first charter which was approved by the former Minnesota Department of Families & Learning in 1999. Sabrina has led and managed the non-profit business and operations of Excell Academy as well as the academic / instructional leadership. Seven years ago, Sabrina restructured the management of Excell Academy and implemented an evidenced-based Shared Leadership model which has brought much progress and success to the entire organization and especially to Excell's students and staff. Sabrina also participated in the Minnesota Principals Academy in collaboration with the University of Minnesota's Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development. Participation in this two-year cohort earned Sabrina the prestigious National Institute for School Leadership's school leader's national certification.

Executive Director / CEO Role Responsibilities

- Effectively communicate and maintain board vision, policies, mission and direction to staff, families, and community.
- Provide Instructional Leadership to academic staff within a shared leadership model.
- Provide resources, financial support, materials, equipment, clean space, etc. for staff to perform their responsibility of effectively educating our students.
- Create and maintain a safe, quality, professional working and learning environment for all staff, students, families, and community.
- Vision keeper, strategizer, change monitor, and clear communicator

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 2020-21:

Professional Development Plan for Chief Education Officer/Executive Director

- Formal review processes the board uses to evaluate the school's head leader. The Board's Executive Director Review Committee (EDRC) is assigned the responsibility of evaluating the Executive Director/CEO using the following Individual Performance and Professional Development Plan process:

Stage I of the ED/CEO professional development plan - Goal Setting with the EDRC is implemented during the first quarter annually.
Stage II - involves an EDRC Mid-Year Check-in Conference with the ED/CEO; ED/CEO provides monthly Contractual Goals Reports (CGRs) and Internal Monitoring Reports (IMRs) to the Board of Directors.
Stage III - By June, a Formal Performance Evaluation of the CEO is completed by the EDRC. The Board's EDRC is responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ED/CEO's professional

development plan and makes a final recommendation of performance and compensation to the Board of Directors.

Areas of performance focus, on which the CEO reports to the Board, include the following:

Visionary and Inspirational Leadership

- Executive Leadership/Shared Leadership
- Team Assessments and Department Assessments
- Handbooks Updates
- Professional Goals

Academic Leadership, Accountability, and Outcomes

Instructional leadership including:

- WBWF Annual Goals
- MAP data
- MCA data
- Authorizer Contractual Goals

Fiscal Leadership, Accountability and Outcomes

MDE Finance Compliances & Recognitions

- Long term Financial Projections
- Annual Audit Compliances
- Authorizer Contractual Goals

Board, Authorizer, Community, and Other Stakeholder Relationships

- Updates and Authorizer relationships
- Partnerships
- Grants
- Parent Engagement Stats
- Authorizer Contractual Goals

School Culture and Climate

- Staff Survey results
- Parent and/or student survey results
- Parent Engagement Goals

Talent Investment and Leadership Development

- Staff turnover statistics
- Professional Develop data and tracking

- CEO's 2019-20 record of Professional Development:
  - McREL Educational Research Balanced Leadership Academy, Creating a Purposeful Community, and Shared Leadership training refresher
  - Ratwik & Associates School Law Conference
  - Regional Centers of Excellence Advisory Training & Committee
  - Educational Policy Fellowship
  - University of MN Urban Leadership Academy PD sessions
  - MN Principals Academy Cohort NISL follow up
  - University of St. Thomas Executive Director Leadership Institute Cohort follow up
  - McREL Educational Research "Classroom Instruction that Works" instructional leadership training refresher
  - School Improvement School Leader training sessions Regional Centers of Excellence
  - ASCD National Educational Leadership
  - ACNW Retreat School Leadership Development sessions
  - MDE School Leadership Professional Development series
  - COVID-19 School Leadership information, training and development
  - MACS Charter School Directors professional support and development
  - National Charter School Leaders of Color Collaborative
  - MN Charter Leaders of Color Collaborative
  - PENworks Leadership Conference

- Activities Completed/Progress/Results for 2019-20:
  - Purchased School Building
  - Secured 6 acres of city property at $1 per year for school playground
  - Upgraded security systems building-wide
  - Developed and implemented COVID-19 Distance Learning Plans
  - Developed and implemented childcare for essential workers for the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Collaborated with transportation companies to provide higher quality and improved safety systems for student transportation services to and from school.
  - Increased student access to technology including the purchase of additional Chromebooks for student classroom use. Also provided upgraded new laptops and LCD projectors in every classroom for teachers to integrate more technology into their instructional practices.
  - Community Partnerships continue to evolve including the DARE program, DeLaSalle, and Cristo Rey Jesuit School. Additional Community Partnerships include:
    - MN Leaders of Color Collaborative
    - Brooklyn Park Rotary Club
    - Brooklyn Park Lion's Club
    - Equity Leadership Partnership
    - Robbinsdale Schools Leadership Partnership
    - Centers of School Excellence
    - Parent Aware MN

    - MN Reading and Math Corps
    - Teach for America
    - MN Senior Corps Volunteers
    - Mayor & City of Brooklyn Park
    - Jr. Achievement
    - Mary's Place
    - Sharing & Caring Hands
    - Godfather's Pizza
    - Hope 4 Youth

- Under the leadership of the CEO several grants and/or funding sources were applied for and/or obtained to help meet the school's mission, vision and goals, including:
    - Walmart community small grants
    - Target field trip transportation grants
    - Hennepin County recycling grants
    - Individual Classroom Grants
    - Parent Aware early childhood scholarship grants
    - Pathway I & II scholarships
    - Audubon EE grant
    - Dollar General grant
    - PBIS grant for cohort training
    - A variety of Federal Grants including, ADSIS, Title I, II, III, several federal sped grants, COVID-19 grants, etc.
    - Other Local grants

- Overall, Excell Academy had a very successful year: "A Year of Educating, Engaging & Elevating" with an increase in enrollment, an increase in staff, and an estimated 5% increase of the fund balance, and an overall average of 11% growth academically.

<u>Professional Development Goals/Areas of Focus for 2020-21:</u>

For 2020-21, the CEO/Executive Director will continue with the above Areas of Focus including:

- Updating and upgrading existing building and new expansion with COVID-19 compliances and safety and security measures;
- Continue Governor's Executive Orders of providing childcare for essential workers, meals delivery and distribution, social and emotional supports and providing the safest learning model (distance learning, hybrid learning or in-person) for our students;
- Continue partnership with Hope 4 Youth, MN in which Excell will continue its pilot of homelessness support within our school programs;
- Expand community partnerships to compliment Excell's mission & vision and to provide additional social emotional supports for our students per each learning model;
- Increase "mixed delivery" partners in our Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program, where we partner with daycares in the community to serve more preschoolers for kindergarten readiness;

XII. Staffing

Teachers and staff at Excell Academy for Higher Learning have high expectations for all learners. Excell Academy teachers develop conceptual knowledge and manage the content of the academic curriculum. Teachers plan lessons and develop learning objectives based on declarative and procedural knowledge in order to ensure a clear balance of learning in content and skills. They strive to lead and instruct students to success by ensuring that the students are learning what is being taught through their individual mental processes, such as recalling, recognizing, reflecting, analyzing, evaluating and understanding as well as creative, higher-level and critical thinking.

A commitment to diversity and equal employment opportunity is the foundation for recruiting and hiring employees at Excell Academy for Higher Learning. Excell Academy is strategic in both hiring and developing quality staff, cultivating candidates early and hiring by the spring to bring in the strongest candidates. Once teachers' "Intent to Return" forms are received, Excell administration plans

accordingly by posting on several popular websites (Star Tribune, EdPost, etc.) and conducting group/team interviews. These postings communicate what's exciting and challenging about working at Excell Academy so that candidates are prepared for the school culture, and unsuitable candidates self-select out of the process. Current staff are included in the interviews. References are checked and background checks carried out. Staffing each classroom with an effective teacher is the most important function of the school! Doing so requires strategic personnel policies and smart practices. Low-income schools do not exist in isolation—they exist in communities. Academic achievement and good behavior reinforce each other, and they are both enforced/encouraged by quality staff who believes that every child can and will learn at Excell Academy.

When Excell Academy had to transition to distance learning in March 2020, the school committed to the utilization of all staff to support the distance learning program. Excell Academy's Distance Learning Plan states that: *During the COVID-19 crisis, Excell Academy will work to ensure the equitable distribution of work assignments and work location assignments for all staff. Excell Academy will utilize all of our staff to ensure fair outcomes for all stakeholders*. Staff lay-offs were avoided, though some vacancies created by staff resignations remained un-filled.

All of Excell Academy's teachers are licensed (or in a small number of cases have the appropriate variance) and are held to high professional standards for lesson planning, instruction, and assessment. In addition to this, the ILT has a professional development committee that works to identify the most significant professional development needs for the implementation of research-based instructional strategies. Throughout the contract term, Excell has provided professional development opportunities every Wednesday (PLC's for all teachers), and every Monday (ILT meetings).

A total of eight days (five in August/September immediately before the school year, and three during the year) are used for PD. At the beginning of the school year PD is offered in a variety of key areas including: curriculum-based training (Direct Instruction, NatGeo, *Creative Curriculum* for Pre-K, *Language for Learning*, McREL's CITW2 Instructional Framework, Science of Reading, Math Matrix Framework for Math instruction), training surrounding the English Language Arts standards, standards-based lesson planning and instruction, classroom management (Responsive Classroom and Teach Like a Champion), and training on racial equity in schools. To support implementation of the Science of Reading approach, based on the neuroscience of reading, Excell Academy leadership and teachers are utilizing LETRS training (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling; see https://www.voyagersopris.com/professional-development/letrs/overview – a sub-group of staff took LETRS training in the summer of 2020 and the rest of the teachers of reading will take this during 2020-21). Also, beginning August 2018, training has been provided for all staff in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

In the summer of 2020, curriculum-specific training continued but was mostly done on teachers' own time while all-staff training was geared mainly toward revising Excell Academy's implementation of

distance learning, with improved community-building and attention to students' social-emotional learning.

Job embedded professional development has occurred for the duration of the contract term in Excell Academy's PLCs. Lead Teachers introduce research-based instructional strategies, teachers use them and bring back data/student work to show effectiveness. Common assessment data are being used to assess the effectiveness of instructional strategies; data from these sources is reported to the ILT. The most successful strategies are perfected and implemented on an ongoing basis. Lead teachers then look for these strategies when doing classroom observations. Grade level teams create the common assessments used to track student performance and using this data to drive instruction.

Members of the ILT have had many opportunities to attend professional development surrounding implementation science, leadership teams and school improvement through the Center for Excellence and their school advocates. Also, Excell's Executive Director and members of the ILT received training on McREL's research supported *Classroom Instruction that Works 2* (CITW2) Instructional Planning Framework (IPF). Several members of the ILT have become trainers and are recertified annually. Excell's "McREL Team" trains all licensed teachers at Excell annually. The ILT has developed practice profiles on the IPF for observation and support of implementation with fidelity.

2019-20 Licensed Teaching Staff				
Name	**File #**	**License & Assignment (subject/grades)**	**2020-21 Status***	**Comments**
Baker, Riki	475611	4th Grade	R	
Blanco, Sharleen	467598	Reading Interventionist	R	
Fuller, Rashidah	504659	4th Grade	R	
Giddings, Kula	470882	1st Grade	R	
Hillestad, Angela	429770	6th Grade	R	
Holland, Cameron	515320	Social Studies	R	
Irving, Taybri	1003513	Technology Learning Center Instructor	R	
James, Julie	435058	Mentor Teacher, Academic Coach	R	
Johnson, Demond	509117	Special Education	R	
Jones, Danita	449874	Kindergarten	R	
Kempf, Sarah	469005	2nd Grade	R	
Kock, Ashley	456483	Reading Interventionist	R	
Kroma, Jartue	485877	Special Education	R	Special Permission
Larson, Erika	407314	Lead Mentor Teacher	R	
Lee, Adrienne	514638	1st Grade	NR	

2019-20 Licensed Teaching Staff				
Name	**File #**	**License & Assignment (subject/grades)**	**2020-21 Status***	**Comments**
Lewis, Elyse	472119	5th Grade	R	
McCarthy, Julianne	467874	3rd Grade	R	
Melendez, Mikayla	498677	ALD Teacher	R	
Merrigan, Amber	418469	5th Grade	R	
Mueller, Bethany	420748	Middle School Language Arts Teacher	R	
Myllykangas, Sophia	513011	Special Education	R	
Nogle, Kimberly	995763	ALD Teacher	R	
Norlien, Andrew	485309	Phy. Ed and Health Teacher	R	
Norton, Katherine	411227	Reading Interventionist	R	
Pardun, Hannah	475756	Kindergarten	R	
Parr, Paige	484726	Special Education	NR	
Reisdorf, Timothy	414661	Math Interventionist	R	
Reyerson, Philip	488358	Reserve Teacher	R	
Schmidt, Annie	493062	Reading Interventionist	R	
Sen, Sarah	402909	2nd Grade	R	
Sneen, Kipton	459060	Middle School Math	R	
Tharaldson, Joslynn	497669	Humanities	NR	
Vanderlin, Amy	489945	3rd Grade	R	
Walker, Precious	512134	Science Teacher	R	
Walters, Amanda	451968	Kindergarten	NR	
Watkins, Micah	511744	Special Education	R	Resigned Sept. 2020
Weber, Carl	505152	Science Teacher	R	
Xiong, Chai	508853	Kindergarten	R	
Yelle, Katy	475608	1st Grade	R	
Zielske, Mandi	483409	Special Education	R	
Zoubek, Mary	481520	ALD Teacher	R	

* R = Returning, NR = Not Returning

Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2019-20 not returning in 2020-21 (non-returning teachers/total teachers from 2019-20 X 100)	**9.8%**

2019-20 Other Licensed (non-teaching) Staff			
Name	**License and Assignment**	**2019-20 Status***	**Comments**
Balvin, Justin	Academic Dean	R	
Uttech, Jennifer	Social Worker, Equity Coach	R	

2019-20 Non-Licensed Staff			
Name	**Assignment**	**2020-21 Status***	**Comments**
Anderson, Dwight	Behavior Intervention Spec.	NR	
Anderson, Tom	Research and Evaluation Coordinator	R	
Barney, Hannah	Educational Assistant, pre-K	R	
Beutel, Anna	Paraprofessional	NR	
Brooks, Bridget	Secretary	R	Returned as Paraprofessional, fall 2020
Browne-Gill, Adrian	Behavior Intervention Spec.	R	
Carter, Micah	Paraprofessional	NR	
Chang, Pahoua	Paraprofessional	R	Resigned Sept. 2020
Coleman, Grace	Paraprofessional	NR	
Cotton, Debra	Paraprofessional	NR	
Dahn, Rhoda	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	R	
Davis, Richlieu	P.E. / Special Ed. Paraprofessional	R	
Davison Dewitt	Paraprofessional	NR	
Davison, Synethia	Food Service Coordinator	R	
Dunbar-Grant, Candace	Facilities and Transportation Director	R	
Flaminio, Kenneth	Paraprofessional	NR	
Garcia, Liliana	Registrar, Office and Program Mgr.	R	
Glover, Shalyn	Paraprofessional	NR	
Gordon, Shalonda	Human Resources Director	NR	
Grant, Eddie	Student Success Coach	NR	
Grant, Stephen	Technology Coordinator	R	
Grant, Tiffany	Employee Daycare Manager	R	
Gregerson, Katie	Paraprofessional	R	Returned as Receptionist
Harchysen, Tessa	Paraprofessional	NR	

2019-20 Non-Licensed Staff			
Name	**Assignment**	**2020-21 Status***	**Comments**
Holbrook, Cassandra	Business Manager, Executive Assistant	R	
Holewinski, Katherine	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	R	
Holland, Fay	Preschool Instructor	R	
Johnson, Jamehlia	Paraprofessional	R	
Loyd, Cathy	Custodian	R	
McGhee, Derrick	Custodian	R	
McNutt, Jamel	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	R	
Penister, Tonya	Paraprofessional	R	
Regan, Jossie	Paraprofessional	NR	
Scott, Jameel	Paraprofessional	R	
Singh, Heroutie	Preschool Instructor	R	
Snead, Dawn	Employee Daycare Manager	R	
Thao, Moua	Paraprofessional	R	
Thibodeaux, Ariale	Art Instructor	NR	
Tweh, Sharon	Paraprofessional	R	
Vang, Addin	Paraprofessional	R	Resigned Sept. 2020
Vechar, Anhelina	Paraprofessional	R	
Washington, Shamilia	Paraprofessional	NR	
Whiangar, Tenizi	Paraprofessional	NR	
Williams, Miea	Preschool Instructor	R	
Williams, Sabrina	Director	R	
Williams, Tonya	Student Success Coach	R	
Willis, Candace	Preschool Instructor	R	
Young, Bethany	Paraprofessional	R	
Young, Nancy	Paraprofessional	R	

CURRENT YEAR – 2020-21 Staffing

The tables below reflect Excell Academy staffing for the 2020-21 school year, as of October 2020.

2020-21 Licensed Teaching Staff			
Name	**File #**	**License and Assignment (subject/grades)**	**Comments:** *Include information regarding special licensure (e.g., Community Expert) or other relevant information.*
Baker, Riki	475611	4th Grade	
Blanco, Sharleen	467598	Reading Interventionist	
Fuller, Rashidah	504659	4th Grade	
Giddings, Kula	470882	1st Grade	
Hillestad, Angela	429770	6th Grade	
Holland, Cameron	515320	Social Studies	New hire, 2020
Irving, Taybri	1003513	Technology Learning Center Instructor	
James, Julie	435058	Mentor Teacher, Academic Coach	
Johnson, Demond	509117	Special Education	
Jones, Danita	449874	Kindergarten	
Kempf, Sarah	469005	2nd Grade	
Kock, Ashley	456483	Reading Interventionist	
Kroma, Jartue	485877	Special Education, Family Community Eng.	Special Permission
Larson, Erika	407314	Lead Mentor Teacher	
Lewis, Elyse	472119	5th Grade	
McCarthy, Julianne	467874	3rd Grade	
Melendez, Mikayla	498677	ALD Teacher	
Merrigan, Amber	418469	5th Grade	
Mueller, Bethany	420748	Middle School Language Arts Teacher	
Myllykangas, Sophia	513011	Special Education	
Nogle, Kimberly	995763	ALD Teacher	
Norlien, Andrew	485309	Phy. Ed and Health Teacher	
Norton, Katherine	411227	Reading Interventionist	
Pardun, Hannah	475756	Kindergarten	
Reisdorf, Timothy	414661	Math Interventionist	
Reyerson, Philip	488358	Reserve Teacher	

2020-21 Licensed Teaching Staff			
Name	**File #**	**License and Assignment (subject/grades)**	**Comments:** *Include information regarding special licensure (e.g., Community Expert) or other relevant information.*
Schmidt, Annie	493062	Reading Interventionist	
Sen, Sarah	402909	2nd Grade	
Sneen, Kipton	459060	Middle School Math	
Vanderlin, Amy	489945	3rd Grade	
Walker, Precious	512134	Science Teacher	
Weber, Carl	505152	Science Teacher	
Xiong, Chai	508853	Kindergarten	
Yelle, Katy	475608	1st Grade	
Zielske, Mandi	483409	Special Education	
Zoubek, Mary	481520	ALD Teacher	

2020-21 Other Licensed (non-teaching) Staff		
Name	**License and Assignment**	**Comments**
Balvin, Justin	Academic Dean	
Uttech, Jennifer	Social Worker, Equity Coach	

2020-21 Non-Licensed Staff		
Name	**Assignment**	**Comments**
Adkins, Shamaya	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	New hire, 2020
Anderson, Tom	Testing Coordinator	
Barney, Hannah	Educational Assistant, pre-K	
Brooks, Bridget	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	
Browne-Gill, Adrian	Behavior Intervention Spec.	
Dahn, Rhoda	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	
Davis, Richlieu	P.E. / Special Ed. Paraprofessional	
Davison, Synethia	Food Service, Health Office & COVID-19 Coordinator	
Dunbar-Grant, Candace	Facilities and Transportation Director	
Garcia, Liliana	Registrar, Registrar, Office and Program Mgr.	
Grant, Stephen	Technology Coordinator	
Grant, Tiffany	Employee Daycare Manager	

2020-21 Non-Licensed Staff		
Name	**Assignment**	**Comments**
Gregerson, Katie	Receptionist	
Holbrook, Cassandra	Business Manager, Executive Assistant, and co-HR Lead	
Holewinski, Katherine	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	
Holland, Fay	Preschool Instructor	
Jacobson, Lisa	Fundraiser / Grant-writer	New hire, 2020
Johnson, Jamehlia	Behavior Interventionist Coach	
Kamara, Mamaka	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	New hire, 2020
Loyd, Cathy	Custodian	
McGhee, Derrick	Custodian	
McGill, Elexis	Ed. Assistant (Community Ed.)	New hire, 2020
McNutt, Jamel	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	
Morgan, Zaria	Special Ed. Paraprofessional	New hire, 2020
Pearson, Tracey	Paraprofessional	New hire, 2020
Penister, Tonya	Paraprofessional	
Scott, Jameel	Paraprofessional	
Singh, Heroutie	Preschool Instructor	
Snead, Dawn	Employee Daycare Manager	
Thao, Moua	Paraprofessional	
Tweh, Sharon	Paraprofessional	
Vechar, Anhelina	Paraprofessional	
Williams, Miea	Preschool Instructor	
Williams, Sabrina	Director	
Williams, Tonya	Equity Coach	
Willis, Candace	Preschool Instructor	
Young, Bethany	Paraprofessional	
Young, Nancy	Paraprofessional	

XIII. Operational Performance

Excell Academy's Facilities and Transportation Director provided updates as stated below, on these two aspects.

Transportation

We started the year off great besides the normal hiccups. Things were going great and then we were faced with COVID so all transportation stopped. We later established transportation for our "Community Heroes" program for essential workers.

Facilities

The school year started great. We were able to receive a bond that allowed us to purchase our building and add a Middle School wing. With that we are adding 6 new classrooms, 6 offices, a new parking lot and a much needed playground. Although COVID has caused us to continue with our online classes it did not affect construction, so things are moving along great. The Middle School Wing should be completed by November 2020.

Health and Safety

Excell Academy materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter contract relating to Health and safety at the school:

- Nurse consulting services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals;
- Students are seen for day to day needs such as scrapes, cuts, illness, etc.
- Students who have medication orders from their physicians are to keep their medication in the health office and take their medication as ordered in their authorizations and care plans in the health office dispensed by the health office staff.
- Students with health conditions are identified and closely monitored to be sure that they are given the correct medication orders and proper procedures are followed.
- When a student is in obvious distress or medical care plans call for it, 911 is called for the safety of the student.
- Providing of hats and gloves to students during cold-weather season
- Provides health screenings for student's grades Pre-K-5
- Facilitates programs for students in need of vision correction to receive free glasses

Food Service

Excell Academy materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter contract relating to Food Services at the school:

- The school health department works with the food service department to be sure that students with specific allergies are not served certain foods and are given appropriate alternatives.
- Students are served balanced healthy meals daily for breakfast and lunch. Food is catered and temperature and quality are maintained by CKC Good Food catering staff.
- Food is catered and temperature and quality are monitored by CKC Good Food catering staff.
- Accurate counts are kept of meals eaten each day through the computer system and logged into the CLiCS system at the end of each month for claims.

Family Engagement

Excell Academy has created a school culture of building a purposeful community where all stakeholders (students, parents, employees, and the community) are involved in the learning and success of our students. Excell provides a wide range of opportunities for parents and families to participate in during the school day and in the evenings. Some of the monthly parent/family involvement nights include: Open House, Read to Succeed Night, Family Gym Night, Winter Carnival, STEAM Night, Culture Celebration Night, and the Annual Title I meeting. Families and the community are also involved through ongoing extra-curricular activities such as sports teams (soccer, basketball, and cheerleading), and the school musical. Excell Academy holds Parent/Teacher conferences twice a year (during the 1st and 2nd trimesters) and has returned to offering conference times in the evening and during the day to better accommodate schedules of working families. Parent/family volunteers are frequently involved through our monthly birthday celebrations, grade level field trips and the Annual School Picnic on the last day of school. Excell Academy's Parent Ambassadors group is evolving with participation being extended to more parents to bolster our volunteer efforts.

Technology Updates

Excell Academy's Technology Coordinator provided the following updates regarding educational technology at Excell during 2019-20:

- Thanks to efforts made prior to the pandemic, and during the preparation period, Excell has been able to provide at least half of its students with devices for distance learning. At this point, Excell has reached a 2-1 student/device ratio.
- The Tyus Jones Creative Learning Lab continues to be a central facet of Excell's integration of technology and learning. Thanks to the investment made by Tyus Jones of the Minnesota Timberwolves, Excell is able to provide an opportunity for students to gain computer experience beyond the typical mobile devices which saturate daily life. In the lab, and online, with the instructor, students learn life skills such as typing, cyber safety, digital citizenship, and also trade-specific skills such as graphic design and coding.
- Teachers continue to use reliable online resources, such as Khanacademy.org, Typing.com, and MobyMax to provide enrichment for their daily lessons. In addition to these resources, many teachers have begun using Classroom Dojo, for incentives and classroom management. Epic! (getepic.com) has also become an indispensable classroom asset for younger grades, as it allows them to utilize classroom technology to have access to a near-infinite online library of relevant educational literature.
- With the pandemic occurring in spring new online technologies were implemented to allow our teachers and students to interact and continue to grow throughout the remainder of the school year. These new online technologies included SeeSaw, and Google Classroom, for online classroom management; Zoom, and Google Meet for conferencing and synchronous learning.
- This school year has seen technology integration reach a new level for Excell Academy with the implementation of the digital classroom in spring 2020. We are continuing toward our goal of being able to provide a 1 to 1 student to device ratio for our school. We are also always trying new online resources to help our students better learn and become comfortable in the digital age. With the increase of device traffic, we have also upgraded our Internet service, and are integrating wireless hotspots to provide safe offsite internet access to families in need. Lastly, in response to new on-site and off-site digital security demands, we have also added safe browsing extensions, restrictions and applications to all devices distributed for distance learning.

XIV. Finances

For questions regarding school finances and for complete financials for 2019-2020 and/or an organizational budget for 2019-2020, contact:

Position: Nichole Schmidt
Contact info: 220 South Sixth Street, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Phone: 612.397.3256
Email: nichole.schmidt@claconnect.com

CliftonLarsonAllen has provided accounting services for the School since July, 2017.

Information presented below is derived from final audit figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to Minnesota Department of Education and Audubon Center of the North Woods no later than December 31, 2020. We are currently waiting for final reports from the auditors as the presentation will be done at the October 22nd board meeting.

FY 20 Finances			
	General Fund	Food Service Fund	Community Service Fund
Total Revenues	$6,994,290	$425,759*	$359,481
Total Expenditures	$7,103,383	$425,759	$465,330
Net Income	($109,093)	$0	($105,849)
Total Fund Balance	$803,747	$0	$105,849

**Includes $17,250 transfer from general fund to deplete deficit*

Overview

Excell Academy continues to pride itself in being a financially stable organization. FY20 presented a few challenges with COVID-19 arising, but overall was another financially stable year for the Academy. The general fund did end up a deficit, however the Academy did not apply for any financial assistance relating to COVID-19 and continued to pay all staff regular pay. The Academy still has a positive fund balance at 11.40%. The school also was able to maintain adequate cash reserves without needing to borrow against a line of credit and pay interest and fees associated with that line.

Factors to take into account for FY20 include:

- The general fund ended at a deficit of $109K, the food service fund ended at a deficit of $17K, and the community services fund ended at a deficit of $106K. All restricted fund balances were spent down in FY20.
- Total general fund expenditures increased by $777,079 from prior fiscal year

- Total enrollment increased by 23 students from prior fiscal year

Revenues

All state and federal programs provided the usual funding sources for Excell Academy. The school did receive another PreK Incentive grant during FY20. Also new in FY20 – CARES Funding was given to the Academy and $120K was used against this funding in the fiscal year.

Expenses

Excell Academy again increased staffing compensation during FY20 to move more towards relevant market rates for high quality teaching and administrative staff. The Academy also closed on their affiliated building company during FY20, so the building expenses did decrease in the latter part of the year due to this closing in December.

COVID-19 Expenditures	
Staffing	$ 126,195.82
Facilities	$ 1,495.00
Supplies/Equipment/Curriculum or Technology	$ 11,097.18
Other Operations/Legal Fees	$ 2,195.50
TOTAL COVID-19 EXPENDITURES	**$ 140,983.50**

Net Income and Fund Balance

Excell Academy's ***combined*** fund balance decreased by $215K this fiscal year. Expenditures did increase with the increase in enrollment – with seven additional staff being hired for instruction. Special Education expenditures also increased about $200K. We did follow our auditor's recommendations to begin spending down the restricted fund balances and these were depleted at the end of FY20. The fund balance percent at the end of FY20 was 11.40%.

World's Best Workforce Annual Budget

Funds will be made available to provide Excell Academy staff high quality professional development opportunities as well as strengthen the capacity and development of school leadership and instructional staff.

XV. Future Plans

Excell Academy is adjusting its behavior management system to implement a Community Care Model that will more effectively support students social-emotional learning. As noted in the Innovative Practices & Implementation section above, the aim is to integrate what the school has done with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with culturally-informed instruction and a “house” system modeled on that used at Ron Clark Academy, a highly successful middle school in Atlanta, Georgia. School leadership undertook planning for the Community Care Model during the summer of 2020 and is implementing this with a Community Care team in place beginning fall 2020.

Another important part of Excell Academy’s future plans revolve around purchasing the school’s building and land; and expansion including providing for a playground and daycare. Zoning changes have been approved and Excell Academy is able to purchase its building (approved December 2019). Construction of a new middle school wing for the Excell Academy facility is underway as of September/October 2020, and the school is negotiating with the city of Brooklyn Park for purchase of city park-owned property immediately north of the school. The city council voted to lease this property to the school, and plans are underway to build a new playground / athletic area, the use of which will be shared between the school and the city/general public. The school was able to celebrate Groundbreaking on the school expansion and playground construction project on May 21, 2020, and construction has continued since. Details are available on the school’s website, at h ttp://www.excellacademy.dreamhosters.com/school-expansion/.

Building Purchase & Playground, Expansion, and Daycare

Fall 2019 Phase I - Building Purchase & Park Land Purchase/Playground

- will save our school over $125,000+ annually in taxes and fees
- will provide space for a long awaited recreational, sports, and outdoor wellness areas for our Pre-K – 8th graders.
- *Estimated cost*: $10 million

Fall 2020 Phase II - Building Expansion

- will add additional classrooms, mental health sensory room, art, and science
- will be able to serve 75 additional students
- *Estimated cost*: $3 million

Fall 2021 Phase III - Family Daycare on site;

- will save our students' families/ parents money & time by having all children at one location;
- supports parent job schedules;
- supports parent-child-school relationships;
- serves staff & community as well.
- *Estimated cost*: $2 million

The following statement of need and request for assistance were prepared by the Executive Director:

Statement of Need:
Excell Academy's funding is almost half of what traditional public schools receive and we do more with less. Imagine how much more we can do with more! Special thanks to many of our community partners who have donated to Excell Academy. Whether it was for additional computers and tablets for our students to engage in distance learning or for donating money and your time to build our new playground - your gifts, time, and support are most valued and appreciated.

The support of our partners and community is still needed to finish funding the costs associated with our new playground, outdoor recreational area, additional staff parking, as well as our staff and students' wellness spaces.

Why Should Partners Support/Help Fulfill this Need:
Excell Academy has proven itself as a high-quality charter school that is Beating the Odds and Reducing the Achievement Gap! Expansion of our facilities, new playground, and wellness programs would allow us to serve more students, impact more lives, and Change Tomorrows for more Children Today!

Specific Request: Significant matching grant for Excell's Capital Campaign.

XVI. Distance Learning Plan Description and Reflection on Implementation

In October 2020 Excell Academy's Research and Evaluation Coordinator provided the below narrative on key strategies implemented during the Distance Learning Plan and takeaways for moving forward.

- *Did your plan effectively serve students and families and what pieces might you change moving forward?*
  Based on parent, staff and student feedback we recognized that students and teachers needed more live, personal (though virtual) contact and instruction.

  We also recognized the need for a more structured day that still provides for flexibility for families. Daily live instruction is scheduled and will be recorded for students who are not able to attend the live virtual sessions. They will be able to access the content when it is convenient for them.

The Distance Learning Plan as updated for the fall of 2020 is also designed to maximize collaboration among classroom, reading intervention and Academic Language Development teachers. Teachers will collaborate during the two Reading blocks on the schedule. Each class will have one specialist live each day.

- *Was the school's distance learning plan comprehensive? Were there any gaps that were identified? How effective was the plan and how did you measure its effectiveness?*
  While the plan was effective given the limited time and guidance for planning, the most significant gap that we needed to respond to was the lack of personal interaction and possibility for building community. Our major shift from the spring of 2020 to the fall of 2020 was from having mostly asynchronous work to mostly live synchronous online instruction in a collaborative setting. In addition, the Community Care Model (see below) is designed to help fill this gap.

- *How did your team prioritize communication, mental health, and general well-being of staff and students during distance learning?*
  A full-time staff was dedicated to connecting with students and reaching out to them, collaborating with teachers and discussing the well-being of families. Some families actually reported receiving too much communication from the school, so for the 2020-2021 school year we designed our family liaison system to streamline communication with families. The well-being of staff during Distance Learning was also front and center as we surveyed staff and offered them support of various kinds.

  In preparation for the fall of 2020, Excell Academy developed its Community Care model. Excell Academy's Community Care model for the morning meeting time on the daily schedule will also feature teacher collaboration, social and emotional learning opportunities and culturally relevant instruction designed to create an engaging and affirming space for virtual learning.

- *What protocols, policies, committees, or trainings, could you incorporate going forward in your preparedness plan?*
  Going forward we are prioritizing the safety and well-being of our students, families and staff. This includes the social and emotional health and well-being of all during a very difficult time. By focusing on community building, stability in scheduling and closely following the health and safety guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Health while closely monitoring local, county and state Covid 19 data, we will be more successful in eventually returning to full in person learning when it is safe. At the same time, by preparing and planning for a robust distance learning program, we will be able to make academic progress while keeping everyone safe.

- *What did you learn about your staff, students, and community that make you proud of the work you have done?*

We have learned so much about our families and staff during this difficult period. First, we have seen that our families follow the Covid 19 pandemic very closely and are quite concerned that returning to in-person learning, whether hybrid or full time, be done in a safe way. We have learned that many barriers can be overcome and that our families and staff are resourceful and resilient. We have witnessed the creativity and ingenuity of our teachers and staff as they have created online learning environments that are fun, build community, affirm our students and provide quality instruction. We are proud of our students, families and staff in the way they have responded with understanding and kindness while we work together to keep moving forward in this most difficult year.

Appendix A: School Calendar

Excell Academy for Higher Learning's calendar for 2019-20 is displayed below; current calendar information is posted at http://www.excellacademy.dreamhosters.com/monthly-news-and-calendars/

Excell Academy for Higher Learning | District No. 4068 | 2019-2020 |Approved Calendar

AUGUST 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

New Teacher Orientation (TBD)
19-23 All Staff Orientation (Tentative)
26-30 Staff Flex Week (Tentative)
29 Student Orientation (PM, Tentative)

Instructional Hours:
Instructional Days: 0

SEPTEMBER 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2 No School (Labor Day)
30 No School (Staff Dev)

Instructional Days: 19
Staff Development Days: 1

OCTOBER 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

15 4-8pm Parent Conferences
16 No School (AM Staff Dev, 1-4pm Parent Conferences)
17 No School (Staff Dev)*
18 No School (Staff Dev)*

Instructional Days: 20
Staff Development Days: 1.5-2.5

NOVEMBER 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	25	26	27	28	29	30

5 No School (Staff Dev)*
27 No School (Reporting Day)
28-29 Thanksgiving Break (No School)

Instructional Days: 17
Staff Development Days: 1

DECEMBER 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2 Trimester 2 Begins
23-31 No School (Winter Break)

Instructional Days: 15

JANUARY 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

1-3 No School (Winter Break)
20 No School (Martin Luther King Day)
21 No School (Staff Dev)*

Instructional Days: 18
Staff Development Days: 1

FEBRUARY 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

13 4-8pm Parent Conferences
14 No School (AM Staff Dev, 1-4pm Parent Conferences)
17 No School (President's Day)*

Instructional Days: 18
Staff Development Days: 0.5

MARCH 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

12 Trimester 2 ends
13 No School (Teacher Reporting)
16 Trimester 3 Begins

30-31 No School (Spring Break)

Instructional Days: 19

APRIL 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

1-3 No School (Spring Break)

Instructional Days: 19

MAY 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

25 Memorial Day (No School)

Instructional Days: 20

JUNE 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

5 Last Day for Students
8 Teacher Reporting Day
22 Summer School Begins (Tentative)

Instructional Days: 5

Trimester I (September 3,2019 - November 27, 2019): 56 days
Trimester II (December 2, 2019 - March 12, 2020): 60 days
Trimester III (March 16, 2020 - June 5, 2020): 54 days

Instructional Hours: Instructional Days: 170
Staff Dev Days: 5 (two ½) Flexible Learning Days: 5

■ = No School for Students
*= Potential Flexible Learning Day for Students